

SPJ Board Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2002 – Fort Worth, Texas

Meeting Called to Order

With President Al Cross presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:05 p.m. on Wednesday, September 11, 2002, at the Renaissance Worthington Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas.

Roll Call

In addition to President Cross, the following board members were in attendance for all or a portion of the meeting: President-Elect Robert Leger; Secretary-Treasurer Mac McKerral; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Jim Highland; Directors At-Large Jim Parker and Jamie Gonzales; Student Representatives Brian Joseph and Elizabeth Bienvenu; Campus Adviser At-Large David Carlson; Regional Directors Irwin Gratz, Dan Drummond, Holly Fisher, Bruce Cadwallader, Vicky Katz Whitaker, Dave Aeikens, Patrick Dobson, Todd Gillman, Jay Evensen, Steve Maynard and Mark Scarp; Diversity Committee Chair Sally Lehrman; Membership Committee Chair Howard Dubin; SDX Foundation Board members Betsy Ashton, Steve Geimann, Fred Brown and Paul McMasters; Executive Director Terry Harper; Bruce Sanford, Baker & Hostetler; journalist Jeff Kass; incoming Region 2 Director Jonathan Hunley; and Roger Whitaker, husband of Vicky Katz Whitaker.

Minutes Approved

No changes were noted to the minutes of the board meeting held on April 27, 2002.

Upon proper motion and second by Highland and Carlson, respectively, the minutes of the April 27, 2002, meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists were unanimously approved.

No changes were noted to the minutes of the joint meeting of the boards of directors held on April 27, 2002.

Upon proper motion and second by Carlson and Dobson, respectively, the minutes of the April 27, 2002, meeting of the joint boards of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists and the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation were unanimously approved.

Three changes were noted to the minutes of the July 13, 2002, meeting of the executive committee. The first added language on Page 1 to indicate that use of the approved line of credit was subject to approval of the executive committee. The second change was a minor correction on Page 2 referring to the German exchange program and the purpose the journalists' visit to the United States. The third change, on Page 3, clarified that an LDF golf tournament would be scheduled to coincide with the 2003 convention and an event in Indianapolis may be considered to occur around the spring board meeting. All three corrections were properly moved, seconded and adopted unanimously.

Upon proper motion and second by Carlson and Dobson, respectively, the minutes of the July 13, 2002, meeting of the executive committee of the Society of Professional Journalists were unanimously approved as amended.

Report of the President

Cross reported that SPJ had a successful year and urged the members of the board to keep fighting the good fight in the name of improving and protecting journalism.

The president's written report is attached to these minutes as Exhibit A.

Report of the Executive Director

Harper reported on the staffing changes in the finance department at Headquarters. He introduced Greg Jones, SPJ's new multimedia coordinator (formerly known as the Web fellow). Harper further noted that

membership numbers were continuing to improve.

Membership Committee Report

Dubin referenced his written report stating that membership has increased 10 percent, or 513 members, since this time last year. He reported that the initial direct mail campaign was completed, having mailed invitations to join to more than 150,000 journalists. He said the next phase would be to send more personalized invitations to join to journalists based on recommendations from current members. Dubin will work out the details with the staff. The board expressed its appreciation to Dubin for his hard work and generosity.

Baker & Hostetler Report

Sanford praised the efforts of Ian Marquand, FOI Committee co-chair. He said that SPJ and other journalism organizations need make an effective sell to the American public on the need for access to information. He stated that Baker & Hostetler greatly values its relationship with SPJ and that the Society's work is very important. On behalf of the board, Cross thanked Baker & Hostetler for their work on SPJ's behalf.

Awards Committee Report

The board discussed Awards Committee Chair Guy Baehr's written report. It was the sense of the board that, given the early deadline for MOE entries, that the entry forms should be circulated before the Thanksgiving break. There was also some discussion about changing the fee structure for the SDX Awards. A series of motions were offered to change the fees, all were defeated.

International Committee

Cross recognized the efforts of Dan Kubiske who has acted as chairman of the International Committee while based in Hong Kong.

LDF Committee Report

Currently, the committee is involved in a case in Chattanooga, Tenn. involving police records. The police are appealing the ruling to make some records available. Frank Gibson is the committee's point person in Tenn.

Publications Committee Report

Although the Publications Committee has been somewhat dormant for the past several months, Leger announced his intention to make the committee more active. He asked board members to submit any suggestions on the Publications Committee to him.

Project Watchdog Report

The board discussed the written report from Project Watchdog Chair Nerissa Young. Young's report asked for funds to revise and re-issue the Project Watchdog handbook for chapters. The board was generally supportive of the idea, but wanted an idea of the budget for such an undertaking before giving its approval.

ACEJMC Report

The membership in ACEJMC is currently held by the SDX Foundation with Geimann serving as the representative on the Council. Geimann referenced his written report. It was the sense of the board that SDX would be asked to continue the ACEJMC membership for one more year at which time SPJ would once again be responsible for paying the dues.

Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Report

Highland announced that he would be offering a set of graduated student chapter requirements for the board's consideration at a future meeting. He said he would be circulating a reaction document amongst the student members at the convention for their feedback. He noted that the biggest accomplishment in campus affairs this year was the successful fight for the reinstatement of a campus newspaper adviser at the University of Texas at Tyler. He asked that any suggestions for institutional memberships should be given to him or Harper.

The board took a break at 3:00 p.m.

IRE-SPJ Better Watchdog Workshops

Reconvening at 3:15 p.m., the board briefly discussed the upcoming series of Better Watchdog Workshops being coordinated by IRE with involvement from SPJ and funded by a grant from the SDX Foundation. Cross will continue to serve as the point person for SPJ after his term as president has concluded. Harper expressed some concern over combining the Better Watchdog Workshops with Regional Conferences. He is primarily concerned that the higher cost to attend the Regional Conferences might drive away some non-members who may just be interested in the Better Watchdog Workshops. Careful coordination will be needed between IRE and Regional Directors to ensure that the partnership is a successful one.

Front-Line Editors Workshop

Harper reported that the Front-Line Editors Workshop was all set for November 15-17, 2002, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Indianapolis. Programs Coordinator Carrie Copeland has lined up a great group of presenters and registration materials will be in the mail in early October.

Graduated Professional Chapter Requirements

Gonzales presented the revised proposal for Graduated Professional Chapter Requirements that has been under development for several months. Cross thanked Gonzales and her committee members, especially Scarp, for their hard work in bringing this project to fruition. A few minor changes were made to some of the language in the revised proposal prior to its adoption.

Upon proper motion and second by Gratz and Aeikens, respectively, the board adopted the Graduated Professional Chapter Requirements by majority decision.

The Graduated Professional Chapter Requirements are attached to these minutes as Exhibit B.

Diversity Committee Report

Diversity Committee Chair Sally Lehrman referenced her written report to the board on the Rainbow Sourcebook. She stated that the Rainbow Sourcebook is a signature program for SPJ and continued effort must be given to ensure its usefulness. She briefly reviewed her grant request to the SDX Foundation for the "Celebration of Diversity Campaign" to be carried out over the next three years. The board expressed its appreciation to Lehrman.

Future National Convention Reports

McKerral gave an update on the plans underway for the 2003 National Convention in Tampa, Fla. He reported that the Tampa Tribune, a Media General concern, had stated its intent some years ago to be a \$20,000 sponsor. Sponsorship booklets are being sent to more than 100 media companies in the area. The local host committee is eager to make the convention a success. It was noted for the record that Tampa was recently voted the 8th sweatiest city in America.

Gratz and Ashton discussed plans for the 2004 convention in New York City. A planning session was conducted in July with a conference call since. The local fundraising committee is eager to proceed, but is waiting on staff to nail down the exact dates and a hotel.

Legal Defense Fund Grant Request

Journalist Jeff Kass of the Rocky Mountain News is writing a book on the Columbine murders and asked SPJ for a \$15,000 grant from the LDF to assist in his legal fight to open a number of records related to the shootings. Sanford feels that Kass will be in a defensive position from the outset due to the sensational nature of the crime. It was the sense of the board that while they were generally supportive of Kass' efforts, that it was too soon in the legal process to commit SPJ funds.

Upon proper motion and second by Dobson and Cadwallader, respectively, the board unanimously decided to defer any action on Kass' LDF request until the spring 2003 board meeting.

New Chapters Created

Requests were submitted by student groups at Keene State College (N.H.) and John Carroll University (Ohio) to be granted chapter status. All paperwork was in order although there was some concern expressed about Article XII of the JCU group's constitution giving JCU rules precedence over SPJ rules and regulations. The question was referred to Highland and his committee although it would not hinder approval of today's request.

Upon proper motion and second by Carlson and Joseph, respectively, the board unanimously approved the creation of a student chapter at Keene State College.

Upon proper motion and second by Gonzales and Cadwallader, respectively, the board unanimously approved the creation of a student chapter at John Carroll University.

Cross' Service Acknowledged

On behalf of the rest of the board, Leger thanked Cross for his tireless service as SPJ president over the past year. As a token of appreciation, members of the board have made contributions to the SDX Foundation's FOI Fund in Cross' name. Cross announced he would match all gifts.

Bank Authorizations Updated

Upon proper motion and second by Carlson and Leger, respectively, the board unanimously approved updates to the Society's bank accounts naming Harper, Deputy Director Julie Grimes, and the SPJ secretary-treasurer as signatories on all accounts, and, further, that Harper be appointed assistant secretary-treasurer of SPJ, Inc.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the board of directors, Cross declared the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m. on Wednesday, September 11, 2002.

Exhibit A

SPJ President's Report September 2002

By Al Cross

Welcome to Fort Worth and a convention that should enhance SPJ's reputation as the leading voice in journalism for freedom of information, ethics, diversity and professional development.

Our leadership is recognized by the ceremony marking the first day of issue of stamps honoring women journalists; by delegations of journalists from Germany and Korea; and by the fall meeting of the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations. Let's make all of them welcome.

We all owe a great debt to Robert Leger, the convention committee and our staff for assembling an excellent program with timely, useful sessions and big names such as Paul Steiger of The Wall Street Journal, Bob Schieffer of CBS News and Len Downie of the Washington Post. We have worked this year to cultivate relationships with these folks and other leaders in journalism.

If the short list of big names seems a little heavy on people from New York and Washington, it's a weight properly placed. The two cities that were attacked a year ago this week are the media capitals of this country, and SPJ must do more to elevate its profile in those cities.

We have been working on both fronts. In two years, on dates that need to be set soon, we will hold our convention in New York.

Last week, George Stephanopoulos of ABC News accepted my invitation to be the roasteer at what we

hope will be the first annual SPJ Legal Defense Fund Roast in Washington. And the Sigma Delta Chi Awards dinner will move back to Washington next year, in the late spring or early summer, when it was held until being moved to the convention several years ago.

We may not have an office in Washington, but with the help of our chapter there, we are about to have a greater presence, a goal that I adopted from my predecessor, Ray Marcano, who cannot be with us this week because of some important personal commitments.

As I told you in April, I didn't seek this job to be a caretaker. While being aggressive with our external agenda we have tried to move forward on internal issues such as membership and headquarters management. After just over 11 months as your president, I believe the Society is poised to move to the next level of leadership and progress. But that will take more work and commitment from each of us, to build on the modest successes of the past year.

Society operations

I very much appreciate the board's indulgence in allowing adoption of this year's budget to be delayed until the July meeting of the Executive Committee. This gave Terry Harper and the rest of us a chance to set some priorities at a critical point, and I think I speak for the rest of the Executive Committee when I say that we feel much more confident about the reliability of the figures in this budget and our ability to meet its forecasts.

With our budget reserves exhausted, we were forced to not fill some vacancies. This put a greater burden on the remaining staff and volunteer leaders. For example, when marketing director Sarah Shrode resigned to take another job, Terry and I decided that she would not be replaced and that we would rely on volunteer leaders to write press releases. In some cases, this means we have not issued releases simply because no volunteer was available to do the writing.

The Publications Committee did not make the progress that Kyle Niederpruem and I had hoped for, and she has resigned as chair. Robert Leger has indicated that he will redouble our efforts in this area. Thanks to Bill McCloskey and the Bylaws Committee for shepherding the amendments that will be put before the convention, and to the temporary Chapter Rules Committee for developing a set of guidelines for judging and managing chapters. Both these efforts are part of an effort to clear out some underbrush that sometimes hinders operations of the Society, and I urge you to see that they are adopted.

Membership

At a time when we needed it most, our membership has been increasing. More than half the gain reflected in the chart below is due to the 280 memberships generated by the direct-mail campaign funded by Membership Chair Howard Dubin.

On Sept. 6, after the latest monthly cull of non-renewals, SPJ had 9,250 members, 5.2 percent more than a year earlier. We have 5,094 professional members, 7.9 percent more than a year ago. Student numbers should begin to rise now that school has begun, and that will be helpful, because there seems to have been a slight loss of momentum on the professional front, with 50 fewer members now than a month ago.

So, while membership may be the best sign of our success, it remains our chief concern. Our members are still disproportionately old, and we are not doing a good enough job at retaining members, especially students. Compilation of data from the survey sent in a recent mailing to former members should give us some guidance on how to do better, but I think we all know that the key to retaining members is chapter activity, and some regional directors and chapter officers must increase their efforts to make that happen. Direct mail is not a great device to attract members, and our campaign will not have much lasting effect unless chapters follow up with new and rejoined members.

We also must have a new, four-color membership brochure to make the sale for SPJ.

The chart, using data from e-mail reports from headquarters, shows that we have made healthy gains since January, just as the direct-mail campaign was beginning to bear fruit. The campaign is now being completed, with the mailing of 31,000 letters from the president to prospects who had not been solicited before because they did not have an active chapter in their area. We sent a specially tailored letter to prospects in Georgia, where Region 3 Director Holly Fisher is temporarily heading a committee to reorganize the Atlanta Chapter, which has been defunct for about four years.

Holly, Robert Leger and I traveled to Atlanta last month for a series of meetings with members, prospects and people who can help us at CNN, the Journal-Constitution and elsewhere. We received encouragement everywhere we went, and Holly has scheduled the first formal meeting of her committee for Sept. 28, when we hope a permanent chair will be elected and program planning can begin. Atlanta will be the site of a regional conference this spring, and plans call for finalists in the Green Eyeshade Awards ñ a chapter project which headquarters has been running in the absence of a chapter ñ to speak at a day-long professional development workshop preceding the awards dinner.

SPJ Membership numbers

Change fm. Year to Year

2002 PROS week listed ago Gain, Pct. TOTAL ago Change, Pct.

imm. below

Sept. 6	5,094	-170	4,722	+372	7.9	9,250	8,789	+461	5.25
Aug. 30	5,264	+21	4,816	+448	9.3	9,476	8,924	+552	6.2
Aug. 23	5,243	+19	4,775	+468	9.8	9,434	8,874	+560	6.3
Aug. 16	5,222	+78	4,709	+513	10.9	9,393	8,797	+596	6.8
Aug. 2	5,144	-52	4,806	+338	7.03	9,237	8,896	+341	3.8
July 12	5,196	+53	4,725	+471	9.97	9,324	8,775	+549	6.3
July 5	5,143	-134	n.a.	9,260	n.a.				
June 28	5,277	+92	4,916	+361	7.3	9,497	9,047	+450	4.98
June 21	5,185	+108	n.a.	9,424	n.a.				
March 25	5,077	+325							
Jan. 18	4,752								

Society missions

Freedom of Information: The Open Doors handbook written by Ian Marquand and produced with the help of Julie Grimes is one of the most important publications by the Society in years. It provides a real service to journalists and reaffirms SPJ's leadership role in freedom of information. We all owe a debt of gratitude to Ian, who will make his own report to you. But I would be remiss not to say that he has helped make SPJ a leading voice for liberty at a time when too many Americans are willing to sacrifice liberty for personal safety or comfort and too many journalists or news organizations are afraid to wave the FOI flag very high. Our latest fight is against Bush Administration efforts to erode the Freedom of Information Act in the Homeland Security bill.

We continue to fight battles at the state level. National and state SPJ protests probably figured in New Jersey Gov. James McGreevey's backtracking on a secrecy order that gutted much of the state's new open-records law. In Tennessee, \$3,000 from the SPJ Legal Defense Fund helped keep federal privacy issues out of a lawsuit over access to photographs of police officers. A trial judge has ruled for us but police have appealed.

Ethics: The Ethics Committee issued a statement deploring the Boston Phoenix's publication of a photograph of Daniel Pearl's severed head, and debated whether provisions dealing with war and/or national security should be added to the SPJ Code of Ethics. That debate will continue at the convention.

Your president appeared on the Connie Chung show on CNN Aug. 14 to discuss coverage of child abductions. Among other things, I said news reports had led many people to believe there is an abduction epidemic when there is none.

Professional development: The first of the IRE-SPJ Better Watchdog Workshops will be held this weekend in Charleston, W. Va. Fifteen others have been slated. Eight of those have firm dates, and at least five will be held at SPJ regional conferences. Attendance at these workshops, funded by the SDX Foundation, carries with it a six-month membership in both organizations. We need to develop a strategy for retaining these members.

SPJ has submitted an application to the Knight Foundation for funding to create and maintain an online database of journalism training opportunities for the Council of Presidents. Negotiations on this have been complicated by requests from the Poynter Institute; we may know more about this at Sunday's meeting, after the Council meetings.

Campus activities: At our last meeting, you authorized creation of a task force to investigate the decision by the University of Texas at Tyler to not renew the teaching contract of the adviser to the student newspaper, which had reported aggressively on the administration. This move, and some aggressive inquiries by VPCCA Jim Highland, appeared to get quick results. Even before the task force was appointed, the teacher got her job back. Jim will elaborate on campus affairs in his own report.

It's a wrap

As I complete my term, my feelings are mixed -- so many things done, so many left undone. I must thank my fellow volunteer leaders for their help and advice, and my employer, The Courier-Journal, for allowing me to take up to two-thirds of my work time for SPJ activities. It was never that much in any given month, but the key was having the freedom to take the time I wanted and never get any complaints about it. It's a great example for other employers of our volunteer leaders.

The demands of this position have become so great, SPJ might be better off if its presidents could serve two years, or take full-time sabbaticals from work. Knowing that is not likely to happen anytime soon, at least, we all must be on the lookout for the next generation of leadership for the Society, beginning with Sunday's elections to the Executive Committee. The current committee is the first in many years without a woman member, partly because some of us weren't sensitive to the need for diversity in leadership, and I hope the board will rectify that on Sunday.

Now, let's have the best convention ever and keep our momentum going.

Exhibit B
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
Graduated Professional Chapter Requirements
(Revised August 23, 2002)

Four Stars

- Chapter holds six full-membership meetings on journalism-related topics such as diversity, freedom of information, Project Watchdog, ethics or any other topic relevant to SPJ missions.
- Chapter supports student journalists by offering scholarship awards, mentoring programs or other assistance as identified by the chapter board.
- Board members are in regular communication with each other, national headquarters and their regional director.
- Chapter displays consistent communication with full membership via vehicles such as newsletters, e-mail or a Web site.
- Annual report is filed on time.
- Chapter is represented at regional conference and national convention.
- Chapter is successful in recruiting new members.

Three Stars

- Chapter holds four full-membership meetings on journalism-related topics such as diversity, freedom

of information, Project Watchdog, ethics or any other topic relevant to SPJ missions.

— Chapter supports student journalists by offering scholarship awards, mentoring programs or other assistance as identified by the chapter board.

— Board members are in regular communication with each other, national headquarters and their regional director.

— Chapter displays consistent communication with full membership via vehicles such as newsletters, e-mail or a Web site.

— Annual report is filed on time.

— Chapter is represented at regional conference and national convention.

Two Stars

— Chapter holds three full-membership meetings on journalism-related topics such as diversity, freedom of information, Project Watchdog, ethics or any other topic relevant to SPJ missions.

— Board members are in regular communication with each other, national headquarters and their regional director, and communicate with full membership on a consistent basis.

— Annual report is filed on time.

— Chapter is represented at regional conference and national convention.

One Star

— Chapter holds two full-membership meetings on journalism-related topics such as diversity, freedom of information, Project Watchdog, ethics or any other topic relevant to SPJ missions.

— Board members communicate with each other.

— Chapter is represented at regional conference or national convention.

— Annual report is filed.

— Chapter membership decreases.

Rewards

— Four-star chapters would receive a 35 percent discount of the price of registration for two delegates to attend the national convention.

— Four-star and three-star chapters would be recognized annually in Quill and awarded a certificate at the national convention. Such chapter would also be recognized at regional conventions.

— Four-star chapters would be able to buy SPJ merchandise at a 20 percent discount. Three-star chapters could buy SPJ merchandise at a 10 percent discount.

— Any extra bags from the national convention would be divided first among four-star chapters, then to three-star chapters.

— Improved chapters (those making the step to the three- and four-star level) will also be recognized at the national convention.

— SPJ Headquarters will finance one chapter mailing (i.e. newsletter, regional conference information) for four-star chapters.

Implementation

The annual report is the primary evidence of professional chapter activity or inactivity. Chapters, of course, may submit additional evidence no later than 30 days after the annual deadline for the submission of the annual report.

Pro chapters that meet the requirements of at minimum a two-star chapter are considered active chapters.

If, after examination of the annual report and any additional evidence, the headquarters staff determines a pro chapter is a one-star chapter or less then the chapter must undergo the following remedial procedure, which is in accord with Article Five, Sections 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the SPJ Bylaws:

STEP ONE: ASSISTANCE.

From the time of the determination by headquarters staff that a pro chapter is ranked as one star until the deadline for submitting the chapter's annual report in the next following calendar year, the chapter will be under remediation. Headquarters staff, in consultation with that chapter's regional director, will provide assistance to chapter officers to help the chapter improve to the two star level.

STEP TWO: PROBATION.

If after the deadline for submitting the chapter's annual report in the next following calendar year from the year Step One begins, the chapter has again failed to meet advance to the *ëtwo starí* level, the headquarters staff will forward the matter to the Executive Committee. The committee will decide at its annual summer meeting whether to continue — by no more than one more calendar year — the remediation period, or to classify the chapter as under probation.

Under probation, the headquarters staff, in consultation with that chapter's regional director, will continue to provide assistance to chapter officers to help the chapter improve. But in placing a chapter on probation, the Executive Committee must forward to the chapter president and to the chapter's regional director written notice of the chapter's probationary status. Probationary status may last no more than one calendar year from the end of remediation. If in the judgment of the headquarters staff the chapter improves to the *ëtwo starí* level, by the end of this one calendar year, it shall be immediately returned to normal, active status.

STEP THREE: INACTIVE STATUS/REVOICATION STATUS.

If after the deadline for submitting the chapter's annual report in the next following calendar year from the year Step Two begins, the chapter has again failed to improve, the headquarters staff will forward the matter to the national Board of Directors at its annual fall meeting. The board may choose one of the following options:

1. Declare the chapter inactive. The chapter will be deemed ineligible to send delegates to the national convention. Local dues collected after the declaration will become the property of the national organization; however, SPJ may decide to allow such local dues to be held for the chapter until at which time it returns to active status, when those dues can be returned to it by decision of either the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee.

As soon as the following July 1, the chapter may reapply for active status. The Board of Directors or the Executive Committee may then grant the chapter active, but probationary status (Step Two above), and it must meet requirements set forth in Step Two in order to return to normal, active status.

2. Declare the chapter's charter revoked. The chapter then immediately ceases to exist and its officers' terms of office immediately ended. Chapter members in good standing with the Society shall have the option of affiliation with an active chapter, to which they shall pay local dues. At any time after the revocation, members in the geographic area of the former chapter may apply to form a new chapter under Article Five, Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the SPJ Bylaws.

A chapter declared inactive by the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee may have its charter revoked by either the board or the committee at any time after it has been declared inactive.