AGENDA
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
SEPT. 21, 2015
TIME: 9 A.M.
ROOM: ANAHEIM
MARRIOTT WORLD CENTER, ORLANDO

1. Call to Order – Fletcher

2. Roll Call – Secretary-Treasurer – unopposed candidates in parenthesis
   a. President-elect (Lynn Walsh)
   b. Secretary-Treasurer
   c. VPCCA (Sue Kopen Katcef)
   d. Neuts
   e. Tarquinio
   f. Director At Large
   g. Student Rep.
   h. Student Rep.
   i. Reilley
   j. Campus Adviser At-Large (Tallent)
   k. Baker
   l. Region 2 Director (Schotz)
   m. Region 3 Director (Koretzky)
   n. Gallagher Newberry
   o. Deborah Givens
   p. Region 6 Director (Radske)
   q. McLean
   r. Gallagher
   s. Tom Johnson
   t. Region 10 Director
   u. Hall
   v. Region 12 Director (Womac)

2. Welcome and Introduction of New Board Members – Fletcher

3. President’s goals – Fletcher

4. Committee chair appointments – Fletcher [PAGE 2]

5. Board expectations – Fletcher

6. Executive Committee Elections – Fletcher
   The Executive Committee is comprised of the President; President-Elect; Secretary-Treasurer; Vice President, Campus Chapter Affairs; Immediate Past President; and two at-large members elected by the board of directors.

7. Appointments to Sigma Delta Chi Foundation Board – Fletcher
   The SPJ President may appoint as many directors to the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation as he/she desires so long as the number of independently elected directors is one more than the SPJ appointments.

8. Ratification of Sigma Delta Chi Foundation Board elections – Fletcher
   The SPJ board ratifies the independently elected officers and directors of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation.
9. Finance Committee Appointments – Fletcher
   The Finance Committee is comprised of the President; President-Elect; Secretary-Treasurer; Vice President, Campus Chapter Affairs; Immediate Past President; and two at-large members appointed by the President and ratified by the board of directors.

10. Old/New business
   a. Rural Community Application – Puckey [PAGE 6]
   b. Work Visa policy – Skeel [PAGE 9]
   c. Explanation of Wells Key selection – Fletcher
   d. Conflict of Interest forms – Skeel
   e. ACEJMC membership – Fletcher

11. Board Orientation – James Romoser
   The orientation session focuses on each officer and director’s responsibilities and duties while serving as a member of the SPJ board of directors.

12. Adjournment
The Society of Professional Journalists
Board of Directors Meeting
Sept. 21, 2015
9 a.m. – noon ET
Orlando Marriott World Center
Room: Anaheim
STREAMED LIVE AT WWW.SPJ.ORG

Improving and Protecting Journalism Since 1909

The Society of Professional Journalists is the nation’s largest and most broad-based journalism organization, dedicated to encouraging the free practice of journalism and stimulating high standards of ethical behavior.

Founded in 1909 as Sigma Delta Chi, SPJ promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry, works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists, and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press.
DATE: Sept. 9 2015
FROM: Paul Fletcher, President
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

COMMITTEE CHAIR APPOINTMENTS FOR 2015-16

Board Colleagues,

I respectfully request your approval of the following committee chair appointments for the 2015-2016 SPJ year. Thank you for your consideration.

Awards & Honors Committee

Chair: Andy Schotz

Andy Schotz has been an SPJ member since 2002 and has held various positions on the Washington, D.C., Pro chapter board, including three consecutive one-year terms as president.

He served on the SPJ Ethics Committee from 2004 to 2011, including three years as chairman.

Schotz ran unsuccessfully for at-large director on the national SPJ board in 2012. The following year, he ran unopposed for Region 2 director.

He is a perennial SPJ contest judge (D.C. Pro Dateline Awards, SDX, Mark of Excellence, Green Eyeshade, high school essay) and has twice coordinated Region 2’s Mark of Excellence contest.

He joined the SPJ Awards & Honors Committee in 2013 and helped work on a national survey seeking feedback about the MOE contest.

He served as managing editor of The Gazette weekly papers in Maryland until their closure this year. Before that, Schotz worked for eight years as a reporter and editor at The Altamont Enterprise, a weekly paper in upstate New York, then for 13 years as a reporter for The Herald-Mail, a daily paper in Hagerstown, Md.

He is on the board of directors of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

By-Laws Committee

Chair: Bob Becker

Robert Becker has served on the Bylaws Committee since 2001 and has been the D.C. Pro Chapter's FOI chair since about 1992. Additionally, Becker serves as the D.C. Sunshine Chair, and the Mid-Atlantic Region member of the National FOI Committee. In this position, he provides advice and information on access to journalists and others in the D.C. metropolitan area. Most recently, Becker has been working with the Maryland, Delaware and D.C. Press Association to draft a new open meetings law for D.C. He’s worked with National (SPJ) to oppose a bill that would have exempted Virginia legislative committees
from the state open meetings law, and he worked with the D.C. City Council Judiciary Committee on amendments to the D.C. open records law and the D.C. open meetings law.

Becker has assisted students at a Montgomery County high school who, as part of their course work, aired controversial programs on the school board’s cable channel. Recently, he actively opposed proposed restrictions on public access to federal court case files over the Internet.

Working with the National FOI Chairman, Becker developed a program to train journalists, news managers and media outlet owners on the importance of defending public access to government information. He regularly addresses groups of foreign journalists and government officials visiting the United States on access to government information and has done training projects in Ethiopia, Morocco, Argentina and Uruguay on issues related to press freedom.

Diversity Committee

Chair: April Bethea

April Bethea is an online producer at The Charlotte Observer where she helps highlight, curate and create content for their website and other digital platforms. She joined the online team in 2013 after more than eight years as a reporter covering topics including county government, education, and breaking news.

Bethea is secretary of the Greater Charlotte SPJ chapter. She was a 2013 SPJ Diversity Leadership Fellow and a 2013 Ted Scripps Leadership Institute graduate. Orlando will be her fourth Excellence in Journalism conference.

Bethea also is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and served as president of its Charlotte chapter when it re-launched nearly a decade ago. She was a fellow this spring with the Kiplinger Program in Public Affairs Journalism.

Outside of work, Bethea volunteers with Hands on Charlotte and enjoys attending local theatre productions when she can.

Ethics Committee

Chair: Andrew Seaman

Andrew is a medical journalist for Reuters Health in New York. Before coming to Reuters Health, he was a Kaiser Media Fellow at Reuters’s Washington, D.C. bureau, where he covered the implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

In 2011, Andrew graduated from Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism, where he studied investigative journalism as a Stabile Fellow and was named “Student of the Year.” Andrew also graduated with his B.A. from Wilkes University in 2011.

He’s won numerous awards throughout his short career, including being named a 2010 Tom Bigler Scholar for ethical standards in journalism, the 2009 Robert D.G. Lewis First Amendment Award, the 2009 and the Arthur H. Barlow National Student Journalist of the Year Award.
Freedom of Information

Chair: Jonathan Anderson

Jonathan Anderson is a public issues investigative reporter for the Marshfield News-Herald in Marshfield, Wisconsin. Before joining the News-Herald in 2015, Jonathan was a reporter for a pair of newspapers in northern Wisconsin for nearly two years. He has held internships at the First Amendment Center, Wisconsin Law Journal, Wisconsin Public Radio and WISN-TV, and was also editor in chief of his college newspaper, the UWM Post.

Jonathan is an avid requester of public records, and his work in the FOI arena has also entailed advocacy and research. He has been the plaintiff in two lawsuits challenging improper government secrecy. He helped obtain a legal opinion from the Wisconsin attorney general that found University of Wisconsin System student government groups subject to the state’s open meetings law. His master’s thesis, “Resolving Public Records Disputes in Wisconsin: The Role of the Attorney General’s Office,” investigated how the Wisconsin attorney general reviews and sometimes intervenes in access disputes. And he has volunteered for the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council.

Journalism Education

Chair: Butler Cain

Butler Cain is an Assistant Professor of Mass Communication at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas. He received a Ph.D. in Media History from the University of Alabama, where he also received degrees in Journalism. He spent a decade as news director of Alabama Public Radio in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, before moving to South Korea to teach English language skills to Korean students.

Butler has been a member of SPJ since 1997. He is a founding member of the Texas Panhandle Pro SPJ chapter in Amarillo, Texas, and has served on the Journalism Education Committee and the International Journalism Committee. Butler blogs about travel and journalism at butlercain.com.

Legal Defense Fund

Chair: Hagit Limor

Hagit Limor’s experience with SPJ includes stints as National President; National President-Elect; National Secretary-Treasurer; National Membership Committee; National Finance Committee Chair; current National Legal Defense Fund Committee chair; National Chair of Executive Director Search Committee; Board Member of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation; and Greater Cincinnati Pro Chapter President, membership chairman and current chapter treasurer.

Outside of SPJ, she serves in dual roles as a professor at the University of Cincinnati’s Electronic Media Department and as WXIX-TV’s Emmy and national award-winning investigative reporter. Her abilities as a writer and reporter have garnered Hagit more than 100 national, state and local awards, including 10 Emmy awards, a National Headliner Award, three national Sigma Delta Chi Awards and as a national finalist with the Investigative Reporters and Editors Association. Hagit received bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University.
Membership Committee

Chair: Robyn Sekula

Robyn Davis Sekula is President of the Louisville Pro Chapter of SPJ. She is a Twitter addict, iPhone-a-holic, writer, speaker and social media consultant. She has spoken frequently at regional SPJ conferences and in 2012 at the national Excellence in Journalism Conference. She spent most of her pre-freelance career as a newspaper reporter, working as a crime and courts reporter in North Carolina, a business editor in Missouri and as a reporter at Business First in Louisville, Ky.

She primarily consults with organizations and business in public relations, communications plans and social media strategy. You can find her web site at robyndavissekula.com, follow her on Twitter, friend her on Facebook, add her on Instagram, and, of course, add her on Yo (user name itsRobynwithay).

Nominations

Dana Neuts

Dana Neuts is a freelance journalist, author, writer and editor as well as the publisher of iLoveKent.net, a hyperlocal blog focused on Kent, Washington.

Her work has appeared in numerous local, regional and national publications including AARP Bulletin, The Seattle Times, Northwest Travel, 425 magazine and South Sound magazine.

She is a member of the Western Washington Pro Chapter of SPJ, and she served as SPJ president from 2014-15. To learn more about Neuts, visit virtuallyyourz.com.

Resolutions

Sonny Albarado

As projects editor at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette in Little Rock, Sonny Albarado supervises reporters on investigative and explanatory journalism assignments. He holds a bachelor’s degree and an honorary doctor of letters from Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, La.

His journalism career of more than 40 years includes lengthy sojourns in Baton Rouge, La., and Memphis, Tenn. He has been a reporter, an assistant city editor, a business editor (twice), a projects editor (twice), a news editor and a city editor. He also briefly edited a trade magazine dedicated to the coin-operated amusement industry.

He has been involved in the defense of the First Amendment and the free flow of information since his days as editor of his college’s student newspaper. A member of SPJ since 1979, he is a past president of SPJ and a current member of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation.

All awards he’s received have been the result of good editors when he was a reporter and excellent reporters since he’s been an editor.
SPJ COMMUNITIES APPLICATION FORM

Date 8-24-15

Proposed Community Name Community Journalists
Organizer Name A. Cross
Organizer Address 122 Graham, UK, Lexington Ky 40506
Organizer Phone/email 859-257-3744 al.cross@uky.edu

Total petition signatures (petition attached, including name, address, email, signature)

1. Explain the purpose/mission of the community. Who does it serve? What is its goal?

2. What activities do you envision the community performing? (check all that apply)
   - Newsletter
   - Online programs (e.g., Webinars)
   - Members-only website
   - Contest/awards
   - Open blog
   - Scholarships
   - Networking opportunities
   - Proposals for conference programming
   - Regional training/workshops
   - Partnerships with other organizations
   - Social gathering at EIJ
   - Other (explain in detail)

3. Do you plan to charge member dues?
   - Yes
   - No
   If "Yes," how much per year? 

4. Do you plan to have a community bank account?
   - Yes
   - No

5. What officer positions do you wish to create? (check all that apply, explain further if needed)
   - Chair
   - Vice-chair (several)
   - Secretary-Treasurer
   - Communications (newsletter/web)
   - Other (list)

6. Do you plan to have an officer "ladder" or term limits? (Ladder: once elected to a certain position you advance automatically to higher positions – provides continuity and gives others a chance to serve)
   - Yes
   - No
   If "Yes," what are the steps of the ladder?
Dear fellow SPJ member:

Can you take just a minute to help me start an effort that could boost membership in SPJ, and help it provide help to journalists who may never have joined because they don't live in a chapter's home city?

As a former SPJ president and weekly newspaper editor, and director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky, I was very glad to see SPJ start a series of communities of interest for its members, such as freelancers, students, and so on. Now it's time to start a community devoted to community journalism and those who practice it.

Such a community would allow community journalists to share the challenges of community journalism and how they deal with them, and gain strength from each other. Through my work, I know that there are thousands of very good rural journalists, but sometimes they are the only person in their newsroom who fits that description. A community for community journalists -- rural, urban and suburban -- would give them a new support system.

To start our community, the SPJ Board of Directors needs petitions from at least 20 members asking that it be created. If we can get petitions together by the first week of September, we can submit them for action at the board meeting at the convention Sept. 18. If you want to join in our petition, all you have to do is say so in a reply email to me with a copy to Alex Veeneman, SPJ's community coordinator: alex.veeneman01@gmail.com.

Our incoming SPJ president, Paul Fletcher, has asked Alex and me to work on this, so we have support from the top, and I hope you can join our effort. If you have any questions or suggestions, please email or call me at 859-257-3744.

Thanks,

Al Cross
Director, Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues
Associate extension professor, School of Journalism and Telecommunications
Faculty senator, College of Communication and Information, University of Kentucky
122 Grehan Journalism Building
Lexington KY 40506-0042
859-257-3744
@ruralj
www.RuralJournalism.org, @ruraljournalism
Read The Rural Blog at http://irici.blogspot.com
Read about Midway, Ky., at www.MidwayMessenger.org
Read Kentucky Health News at http://kyhealthnews.blogspot.com
August 25, 2015

To the members of the Board,

Below please find the names, states and email addresses for the 50 SPJ members that have signed the petition calling for a community for rural and community journalists. All members have been verified by me according to the current member list.

Al Cross - Kentucky - al.cross@uky.edu
Andy Schotz - Maryland - lawngyland@aol.com
Robert S. Hackney - Florida - robert@sarasotanewsleader.com
Georgiana Vines - Tennessee - vinesfox@hotmail.com
Jean Ash - Tennessee - jjeanash@gmail.com
Dorothy Bowles - Tennessee - d-bowles@comcast.net
Susan Schwartz - Pennsylvania - susan.schwartz@pressenterprise.net
Laura Ritter - Delaware - laura.c.ritter@gmail.com
Ron Bridgeman - Georgia - ronmsgr@gmail.com
Amanda Boyd Womac - Tennessee - spjamanda@gmail.com
Amy Chaffins - Minnesota - achaaffins@echopress.com
Nathan Pettengill - Kansas - npettengill@sunflowerpub.com
Robert Buckman - Louisiana - jprof47@aol.com
Ashley Mott - Louisiana - amott@bastropenterprise.com
Larry Dreiling - Kansas - ldreiling@aol.com
Mike Kelly - Texas - mike.kelly@gosanangelo.com
Kelly Hawes - Indiana - kelly.hawes@indianamediagroup.com
Liz Hansen - Kentucky - spjliz@gmail.com
Steve Soliz - Texas - stevesoliznews@gmail.com
Max Heath - Kentucky - maxheath@lcni.com
Chris Otts - Kentucky - cottswdrb.com
Jan Anderson - Montana - janderson@jeffersoncountyjournal.com
Jane Kirtley - Minnesota - kirtl001@umn.edu
Cassidy Herrington - Kentucky - cassherrington@gmail.com
Benjy Hamm - Kentucky - bhamm@lcni.com
Stan McKinney - Kentucky - somckinney@campbellsville.edu
Deborah Givens - Kentucky - deborah.givens@eku.edu
Liz Fisher - Kentucky - laf1110@sbcglobal.net
Jonathan Anderson - Wisconsin - andjonc@gmail.com
Elizabeth Larson - California - elarson@lakeconews.com
Kathryn Reed - California - laketahoetweets@gmail.com
Adam Randall - California - pbs0010@gmail.com
Julie Lane – New York - jalwrite@aol.com
Alyssa Bloechl - Wisconsin - bloechla@gmail.com
Susan McCann - Colorado - sdcmc@infionline.net
Tracy Wood - California - twood@voiceofoc.org
Gary West - Oregon - glwest2@msn.com
Joanna Markell - Washington - jmarkell@kvnews.com
Samantha Swindler - Oregon - sswindler@oregonian.com
Steven Solomon - Arizona - steven.h.solomon@gmail.com
Pia Hallenberg - Washington - piah@spokesman.com
Mike Faulk - Washington - mike.faulk@gmail.com
Kari Williams - Iowa - williams.kari09@gmail.com
Monica Vendituoli – North Carolina - mvendituoli@gmail.com
Gabrielle Porter - Colorado - gabrielle.r.porter@gmail.com
Shan Cousrouf - Montana - bluecheer@live.com
Jud Burkett - Utah - judburrkett@gmail.com
Delinda Korrey - Colorado - sentinel@southplattesentinel.com
Alber Fulcher - California - albertflucher@gmail.com
Ken Hedler – Kentucky (though listed in Utah) - kenhedler@gmail.com

If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me through the details below.

Yours sincerely,

/s/

Alex Veeneman
Community Coordinator
Society of Professional Journalists
Phone: 815-782-2023
Email: alex.veeneman01@gmail.com

CC: Tara Puckey, HQ
DATE: Aug. 26 2015
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

WORK VISA OPINION LETTER POLICY

Fairly regularly, SPJ staff is contacted by immigration attorneys to provide work Visa opinion letters. As has been our practice for several years, we decline to provide these letters. However, SPJ has no official policy on the matter. I was asked to prepare a policy, eliminating the practice of using institutional knowledge to make this decision.

That policy is attached to this memo.

Here is some background:

- Work Visas are issued to non-U.S. Citizens that want to work in the United States. Often, those requests ask specifically for O-1 opinion letters.
- We are contacted by attorneys in an effort to legitimize their client’s journalistic endeavors.
- SPJ has chosen not to provide opinion letters because:
  - SPJ doesn’t have resources to vet all potential applicants.
  - SPJ leaders felt the Society shouldn’t provide opinions on applicants that aren’t fully vetted.
  - SPJ has long had a position against defining who is and who isn’t a journalist.
- On April 17, 2010 SPJ’s Board of Directors considered and supported the position of declining opinion-letter requests.
- SPJ’s legal counsel Baker Hostetler also supported this position.
- The Society does send letters to immigration attorneys confirming an individual’s membership in the Society, on the rare occasion that occurs.
WORK VISA OPINION LETTERS

It is the policy of the Society of Professional Journalists to decline requests from those seeking opinion letters in an effort to obtain a work visa. This policy is in effect because:

- SPJ doesn’t have resources to vet all potential applicants.
- SPJ shouldn’t provide an opinion on applicants it can’t fully vet.
- SPJ has long had a position against defining who is and who isn’t a journalist.

The Society may, however, issue a letter confirming an applicant’s membership status with SPJ.