AGENDA

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TIME: 9 A.M. – NOON
DATE: SUNDAY, SEPT. 18, 2016
ROOM: GRAND A, 5TH FLOOR
SHERATON NEW ORLEANS
STREAMED LIVE AT WWW.SPJ.ORG

1. Call to Order – Fletcher

2. Roll Call – Baker
   a. Neuts
   b. Fletcher
   c. Walsh
   d. Baker
   e. Kopen-Katcef
   f. McCloskey
   g. Tarquino
   h. Hiller
   i. Dattage
   j. Reilley
   k. Tallent
   l. Primerano
   m. Schotz
   n. Koretzky
   o. Gallagher Newberry
   p. Givens
   q. Radske
   r. Wilken
   s. Gallagher
   t. Johnson
   u. Chung
   v. Hall
   w. Womac


4. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Fletcher
   a. April 16, 2016 [Page 6]
   b. May 9, 2016 [Page 22]
   c. May 23, 2016 [Page 28]
   d. July 27, 2016 [Page 33]

5. Report of the SDX Foundation President – Leger [Page 34]

6. Staff report – Skeel [Page 36]


8. Action/Discussion Items
   a. Chapter action – Puckey [Page 45]

9. Old/New Business
   a. Update on 41% member representation/supporter bylaws changes – Fletcher [Page 47]
   b. Update on the membership strategic plan – Fletcher/Puckey [Page 51]
   c. Update on website/database project – Puckey [Page 57]
   d. Update from the governance task force – Gallagher Newberry

10. Public comment period

Page 1 of 2
a. *Public can make comments prior to the meeting at www.spj.org*

11. Recognition of retiring board members – *Fletcher*

12. Committee Reports
   a. Awards and Honors – *Schotz [Page 63]*
   b. Community report – *Veeneman [Page 64]*
   c. Ethics – *Seaman [Page 67]*
   d. Freedom of Information – *Anderson [Page 68]*
   e. Generation J – *Amezcua [Page 69]*
   f. International Community – *Kubiske [Page 70]*
   g. Journalism Education – *Cain [Page 72]*
   h. LDF – *Limor [Page 73]*

13. Executive Director Evaluation (Executive Session)

14. Adjournment
The Society of Professional Journalists

Board of Directors Meeting

Sept. 18, 2016
9 a.m. – Noon CT

New Orleans Sheraton

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.
PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Colleagues, this report will include a recap of SPJ activities since April as well as an overview of my year as president.

INITIATIVES

MEMBERSHIP
In my induction speech last September in Orlando, I noted that SPJ leadership hadn’t looked at membership in about 10 years. Virtually every professional association has had issues and declines in membership, especially since the 2008 recession. SPJ was not alone or immune.

We took a different approach to our January executive committee meeting in Arizona and our board meeting in New Orleans in April: In each session, we worked on membership strategy, brainstorming to determine ways to enhance membership, both for existing and potential members.

From that work, two tracks emerged. The first, to be rolled out this fall, is designed to enlist people interested in fighting for journalism and freedom of information and to help those already doing so. Please see the report from Tara Puckey, SPJ membership strategist, included in these materials.

In tandem with this effort, SPJ President-Elect Lynn Walsh led a task force looking for a way to pull in all people who were interested in backing quality journalism and the causes we fight for. Her group developed the “supporters” of SPJ idea.

There is a proposed bylaws change at EIJ16 to make this a reality. It’s an excellent idea, and a way to expand SPJ’s reach and influence.

The second membership track will be coming next year – it’s an emphasis on how SPJ helps a journalist at every step of his or her professional career.

Tara and Robin Davis Sekula, chair of the Membership Committee, also partnered this year on some well-executed and successful membership marketing campaigns. This included some basic membership segmentation to seek to make the marketing more targeted.

SPJ GOVERNANCE – REPRESENTATION.
This is a drum I have been beating for several years.

SPJ governs itself as a representative democracy, with all decisions coming from the annual convention. But the only delegates at convention are those that represent SPJ chapters. We did a data-dive in late 2014 to learn that 41 percent – nearly half – of our membership is not affiliated with a chapter. In other words, they have no voice at convention.
Dana Neuts appointed me to chair a task force to study this problem, and to seek possible solutions. When I became president, I asked Alex Tarquinio to continue and finish the work.

She and the other task force members did a great job in coming up with a proposed set of amendments to the SPJ bylaws, which you’ll also see at EIJ16. The proposal would establish a system of regional at-large delegates, allowing those who are not in chapters to have representation.

SPJ GOVERNANCE – BOARD STRUCTURE
Earlier this summer, we considered a proposal to redraw the lines of the various regions and reduce the size of the board.

While that effort wasn’t successful, it prompted us to think about a more global look at the board’s structure and composition.

Working with Lynn, I appointed Region 4 Director Patti Gallagher Newberry to chair a task force on board governance. Lynn, Patti and I selected a small group of people for the task force; they may select a larger focus group to serve as a sounding board for ideas as they get to work. We will be discussing the work of Patti’s task force at the first September board meeting.

ADVOCACY – PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS
The problems with public information officers, including the stranglehold they place on information sought by journalists, remains and is not going away anytime soon.

After two strong letters from SPJ in 2014 and 2015, joined respectively by 38 then 53 other journalism groups, we got a meeting with the White House to discuss PIO practices. In December, representing the 53, I led a group that spoke with President Obama’s press secretary, Josh Earnest. Representatives from the Society of Environmental Journalists and the American Society of News Editors joined us.

Our topic: The trend by public information officers at federal agencies to prevent journalists from doing their jobs and getting information to the American people. The problem has gotten worse, not better, under the “most transparent administration in history,” which is what the president called for the day after his inauguration in 2009.

PIOs have become a stifling pinchpoint for information, or in the case where interviews actually are allowed, minders who seek to make sure that the company line is preserved.

Earnest was cordial and the conversation was candid. But even after the meeting, we were not encouraged. All during this year, the Obama administration has been playing out the clock. And neither of the major-party presidential candidates is a fan of the press. I fear the problem will only get worse, no matter who is elected in November.

ADVOCACY – FIX FOIA by 50.
This initiative was nearly a year in the making, reaching success at the end of June.

SPJ is a member of the Sunshine in Government Initiative, a combination of nine journalist and open-government groups. SGI worked tirelessly on behalf of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, a measure that passed both houses of Congress unanimously. “Fix FOIA by 50” was the mantra, seeking passage of the bill before the 50th anniversary of the act’s initial passage.
The bill brings FOIA into the 21st century; among other reforms, it allows for electronic requests and requires electronic documents to be created. There will be a single online portal to submit FOIA requests to agencies. It establishes, by statute, a presumption of openness in our government.

President Obama signed the bill on June 30, just a few days before July 4, the day President Lyndon Johnson signed the first FOIA in 1966. We fixed FOIA by 50, and we gave America a little something extra to celebrate on Independence Day this year.

ETHICS
Under the guidance of Ethics Committee chair Andrew Seaman, SPJ has stayed on top of most, if not all, the major stories affecting journalism ethics.

From Sean Penn’s interview with El Chapo (and his allowing prior review of the piece for Rolling Stone) to the rush by reporters into the home of the San Bernardino shooters to the purchase of the Las Vegas Journal Review by the Adelson family (which gave a work-out to the new tenet in the 2014 ethics code, “Be Accountable and Transparent”), Andrew was ready with timely blog posts that gained SPJ a lot of traction on social media.

And the roll-out of the new ethics code continued. Andrew put together a PowerPoint “Choose Your Own Adventure” presentation that we were able to use at a number of regional meetings in the spring. It was well-received each time.

TRAVEL
During the course of the past year, I have been able to travel across the country, meeting SPJ members and discussing our activities and initiatives:

OCTOBER
Fort Worth, Texas -- dinner with SPJ Fort Worth chapter.

NOVEMBER
New York City – Deadline Club Hall of Fame luncheon.

DECEMBER
White House – meet with Josh Earnest, discuss PIO problems on behalf of 53 journo groups.

JANUARY
Arizona – Executive Committee meeting, cocktails with Valley of the Sun chapter.

APRIL
Cincinnati – Attend Region 4/Region 5 combined meeting, with ethics and FOIA presentations.
Richmond, Virginia – Attend Region 2 meeting, with ethics presentation.
New Orleans – Spring Board meeting, cocktails with attendees of Region 12 meeting.

MAY
Norfolk, Virginia – “Meet the President” cocktail party hosted by SPJ Virginia.
JUNE
Seattle – Attend Region 10 meeting, with ethics presentation.
Washington, DC – Executive Committee meeting, SDX banquet.

SEPTEMBER
New Orleans again – EIJ16.

ONE FINAL NOTE
It has been a singular honor to have the opportunity to serve as president of SPJ this past year, and I thank each of you on the board for your dedication and passion.

I thank the excellent professional staff we have in Indianapolis, especially Joe Skeel, Jennifer Royer and Tara Puckey.

And I thank the people with whom I have served during my three years on the ladder – Dave Cuillier, Dana Neuts, Lynn Walsh and Rebecca Baker.

We practice journalism during a time of great change. I am confident that SPJ can and will adapt to those changes.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 8:50 a.m. CT on Saturday, April 16 at the Sheraton New Orleans.

In addition to Fletcher, the following were present: President-Elect Lynn Walsh; Secretary Treasurer Rebecca Baker; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; At Large Directors Bill McCloskey and Alex Tarquinio; Campus Representatives Kate Hiller and Monica Dattage; Campus Adviser At Large Becky Tallent; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Newberry Gallagher, Deborah Givens, Joe Radske, Eddye Gallagher, Tom Johnson, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel and Membership Strategist Tara Puckey. Also present was Membership Committee Chairwoman Robyn Davis Sekula.

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGIC PLANNING
Fletcher reminded the board of his goal to address membership, which he first mentioned during his inauguration speech during EIJ15 in Orlando. That led to a January strategic planning meeting in Scottsdale, Az., when the SPJ Executive Committee met.

Eighteen people attended the January meeting, which included the executive committee, five staff members, the diversity and membership committee chairs, the SDX president and three other members representing different segments of SPJ membership.

Fletcher shared that this is the first time since 2006 that leadership is taking a deep look into membership. And, for the first time, the national board is taking ownership of membership. He categorized it as a “sea change,” because previously recruitment and retention was viewed as the responsibility of chapters.

Fletcher told the board that in Scottsdale, the group talked a lot about what SPJ does, and what it believes in. How can we use those things to attract people?

The group settled on two courses of action: Being the career resource for journalists throughout their “life cycle” and helping journalists and those who support our work to fight their own fight in areas of transparency, ethics, diversity, etc.

The board is now being asked to consider those courses of action, he said. If it supports the ideas, it will spend the morning in brainstorming sessions so that it may fine tune the action plans.
Lastly, he reiterated that whatever the board decided, and whatever work is done today, this is only a start. We can’t solve all of SPJ’s membership problems today, he said.

He then asked Davis Sekula to update the board on the strategic planning progress since January. Davis Sekula first shared with the board how she and the membership committee work. It develops its own yearly plan, then runs that by the president and staff. Primarily, the plan consists of tactics and objectives for the coming year.

In Scottsdale, she said, we wanted to approach membership from a much higher level. The organization primarily focuses on the day-to-day, she said.

“Instead of handling all of the tasks, we are stepping back and asking ‘what do we want to do? Who do we want to be?’”

She reiterated that there is not a single initiative that will fix the membership drain. But the first step is to ask “Is SPJ what we want it to be? Are we really serving our members? Are we improving journalism? Are we meeting our mission?

“That’s what we were going after in Scottsdale.”

Davis Sekula shared that the Scottsdale meeting started with a frank discussion and ended with two plans that answered the questions above.

Following that meeting, the work continued.

Davis Sekula, with the help of the membership committee and SPJ Past Presidents John Ensslin and Sonny Albarado, reached out members and conducted focus groups.

The goal was to get as much information as possible to help flesh out the plans.

She closed by stating that she was not in New Orleans to defend the plans developed in Scottsdale. It’s up to the board to decide how it wishes to proceed. But she wanted to make sure leadership understood the process and how we arrived at the plans presented to the board.

Fletcher then asked SPJ Membership Strategist Puckey to share details of the plans.

Puckey shared that the two plans incorporate many things SPJ is already doing. But the Society must focus those efforts, while adding some new elements, to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

She also shared that regardless if the board supports the plans, we have several improvements on the way in the areas of member communication. One example she gave was the development of an onboarding process for new members.

Puckey first addressed the “Fighters” plan.
She shared the concept of the SPJ supporter category, where SPJ would target those who support journalism and the work we do. This could include non-journalists or journalists that aren’t interested in full membership.

By a show of hands, the board supported this concept – with details to be discussed later in the meeting.

Puckey then shared the concept of a SDX Foundation initiative, tentatively called “Dr. J.” This would be a staff position that could serve as a one-stop-shop for individuals needing help in understanding their rights, working through ethical situations, etc. Although this person couldn’t possibly answer all of the questions, it would serve as a “traffic cop” and direct people to the answers.

By a show of hands, the board supported this concept – with details to be discussed during the SDX Foundation meeting the following day.

Puckey said if all goes according to plan, the “Fighter plan” could be unveiled during EIJ16 – as many of the pieces are already in existence.

She shared that the “Lifers plan” would likely be unveiled at EIJ17.

Upon proper motion by Gallagher and second by Baker, the board voted to move forward with the Fighter and Lifer plans.

Baker moved to go into executive session in order to discuss strategies for the two plans. Kopen Katcef seconded.

Discussion ensued about the need to go into executive session. Baker shared that leadership may be discussing proprietary measures, and confidentiality is important.

Fletcher shared that although SPJ strives to operate in the most transparent manner – just as we expect governments to do – SPJ is not a government entity. And this is one of the few times he supports going into executive session. He also said it is impractical to live stream group work.

After much discussion, the motion to go into executive session was withdrawn.

Puckey then explained how the group work would work, tackling the Fighters plan first.

The board worked in groups for about three hours, coming back together to discuss progress over lunch.

At this time, questions about the Dr. J position arose. SDX Foundation president Robert Leger and Vice President Irwin Gratz answered questions from the SPJ board.

Kopen Katcef moved that SPJ support the concept of the Dr. J position. Baker seconded.
Koretzky asked to amend the motion, stating that the position should be for one year, giving the Foundation time to evaluate it. Kopen Katcef denied the request for the friendly amendment.

McCloskey moved to table the motion. Koretzky seconded. The motion to table failed by an 11-6 vote.

**Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Baker, the board voted to approve the concept of the Dr. J position. Koretzky and McCloskey voted no.**

Discussion continued about ideas to attract and retain members through lunch.

**SELECTION OF FELLOWS**

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the board voted to enter executive session at 2:10 p.m. for the purpose of selecting Fellows of the Society.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Schotz, the board voted to exit executive session at 2:21 p.m.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

President Fletcher made a few remarks about his report, noting information about the continued roll-out of the updated Code of Ethics, updated information about FOIA reform and #FixFOIABy50, SPJ’s visit to the White House and Lynn Walsh’s presentation at SXSW. He also noted that Sonny Albarado, the Resolutions Chair, will start requesting resolutions from chapters much earlier this year to address concerns from the previous year.

At the request of McCloskey, Puckey explained that the board chipped in and purchased Hilde Lysiak a four year student membership. Fletcher and Walsh recorded a welcome video that will be shared and Davis Sekula is writing a blog post to welcome her.

**MINUTES**

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Baker, the board voted to approve meeting minutes from Sept. 18, 2015; Sept. 21, 2015; Oct. 27, 2015; Nov. 16, 2015; Dec. 22, 2015; Feb. 15, 2016. Primerano abstained from voting on Sept. 18, 21 and Oct. 27 as she was not a board member at the time. Hiller and Dattage abstained from voting on the Sept. 18 minutes for the same reason.

**FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET**

Baker gave an update on the budget for FY17, noting that it is one of the most aggressive budgets that we’ve seen in recent years. Skeel provided an overview of the budget to the board and explained that revenue from association management and membership are two key points within the budget. Expenses were reduced in staff raises and training, among other things.

Koretzky asked questions about projected revenue for association management and if additional staffing would be required to attain the expected amount. Skeel explained that Lisa Susemichel was hired to help with many of the association management tasks and spoke about the length of contracts.
Johnson inquired about association management competition and what other choices associations have when it comes to management. Skeel talked briefly about the different types of management choices: associations with their own staff, traditional association management firms that aren’t industry specific and what the Society offers, which is a mix of both. He noted that it is sometimes a challenge to not be able to offer the organizations an executive director role or manage their fundraising.

Newberry Gallagher asked about membership revenue specifically and if there was a specific number of members tied to the revenue predictions. Skeel explained that it is aggressive in that we haven’t budgeted a 3 percent decline as we have in prior years.

**Baker called the question.**

**Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Tallent, the board voted to approve the FY17 budget.**

**CHAPTER ACTION**
Puckey informed the board of three campus chapters seeking approval of their charters: Samford University, University of Chicago and Samford University.

**Upon proper motion by Gallagher and second by Walsh, the board voted to approve Samford University, University of Chicago and Utah Valley University for chapter charters.**

Tarquinio asked about procedures and policies about forming satellite chapters. Puckey explained that while there are procedures to do so, she generally encourages chapters to form independently so they are eligible for delegates and can govern themselves.

**SUPPORTER MEMBERSHIP**
Walsh took a few minutes to explain the work of the Supporter Membership task force and summarized each component of the membership. She noted cost, benefits and differences between this type of membership and current members. Walsh explained the two options the task force explored: redefine current Associates with this new membership category or create a new tier of membership.

Baker pointed out that our current Associate category isn’t clear as to what it is and suggested that the membership be called SPJ Supporters. She also suggested moving current Associates into the SPJ Supporters category, essentially replacing the current category. Tarquinio expressed concern that the new Associate category may disenfranchise some members and also cannibalizing our other membership categories.

McCloskey pointed out that the Associate category is not described as a membership level within the bylaws. He believes that this type of membership is essentially a donor category and asked how this membership category impacted the Household Membership. Womac indicated that she
supports the idea, but inquired if this would be a tiered donation amount. Skeel addressed some of the staff tasks that would be associated with this type of membership.

Walsh made a motion that the idea of a supporter membership be a $20 membership that would redefine the current Associate “pocket,” and striking the removal of Household Memberships, essentially option one. The motion was seconded by Kopen Katcef.

Baker offered a friendly amendment to change the price to $25 because it may fall in line with our other prices. Kopen Katcef said that she prefers to keep it at $20 and Koretzky agreed. Baker withdrew the amendment.

Robert Leger said that the bylaws note an Associate is someone who isn’t eligible for membership within the Society. A general consensus indicated that the bylaws committee would need to clean up information about the membership categories. Irwin Gratz indicated that it might require the bylaws committee to bring forth changes that would allow this change to take place.

Discussion continued about cost, the type of membership that this group would represent and overall goals of the membership.

Baker called the question.

Upon proper motion by Walsh and second by Kopen Katcef, the board approved Option 1 listed in the Supporter Membership memorandum (Appendix A). Schotz and Tarquinio opposed; McCloskey abstained.

OPT-OUT MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT PRACTICES
Puckey explained that members used to be automatically affiliated with a chapter based on zip code and how the process has changed since then. She asked the board for guidance about if chapters should be allowed to send e-mails to SPJ members in their area, requiring them to opt-out of chapter membership.

Baker supports the idea for chapters that are the only chapter in their state and do not charge dues. Koretzky gave background on the actions of Florida Pro, which conducted an opt-out campaign, and shared information about their goals of engagement and retention. Hall asked for a few points of information: how many members were gained, if there is information about who opened email. Schotz expressed his concern for any opt-out communication.

Schotz made a motion that SPJ national and local shall not do any opt-out marketing. It was seconded by Baker.

Walsh noted that she is uncomfortable with such a hard line as technology changes. Hiller said that she accidentally opens emails all the time, so she isn’t sure that people are actually reading the emails. Baker withdrew her second and there were no other seconds.
Schotz’s motion – SPJ national and local shall not do any opt-out marketing – fails for lack of a second.

Ultimately, the board agreed to give the following guidance to staff: Chapters cannot utilize the opt-out method to add members to their ranks, but they are able to contact unaffiliated members in their area and encourage them to join. Requests should be forwarded or directed to headquarters.

MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATION
Fletcher provided an executive summary about the work of the Unaffiliated Members Task Force. He noted that roughly 41 percent of members don’t have representation at the convention because they are not affiliated with a chapter. The Executive Committee recommends that the full board adopt the overall regional delegate process, but recommended that the Bylaws Committee proposed language be used.

On another matter, Fletcher spoke about a proposal that delegates can put forward a binding resolution to the membership. Since this is currently allowed, but not publicized, the Executive Committee decided to not offer a recommendation to the full board either way.

Schotz made a motion to recommend the adoption of an at-large delegate system to the convention delegates. Baker voiced a second.

Hall pointed out his support of the proposal. Walsh made it clear that she was not in agreement with the committee for several reasons: She would like everyone to have a voice, she is worried that this will create more work on staff and she believes that one member, one vote is the best option. Schotz voiced agreement with Walsh, but expressed his concern with technology for conducting real-time debate during the convention business meeting and the ability to implement one member, one vote.

Upon proper motion by Schotz and second by Baker, the board voted to recommend that the delegates approve the at-large delegate system with language suggested by the Bylaws Committee indicating that the board determines procedures. (Appendix B) Walsh, Johnson and Koretzky voted no.

Regarding binding resolutions, McCloskey suggested that we ensure it is well publicized that delegates can send things to the full membership for a binding vote, noting that it should be in the delegate handbook and announced at the closing business meeting. Schotz expressed his concern that this might fall through the cracks and encouraged the group to add this to the bylaws.

Primerano called the question.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Tarquinio, the board voted that staff be directed to add language to the Parliamentarian Script, Resolution Script and the Delegate Handbook, making it clear that any resolution can be referred to the full membership for an electronic referendum. Schotz voted no.
ACEJMC APPOINTMENTS
Fletcher briefly discussed the ACEJMC appointment policy following the recommendation of the Executive Committee to adopt. In essence, the appointment policy is similar to that of the appointment of a new Regional Director.

Baker called the question.

Upon proper motion by Tallent and second by Hiller, the board voted to approve the AEJMC appointment policy (APPENDIX C).

OLD/NEW BUSINESS
Fletcher briefly spoke about Neuts’ nominations report, followed by a summary of SDX Foundation business provided by Leger. The board discussed the SDX Foundation Dr. J initiative and the recent Stephen Glass donation to the SDX Foundation.

Fletcher informed the board of the latest Legal Defense Fund case. The Lens, a nonprofit based in New Orleans, was seeking a digital database of all public purchases and is now in a legal battle with the city over their request. The LDF Committee recently approved $5,000 for The Lens, but the committee would like to ask the board for an additional $5,000.

Baker made a motion that the board approve an additional $5,000 LDF funds to The Lens and a second was made by Kopen Katcef. Koretzky made a friendly amendment that the board approve an additional $5,000, making funds total $10,000. Both Baker and Kopen Katcef accepted.

Upon proper motion by Baker and second by Kopen Katcef, the board voted to approve an additional $5,000 in LDF funds to The Lens.

ADJOURNMENT
Upon proper motion by Hiller and second by Gallagher the meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m. Saturday, April 16, 2016.
APPENDIX A

DATE: March 30, 2016
FROM: Lynn Walsh
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

SUPPORTER MEMBERSHIP

Idea:
There are people out there, non-journalists, fighting or paying attention to issues, we at SPJ, care about and pride ourselves on fighting for. SPJ, as is highlighted in our strategic plan, should be reaching out to these people and engaging with them, to raise awareness, connect with them and be a support and resource for them. These issues primarily include: access to public information, freedom of the press, journalism ethics and protecting the First Amendment.

Benefits:
- Allow SPJ to fight and bring awareness to these issues for journalists and the public.
- Help SPJ advocate for these issues with larger support, more members.
- May help restore media credibility for all journalists.
- Bring SPJ’s name into the spotlight and into the public eye as a fighter for public information, available to all, not just journalists, and freedom of the press and First Amendment issues.

How it would work:
People would pay $20 to become “Associate Members” (Or another name decided on by the board) to support the mission of SPJ. These would be people who are committing a monetary donation to SPJ ($20) to say “we support efforts to protect the First Amendment, freedom of press and the public’s access to information.”

What they would get:
- Separate newsletter in their inbox, highlighting SPJ’s work and what is going on in the field of public access to information, First Amendment, journalism ethics, etc.
- SPJ Member rate for EIJ conference
- Able to join SPJ communities
- MEMBER GIFT (MARKETING TOOL)
- Educational Training/Events organized by staff or volunteers: Public Records Day, etc.

What they would NOT get:
- Access to the SPJ membership list.
- Access to what is behind the SPJ member paywall.
- Not a voting member.
• Discount on award submissions
• Cannot run for national or local offices.
• Digital Quill/Quill

Launching:
A strategy would need to be developed and maintained to launch/maintain:
• We think this membership level should be advertised and marketed separately than how we market to working journalists. This means it may need its own web page that has duplicate material on it or just is displayed differently.
• We may consider a campaign or slogan to help launch this: something along the lines of “If the press didn’t tell you who would?” We may run ads again on TV through the ad council.
• To help recruit them do we have splash pages “pop up” on the SPJ page (ethics, FOIA, etc.) telling people about this membership, asking them to join/donate?
• May initially reach out to former and current associate members?
• HQ staff responsible for newsletter, possibly the FOIA/legal intern in the summer?

Why would someone join?
They want to continue to see journalism that creates change in communities, starts difficult conversations, uncovers information and informs the public. They get to say, “I support that,” and hopefully one day, “I was part of a fight for open records” at the state and federal level.

Name:
• Option 1: Change the current membership format, where these new members would be considered Associate Members and we eliminate the Household Membership level. Here is what the membership levels would look like:
  o Professional: You spend more than half your time working as a journalist or j-educator.
  o Retired: You're retired and 62 or older.
  o Lifetime: Enjoy a lifetime membership in SPJ. Local chapter dues not included
  o Student: High school, undergraduate and graduate students.
  o Post-Graduate: Those who have graduated from college or graduate school within the past three years.
  o Associate: You support efforts to protect the First Amendment, freedom of press and the public’s access to information.
• Option 2: Create a new tier of membership and name it something like:
  o Friends of SPJ, Friends of Journalism, Friends of the Press, Journalism Supporters, SPJ Supporters

Task Force Members:
Questions for Supporters Task Force to answer:

- Why $20? Is there any particular reason that amount was chosen? Does that effectively cover costs?
  - According to information from Joe: Hard cost per member is $21.59, without Quill drops to $8.89, with digital Quill it is $14.27.
- What will we be expected to give them?
  - Separate newsletter in their inbox, highlighting SPJ’s work and what is going on in the field of public access to information, First Amendment, journalism ethics, etc.
  - SPJ Member rate for EIJ conference
  - Able to join SPJ communities
  - MEMBER GIFT (MARKETING TOOL)
  - Educational Training/Events: Public Records Day, FOIA tour, etc.
- What will professional journalist members get that these folks will not?
  - Everything behind the SPJ paywall on the website (eCampus, Webinars, Members Directory Lists, Freelance Directory, Award candidates feedback, Freelance Community board, Freelancer Guide, Convention Recap Audio)
  - Access to the SPJ membership list.
  - Voting member.
  - Discount on award submissions
  - Ability to run for national/local offices.
- How will chapters handle these members? Or will they?
  - They will not directly but are free to indirectly.
- Why will someone who is not a journalist want to do this? (Need a good statement that compels people to join)
  - These issues primarily include: access to public information, freedom of the press, journalism ethics and protecting the First Amendment
- How will we market this new membership type?
- What costs are associated with this?
- New brochures, etc. Anything else?
- How will we handle this on the web site?
Who are good targets for this type of membership? General public, local activists, attorneys.

What should we call these new types of members?

Why not call them Associate members? Supporters?

Do we have any goal for how many of these types of members we’d like to have?

No, but definitely should re-evaluate if it is working after several years.

In Scottsdale there was mention of SPJ website metrics showing that people frequented a very targeted bunch on pages (sometimes in a certain order) on the website. I’d suggest we dig into those metrics some more and see if that traffic is stable over time or based on reactions to news events, etc? Can more be learned about this behavior? How many people do this? If these people are our potential “supporters” I’d like to know the numbers a little more. And, assuming we move forward with the “supporter” membership - we should make certain that these well-trafficked pages have a clear call to action to become a “supporter” of SPJ.

Data from HQ: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B9ymCBKwfz6ldUhFbEQtcEza1J3d3BwUjM1c0lJbmZ1Rm5n/view?usp=sharing

One process gap we might want to target with the “supporter” membership is the ease of signing up. I’d love to see SPJ be able to utilize Amazon Payments or PayPal to quickly, easily, (and maybe with one-click) allow people to donate or give to the cause. I think the harder a process we make this, the more we leave on the table.

Lynn’s note: I would love to see this too and think it would be an important function possibility for us to easily maintain and keep these types of members. HQ says this is already possible.

General Notes from Scottsdale Membership meeting:

Cost: Finding ways to optimize cost structure. We don’t know what the “supporter” membership might cost at this point - but one thing I would suggest is to not provide new content solely for this tier. I would think for this price point - they just would get Digital Quill, discount on EIJ, and little else. I would not make a separate newsletter for them as this would be developing new workload.

Somewhat related to metrics - do we have an idea of how big this “supporter” universe realistically might be? If so, can we set some goals to help provide metrics on success and impact? Knowing if we’re expecting 100 supporters or 1000 supporters helps tailor how much energy and effort SPJ will expend.

Assuming our “supporter” tier are generally non-journalists - it might be easier to rally them around an event or product rather than an ongoing concept like the “First Amendment” or “press freedom.” I might brainstorm some way that we can tie this “supporter” tier to events that seem to resonate with the non-journalist crowd.
• I’m a big advocate for giving “supporters” something tangible for their contribution - like a t-shirt or laptop sticker. Done properly, these become their own social advertising campaign for the project through shared photographs.
• In general, I think the nice part about this “supporter” idea is that it’s a focus on a real, achievable issue and potential solution. Success in this area requires some more clarity on what we want to change and how we can demonstrate we’ve achieved that. As consumer behavior continues to move away from annual dues and memberships, we need to help SPJ evolve its approach - through rapid iteration and experimentation!
APPENDIX B

DATE: April 12, 2016
FROM: Paul Fletcher, President
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

41-Percent Representation

Board Colleagues:

The Executive Committee held a Zoom conference on Monday, April, 11, to review the proposals from the Membership Representation Task Force, chaired by Alex Tarquinio, and the recommendations of the By-Laws Committee, chaired by Bob Becker.

Both groups have put in a great deal of work to hammer out a proposal designed to solve the 41 Percent Problem – the fact that 41 percent of our members do not belong to a chapter and therefore have no say in the governance of SPJ at our annual convention.

I appreciate and thank them for their work in vetting the issues and in working out differences.

There are two proposed by-laws amendments on the table.

AT-LARGE DELEGATES. The good news is that there now is general consensus on a proposed solution – adoption of a system creating at-large delegates in each region who would represent those in the region who are not chapter members.

The task force and the committee were in disagreement on the level of detail of the procedures to be included in the by-laws amendment.

The positions and arguments are detailed in the attached memos.

The Executive Committee recommends to the board that the board recommend to the convention that SPJ adopt the change creating the regional at-large delegate system, with the simple statement that the board will establish a procedure for their selection (essentially the recommendation of the by-laws committee).

Should the convention pass this amendment, the Executive Committee recommends to the board that in establishing a procedure, it should adopt the proposal from the task force on selection of the at-large delegates (taken from their proposed amendment language).

REFERENDUMS. A second proposal from the task force would amend the by-laws to provide an explicit statement that the SPJ convention can send any resolution to a membership-wide binding referendum.
The by-laws committee opposed this idea, stating that the procedure already exists and that adding it to the by-laws was unnecessary.

The executive committee expressed support for the idea of making sure delegates be made aware of this option, either in delegate training or in a statement from the resolutions chair at the outset of convention.

With the referendum option apparently already in place and these options available, the executive committee did not take a position on this by-laws change, referring it on to the board for consideration.
Note: The SPJ Executive Committee voted in January to recommend that the Board of Directors adopt the following policy for selecting future representatives of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

Colleagues,

This memo will provide additional information about the SPJ seat on the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

Steve Geimann held this seat for 19 years but with his transfer to London, he relinquished his position.

The Orlando convention passed a resolution requiring SPJ’s continued active involvement in ACEJMC and our continued support of a rep, including payment of the annual membership fee and the rep’s travel expenses to council meetings.

Sonny Albarado was appointed in late 2015. This was done by appointment by SPJ President Paul Fletcher and approved by the board.

I would like to amend the established formal system for selecting the SPJ ACEJMC rep. and I propose the following:

1. The SPJ position on the ACEJMC is a position that interested SPJ members apply to be considered for. The applicants are considered by the full board and subject to board ratification.
2. The SPJ rep will serve for a term of three years.
3. The SPJ rep should be a working journalist.
4. The SPJ rep will submit reports to the board, detailing his/her activity, for the spring and fall board meeting packets.
5. SPJ will pay the annual membership fee and the rep’s travel expenses to council meetings.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:02 p.m. ET on Monday, May 9, 2016, via Zoom teleconference.

In addition to Fletcher the following were present: President-Elect Lynn Walsh; Immediate Past President Dana Neuts; Secretary-Treasurer Rebecca Baker; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katee; Directors At-Large Bill McCloskey and Alex Tarquinio; Campus Adviser At-Large Becky Tallent; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Deborah Givens, Joe Radske, Stephanie Wilkin, Eddye Gallagher, Tom Johnson, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel and Membership Strategist Tara Puckey.

The primary purpose of the call was to discuss contracting the board, a proposal submitted by Koretzky (APPENDIX A).

Walsh recommended that the board talk about the proposal, but not take a vote at this time. In an effort to get member feedback, she said that she or Fletcher should write a blog post about the proposal. They could collect feedback for a couple weeks.

Tarquinio supported Lynn’s plan.

Walsh asked if anyone was opposed to her recommendation. None voiced opposition.

Fletcher asked Koretzky to share his proposal.

Koretzky said the urgency is to make this move now because there are no current candidates for three Regional Directors spots that would be eliminated.

Koretzky said in order to keep an odd number, the board could also ask the delegates to contract from two campus advisers at-large to just one. Koretzky shared that there are several people on the board that hold professional positions at universities, and having two positions for that role is no longer necessary.

He also shared that some think the board needs a bigger overhaul. His proposal, however, is a starting point.
Neuts clarified that the reason there are no candidates for those RD spots is because she hasn’t actively recruited for them. She is putting that on hold until the board decides on reconstructing the board.

Givens shared that some chapters in her region felt it was being rushed. Some of the pro chapter members didn’t support the map as proposed.

McCloskey is wondering if the data that Johnson shared with board members before the meeting shows that the regions as proposed would be roughly equal in membership.

Johnson shared that there is territory mapping software that can be used to help make them more equal.

Fletcher said he isn’t sure making regions equal is possible, given that they aren’t equal now. He also said he wasn’t sure making them equal was necessary.

Johnson agreed, saying equal takes many forms. East of the Mississippi, drive time is the key factor, he said. Out west, it’s flight time.

Gallagher Newberry asked whether the board should consider cutting both campus at-large positions, and if there should be any specific effort to reduce the number of academics on the board. Should the board discuss the possibility of adding affiliate spots (RTDNA, NAHJ, etc.)? Should the board consider representation for our growing communities?

Koretzky likes all of the questions. He recommends making the changes the board can make now, then getting a group together to consider bigger changes. Having been on high-level task forces, he says it’s discouraging when it feels like nothing is happening.

“If we try to consider all of the questions now, we may not accomplish anything,” he said.

Primerano agreed that switching the regional borders probably won’t have much impact on the rank-and-file members. But in looking at SDX Foundation President Robert Leger’s e-mail comments prior to the meeting, she wondered if basing a board on geography makes sense any longer.

Schotz is glad we are putting this out to members. He thought that if the board was planning to take a vote, that’s this info should have been shared before this meeting.

He asked if the board is sure of the changes it wants to make? Does it want to come up with other ideas? He said Koretzky makes a good point about “perfect being the enemy of good.” But he hopes national leadership can commit to continuing the conversation about board make-up.

Fletcher said he could put together a group to discuss larger changes of board make-up, which would need to be carried on by Walsh during her upcoming term as president. Fletcher said he would talk with Walsh about creating a task force.
Koretzky suggested the task force talk to the executive director, as he has some ideas about the way other groups govern.

Hall said he brought this topic up during the Region 11 conference – where nearly every pro chapter was represented. No one raised objections or considered it a great idea. The sense was the board would do what’s best for membership.

Hall mentioned that RDs currently have the majority voting block. Are they willing to give that up? Not sure having the majority has ever come into play, but it’s something that must be considered.

Baker supported the proposal, but shared two comments: In the past, she said, we have taken an issue, studied it and then nothing happened. I’d like for this group to have a set of deadlines. I also truly believe the vast majority of membership will trust the board to make the best decision.

She agrees with Koretzky in taking a smaller approach in the beginning. Incremental change is more doable, she said.

Koretzky suggests that the blog post ask members to consider the proposal as written. The more narrow and concrete it is, the more likely it is we will get valuable feedback, he said. If we start putting all of the options out now, I don’t think we will get use information in time for EIJ16, he said.

McCloskey asked if there was a nominee for at-large director. Puckey confirmed there were two. *(Note: those nominations are for at-large director, not campus adviser at-large).*

Neuts asked for guidance in proceeding with seeking nominations. Gallagher Newberry asked if waiting a couple weeks would delay the process that much. Neuts said most nominations come in June. But, she can’t wait much longer than that. Puckey clarified that the Quill deadline for submission of bios is June 24.

Fletcher wrapped up by stating that he and Walsh would work together on a blog post regarding the proposal. The board would meet in two weeks, after membership had a chance to provide feedback.

Kopen Katcef asked for a summary on the composition of other boards before the next meeting. Fletcher asked Skeel to provide that.

Regarding the proposal, Gallagher Newberry asked “What does this do to improve journalism? What does this do to protect journalism?” She hopes that the board will keep that in mind as it moves forward.

“Keep the eyes on the prize,” she said. “The importance is the bigger issue, not the headcounts we are focusing on at the moment.”
Hall closed the meeting in memory of Debora Schwartz, who died over the weekend while hiking. She was an Arizona State University professor that attended the Region 11 conference the week before. He asked that board members keep her family in their thoughts.

ADJOURNMENT
Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Tarquinio, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m., Monday, May 9, 2016.
APPENDIX A

Motion 1

Effective Sept. 19, 2016, SPJ shall have nine regions, with their borders defined as:

- **Region 1**: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont
- **Region 2**: Delaware, District of Columbia, Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia
- **Region 3**: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
- **Region 4**: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
- **Region 5 (formerly 12)**: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee
- **Region 6**: Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- **Region 7 (formerly 8)**: Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
- **Region 8 (formerly 10)**: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming
- **Region 9 (formerly 11)**: Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, Mariana Islands, Utah

Motion 2

The SPJ board of directors requests the Bylaws Committee draft a resolution to the delegates to the convention, “the supreme legislative body of the organization,” that will change to Article 7 Section One of SPJ’s bylaws to remove one campus chapter adviser from the board (change in italic):

“The board of directors shall be composed of the national officers, the immediate past president, one regional director for each region established by the board, and six directors to be elected at large: a campus chapter adviser, two student members, and two professional members.”
**Motion 3**

SPJ shall create a Regional Directors Fund, replenished annually at $3,000 from the operating budget and administered by the regional directors for the purpose of supporting chapter programming nationwide. At the first fall board meeting, regional directors shall submit to the board, for approval, a procedure for allocating these funds.

**Motion 4**

SPJ shall raise annual travel stipends from $1,500 to $1,700 for each regional director, the campus chapter adviser, two student members, and two at-large members.”
MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
MAY 23, 2016
ZOOM CONFERENCE SERVICE

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:05 P.M. ET on Monday, May 23 Via Zoom conference service.

In addition to Fletcher, the following were present: President-Elect Lynn Walsh; Immediate Past President Dana Neuts; At-Large Directors Alex Tarquinio and Bill McCloskey; Campus At-Large Representatives Becky Tallent and Mike Reilley; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Deborah Givens, Joe Radske, Stephanie Wilken, Eddy Gallagher, Tom Johnson, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel and Membership Strategist Tara Puckey.

BOARD RESTRUCTURING
Fletcher asked Koretzky to speak to his proposal.

Koretzky said he had a hard time responding to notions that the chapter system will be destroyed under this proposal. Or that it’s difficult for members to get to regional conferences and pick up Mark of Excellence certificates, which were other concerns raised by members.

Koretzky said he has held a Region 3 conference not in the spring, not in his region and it wasn’t a full-blown conference. And, it went well.

Koretzky said we are talking about dots on a map. It won’t affect everyone in the way they think it will.

Some were also concerned about changing the Scripps Leadership program.

Koretzky said if the board is going to make decision that has some reward, it is going to come with some risk. If it doesn’t go right, we can change it right back, he said.

Fletcher said regardless of what happens with this proposal, he will put together a task force to research the issue of governance.

Schotz addressed the idea that people can go to any regional, but said the organization has never explained that. But there is a legitimate issue about MOE awards given out at regional conferences. If people can go to whatever conference they want, they would need to enter into whatever region they want.
“If we have solutions, we need to flesh it out and explain it. We can’t just dismiss that,” Schotz said.

Gallagher Newberry asked for an update on the recruitment for the three RD vacancies.

Givens said they had a candidate for Region 5. Wilkens said they didn’t have a candidate for Region 7 yet.

Gallagher said her chapters were concerned about distance and reducing the number of regions. Local leaders also felt the board was not too large — and more voices were needed. By doing away with RDs and campus advisors, we were losing voices for people that don’t always have enough. Chapters like the idea of RDs making personal contact with leaders.

Hall said he was an early supporter of the proposal, but definitely on the fence. He talked to all of his pro chapters and one supports it. The others didn’t respond or suggested they were OK with this. But in talking with Utah, he doesn’t agree with chapters being “dots on a map.” They have strong relationships with chapters they want to maintain. And, where I start to oppose this idea, is regional travel and cost. Not from the RD perspective, but from chapter members that travel to regional conferences. It’s a big deal for the students. There is a camaraderie that I think we are minimizing. We could redraw it, but that would mean changing relationships.

Womac said the grass-roots representation is what’s important for folks in her region. They are in favor of looking at ways to restructure the board, but not this proposal.

Johnson said all three of his chapters are pretty strongly opposed to changing the regions. It seems that lumping whole states together doesn’t make sense in planning. Seems the board does function pretty well given its size. He said he doesn’t know that the board would gain faster decisions by knocking down the number of board positions.

He went on to say that if the regions are going to be redesigned, he thinks the organization should be using other criteria that states. He does like giving additional financial support for RDs. He is opposed to the proposal today.

Radske said: In Region 6, this has made sense for us. We already partner with chapters in the proposed regions. If we do this, we do need to respect what Tom just said. Maybe there are some adjustments that need to be made. And I think that reducing the student adviser position is a mistake.

Koretzky said that irrespective of the vote, he would love to know how many board members is enough members. If there is going to be a task force, he said, we could have the regional directors be more like city commissioners, where we don’t represent specific regions. In this new media era, one thing we need to talk about is being less rigid.

Koretzky said the board is going to have to figure out a way to respond quicker, take risks and fix those risks. Regardless of what happens with this proposal, we need to fix this. I hope that becomes part of this discussion.
Schotz said we could help ourselves by bringing people in during the process. He said we could eliminate RDs from the board but keep that level in place, with regions intact.

Fletcher said what Schotz is proposing is the kind of thing that the task force would be considering.

McCloskey said it seems that this is a solution looking for a problem. Part of what Michael is proposing is that Michael has more money. That’s a wonderful idea. That can be done through the budget process. Some chapters choose not to charge dues. Some charge dues and don’t spend it. I think we are talking about money, and not geography. We can reallocate money right now if that’s the problem, he said.

Walsh said she doesn’t think this plan is perfect. But she appreciates Michael proposing it because it has started the conversation. To her, this proposal is a step toward a larger direction. “I’d like to see us vote today to remove the positions, but let’s have a task force or staff look at the issues more in depth.” She said.

Givens agreed with McCloskey. Chapters in Region 5 didn’t understand the need. And as a new board member, she didn’t see the size being problematic.

Koretzky moved that the proposal below be adopted – with the amendment that Utah and Colorado be in the new Region 8. McCloskey seconded for the purposes of discussion.

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- **Region 4**: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio
- **Region 5 (formerly 12)**: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee
- **Region 6**: Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- **Region 7 (formerly 8)**: Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
Region 9 (formerly 11): Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Nevada, Mariana Islands, Utah

Motion 2

The SPJ board of directors requests the Bylaws Committee draft a resolution to the delegates to the convention, “the supreme legislative body of the organization,” that will change to Article 7 Section One of SPJ’s bylaws to remove one campus chapter adviser from the board (change in italic):

“The board of directors shall be composed of the national officers, the immediate past president, one regional director for each region established by the board, and six directors to be elected at large: a campus chapter adviser, two student members, and two professional members.”

Schotz said he doesn’t feel like the board should be making this decision on the fly. He would like to see the board spend more time and research it first.

Johnson said diving by state is illogical and counterproductive.

Walsh calls the question.

The board voted 13-3 against the motion. Those voting yes included Koretzky, Walsh and Radske. Neuts abstained.

Gallagher Newberry said she thinks there are a lot of admirable parts of Koretzky’s proposal. She voted no because she felt we were rushing it. It became a lot more complicated as we received feedback from members.

As the task force leader, she asked Lynn and Paul for guidance and deadlines. She doesn’t want the work to take two years to issue a report.
Fletcher said that if we took a vote, there might be a majority that we need to do something different. If nothing else has been accomplished, that is now on the table.

Walsh said she would like to get with Tara, Skeel and Fletcher and would like them to be very closely involved in this. Although it’s very important, she doesn’t know that she want volunteers carrying too much of the load. We (Lynn and Paul) will follow up via e-mail.

ADJOURNMENT
Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Wilken the meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m. Monday, May 23, 2016.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:05 p.m. ET on Wednesday, July 27, 2016 via Zoom virtual conference service.

In addition to Fletcher, the following were present: Immediate Past President Dana Neuts; Campus Representative Kate Hiller; Campus Advisers At-Large Becky Tallent and Mike Reilley; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Deborah Givens, Stephanie Wilken, Tom Johnson, Ethan Chung and Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel and Membership Strategist Tara Puckey.

AWARDS
The purpose of the meeting was to approve the Executive Committee’s recommendations for SPJ’s Awards and Honors.

Distinguished teaching: Jeff South
 Historic Site in Journalism: Roosevelt Island
 Howard Dubin large chapter – Jason Parsley
 Howard Dubin small chapter – Robyn Davis Sekula
 Julie Galvin – Kate Hiller
 Sunshine Awards – The Guardian, Donovan Slack, The Invisible Institute

Upon proper motion by Chung and second by Reilley, the board approved the awards – in block – as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Upon proper motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 1:16 p.m. ET., Wednesday, July 27.
SDX FOUNDATION PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Colleagues,

I look forward to an invigorating conversation about the Foundation’s future during our meeting today. The preliminary email discussion showed some common themes and concerns, which I discuss in another memo within our board packet.

I also hope to move on our “Dr. J” project. A great deal of work has gone into answering your questions from April, and I look forward to that discussion as well.

A few other matters:

--The board will be smaller after this week. We say farewell to three longtime members who chose not to seek another term: Dave Aeikens, with a total of 10 years of the board; Al Cross, 14 years; and Steve Geimann, 22 years. I cannot thank them enough for their contributions and friendship across the years.

Further, SPJ Immediate Past President Dana Neuts wishes to continue her SPJ activity in other realms, and I wish her the best of luck.

We are not inviting any new SDX-appointed members to join our board, as there has been some sentiment to reduce its numbers.

--A question I’ve been noodling: Should we move our spring board meeting to Friday, rather than Sunday morning? As we saw at our meeting this year, action on our budget can have an effect on the SPJ budget. Does it make sense for us to meet before the SPJ board does, so its members do not have to cross their fingers and guess at what we might do?

We’re locked into dates for 2017, so the earliest this change could happen would be 2018. There’s time to weigh the pros and cons.

--We’ve celebrated several wins since we last met.

Farah Stockman, the 2014 winner of the Pulliam Editorial Fellowship, won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary. She’s presenting during EIJ16.

Google nearly tripled its funding for our Google Tools training. Most of the money goes directly into programming, but a portion ends up in our holdings. Congratulations to Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon for her efforts in making this happen.

With a minimal investment, our “Spotlight” initiative sparked conversations about journalism around the country. My home chapter, Valley of the Sun, scored a coup when Robby Robinson was on hand for the screening.
--The stock market has recovered since the first quarter of 2016, and so have our holdings. They stood at nearly $11.8 million on July 31, just slightly below the level of one year earlier.

The penultimate word goes to Brittany Robb, recipient of one of the Region 7 fellowships we funded in 2015-16. She took the time to send a handwritten thank you note, which I share with you here:

![Handwritten Note]

The final word follows naturally: Thank you for all you do.
DATE: Aug. 25, 2016
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

STAFF REPORT

I will issue the final Fiscal Year report shortly after EIJ. This is because even though the year closes July 31, we have to wait for July bills to arrive (usually through the end of August). Only then can we begin the process of reconciling the accounts and buttoning up the fiscal year.

Although I don’t know exactly where we stand in terms of budget to actual until the books are closed, I am comfortable saying we will finish the year in well in the black.

Our cash position remains strong. We have about $527,000 in unrestricted cash reserve investments. Furthermore, we have about $107,000 in the 1st Amendment Forever Fund and the LDF stands at about $82,000.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

One of my biggest focuses the past year has been working toward my Certified Association Executive designation. This is a designation earned after completing 100 hours of professional development, then passing an exam. Last year I completed about 60 hours. I plan to sit for the exam in May 2017.

The designation and exam isn’t the end game, however. It’s the knowledge gained on the journey. The 60 hours of education has already paid huge dividends for SPJ and the SDX Foundation. Because I get to pick my own courses, I have been able to focus on areas of need. For example, I haven’t spent too much time on non-profit corporate law and finances. Instead, I have focused my course work on three main areas: governance, membership and communications.

As a result, we have implemented (or will implement) things I have learned in these areas. In addition, the knowledge I have gained has proved useful for projects that I didn’t initiate. A few examples: Helping the governance task force navigate the possibility of a board restructure. The importance of having a unique onboarding process for new members. The benefits of targeted communications and services for each member type (no more one-size fits all). Building a fundraising structure as member revenue declines (this is happening to most associations, by the way). In a few cases, staff and I have taken these online classes together. In nearly every case, I have shared knowledge with staff for implementation into their areas.

I should point out that Tara is also working toward her CAE, so we have been able to share knowledge and brainstorm ideas together.

FUNDRAISING

This section is new to SPJ. Outside of LDF, we never really focused on fundraising efforts. With the creation of the fundraising coordinator position, we are aiming to increase non-dues revenue and build member engagement/support.

SPJ launched the First Amendment Forever Fund this year. For context, this is the advocacy fund spearheaded by SPJ Immediate Past President David Cuillier.
Since its launch we have raised a little over $5,600. In June we sent out a direct mail appeal to all of our members (excluding students) to raise awareness. We spent about $2,000 on postage and printing and we raised just over $3,000. A third of those contributing were first time donors to SPJ/SDX.

We tried a new Sunshine Week Campaign for the Legal Defense Fund. The goal was to get students involved with LDF. The campaign met its $500 goal. We are gearing up for the LDF Auction at EIJ. We started a chapter competition this year and so far we have received some great baskets and items from chapters. We were also able to get the Boston Globe Spotlight team from the film to sign a director’s chair and movie poster for the live auction.

We are working on revamping the President’s Club (ask me if you don’t know what this is. Truth is, most people don’t). We have focused on reshaping President’s Club member benefits to make it feel more like an actual club or rewards program. Some of the new benefits include: a special President’s Club Lounge at EIJ, room service check-in at EIJ and a President’s Club business card bottle opener.

**STAFFING**

It has been a relatively (and welcome) calm year after a year of staff evolution. You may remember that last fiscal year Heather Dunn left, Chrystal Parvin was hired full time and we created a fundraising coordinating position – which was filled a week before EIJ15 by Katie Hunt. Since then, we have hired Lisa Susemichel as our event coordinator. She is learning the EIJ ropes and will serve as the primary planner for the ACES and JAWS conferences that we plan.

**ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT/PARTNERSHIPS**

Business is steady. Here is a list of our current partners:

- **Bookkeeping:** National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Radio Television Digital News Association, Journalism and Women Symposium.
- **Membership:** NAHJ, American Copy Editors Society.
- **Communications:** ACES.
- **Convention planning:** JAWS, ACES and Native American Journalists Association (as part of EIJ16)

Since our meeting in April, we submitted a bids to the Society of Environmental Journalists. They are looking for headquarters space in concert with an executive director. They are focusing primarily on a university partnership, but I bid nonetheless. In the words of their executive director, I’ve given them something to think about, but it’s probably a long shot.

In addition, NAJA is interested in joining NAHJ, RTDNA and SPJ for EIJ17. Because we already have signed contracts with NAHJ and RTDNA, we must all three come to an agreement of if this can happen. The challenge will be creating a fair business model.

**PROGRAMMING UPDATE**

The Training Place concept began in 2006 with a grant from Bloomberg News. The program began with a stable of trainers going into newsrooms and to chapters and to regional conferences training on topics such as accessing records, ethics, multimedia storytelling, writing on deadline and a few others.
When the Bloomberg financial support ended, SPJ began requesting (and receiving) grants from the SDX Foundation to continue the program. As interest in the training from newsrooms declined, the program morphed into a training program similar to what you see today which involves:

- SPJ webinars
- SPJ on demand training videos
- SPJ JournCamps (day-long workshops)

Then the Google News Lab came along and wanted to partner with SPJ to get training to journalists on the use of Google tools for news gathering, reporting and storytelling. (technically the partnership is with the SDX Foundation). As a result, the Training Place still includes the programs listed above and SPJ is back in newsrooms and back to traveling to chapters and regional conferences to provide in-person training. SPJ is not only training its members, it is training members of other organizations. There is often a request from ONA or NABJ or NAHJ, or many other groups, for a local, regional or national event.

Below are statistics of the Training Place as of August 10, 2016:

**On Demand Videos**
- Front page: 18,534 pageviews (13,392 unique users)
- All individual videos: 8,420 pageviews (5,629 unique)

**Webinars**
- Number of webinars: 15
- Registrants: 1,492
- Participants: 841
- Page views of webinars page: 2,346
- Webinar replays: 817

**JournCamps**
- Number of workshops: 12
- Registrants: 1,075

**Newsrooms/SPJ Chapters/SPJ Spring Conferences/Journalism Association Conferences (with and without Google tools training/money):**
- Number of workshops: 121
- Participants: 3,633

**COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE**
From September 2015, to Aug. 19, 2016, SPJ has distributed 84 news releases and statements, ranging from the delegation of journalists that spoke with Josh Earnest at the White House about government transparency, to the passing of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, to promoting training, awards, partnerships, etc.

In addition to writing, editing, posting, sending, promoting news releases and statements. Member communications have increased significantly this year. We have been working closely with other departments in creating email communications, newsletters and e-books to help promote SPJ to current
and new member categories. We have also been focusing, most recently, on creating promotional videos to help promote SPJ and its programs and initiatives.

A video promoting the EIJ16 early bird deadline was used in late July/early August. Another EIJ16 video is being used August/September. And a video for the Forever Fund is being created. Interviews and footage will be taken at EIJ16 for multiple video projects being planned for the coming year.

SPJ continues to use Twitter and Facebook not only as ways of distributing SPJ content and marketing programs, but by engaging members, potential members and anyone else interested in journalism, journalism ethics, free speech, the First Amendment or other SPJ activities.

News releases and statements are also emailed to a national media list, which includes major media outlets – both print and broadcast – throughout the country and to another media list which includes all reporters who have contacted SPJ in the past with interview requests. Targeted local and regional lists are used for issues that are more focused to a specific area. When SPJ wants to speak out on an issue, or already has, SPJ’s communications team monitors the news outlets and specific reporters who are writing about the issue the most, and sends them SPJ’s statement/press release in addition to all other efforts. This often garners more media coverage for SPJ.

We are still following the communications plans and guidelines created about two years ago, which have streamlined the process and allow us to respond faster to national and world events. Even if SPJ does not write its own statement or release on a topic, we often take to social media in support of other organizations or statements we are monitoring or think are important. We also post several articles on social media that are written by other organizations related to journalism that we believe our followers would find interesting, would engage them in conversations about important journalism topics or would be helpful resources for their jobs.

We entered into a formal content sharing partnership with Columbia Journalism Review this year as well. Social media posting has increased, which has in-turn increased engagement, awareness of the organization and SPJ’s name as a whole. These approaches all work together to make our presence on social media as vibrant and engaging as possible for our audiences.

SPJ also has a presence on LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+ and, new this year, Snapchat. We chose to close SPJ’s Pinterest account due to lack of activity. We continue to monitor and dedicate an appropriate amount of time to each social media account in an effort to keep these accounts fresh and interesting for the audiences we have on these platforms.

We also look forward to working with the newly formed Communications Committee to develop improved strategies in social media.

We continue to see success in SPJ’s social media presence. SPJ’s total likes on Facebook stand at 33,149 as of mid-August – an increase of 8,423 since September 2015. Twitter followers as of mid-August have reached 42,021 – an increase of 6,721 since September 2015. SPJ’s LinkedIn page has 2,345 followers, an increase of 696.

Communities and committees remain active on social media, and all have enjoyed growth in the number of followers and page likes (numbers in parenthesis are last year’s numbers).
Gen J Twitter: 1,778 (1,589)
Gen J Facebook: 252 (204)
Freelance Twitter: 1,601 (1,126)
Freelance Facebook: 312 (unreported)
Digital Twitter: 723 (579)
Digital Facebook: 287 (195)
FOI Twitter: 103 (86)
International Facebook: 238 (186)

AWARDS UPDATE

SDX & MOE Entries dropped yet again this year. Communication efforts were increased through email, social media, reaching out to other journalism organizations and through snail mail. Entries dropped toward the end of the contest like last year.

SDX Entries the last 6 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MOE Entries the last 6 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4,456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4,158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4,062</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the things we are discussing with the Awards and Honors Committee:

- Outreach and find better ways to measure our effectiveness.
- How is the changing field of journalism reflecting on the contest.
- How to best accommodate different types of journalism (freelancers, bloggers, etc.)
- With our focus on membership, will this translate to an increase in award entries (if we see an increase in membership).
- Ways to improve the content of our marketing. Last year, we worked on changing up the message.
- The communications team did an experiment earlier this year on tracking all of our information that goes out. They printed each message they sent out via email, social media, etc. and documented how many people it reached. Should we do the same with our awards marketing. Previously, we have reached out to the same people/groups (we reached out to different
organizations last year, etc.) This will help us figure out what marketing is worthwhile and what isn’t.

SDX Judging
- SDX judging went very smoothly this year. Judges were again asked to provide associate judges. We had no problems with the associate judges and were able to provide some for judges who couldn’t find any or had someone drop out last minute. All judging was completed on time!

MOE Judging
- MOE regional judging tends to take a little more time to wrap up. This year, we had to sort out school divisions and have some judges re-judge due to schools entering in the wrong size and the judges not catching it. I’m hoping to better explain school division in our rules to avoid this next year. I will also encourage region coordinators to voice the importance of the school divisions to our judges. National judging and MOEy judging both went well.

New America
- We received 91 entries (we had 96 last year), so we are right where we need to be. This year, we partnered with NAHJ, NABJ and NAJA. We also had representation from SPJ and SDX. Judges worked in teams of two. Entries were divided up by medium for the first round of judging as requested by judges from last year. This seemed to work very well.

National Awards & Honors
- Mac McKerral, chair of the Pulliam First Amendment judging committee, noticed nominations were lower this year for the Pulliam First Amendment Award. We had about 8 nominations but actually went with 2 winners this year, because they were both so deserving. We are planning to reach out to others journalism organizations to market better next year. Note, this is an SDX award, but wanted to share the entire picture.
- We had a few comments that the online nomination system was a little difficult to sort through. We plan on looking at the form that is online and how it goes into our Dropbox folders. I’m also going to reach out to a few committee members who looked through nominations to find ways we can improve the system.
- We had no issues reported with nominees using the online forms

WEBSITE UPDATE
The most prominent SPJ website news of 2016 hasn’t been particularly upbeat. A two-week outage for our blogs/Toolbox sites necessitated a migration to a new hosting company, which went smoothly until a surge of bad bot traffic knocked them offline again for a few days in June. I’m still fighting against that traffic, and that fight will continue even though I have the upper hand on it now.

We’ve had some good times too, though. The new Kunkel Awards, SMACK and First Amendment Forever sections got high traffic. We quietly upgraded SPJ.org’s encryption without incident, and beyond the aforementioned outages and a couple on the membership server side, we’ve seen the major submission-heavy deadlines come and go without any breakdowns. That’s par for the course and not an exciting thing at all to mention, but given the increasingly volatile nature of the web, it’s good news all the same.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPJ.org</th>
<th>Week of 8/11/16</th>
<th>Week of 8/11/15</th>
<th>2015 Total (Weekly Avg.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>9,727</td>
<td>9,183</td>
<td>731,177 (14,023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Visitors</td>
<td>8,182</td>
<td>7,365</td>
<td>523,021 (10,031)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>17,479</td>
<td>18,241</td>
<td>1,321,369 (25,341)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views per visit</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time per visit</td>
<td>2:02</td>
<td>2:29</td>
<td>1:56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPJ Blogs</th>
<th>Week of 8/11/16</th>
<th>Week of 8/11/15</th>
<th>2015 Total (Weekly Avg.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>8,766</td>
<td>2,039</td>
<td>160,438 (3,077)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Visitors</td>
<td>8,191</td>
<td>1,841</td>
<td>137,088 (2,629)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views</td>
<td>10,988</td>
<td>2,641</td>
<td>199,100 (3,818)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Views per visit</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time per visit</td>
<td>0:30</td>
<td>0:58</td>
<td>0:53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SPJ.org: 2016’s most popular pages (through 8/10/16)
(front page: 69,752 views)

1. Ethics Code – 127,685 views
2. Ethics Case Studies – 28,500 views
3. Join SPJ area – 24,762 views
4. SDX Awards – 24,046 views
5. Mark of Excellence – 14,651 views
6. Awards front page – 13,097 views
7. Ethics Papers – 12,353 views
8. High School Essay Contest – 9,772 views
9. EIJ Registration – 8,191 views
10. Kunkel Awards – 7,642 views
11. Spring Conferences – 6,272 views
12. eCampus front page – 5,829 views
13. Ethics front page – 5,344 views
14. Shield Law – 5,316 views
15. Ethics Code (other orgs) – 5,263 views

MEMBERSHIP
You'll find all things relating to the overall strategic membership initiatives in a separate memo, but being able to view a snapshot of where we are at any given point in time is important. Overall, things are looking up. While we still see a decline in some areas, we’re improving in retention almost every month or, at the very least, holding steady.
**New Members**
As indicated by the snapshot of data below, we’ve seen an overall decline in new members joining within the last three years, but August seems to be tracking with prior years.

Staff now has monthly goals to achieve for membership – both new members and renewals – to help focus on membership and how it relates to each of their departments. And, once the marketing plan for Associates goes all out, we hope to see an uptick in these numbers.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 2016 – 121</td>
<td>July 2016 – 96</td>
<td>August 2016 (as of 8/16/16) - 112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retention**
We’re happy to report that retention rates are on the rise.

In 2015, our overall retention rate was an average of 47%. Though we’re currently sitting at the same percentage for this year, numbers for the past several months have been encouraging and we already sit at a 50% retention rate for the month of June, though we don’t calculate that for another month so there’s additional time for some members to renew.

Below, you’ll find a graph that completes last year, along with a graph indicating our retention rates for 2016. As you can see, we’re on the upswing, especially in comparison with the same time period last year.
Note: the retention rate bar plummets in June because we don’t measure retention until 60 days after members receive their final invoice (in this case, late August.).

Though we are still seeing a decline in some areas, we’ve been able to hold relatively steady in recent months, even with Linda cleaning the rolls of some 40+ deceased members. As we continue to clean and inspect our data, it’s likely that we’ll find more people who will need to be removed. But, the fact remains that good data is better than bad data and we’re making progress a bit at a time.
CHAPTER ACTION MEMO

CHAPTERS TO INACTIVATE
Chapter listed here have either expressed interest in being inactivated on their own (program no longer exists, no dedicated adviser, etc.) or were selected to be inactivated by the respective Regional Directors during a phone call following Annual Reports.

Region 2
Howard University

Region 3
Auburn University
Georgia College & State University
Georgian State University
Georgia Southern University
University of Central Florida
University of Miami
Winthrop University

Region 4
Kent State University
Marshall University
Michigan State University
Ohio State University
Wayne State University

Region 6
North Dakota State University
University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh
Milwaukee Pro

Region 7
University of Iowa
Webster University

Region 9
Colorado Mesa University
University of Colorado
Wyoming Pro

Region 10
Montana Pro
CHARTERS TO REVOKE

Region 3
Mid Florida Pro
North Central Florida Pro

Region 10
Inland Northwest Pro
ARTICLE FOUR

Associate

Section Nine. Associates shall not vote, hold national or chapter office, be delegates to the national convention, nor be counted in determining the voting strength of a chapter as defined under Article Ten, Section Three.

Associates may be:

— Persons who support the goals of the organization.
— High school students who have a demonstrated interest in journalism or whose serious interests or career plans are within the scope of the Society as defined in Article One, Section Two.

Section Ten. Nominees for a membership category or sub-category shall be approved by the headquarters staff and executive director. Appeals on eligibility can be made to the membership committee and then to the board of directors.

ARTICLE FIVE

Governance

... 

Section Fifteen. The national headquarters annually shall determine the status of all SPJ chapters, with the assistance of the national board of directors. This process shall be completed in time for certification of delegates to the national convention. Chapters shall be notified of their status at least 60 days prior to the convention and shall have 30 days to bring themselves into active – good standing status.

Section Sixteen. As part of the process of certifying chapter membership for purposes of apportioning delegates to the national convention, the national headquarters shall determine whether each SPJ member in the region is or is not counted as a member of any SPJ chapter within or outside the region, and establish the total number of SPJ members living in each region who are not counted as members of any SPJ chapter within or outside the region.

Section Seventeen. Upon the decision to terminate any professional or campus chapter, whether by dissolution, disbandment, revocation pursuant to Section Thirteen of this Article, or otherwise, any remaining chapter funds shall be distributed to another adjoining active Society Chapter then in good standing, the Society, or the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, as directed by the chapter’s governing body, or, in the absence of action of the local board within 60 days of termination, the national board of directors.
ARTICLE TEN

Convention

Section One. The convention shall be the supreme legislative body of the organization. It shall be held at least biennially at a time and place designated by the board of directors.

Section Two. The convention shall be composed of delegates or representatives from each chapter, delegates chosen in each region by SPJ members residing in the region who are not counted among the members of any SPJ chapter within or outside the region, the national officers and the national board of directors.

Section Three. The Board of Directors shall establish a procedure and timetable for the selection of regional delegates. In the event that the number of potential delegates exceeds the number of convention votes assigned to the region, the national headquarters staff shall conduct a ballot among SPJ members living in each region not counted as members of any SPJ chapter within or outside the region to elect their delegates.

Section Four. In the convention, each professional and campus chapter considered as active in good standing shall have one vote for each 50 members or fraction thereof. Each region shall have one vote for each 50 members or fraction thereof, who reside in the region and are not counted among the members of any SPJ chapter within or outside the region. Voting must be done by accredited delegates or their accredited alternate delegates present on the floor of the convention. Delegates cannot vote by proxy. National officers and members of the board of directors who are not delegates may not vote. In case of a tie, the presiding officer shall cast the deciding vote. Representatives of chapters who are not accredited as delegates may not vote.

Section Five. A convention quorum is present when delegates or alternates with authority to cast at least half of the delegate votes apportioned according to Article Ten, Section Three, are on the convention floor.

Section Six. All enactments of the convention shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified.

Section Seven. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these bylaws.
Article Four

Associate

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Associates may be:

— Persons who support the goals of the organization.
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Section Seven. **Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these bylaws.**
STRATEGIC MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

There’s been a lot of activity on the membership front since we last met in April. Following the strategic membership work the group did in New Orleans, we began distilling the information, focusing on a few key areas and then moving forward on a laundry list of things that we believe will, at their core, impact membership.

Below, you’ll find information about “all things membership” in three general areas: Fighters (focused on advocacy and adding SPJ Supporters to the mix), Lifers (focused on what SPJ can do from “cradle to grave” for journalists), and General (things that don’t necessarily fit into either category, but we’ve learned from association management courses, membership books, training, etc.). You’ll also find some information – in the Check It Off section – at the end about things we’ve talked about previously that were implemented between the board’s last meeting and now.

I’ve tried to include a bit of information about where each of these ideas originated, why it is important, how it will work and when we’d like to see it implemented.

GENERAL

Excellence Outreach
One of the greatest ways we can reach new members and show the public good, ethical journalism is by rewarding excellence. We have long struggled for practical ways to do that outside of our awards or funding of some kind, but we may have cracked that nut.

Thanks to a generous contribution from Howard Dubin, we’ve worked with a marketing/engagement group to create a “Kudos Box.” It’s fully decked out with SPJ branding and includes: a note to thank them for their hard work, 10 small notebooks with a basic version of SPJ’s Code of Ethics printed on the inside cover, 10 “SPJ All Things Journalism” branded business card bottle openers, 10 postcard-sized cards with five reasons to join SPJ and how on one side and a great journalism quote on the other – maybe something they can hang at their desk and notice every once in a while.

In the most basic sense, it’s a way for us to thank them for their hard work, let them know they have made us proud and invite them to join us. Each month, we’ll select a newsroom – big, small, print, broadcast, etc. – and send this to them, making sure we share it via our communications channels and invite them to do the same.

Timeline: Proof kits are slated to arrive just before we head to New Orleans, so hopefully these will be available to check out during EIJ. After we’ve approved and finalized, we expect the full shipment to arrive at HQ sometime in October/November. We’ll begin sending shortly after.

Invoicing
For quite some time, our invoices have been lackluster. They appear dated and are a bit overwhelming. After consulting several association resources, we believe a redesign is in order. It’s a little trickier than we’d like since it all has to “talk” to our database to pull correct information, but we think it’s an
important step in making sure SPJ is cohesively branded and that the renewal process is as easy as we can make it.

**Timeline:** This is a large project that does involve our third-party database provider. We plan to begin the redesign process post-EIJ and send fresh new invoices beginning in January 2017.

**Onboarding Process**

One of the main reasons people leave associations, according to many experts in the industry, is the fact that they never felt connected to begin with. The onboarding process is critical to retention, which is already important since, overall, retaining members costs the organization significantly less than getting new members.

There are a few key parts of the onboarding process that we plan to implement:

- Welcome calls (already started): Each month, Chrystal has been calling new members to welcome them to the organization, answer any questions they may have and create a new connection
- Onboarding email communication: New members will receive unique “what to know” emails for the first six months of their membership (how to login, what places on the website are important, things SPJ can do for you, etc.)
- Welcome video: A short video will be created to welcome new members, explain a few important things to know about SPJ that will be made available to all new members
- New member webinars: A bit more in-depth than the welcome video, the webinar will be created and recorded to share information about what SPJ can do for them

**Timeline:** A list of things new members need to know has already been developed with the help of the Membership Committee and staff. Post-EIJ, we’ll work to develop this into the six email campaigns, video and webinar. The goal is to have all pieces of the onboarding process ready to go in early 2017.

**Segmented Communication**

Communicating to the specific needs of each of our groups of members is something we haven’t done well in the past. Generally, SPJ has communicated with a one-size-fits-all approach by sending the same weekly newsletter to each member, hoping that something there will be applicable to them. That isn’t the case. From my experience, most members wouldn’t rank “insider baseball” SPJ items at the top of the list of reasons they would join the organization. They want real-world tools, resources that speak to where they are in their career and helpful information about the industry. And, even more than that, they want it to be relevant to where they are in their journalism career – professional, retiree, student, etc.

Ideally, we’ll have separate and dedicated communications for each type of member (student, professional, retired, etc.), much like the SPJ Supporters get their own newsletter. As we work to develop the logistics of creating the content, we’ll start with something quarterly that could eventually move to a monthly format. The goal is to provide information about journalism, not specifically SPJ.

**Timeline:** In October, we’ll work with the Membership Committee, as well as staff and other volunteers, to create a mechanism to develop and aggregate information, along with a more specific timeline for when it goes out. In a perfect world, our first quarterly group-specific newsletter would go out Q2 2017.

**Referral Links**
You may recall me mentioning this before. Creating referral links for chapters to use as they reach new journalists would allow them to get credit for their hard work. For example, once a chapter has 25 people sign up, we’ll cut them a prize money check (just an idea, not the final prize). Eventually, it would be great to expand this to an individual referral system as well. In either scenario, there are likely some customizations that have to take place within our database and our website and there are other top priorities on those fronts at the moment.

**Timeline:** Begin work on referral links Spring/Summer 2017.

**Confirmation and Renewal Emails**
Again, more of a focus on the communication message and style that we use when thanking people for joining and asking them to renew. We plan to create more effective renewal emails (providing more information about the specific member).

**Timeline:** We’ve already worked with the Membership Committee on text and information for the new renewal reminder emails, so once we return from EIJ, we’ll begin working to get the information tied to the database. I anticipate this will coincide with the new invoice that should be ready to go January 2017.

**“I am SPJ” Videos**
One of the things the board consistently mentioned during the strategic talk was diversity, but we have struggled overall to be able to aim specific initiatives at the topic. One of the things we’ll be doing at EIJ is collecting short video snippets of many of our members simply saying their name and the phrase “I am SPJ.” This will be used as a video campaign to highlight diversity of our members and will also give us additional footage to use in videos used for advocacy and other purposes.

**Timeline:** Footage will be shot during EIJ and we’ll begin compiling everything when we return. It’s possible this could be ready to be used around the holidays as a way to encourage the gifting of memberships, but we’ll definitely have it completed by early 2017.

**Programming at Other Organizations**
By “other,” we’re talking non-journalism organizations and creating programming that helps them to work better with journalists and understand more of our processes and procedures. For example, visiting a Fraternal Order of Police convention and producing a session about working with journalists and understanding the ideal situation in which both the police and journalists can do their jobs effectively. Ideally, we’ll share information that is helpful and also be able to encourage others to join SPJ as SPJ Supporters.

**Timeline:** Post-EIJ, we’ll work with the Membership Committee and other committees to identify possible groups we’d like to educate about journalism – police, government, etc. – and create a timeline of their events and conventions. For each, we’ll identify programming that makes sense and start pitching. Hopefully, we’ll be able to line up at least a few conventions in 2017.

**FIGHTERS Prospects**
We’ve discussed for some time the best way to capture our web audience, those who frequently visit pages like the Code of Ethics and About Us and then leave. Collecting their information is relatively easy (Billy has developed an unobtrusive name and email popup), but the question still remained: What do
we do with that information once we have it? In our association management training, we’ve learned that it’s important to create a funnel for people to enter the association. If they start small and you provide them with good, valuable information that they want, they’re more likely to dip their toes in the water a bit more. So, instead of just sending mass marketing emails, we knew we needed to provide them with something more.

Internally, we’ll call these people Prospects and we’ve developed a plan to connect with them four times over the course of one year after they’ve visited our website. First, they’ll receive a welcome email with free content, which will change depending on the climate of the industry, current events, etc. Right now, we’re in the final stages of developing an eBook relating to the election that includes things like how important ethical reporting is to the political process, how/where to fact check information and be an informed voter, the role of the press in politics, etc. The content will be branded and easily shareable. Later, they’ll receive three more emails, each with additional content about journalism, ethics and current events, though not always in the form of an eBook, and each encouraging them to join as an SPJ Supporter or other membership category. If they don’t have any activity (event, joined, etc.) within one year, they’re cleared from our rolls.

**Timeline:** Details for the eBook are being finalized and we hope to have this branded and ready to go in September or early October. The popup box is already functioning, just hidden until we’re ready to roll out the complete process.

**Associate**
As indicated shortly after the board meeting, we’ve already started offering this option – just slowly and quietly so we could make sure our processes and procedures were working correctly. Members who join are welcomed with a new confirmation email that explains everything they’ll receive as part of their membership. Shortly after, they receive a welcome letter, accompanied by the SPJ shield logo sticker that highlights the unofficial motto, “protecting the public’s right to know.” Each month, they receive a custom newsletter with information about the press, the importance of journalism and First Amendment issues.

Previous timelines indicate a rollout of this category during EIJ16. The redefined category will be mentioned in all of the meeting scripts, noting that it is pending the approval of the delegates at the Closing Business Meeting. Assuming it passes, members and delegates leaving the meeting will receive *Each One Give One* cards where they can indicate someone they would like to “gift” a SPJ Supporter membership to by dropping it at the EIJ16 Registration Desk. Later, a digital format of these cards will likely go all members and, eventually, we’ll replicate the *Each One Give One* program for other types of memberships.

Following EIJ, a webpage highlighting the category will go up and we’ll begin marketing through mailing lists, other associations, etc. We’ll also continue to encourage members who have lapsed to come back as SPJ Supporters if they have left the industry (we’re already doing this in smaller groups a bit at a time).

**Timeline:** Announcement and introduction of the category at EIJ16, followed by the *Each One Give One* option for delegates and members. Once we return to the office, we’ll load up the webpages promoting the category and begin marketing through several different channels.

**Media Credibility**
One of the ideas that we present on several of the brainstorming papers in New Orleans was the idea of media credibility – we help journalism if we help the public understand the value of journalism. Because of this, two smaller initiatives will start off what we anticipate will be a larger overall project in the future. As fate would have it, many of these initiatives can be used in partnership with SPJ Supporters and used to market to people who may join.

We’ll work with the Membership Committee and others to create or support existing resources for community involvement in newsrooms. From helpful ways to solicit public feedback to toolkits for newsrooms to distribute to the public about how to find credible news to resources that will help citizen journalists work with their local news outlets, we’ll seek to help both newsrooms and the public understand and promote better journalism overall.

**Timeline:** This initiative is very early in the planning phases. In Spring 2017, we’ll research other organizations or companies that do this well and work to figure out what needs are still there. Throughout the rest of the year, we’ll work to create resources that meet those needs and promote them accordingly. It’s likely that many pieces of this will develop as we work on creating and aggregating information for the SPJ Supporter newsletter, so this may come together sooner than planned.

**LIFERS**

**Volunteer Square**

Experts in the association management field have studied generational needs for years, and their research shows that a growing number of young people look for different things in an association than they have in past years. One thing that’s important: social responsibility and their ability to get involved and volunteer. In addition, studies show that people who volunteer for an organization are significantly more likely to continue staying involved in the organization much longer than those who don’t. While there are generally multiple opportunities to volunteer at the chapter level, there aren’t many places the national organization uses volunteers outside of the traditional leadership structure and communities/committees. We need to change that.

Creating a “Volunteer Square” means creating a virtual place where members and nonmembers alike can view volunteer opportunities and apply or express interest. We’ll model it after the organized, easy-to-use system that the American Society for Association Executives has on their website where opportunities are categorized by experience level, time required and other helpful filters.

**Timeline:** The bones of the web page have already been created and we’re now working to find volunteer opportunities to populate it. Post-EIJ, we’ll continue to work with staff and communities/committees to create information about each task, from estimated work time to requirements. We anticipate being able to roll out a limited version in December 2016.

**SPJ After Deadline**

In June, we asked members to serve as SPJ Ambassadors for our first After Deadline event. The goal was to create short and easy volunteer opportunities that didn’t center around long-term commitments or the geography of our chapters. We had more than 100 people volunteer to serve and those people worked together to host SPJ After Deadline (think Happy Hour social gathering) events at more than 20 cities around the country. This is a great example of a new way to engage members, both volunteers and attendees of the events.
Timeline: We hope to have this program quarterly. Our first coincided with #SPJ4ALL, which worked nicely to promote diversity. In the future, it may make sense to tie the event with other initiatives, or it may make more sense to stand on its own. We’ll likely hold another later in 2016 or early 2017.

“In the newsroom when...” Videos

We’ve learned that as members get older, they often view their role within the organization as one that gives back. It’s important that we continue to create those opportunities for them, reminding them how valued they really are. In addition, it’s important to remind earlier generations of journalists, as well as the general public, the impact of the industry over time.

During EIJ, we’ll collect short pieces of footage with some of our more seasoned journalists talking about an experience in the newsroom during a momentous event – the assassination of JFK, the explosion of the Challenger, etc. – and how they reacted, what it felt like and, most important, how they and their team handled the situation. We’ll be able to use this footage to create a catalogue of how important journalism has been over time, which is something we’ll repurpose in communication with perspective SPJ Supporters.

Timeline: We’ll collect the footage during EIJ and, as with other footage, compile it when we return. The goal is to have a completed project, along with several small pieces, in early 2017.

CHECK IT OFF

Membership Videos

Though we plan to continue producing more short videos about membership, both with actual people and animated shorts, we’ve already completed one. The Membership Committee has shared ideas about themes and concepts for future videos and we’ll work to create those post-EIJ.

Social Graphics

You may have seen images on Facebook and Twitter that have images with a quote and feature the SPJ “All Things Journalism” branding. While this isn’t specific to joining SPJ, we’ve seen huge reach numbers on each post and it’s just another way we’re keeping SPJ in front of people.
DATABASE UPDATE

One thing I’ve learned since working with AMS, CRM and EMS systems: they all have pros and cons. There is no perfect out-of-the-box solution that meets every need. That forces us to create custom solutions to meet the unique needs of the organization. These, inevitably, take more time. Pair that with a system that hadn’t been updated in years and the problems magnify.

Below, I’ve provided some information about things that have been completed on the database upgrade front. I have also included descriptions of the things that are holding us up and how we plan to tackle those. Bottom line: progress is being made, even if it isn’t visible on the surface just yet.

STAFF SITE
A huge win for staff is that we now all have access to the database via a browser version called the Staff Site, both on and off the SPJ network, meaning staff can access the full database without having to sit in the office (as has been the case in the past). Some other items in the plus column include:

- More information about members – we now have the ability to create new fields to collect new information, from gender to ethnicity to actual profile pictures of members.
- Easier to read and use reports – we’re able to create our own IQAs because the Staff Site is so much easier than the desktop version. Those reports are downloadable in Excel easily, which they weren’t before. They can be sliced and diced by the user – as opposed to contacting a third-party for more difficult reports.
- Registration for events is done this way, which was the first step in allowing people to register themselves directly in the database. In the end, this means no more double processing for staff and less chance for error in entering information.
- This site allows us to create pages for leadership access, which we’re working on right now. Chapter leaders will have their roster available to them immediately and board-level leadership will be able to see key information about our membership.

DATA CLEANUP
Because we’ve had several upgrades and technology changes over the last decade, done by different people no less, there’s a lot of data that needs to be cleaned up. I’m happy to report that Linda has worked incredibly hard over the last couple months to clear the database of deceased members and people who slipped through the cracks (didn’t actually pay, had multiple records, etc.). You’ll see that reflected in our membership numbers, but we’re well on our way to having good, accurate data.

The cleanup also extends to chapter membership. This “piece” is more complicated than it seems as we can’t create a single query or script to correct the information because each chapter situation is different – some charge dues and some do not and they’re all different prices. This means that we need to look at each individual chapter and their members to determine who should really stay as a member of that chapter. This is still a work in progress and we’ll have to work with chapter leadership to make sure the information is accurate once we have it. Ideally, I’ll be connecting with each of them post-EIJ to
send a starter list that we’ll work together to clean up and end with an accurate reflection of their membership.

**MEMBER PROFILE, JOIN, RENEW**

These three pages are all interconnected, meaning when we “flip the switch” to turn one of them on, they all go on. For example, we can’t begin using the new member profile page without using the renew page, and that’s where we are running into challenges.

We are hitting a snag with multi-year chapter dues on the join and renew pages. The database doesn’t allow many out of the box options in this realm, so we’ve been working with our third-party provider to come up with a solution. In turn, he’s been working within the iMIS community to see how others are doing this. What we’re finding – they aren’t. We can handle the multi-year national dues just fine. The challenge is finding a solution that allows members to join chapters for the same length of time.

As for the member profile page, Billy has worked hard on getting everything set. The Member Profile page is relatively complete. It allows members to edit information we haven’t collected before: birthdate, ethnicity, gender, add a picture, preferences about what types of information they’d like to hear about, etc. This is also where members will be able to see the chapters and communities they are a part of, as well as contact information for the leaders of those groups. Overall, we have very little left to complete on this section.

We had targeted late 2015 for this section to be rolled out. However, some of my time was deflected to address membership concerns and the overall membership strategic plan, then convention was upon us. This led us to pulling back and letting our third-party continue working on a solution. Once convention registrations started, we maxed him out with convention-related inquiries and this temporarily moved to the back burner for them as well.

Post-EIJ, this is the top priority. Once we find a solution to the multi-year chapter billing, we’ll be able to flip the switch and start diagnosing issues as they happen.

**COMMUNITY PAGES**

Again, Billy has put most of the work into these pages and has created something that reflects the needs of the communities while integrating with our database. The Freelance Community has seen early versions of the page and made suggestions for improvement. These are pretty much ready to go. One of the greatest things about this integration is that community leadership will have the ability to control much of the pages and the database will log activity from each member, allowing us to invite more engagement from those who participate very little and praise those who do. We’ll also get a better picture of where people are participating, allowing us to evaluate our resources a bit more than we have in the past. But, again, they can’t go live until we implement a solution for multi-year dues payments.

**OVERALL UPGRADE – WHERE WE’RE AT NOW**

In October 2014, a memo to the Executive Committee outlined several reasons that an upgrade to the iMIS ZO RiSE platform was a step in the right direction. At that time, we anticipated the upgrade to take roughly one year from the time we started work. Below, you’ll find information about the timeline of events so far and an itemized list of each of the expected results.
The Timeline

11/18/14: The board voted to approve the upgrade and later that month, we connected with our third-party provider to work out a timeline for install of several upgrade components. We made it very clear we didn’t want to implement any software immediately prior to or during the awards season (which ends in February) because we weren’t sure what, if anything, would be affected. During that time, we cleaned data, upgraded the memory on our server and worked with our internal processes on small fixes.

4/6/2015: In early March, we created a place on the server for the database to “live” and scheduled the official upgrade for the week of April 6, 2015. I will spare you the long list of issues that we worked through immediately following the upgrade but some major hurdles were VPN access and Staff Site access outside HQ, “mirrors” of the database not accurately being reflected on the website and in other places and a multitude of access issues from our server. Late in April, Billy and I met for two days with our third-party provider to work on setting everything up to our specifications. Since then, we’ve worked to tackle a vast array of customization that we didn’t expect. Our products aren’t simple and we’re asking the system to do many things not available in the out-of-the-box solution. However, I should say, we were told that our complicated chapter structure and multiple billing codes wouldn’t be difficult to integrate. We provided an ample list of scenarios and complications under which a member might join or renew SPJ, and all were received with similar confidence. This has not been the case in practice, and thus modifications were needed from our vendor.

This, exponentially more than any other factor, has been the catalyst for the delays in our timeline. Our goal was to have the system completely upgraded by late spring/early summer of 2016.

7/2015: We received the access we needed to start building the website portion of the upgrade in July 2015, and a large portion of the time since has consisted of going back and forth with our vendors to get these components working as they should.

Present: We’re working through a few final pieces of the database side of the upgrade. Below is information about some of the things we’re using already behind the scenes at HQ, but I wanted to provide some concrete upgrades on the bulleted points listed in the October 2014 memo first.

The Items
On the database side:

• Original Bullet: We’ll be able to easily collect more member data like pictures, beats, categories, etc., and do so without have to custom code things on the back end

Update: This is working in small doses. Our EIJ16 registration form collected demographics that are tied to the database, we have a place for members to upload pictures and share other information like birthdate that we didn’t collect previously. Once we flip the switch, these things are a go.

• Original Bullet: Staff can access the database anywhere via the web, as they’ll be working on a Staff Site instead of being tied down to their HQ desktops, which will come in handy for convention
Update: This is done. Staff can access the database from anywhere as long as they have a browser. This has been helpful for long convention prep nights and will be great when we’re on site at EIJ in NOLA.

• Original Bullet: Our reporting will be more accurate and we can create our own reports using IQA (Intelligent Query Architect) to look at any piece of data in our system, where before we were tied to previously created reports or having them custom coded by our outside provider

Update: We’re already using these as they were intended. For the most part, I’ve (Tara) have been able to build the reports we need and make them easily accessible to staff. We can now look at apples to apples (i.e., our newest staff membership goal of new members, and compare August 2016 to August 2014, 20XX, etc.)

• Original Bullet: Each staff member will have the tools they need to succeed – for example, Linda will be able to quickly view up to the minute stats, access records easier and find the people she needs depending on different criteria; Chris will have access to live donation stats and be able to review donor data in a way that makes sense

Update: We’re working on customizing all the dashboards to specific staff needs, but they have already come in handy. Reports are quick and easy and live stats are available immediately and it’s a quick look to find anything else that is needed. We’re still building these out as we figure out more about what we need.

On the website side:

• Original Bullet: Members will have an easier to manage, more robust member profile section that allows them to quickly and easily update their information at any time

Update: The member profile section is put together. Members can see all their chapters and find contact information for chapter leaders. Chapter leaders can access their rosters right from their profile page. Communities are also visible and it’s easy and quick to update information. Though this isn’t live yet, member updates on the current site are faster – an immediate reflection of changes – due to the upgrade.

• Original Bullet: Our database and website are tied directly together so members and non-members can register for conferences or events and the data moves seamlessly into our database and corresponding event registration sections (huge timesaver for convention registrations!)

Update: This piece is working, though just on the back end for this year. We wanted staff to have more experience with the new system and to work out any challenging circumstances we may not have foreseen. We found some processes we needed to change and are taking notes as we move through the process in preparation for registration to go automated by the user.

• Original Bullet: Board members can work within their own section of the website and see up to date information that is most important to them, as can chapter leaders (which will create a new place to share ideas and converse)

Update: Once the data clean with chapters and accurate chapter memberships is done, we’ll build out a “stats” page for board members, as well as a page where regional directors can pull their own reports.
The chapter roster will be available for chapter leaders via their member portal once it is live, but it is up and running in testing.

• Original Bullet: *We have the ability to create community workspaces*

Update: Billy has worked with the Freelance Community to create a community spaces for each of our existing communities that are tied to the database so people can access them from their member profile and engage in conversations. Community leaders have the ability to post announcements and moderate things on the page. This is up and running and will replace our current community pages once we make our join/renew/member profile pages to public facing.

• Original Bullet: *Data from iMIS will be directly integrated with the website, so no more three step process for usernames and passwords (again, a huge staff timesaver)*

Update: While we are still dealing with some challenges with usernames/passwords tied to generally older combinations (created three upgrades ago) that haven’t been used in years, this is moving along much easier than before. The link to reset a password is working and will be accessible when we make everything public.

One area of the web that hasn’t gone smoothly is the migration of our ‘non-member’ elements. This includes things like Quill content, SPJ news, the freelancer database, training and other resource pages. There was confidence in the migration being possible after Billy demoed the platform and received satisfactory answers about support for content database support/creation, data flexibility and other things that are absolutely necessary for such a thing. Turns out, however, that after having unfettered access to the installation the past couple months, things aren’t exactly as we were led to believe.

For example, to import our library of past Quill articles, news releases and other content, we’d need to do so manually, via copy/paste one story at a time. There’s no fast import option because Rise, which runs on the ASP.Net application platform, doesn’t play nice with SQL (which we currently use). More importantly, however, there's no fast export option. Again, copying and pasting is the only way. We were OK with importing into a proprietary system when we thought we could retrieve information quickly. However, if the day comes where our database company goes belly up or even simply ceases support for Rise and we need to quickly port our site somewhere else, we couldn't. Once we are in, it may be impossible to get out. Member data, meanwhile, is easily exportable.

For this reason, it may be better to keep the “non-member-related” sections of the website in their current homes. Regardless if we can find a workable solution to this migration problem, we will still be adding Rise features that make the website more engaging for members and leaders: Community pages, new profile pages, national and chapter leadership management tools, etc. To the end user, keeping the non-member pages out of Rise would have minimal seams. And while we realize this would still leave us with our site in three silos (blogs on PHP/Wordpress, content on ASP/iNet, member tools on ASP.Net/Rise), this is the best solution for as long as we’re with iMIS or another membership database that uses proprietary technology (which, when you’re buying software from a vendor, is all of them).
We aren’t giving up on this yet, so we aren’t ready to make a recommendation one way or another. It had to go to the back burner once EIJ got closer, but determining the best course of action (and recommendation) will be a priority after EIJ is over.

OVERALL
We are pleased with the way the new system is operating internally. The number of errors, breakdowns, fixes has dropped dramatically as we’ve updated. We are no longer four versions behind; staff is able to work differently and easier within the database; more accurate data will allow us to find correct information about our membership trends; we’re starting to collect additional information about our membership that will help in that regard as well; registration for events will soon be done by the registrant themselves, as opposed to staff; and, a comprehensive community page that integrates with the database.

Although Billy and I aren’t happy with everything we’ve seen in this upgrade, I think the ball is rolling in the right direction. It’s just taking us longer than expected, primarily because of unexpected customizations.
AWARDS AND HONORS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Awards and Honors Committee has added a new member: Jason Parsley from the Florida Pro chapter. He replaces Rebecca Baker, who stepped down after several years on the committee.

The rest of the committee is: Andy Schotz (chairman), Sarah Bauer Jackson (vice chairwoman), Sue Kopen Katcef from the University of Maryland, Heather Lovett Dunn from the Cronkite School at Arizona State University and Jay Evensen from the Deseret News.

Under a structural change made while Dana Neuts was president of SPJ, the Awards and Honors Committee continues to include the SPJ chapter contest database system, which Bauer Jackson oversees. SPJ chapters sign up to get partners for judging local contests.

The committee's busiest time of year is at the annual Excellence in Journalism convention, when it meets to review SPJ's national contests — the SDX Awards, the Mark of Excellence Awards and the New America Award.

We soon will start in on our annual review through an email conversation, which includes addressing questions and comments that SPJ Awards Coordinator Abbi Martzall received during the contest entry and judging periods.

Once the contest season has begun, Martzall often consults with me as questions arise about the three contests.

According to charts that Martzall prepares, the number of SDX Awards entries has dropped each year since 2011. There were 1,467 SDX entries in 2015, down from 1,755 in 2011.

The number of Mark of Excellence Awards also is down — from 4,611 in 2013 to 4,062 in 2015. From 2010 to 2013, the number of entries increased from 3,960 to 4,611.

We had 91 New America award entries this year, compared to 96 last year. For the second straight year, we had a judging panel that included representatives from other journalism organizations — NAHJ, NABJ, NAJA — along with judges from SPJ and SDX.

The pool of five finalists was recently announced for the MOEy, which is the Best in Show for Mark of Excellence Awards. This is the second year of the MOEy, which is announced during EIJ.
STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES

I am delighted to present to the Board this statement of the communities, for the annual Excellence in Journalism conference in New Orleans.

This year overall has been a productive one for the network of the communities, as the values of education and exchange of ideas has been at the crux of the work they do. All 5 of our communities have been at the helm of developing content, programs and initiatives that have examined the industry, its culture and where it progresses from here.

The International community has held a series of Google hangout conversations on international reporting as well as examining various areas of the world, allowing members to better understand how to make sense of the world and putting it into context. These have been championed by co-chair Elle Toussi, who has also led conversations on issues in the closed, private Facebook community.

In addition, co-chair Dan Kubiske continues to blog extensively on issues of press freedom abroad, giving SPJ members and the public insight into the role of journalists abroad, insight that is at the cornerstone of SPJ’s efforts to champion press freedom.

The Freelance community has also designed programs tailored to life as a freelancer, and how as journalism evolves those in freelance can make a contribution to the profession. In addition to chats with guests, they have utilized the closed, private Facebook community, and The Independent Journalist blog on the blog network to exchange tips and advice, as well as ensure freelancers are ready for the 21st century industry.

Anna Pratt and her colleagues have worked extensively to guarantee a broad, wide-ranging variety of programs for freelancers, which continue to provide benefits time and again.

The Digital community has also continued to help journalists make sense of the industry’s digital evolutions. Taylor Mirfendereski and her colleagues have worked on developing programs significant to education and making sense of the industry, from webinars and conversations on Twitter about engagement and making sense of platforms like Snapchat, to utilizing the Net Worked blog for reflections on trends and what is ahead.

Generation J has worked to engage younger audiences with journalism, though there have been changes in leadership. Last June, Claudia Amezcua resigned her position as chair, and Andie Adams, who was elected as Communications Officer, is serving on an interim basis until elections are held for the communities in October.

Current work being done includes advice posts and essays on First Draft, Generation J’s blog, work I am overseeing and hope to ensure is up before elections are held.
The Community Journalism community, which was formally approved by the Board at the last EIJ, is engaging its members with conversations about content relevant to covering issues, be it in a small town newspaper or broadcaster or in an urban market.

Al Cross has been at the core of those conversations and is working on expanding those opportunities with the help of co-chairs in other areas. I look forward to seeing what comes from the community in the year ahead.

The communities continue to remain a vibrant, quintessential part of SPJ’s work, and I am grateful to the chairs and members of each community that keeps things going and allows us to serve members, and SPJ as a whole. We have been able to raise awareness about SPJ’s work, and we have been able to work to emphasize SPJ’s mission, especially education, a value that I hold dear, and a value that remains ubiquitous with SPJ’s history and is integral to its future.

Yet, while this report gives me the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our communities, it also presents the opportunity for me to ponder and to look ahead, to see how the network as a whole can best help SPJ continue to be the best champion for journalism that it can be.

First, as mentioned previously, elections for the new executives of communities will be held in October. My colleagues at headquarters and I felt moving the elections to October instead of holding them during EIJ would be in the best interest for the communities, and allow for more engagement with members, allowing them to have their focus on national and regional races for board seats. Tara Puckey and I will be speaking further about the elections once EIJ is concluded and establishing a timetable for elections to commence.

Second, news about community programs continue to appear in Leads and I have encouraged the chairs to keep headquarters staff, notably Jennifer Royer and Rachel Semple, notified of such events so more members are able to attend. I will ensure that continues after the October elections.

Indeed, improving engagement will continue to be a priority. For example, Chris Vachon has been working with chairs to develop a place where members at EIJ can learn more about the communities. I am hopeful for its success and I know that projects like this will continue to be crucial to our development in the next year.

In addition, over the past few weeks, I have had conversations with President-Elect Walsh about the role of these communities. We have discussed several topics, including the engagement of younger audiences, especially with Generation J, collaboration with committees and other SPJ entities, as well as assessing how the communities can best serve SPJ’s work and help answer the questions it has.

I look forward to continuing these conversations with her, the Board and others within SPJ, and I encourage any Board member with thoughts on how the communities can best help SPJ to contact me. I also encourage members and others to get in touch if they have ideas to start a new community or have other ideas about the network.

What I appreciate the most about what the communities have been able to do for SPJ, as it continues to answer questions about its membership and how that will affect its future, is that we are able to serve all of our members with content and programs that remain at the focal point of the organization’s own mission.
This is done thanks to the tireless dedication of the chairs and others in the community executives who have shown dedication to their niches within the profession. I thank them for their service to the communities and to the future of SPJ, and know that their work will set the tone for the year ahead. I also thank President Fletcher and the Board for their service to the organization this year, for the support they have given to our work, and for allowing us to make a difference for members with this network. I look forward to working with President-Elect Walsh and the Board in the days and months ahead to ensure the communities can continue to remain a relevant and vibrant part of SPJ’s work. I also thank Jennifer Royer, Tara Puckey, Rachel Semple, Joe Skeel and all at headquarters who also support our work and advance SPJ’s mission.

We are stronger together when we collaborate together. We are stronger together when we make journalism better together. We are stronger together when we make your SPJ better together. I know that will continue, and I look forward to helping ensure SPJ remains the best it can be for not just its members, but for journalism.
ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT

Since the Spring board meeting, the committee has been active in answering questions submitted through the Ethics Hotline and educating people about the Society’s code through various forums.

The largest event for the committee was Ethics Week, which was held April 24-30. The theme was Emerging Ethics: Best Practices for New Technology. The week featured daily blog posts and a Twitter chat.

During Ethics Week, the committee also became somewhat involved with the debate over whether to name people who commit mass murders, such as those in the Orlando nightclub shooting or the shooting in Santa Barbara.

In the same vein, the committee hopes to engage other organizations over the next year to work on crafting best practices for reporting on mass casualty events. While the Society’s code does provide guidance, there may be some benefit to creating a more in depth guide for journalist in the midst of traumatic events.

Through the ethics committee, the Society also gained notice through several media interviews.

In the most recent example, a blog post about a Daily Beast story from the Olympics was widely quoted, including in a story by the Associated Press.

In an effort to be more effective at addressing people’s questions, the committee also reworked the language greeting people visiting the Society’s webpage for the Ethics Hotline. To triage calls and emails, people will be asked to tell the website a little about themselves. The person will receive specific information based on whether they’re a journalist, student or member of the public.

There is also a plan to add a small non-intrusive pop-up box on the Code of Ethics webpage to collect people’s email addresses for the Society’s mailing lists.

In the coming months, the Society’s ethics committee will take part – in some form – in conference panels at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association and – of course – the Excellence in Journalism 2016. There are also discussions about making the Society’s code a central theme for the upcoming Journalism Education Association conference in November. A tentative speaking invitation was also extended for a talk at the 2017 World Science Journalists Conference.

The committee will continue to advocate and educate the public, journalists and all people about the Society’s code. As always, the committee is happy to hear suggestions from the boards of the Society and foundation.
I’ve taken over as chair of the FOI Committee a little over a week ago, so I won’t report on what I haven’t been part of. But looking ahead, the plan is to accomplish three goals:

1. **Blog regularly about FOIA issues**

The last four entries on the FOIA blog are dated July 13, June 16, March 25, and January 28 – and that’s everything for 2016. There’s enough fodder for us to publish biweekly or, at least, on a regular and predictable timetable.

2. **Attempt to effect real change for embattled journalists (at least one)**

The FOIA Committee will figure out what’s right and wrong in a few high-profile FOIA cases and make a direct stand. Even if we just send a letter to Congress, it’ll tell them where to shove it.

If someone’s getting in real trouble for doing real journalism, we’ll try to provide them with real help, and get eyes on us for doing so. Making SPJ matter is more than just talking about the right thing, it’s telling people what that is and leading by example.

3. **Program FOIA**

When journalists do things, it looks good, and programs are an easy way to accomplish that.

Using immersion-style programming, the FOIA Committee will attempt to get students and pros involved in FOIA, directly.
GENERATION J COMMUNITY REPORT

As you may know, Generation J is in a period of transition. I took over as interim chair a couple weeks ago, and I have appointed a Gen. J board member to help me out.

I'm trying to now revitalize the blog as well as re-engage the community before I give up my seat in November.

Our social media following is strong with 251 likes on Facebook and 1,777 on Twitter.
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REPORT

2015 was the year of re-organizing and re-grouping as was stated in the 2015 report prepared by Dan Kubiske and Elle Toussi.

Since Dan and Elle took over the community the main goal was to strengthen the community and increase participation. Some key transitions have taken place since 2015. The community transitioned from Basecamp to Slack as a method to increase communication. Seeing the lack of participation on that platform, the chairs created the secret group on Facebook in 2016.

Membership
- This is will be the focus this year now that we have the Facebook group situated. We will capture the information of members and participants in 2016 and look to find their needs for the 2016 year as members of the community.
  - Will look to collaborate with headquarters to let chapter leaders know about the IC. Would like to create a source for chapter leaders and invite their members to join the Facebook group if their interest is in international/global journalism.
  - Elle and Dan will discuss goals for membership for the 2016 year.

Status Update: 2016
- The first year of the IC has been to create a stable location for current members to communicate with one another.
- The “conversations” series with Google News Labs did a series of interviews sponsored by the International Community. -Will continue in the fall of 2016 to create a unique experience for the members.
- Will look to create leadership opportunities within the community for members to become more active and lead projects for the community.
- Will look to grow the online presence of the IC from Twitter, Facebook (public page, secret page).
- Will look to create solid contributions to the community blog.
- The community will meet at EIJ16 to discuss future on-going programs and activities for the 2016-2017 year.
- Make local chapters aware of opportunities to meet with foreign journalists who visit the USA on US Government/NGO grants. Ex. DC SPJ with Kazakh journalists and an upcoming one with Chinese media representatives.
- Encourage local chapters to engage with foreign correspondents who might be assigned to their area in programing.

Summary
This year will be the growth of the international community now that the foundation has been set and gaining member’s participation. The IC will discuss with headquarters about ways to promote the community within the members already in the system and what programs will help gain future members. The IC becoming a resource center for local chapters or journalists seems to be a logical next
step and goal going into 2017. Maintaining the momentum created in 2016 and figuring out a growth strategy will be key.
Committee Meetings
The Journalism Education Committee did not meet via teleconference during the summer but is checking times and availability (at the time of this report) for a teleconference to be scheduled at the end of August.

Publications
Committee members are regularly producing Toolbox articles for Quill.

SPJ's Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award
Committee member Jeff South was honored with this year’s Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award. He was among three nominees submitted to SPJ for board members’ final consideration.

Committee Leadership
After two years as committee chair, Butler Cain decided to rotate out of that position and informed incoming SPJ President Lynn Walsh of his intentions. She recommended Richard (Rick) Gaspar of Hillsborough Community College in Florida as the next committee chair. He will assume his new duties at the end of the J-Ed Committee meeting at EIJ16 in New Orleans.

Membership
There are currently 17 committee members:

Butler Cain, University of North Alabama (chair)
Adam Maksl, Indiana University Southeast (co-chair)
Rick Gaspar, Hillsborough Community College (incoming chair)
Anthony Adornato, Ithaca College
Meredith Cummings, University of Alabama
Kym Fox, Texas State University
Suzanne Lysak, Syracuse University
Jimmy McCollum, Lipscomb University
Mac McKerral, Western Kentucky University
June Nicholson, Virginia Commonwealth University
Lee Anne Peck, University of Northern Colorado
Pat Sanders, University of North Alabama
Jeff South, Virginia Commonwealth University
Leticia Steffen, Colorado State University-Pueblo
Becky Tallent, University of Idaho (immediate past chair)
Peggy Watt, Western Washington University
Jack Zibluk, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Butler Cain, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Communications
University of North Alabama
LEGAL DEFENSE FUND COMMITTEE REPORT

As the year draws to a close, the Legal Defense Committee is considering several cases that are outstanding. Below you’ll find synopses of the latest decisions already reached as of the time this report was due. I’ve added these first and then included all the items on which we acted previously during the entire term for a full accounting of the committee’s work this year.

In addition to these decisions, I fielded other requests for information and help wrote thank you notes to direct contributors to the LDF, and discussed new fundraising possibilities.

8/24/16 Access to Police Records – Grabell v. NYPD
The Committee joined the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in a case involving application of the New York Freedom of Information law. A ProPublica reporter sought documents relating to the use of NYPD surveillance vehicles known as “Z-backscatter x-ray vans.” We signed onto an amicus brief last year when the case was before an intermediate appellate court; that court ruled that most of the records did not have to be released. We support the reporter’s effort to get an appeal to New York’s highest court, joining the Reporters Committee’s amicus brief. We all are arguing (1) that much of the information concerning the “Z-backscatter” is already publicly available, in contradiction of a key NYPD affidavit, and (2) the importance to the press and the public of access to law enforcement records.

8/17/16 Reporters’ Privilege/ Shield Law – Robles
The Committee joined the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in a case involving a New York Times reporter whom a judge tried to compel to disclose nonconfidential but unpublished information obtained during the newsgathering process. We support reporter Frenchie Robles bid to overturn the New York Supreme Court’s decision that would require her to turn over her unpublished notes and to testify about a jailhouse interview with a murder defendant. Robles is challenging the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the New York Shield Law, which she – and we – claim protects reporters from being forced to testify against their sources.

7/28/16 Reporters’ Privilege – Boal
We joined RCFP again in an amicus brief related to the military court martial of Bowe Bergdahl, the U.S. soldier who was held captive in Afghanistan. Journalist and filmmaker Mark Boal interviewed Bergdahl after his release, and portions of those interviews were played on season two of the Serial podcast. The military is now planning to subpoena Boal for his notes and recordings as part of its court martial proceedings. Boal is fighting the subpoena, and the amicus brief supports his efforts to invoke the reporter’s privilege. The brief argues that Boal deserves the protection of the privilege whether he is working in documentary film or in traditional journalism. It also argues that Boal should be allowed to seek protection from a federal district court (=rather than having to proceed through the military justice system.

7/28/16 NYPD Bodycam Policy
The Committee joined RCFP in submitting comments on the New York Police Department’s draft policy on its bodycam videos. The proposal acknowledged that the videos are subject to New York’s Freedom
of Information Law (FOIL) but we found areas in which the policy could be strengthened. One example:
we want the policy to clarify that if only a portion of a video is exempt from FOIL, the rest of the video
should be redacted and released. Our comments emphasized the importance of proactive disclosures of
footage showing serious use of force by police.

7/13/16 FOIA – State Department Emails
We signed onto a letter from the Associated Press and Reporters Committee asking a federal judge to
reconsider his decision in a FOIA lawsuit against the U.S. State Department. The advocacy group Judicial
Watch Inc. sought State Department records related to Huma Abedin, the adviser to Hillary Clinton. The
case was dismissed in 2014 but reopened in 2015 after reports surfaced of Clinton’s use of a private
email account to conduct governmental business while Secretary of State. Judicial Watch has taken
depositions of various State Department officials regarding the agency’s handling of FOIA requests that
potentially implicated Clinton’s and Abedin’s emails. The presiding judge issued an order preventing the
videos of the depositions from being released to the public. Our letter explains the enormous public
interest in the depositions and argues that audiovisual copies of depositions should be unsealed and
available for public inspection when those depositions relate to high-ranking officials’ duties on a matter
of public concern.

7/5/16 Global Injunction
This highly unusual, potentially precedent-setting non-media case caught our interest because the
concept of global injunction could be used against the media, not just Google as in this case. We joined
the Reporters Committee in a motion to intervene in a case in which a Canadian court ordered Google to
de-list some web sites worldwide. Equustek Solutions Inc. v. Morgan Jack involves the theft of trade
secrets in the networking device market. As part of the proceedings, a British Columbia court issued an
injunction requiring Google to de-list from its search database any of the websites that were used by the
defendants to sell their products. The court found that an injunction applying only to Canada would not
sufficiently protect the plaintiff, Equustek, so the court made the scope of the injunction global. The
case is now pending before the Canada Supreme Court. We argued that a court should not be allowed
to impose a single nation’s standards on Internet-published speech around the globe.

6/27/16 Gag Law
We joined the Reporters Committee in a constitutional challenge to Idaho’s “ag gag” law, which
criminalizes audio and video recording at agricultural facilities. This overbroad law can be read to cover
any type of “growing” or “planting” operation, even on public property. The Animal Legal Defense Fund,
which seeks to expose abuses in agricultural operations, brought a lawsuit arguing that the statute is
unconstitutional under the First Amendment because it is a content-based restriction on speech. A
federal trial court ruled in favor of the ALDF, and the case is now on appeal before the U.S. Court of
Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Our brief urges the appellate court to uphold the lower court’s finding that
the statute violates the First Amendment, as the law interferes with not only activists like the ALDF, but
also with investigative journalism and newsgathering.

6/9/16 National Security Letters
We signed onto an amicus from from the Reporters Committee in Freedom of the Press Foundation v.
U.S. Department of Justice. The nonprofit Foundation made a FOIA request seeking information about
the government’s use of administrative subpoenas known as “national security letters” and “exigent
letters.” The FBI has used these types of letters to get telephone records of journalists -- for instance, in
the course of leak investigations. The foundation wanted to see the policies and procedures governing
how the FBI uses such letters to obtain journalists’ communications. The government has argued that
these policies and procedures may be withheld under four different FOIA exemptions. The case is pending in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. The amicus brief provides background on the recent amendments to DOJ’s News Media Guidelines, which constrain the FBI’s ability to target journalists using formal subpoenas and search warrants. The brief also emphasizes that, because “national security letters” lack safeguards that typically protect First Amendment rights, transparency about how the FBI uses this form of legal process is essential.

5/30/16 Anti-SLAPP
SPJ joined dozens of news organizations in an amicus brief in Tobinick v Novella, a federal defamation suit between two doctors after one posted articles to a medical blog disputing the other’s claims about treatments for Alzheimer’s disease. The judge dismissed most of the suit under California’s SLAPP Act, applying state Anti-Slapp statues to a federal case. We urged the U.S. Court of Appeals now hearing the case to uphold that decision saying the Anti-SLAPP Act should apply to safeguard against lawsuits challenging protected speech.

5/30/16 Public Records
We also joined an amicus in Friedman v. Rice, a public records case under the New York Freedom of Information Law. An intermediate appellate court concluded that non-testifying witness statements given to law enforcement are categorically exempt from disclosure under the law’s exemption for confidential sources. The case is now on appeal to the New York Court of Appeals. The amicus brief highlights the media’s interest in this issue and argues that the lower court’s interpretation of the confidential source exemption is inconsistent with U.S. Supreme Court precedent and the decisions in other New York cases.

5/7/16 Libel / Actual Malice - Kelley v. Wren
We filed a brief to the South Carolina Supreme Court in a libel suit against The Sun News, a newspaper that published a series of reports about suspicious campaign contributions funneled through limited-liability companies. In one article, the journalist reported on a meeting in which a lobbyist delivered $84,000 in campaign contributions to a candidate for governor. The lobbyist sued, arguing that the sentence implied he had personally made the contributions, which would have been illegal. The journalist testified he merely intended that the lobbyist was present at the meeting. Other articles in the series made clear that the lobbyist did not physically hand over the contributions and did not break the law. Nonetheless, the jury found in favor of the lobbyist, and a state appellate court recently affirmed the verdict. Our brief to the Supreme Court argues that the lower court disregarded the well-established law that requires a public-figure plaintiff to show clear and convincing evidence that the defendant subjectively harbored serious doubts about what he was publishing. We hold that if the lower court ruling is allowed to stand, it will create confusion in South Carolina defamation law and chill journalism.

5/2/16 Public Records / License Plate Scanners
We joined 12 other media organizations in an amicus brief in a California case, American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California v. Superior Court. A state appeals court ruled that data collected by Automated License Plate Reader (“ALPR”) systems which police use to automatically scan license plates of all nearby cars, then cross-reference to the plates of stolen cars, should not be disclosed under the California Public Records Act. The court cited an exemption for law enforcement investigatory records. We argued in a brief to the California Supreme Court that ALPR records do not qualify as “investigatory” because they are not gathered for use in connection with any specific criminal investigation. Our brief holds that journalists rely on public records requests to report on law enforcement agencies, and any ruling that expands the exemption for investigatory records would hamper press access to public
4/25/16 Public Records

In our biggest award this year, the Society’s full board agreed with the LDF to award $10,000 to support *The Lens*, a nonprofit publication fighting the city of New Orleans over access to a database tracking public purchases. Despite Louisiana’s public records law that mandates government agencies provide access to public documents within three days if those documents are currently in use, the city has waited until public records requesters filed suit to produce requested documents on the eve of the court hearing, knowing most citizens and newspapers can’t sue every time they request public records. *The Lens* sued the city to deter this strategy. In March, a judge ordered the city to produce the full database and rejected the city’s contention that producing it might release private information but the city is appealing the judge’s ruling on the database. The declaratory judgment condemning the city’s practice of unresponsiveness is pending before a trial court.

2/29/16 Right of Publicity - *Maloney v. T3Media*

The committee joined the Reporters Committee in a lawsuit brought by college basketball players against a company that operated an online photo library containing thousands of photos of NCAA athletes and sporting events. The company allowed members of the public to purchase non-exclusive licenses of the photos. By purchasing these licenses, members of the public could download copies of the photos for their personal use.

College athletes who appeared in the photos sued in California, arguing that the display and licensing of the photos violated their “right of publicity,” which allows individuals to control the commercial use of their name and likeness. The trial court dismissed the case, but did not address any First Amendment issues. It is now on appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

The amicus brief argued that California’s publicity statute is a content-based restriction on speech and must be interpreted narrowly so that it does not interfere with expressive conduct or the media’s ability to report the news. In essence, if courts allow individuals to exercise unbridled control over the use of their images, the “right of publicity” will be transformed into a right of censorship.

1/27/16 Public Records - *Gilleran v. Township of Bloomfield*,

The committee signed onto a Reporters Committee amicus brief involving a request under the New Jersey Open Public Records Act for access to surveillance footage from a pole-mounted, stationary camera.

The town government argued the video footage should be subject to a blanket exemption from the open records act because it captured comings-and-going at the town hall, where there is also a police station. These arguments could implicate public access to police recordings including dash cams and body cams. The trial court and an appellate court both rejected the town’s arguments and found that the footage had to be released. This brief urged the New Jersey Supreme Court to affirm that ruling.

1/26/16 Sunshine Law – State of Florida

The committee and SPJ as a whole signed onto a Reporters Committee letter to the Florida legislature objecting to two bills that would alter Florida’s Sunshine Law. The bills would no longer make mandatory the reimbursement of attorneys’ fees when a public-records requester is successful in litigation against a government agency.
House Bill 1021 and Senate Bill 1220 would convert the current mandatory fee-shifting provision in Florida's Sunshine Law into a permissive fee-shifting provision.

12/24/15 Actual Malice - Angel v. Winograd
The committee voted to join a Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press amicus brief to fight back against a court ruling that would severely constrain the ability of the press to effectively expose government deception and would be inconsistent with the long-held standard for actual malice established in 1964 by New York Times Co. v. Sullivan.

Tawni Angel, the owner of a business that used to operate a petting zoo and pony rides in Santa Monica, California, sued Marcy Winograd, a local animal-rights activist who had led protests against Angel’s business. Winograd filed an “anti-SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation)” motion asking the trial court to dismiss the case, but the court allowed it to proceed. The judge said there was evidence Winograd spoke with “actual malice” when she criticized Angel’s business.

The brief contended that the trial court misapplied the actual malice standard, which requires a public-figure plaintiff suing for defamation to show that the defendant knowingly made false statements or recklessly disregarded the truth. The trial court concluded that Winograd spoke with actual malice merely because her statements contradicted the findings of local animal-control officers. That failed to take into account Winograd’s good-faith, subjective belief -- based on her own personal observations -- that the animal-control officers were wrong. This interpretation of actual malice would hamper the practice of journalists, subjecting who expresses disagreement with a government official’s findings to a possible defamation lawsuit.

The ruling is currently on appeal to the California Court of Appeal, and the amicus brief reiterates the proper actual malice test.