

Minutes
Meeting of the House of Delegates
Society of Professional Journalists
August 26, 2013
Anaheim, Calif.

Meeting Called to Order

With President Sonny Albarado presiding, the meeting of the house of delegates of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 3:33 p.m. on Monday, August 26, 2013, at the Anaheim Marriott, in conjunction with the Society's annual convention at the Excellence in Journalism conference.

Year in Review

Albarado gave a brief year in review of initiatives completed in the past year, including the fight for a federal Shield Law, support for the NPPA, adopting new guidelines and policies for the Society.

Rules of the Convention

Bylaws Committee Chairman Robert Becker read the rules of the convention and voting procedures for delegates.

Convention Resolutions

Resolutions Committee Chairman Gordon "Mac" McKerral introduced the 9 resolutions for delegates' consideration.

Upon proper motion and second by Lauren Bartlett, Los Angeles Pro Chapter, and David Sheets, St. Louis Pro Chapter, respectively, the house of delegates agreed to approve all resolutions as a block with the exception of 5,6 and 9.

Steve Geimann read resolution 1, thanking Albarado for his service.

RESOLUTION 5 — Renaming SPJ the "Society for Professional Journalism"

Bill McCloskey made a motion to speak to the issue for only 15 minutes. The motion was seconded by Lauren Bartlett, Los Angeles Pro Chapter.

A voice vote was taken and was close. McKerral urged delegates to move forward with discussion.

Hazel Becker, D.C. Pro Chapter, opposed the resolution because of her belief that the Society continues to do things for journalists — training, advocating and the Code of Ethics. Eric Francis, Arkansas Pro Chapter, supported the resolution, saying that supporting the act of journalism does not change our mission and can foster an outreach to those who support journalism but may not be journalists in the traditional sense.

Terri Carnicelli, Valley of the Sun Pro Chapter, made a motion to strike the first "Whereas" because it seems to provide a negative connotation. Monica Guzman, Western Washington Pro, seconded.

A card vote was taken and the motion passed. The first "Whereas" was removed from the resolution.

There was debate among leaders about removing the second "Whereas," and McKerral spoke with the group about remaining on point with the big picture.

Michael Fitzgerald, New England Pro Chapter, called the question. The motion passed.

Debate ended and Resolution 5 failed.

RESOLUTION 6 - PAOs

Carolyn Carlson, Kennesaw State University Chapter, made a motion to pass, seconded by Georgiana Vines, Eastern Tennessee Pro Chapter.

Lauren Bartlett, Los Angeles Pro Chapter, made a friendly amendment that the final “be it further resolved” be struck from the resolution. A proper second was given by Bill McCloskey, D. C. Pro Chapter, and the friendly amendment was accepted by Carlson and Vines, respectively.

McCloskey, D.C. Pro Chapter, spoke to delegates, saying “passing this will not change the scenario” and that he objects against seeking special privileges for journalists instead of all citizens. He urged delegates to vote against it.

A card vote was taken. Resolution 6 failed.

RESOLUTION 9 — Defining “journalist”

Eric Francis, Arkansas Pro Chapter moved that Resolution 9 be approved and was seconded by Hazel Becker, D.C. Pro Chapter.

There was no discussion and the Resolutions Committee gave a brief description on the background of the resolution.

A vote was taken and Resolution 9 was passed by the house of delegates.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION — RESOLUTION 5

Michael Fitzgerald, New England Pro Chapter, made a motion for additional discussion about Resolution 5. A proper second was given by Mary Kenney, Indiana University Chapter.

Monica Guzman, Western Washington Pro Chapter, encouraged delegates to be educated about the process and urged them to continue discussion on the topic. Mark Scarp, Valley of the Sun Pro Chapter, suggested that the discussion be brought before the national board at their meeting on August 27, 2013 for a recommendation to bring the topic forward as a bylaws amendment. Patti Newberry, Miami University Chapter, asked that the board have specific discussions regarding logistical information and the impact at a chapter level.

Lauren Bartlett, Los Angeles Pro Chapter, made a friendly amendment that the issue simply be a discussion item with the board on the following day. Eric Francis, Arkansas Pro Chapter, seconded and the friendly amendment was accepted. The motion passed.

ELECTION RESULTS

President Albarado announced the results of the board elections:

Election Results:

President Elect: Dana Neuts

Secretary Treasurer: Paul Fletcher

Vice President, Campus Chapter Affairs: Sue Kopen Katcef

Campus Adviser At-Large: Rebecca Tallent

Director At-Large: Bill McCloskey

Campus Representatives (2): Lindsey Cook, Michael Periatt

Region 2: Andy Schotz

Region 3: Michael Koretzky
Region 6: Joe Radske
Region 10: Pia Hallenberg
Region 11: Elizabeth Smith
Region 12: Tony Hernandez

SWEARING IN NEW OFFICERS:

Newly elected officers and board members were sworn in by President Albarado.

CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS:

Albarado presented the Circle of Excellence Awards to large and small chapters.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon proper motion and second Lauren Bartlett, Los Angeles Pro Chapter, and Steve Geimann, D.C. Pro Chapter, the house of delegates voted to adjourn the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

APPENDIX A

Resolution No. 1: Thanking SPJ President Sonny Albarado

Submitted by: SPJ Resolutions Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, during the past year, President Sonny Albarado has worked tirelessly as a forceful advocate for journalists and a steady leader for the Society of Professional Journalists and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado has much to be proud after an eventful year fighting censorship on college campuses, offering stern critiques of federal overreach in the use of journalists to prosecute leakers, and maintaining pressure for a federal shield law to protect journalists and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado used his bully pulpit to call out police for heavy-handed tactics used against reporters and photojournalists covering demonstrations in New York and Atlanta, and helping to get charges dropped against two college journalists detained when police broke up an Occupy Atlanta demonstration and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado has strengthened SPJ by overseeing improved governance guidelines and best practices for openness and accountability at the chapter, regional and national levels and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado has prodded state and federal officials to fulfill their open government responsibilities on topics ranging from the food stamp program to university president searches and efforts to seal "9-1-1" calls and other murder scene evidence and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado responded firmly and with a level head to the uproar over the Justice Department's seizure of Associated Press phone records and a Fox News reporter's emails, allying SPJ with other major media groups in condemning those actions and pressuring the administration to make it harder to turn journalists into an extension of law enforcement and;

WHEREAS, this outspoken advocacy reinforced the important role SPJ plays in safeguarding a free press and transparency in the government's relationship with citizens and;

WHEREAS, under the leadership of President Albarado, the 2013 Excellence in Journalism national conference in Anaheim, Calif., brought SPJ together with two other major media organizations — the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the Radio Television Digital News Association — to offer journalists from throughout the country an exciting menu of training and education and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado somehow managed also to juggle duties as projects editor at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado’s supervisors at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette showed a commendable and increasingly rare level of support for his SPJ endeavors and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado has avoided the sort of lurid scandals that have led to the impeachment of other presidents from Arkansas and;

WHEREAS, President Albarado, having begun his term with a full head of dark hair, has accepted the obvious physical toll of the SPJ presidency with good humor;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the SPJ convention of delegates thanks Sonny Albarado for his dedicated service to the Society during his term as president and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that (delegates commence singing): “Sonny, yesterday SPJ’s life was filled with rain; Sonny, you smiled at SPJ and really eased the pain. Oh, the dark days are done and the bright days are here, our Sonny one shines so sincere. Oh, Sonny one so true, we love you.”

Resolution No. 2: Thanking SPJ staff

Submitted by: SPJ Resolutions Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, the Society of Professional Journalists remains the largest broad based professional media organization through its ongoing and exemplary work in the areas of professional development, public access, ethics, diversity and First Amendment advocacy and;

WHEREAS, the SPJ headquarters staff makes it possible for SPJ members to do all that exemplary work mentioned above and;

WHEREAS, the staff has created another boffo national journalism conference, this time in tandem with the Radio Television Digital News Association and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and;

WHEREAS, Excellence In Journalism 13 has featured an enormous display of “talent, truth and energy” and much better fashion sense (thanks to our NAHJ and RTDNA partners) and;

WHEREAS, the SPJ Headquarters staff has done and continues to do its good work despite the SPJ board of directors and a vast collection of past presidents who think they know everything and;

WHEREAS, SPJ relies heavily on the staff’s vast knowledge, high levels of patience, tireless energy, two-way radios, clipboards, running shoes and CNN socks and;

WHEREAS, during the 2013 Excellence in Journalism national conference the SPJ staff again demonstrated high levels of professionalism, skill, ingenuity, nimbleness, and kept their black-and-white staff shirts clean and non-smelly through days of work with not much sleep and;

WHEREAS, the SPJ staff transmitted to EIJ 13 participants a high-level of energy and focus — a staff

infection of sorts;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the SPJ convention of delegates thanks the SPJ staff for all its work and gives the staff a hearty “Let’s have another!” for its work on Excellence in Journalism 13 conference in Anaheim, Calif.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the staff is requested to get more rest by sending fewer e-mail messages leading up to EIJ 14 in Nashville, Tenn.

Resolution No. 3: Recognizing past leaders

Submitted by: SPJ Resolutions Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, Bert Bostrom wrote “Talent, Truth and Energy” the 75-year history of the Society of Professional Journalists and exhibited all those tenets during his longtime service to SPJ and;

WHEREAS, Anne W. Nunamaker served in leadership roles throughout her longtime membership in SPJ and taught journalism in high school and college four decades and;

WHEREAS, Robert D.G. Lewis, a longtime member of SPJ and a society past president was an unabashed advocate for open government and freedom of information and tangled verbally with then-Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., during a hearing in which Lewis testified in 1983 and;

WHEREAS, Robert “Bob” McCord, a longtime supporter of SPJ, who worked as an editor at both the Arkansas Democrat and the Arkansas Gazette, helped craft the Arkansas open record's law that passed in 1967 and his name was atop a lawsuit in which the law was upheld by the Arkansas Supreme Court and;

WHEREAS, these outstanding SPJ stalwarts, who have died during the past year, led by example and represented SPJ’s best and brightest leaders who dedicated their lives to serving and protecting journalism;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the delegates to the Excellence In Journalism 13 conference salute these past leaders and recognize that SPJ’s light will continue to shine brightly while energized by the spirit they infused into the society.

Resolution No. 4: Student journalism censorship

Submitted by: SPJ Education Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, 2013 marks the 25th anniversary of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier case, in which a five-justice majority ruled that high school administrators could lawfully censor student expression in non-public-forum media for any “legitimate pedagogical purpose,” and;

WHEREAS, this ruling included limiting the free speech and press rights of school news organizations that tend to “associate the school with any position other than neutrality on matters of political controversy” and;

WHEREAS, during this 25th anniversary year, Hunterdon (New Jersey) Central High School’s

newspaper staff members found themselves under prior review by the high school principal, an action not enforced by past principals and;

WHEREAS, the students protested the action, but the principal to defend his position leaned heavily on Hazelwood and a school policy adopted in 1998 and;

WHEREAS, both the Journalism Education Association and the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communications have passed resolutions condemning the actions by the principal and school board and;

WHEREAS, the Society of Professional Journalists believes in an unfettered press, including the right of all school students to report fairly and accurately without prior review or censorship and;

WHEREAS, it is well-documented the Hazelwood censorship clause impedes an educator's ability to adequately instruct and train students in professional journalistic values and practices, including the right to question authority and investigate performances of governance and;

WHEREAS, the primary concern of the Supreme Court in Hazelwood was to permit schools to restrict editorial content "unsuitable for immature audiences," a concern that is unwarranted at the post-secondary level of education and;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court ruled in *Tinker v. Des Moines* that students do not check their First Amendment rights at the schoolhouse door and;

WHEREAS, in recognition of society's increased reliance on student news-gathering to fulfill basic community information needs, and the importance of being able to gather unfiltered information about the performance in and of educational institutions;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Society of Professional Journalists stands with the JEA and AEJMC in stating that no legitimate pedagogical purpose or the public's right to know is served by censorship of student journalism on the grounds the reporting may be unflattering toward school programs or policies, that it candidly discusses sensitive social and political issues or that it voices opinions which challenge the majority views on matters of public concern because all of these are essential to critical thinking, collaboration and communication skills necessary for an informed public and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that administrative authority to censor is not a substitute for journalistic credentials and professional journalists should recognize this important distinction and stand with, not against, student journalists in their right to free expression and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that professional journalists who publicly agree with censorship need to understand they are forsaking foundational journalistic tenets and threatening the future practice of the profession and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that journalists must recognize that censorship and punishment of media advisers has negative effects on learning and teaching as well as to the community as a whole.

Resolution No. 5: Renaming SPJ the "Society for Professional Journalism"

Submitted by: Michael Koretzky, Region 3 director

Resolutions Committee recommendation: No recommendation

Delegate action: Failed

WHEREAS, other organizations include supporters of whatever niche they fill, as shown by the National Organization for Women allowing men to join and the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People having a racially diverse membership and;

WHEREAS, SPJ's name doesn't accurately reflect its current membership because many members and even many SPJ board members are not professional journalists and;

WHEREAS, a name that invites membership by a larger community of supporters would give SPJ more lobbying power with lawmakers not currently predisposed to a free press and;

WHEREAS, the name "Society of Professional Journalists" suggests that there is or should be a group representing unprofessional journalists and;

WHEREAS, this will probably result in much gnashing of teeth and rending of garments, this change is inevitable or the society will go down permanently;

THEREFORE be it resolved that SPJ rename itself the Society for Professional Journalism starting as soon as the articles, bylaws, policies and guidelines permit.

Resolution No. 6: PAOs

Submitted by: SPJ FOI Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Failed

WHEREAS, the Society of Professional Journalists Freedom of Information Committee has been concerned about the growing amount of control over the interviewing and reporting process exercised by government public affairs officers and;

WHEREAS, the FOI Committee during Sunshine Week conducted a survey of current and former members of the National Association of Government Communicators for Sunshine Week and found that among respondents 62.3 percent of PAOs "believe that controlling media coverage of the agency is a very important part of protecting the agency's reputation," and;

WHEREAS, 65.9 percent of PAOs responding believe it is necessary to monitor or otherwise supervise interviews with members of their agency staff and 75 percent responding agree that monitoring is the best way to prevent misquotes and;

WHEREAS, almost 40 percent of PAOs responding ban specific reporters from talking to their staff members, based on objections to previous stories and;

WHEREAS, an earlier survey by the SPJ FOI Committee found that among respondents seven out of 10 Washington-area reporters who cover the federal government believe that "agency controls over who I interview (is) a form of censorship" and 85 percent believe that "the public is not getting the information it needs because of barriers agencies are imposing on journalists' reporting practices";

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Society of Professional Journalists urges public affairs offices to loosen their stranglehold over the interviewing and reporting process, and to refrain from active monitoring of interviews without the permission of the reporter involved and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SPJ calls on President Barack Obama to direct federal agencies to adopt policies that preclude such interference with reporters' work and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SPJ urges PAOs to refrain from banning reporters in all but the most egregious circumstances in order to allow the free exercise of First Amendment rights and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SPJ urges journalists to refuse to accept restrictions imposed by PAOs and to resist them at every opportunity in the interest of restoring true freedom of the press and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SPJ urges journalism educators to teach students that PAO control of information is not a practice that fosters transparent government, and that when students encounter such practices, they should stand up for the principles of a free press.

Resolution No. 7: NSA/DOJ

Submitted by: SPJ FOI Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, it has come to light that the National Security Agency routinely collected phone records of millions of individuals in the U.S. and abroad in the name of protecting the American people and;

WHEREAS, it also has come to light that the Department of Justice has subpoenaed Associated Press phone records to further a leak investigation and;

WHEREAS, the NSA reportedly has developed a surveillance network that can reach about 75 percent of all Internet traffic in the U.S. and;

WHEREAS, the secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court in July renewed the government's authority to continue the collection of millions of Americans' phone records and;

WHEREAS, these and similar government actions make a mockery of the concept of a free press while trampling the civil liberties of Americans and citizens of other nations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists rejects the explanation that "national security interests" justify these actions and call upon the Obama administration to cease practices that reflect a disturbing disregard for civil rights and privacy and urges the Obama administration to live up to the principles of transparency it professes to embrace.

Resolution No. 8: Ethics Code

Submitted by: SPJ Ethics Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, the Society of Professional Journalists created a Code of Ethics to serve as a benchmark for ethical principles and standards of professional journalism and;

WHEREAS, the Code is voluntarily embraced by thousands of journalists, regardless of place or platform, and is widely used in newsrooms and classrooms as a guide for ethical decision making and;

WHEREAS, the Code has been translated into 16 languages and;

WHEREAS, the Code is the backbone of three Society ethics books and much of the ethical advice dispensed by the Society's ethics committee members and;

WHEREAS, the current Code was adopted by the delegates in 1996 and has not been revised since and;

WHEREAS, journalism has experienced great changes in its landscape, including shifts from traditional media to digital and social media forms and;

WHEREAS the current code was written before many of these changes developed, and the transforming media have created scores of ethical challenges for professional journalists;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Ethics Committee of the Society should embark on a meaningful and deliberate process to review its Code of Ethics for the purposes of ensuring it fosters the highest ethical standards in today's media world and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this process relies on extensive input from SPJ members, professional journalists, journalism students and scholars that could result in a new code or changes to the current code that will be voted on by Society delegates at a future convention and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any code and in whatever form it takes will remain an integral part of SPJ's core mission to promote the highest standards of ethical conduct within journalism.

Resolution No. 9: Defining "journalist"

Submitted by: SPJ Ethics Committee

Resolutions Committee recommendation: Favorable

Delegate action: Approved

WHEREAS, the passage of a federal shield law to protect U.S. journalists from undue and suppressive court actions has hinged for many years on the definition of a journalist and;

WHEREAS, the Society has since 2005 formally supported creation of a federal shield law and;

WHEREAS, the Society has long disavowed attempts to define "journalist" in a strict sense so as to promote inclusiveness within its ranks and;

WHEREAS, the Society believes that journalists should not be defined by the mediums in which they work, the percentage of their incomes derived from journalism work, their education, their employer, or any other specific criteria that would limit their abilities to inform the citizenry and;

WHEREAS, any attempts by U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., or any other federal lawmakers to create a restrictive definition of "journalist" in the context of a shield law is an affront to journalism and to First Amendment rights of a free press;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists strongly rejects any attempts to define a journalist in any way other than as someone who commits acts of journalism and admonishes Congress for stalling long overdue protection for journalists.

Action from the floor

A motion to place discussion of a name change for the Society on the agenda for the Aug. 27 Society of Professional Journalists' board of directors meeting was approved.