AGENDA

SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

TIME: 2 - 5 P.M.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6, 2007

ROOM: GRAND C
ANAHEIM MARRIOTT
STREAMED LIVE AT WWW.SPJ.ORG

1. Call to Order – Walsh

2. Roll Call – Tarquinio
   a. Fletcher
   b. Walsh
   c. Baker
   d. Tarquinio
   e. Kopen-Katcef
   f. McCloskey
   g. Wedding McClelland
   h. Muhammad
   i. Gottlieb
   j. Steffen
   k. Tallent
   l. Primerano
   m. Schotz
   n. Koretzky
   o. Gallagher Newberry
   p. Day
   q. Radske
   r. Williams
   s. Gallagher
   t. Otte
   u. Chung
   v. Hall
   w. Womac

3. Report of the SPJ President – Walsh

4. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – Walsh
   a. April 22, 2017 [Page 2]

5. Report of the SDX Foundation President – Leger [Page 8]


7. Action/Discussion Items
   a. Chapter action – Puckey [Page 14]

8. Old/New Business
   a. Governance update – Walsh [Page 16]
   b. Update on the communications strategic plan – Walsh/Royer [Page 26]
   c. Quill task force recommendations – Skeel [Page 29]
   d. Fundraising strategy session update – Walsh [Page 31]
   e. Wiggin donation – Skeel [Page 33]
   f. Spending policy – Walsh [Page 34]

9. Public comment period
   a. Public can make comments prior to the meeting at www.spj.org

10. Recognition of retiring board members – Walsh
11. Committee Reports
   a. Awards and Honors – Schotz [Page 35]
   b. Community Journalism – Cross [Page 37]
   c. Diversity – Zinn [Page 38]
   d. Ethics – Seaman [Page 39]
   e. Freelance Community – Becker [Page 41]
   f. International Community – Toussi [Page 42]
   g. Journalism Education – Gaspar [Page 44]
   h. LDF – Limor [Page 45]

12. Executive Director Succession Planning (Executive Session) [Page 52]

13. Adjournment
The Society of Professional Journalists

Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 6
Time: 2 - 5 p.m.
Room: Grand C

Anaheim Marriott

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.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Lynn Walsh presiding, the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:05 p.m., Saturday, April 22.

In addition to Walsh, those in attendance were Secretary-Treasurer Alex Tarquinio; President-elect Rebecca Baker; Director At-Large Bill McCloskey; Vice President of Student Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katceof; Immediate Past President Paul Fletcher; Director At-Large Rachel McClelland; Campus Representative Keem Muhammad; Campus Representative Maggie Gottlieb; Campus Adviser At-Large Leticia Steffen; Region 1 Director Jane Primerano; Region 2 Director Andy Schotz; Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky; Region 4 Director Patti Gallagher Newberry; Region 5 Director Michele Day; Region 6 Director Joe Radske; Region 7 Director Kari Williams; Region 10 Director Ethan Chung; Region 11 Director Matt Hall and Region 12 Director Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Associate Executive Director Chris Vacohon, Associate Executive Director Tara Puckey and Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Walsh gave a report on what was being planned for Ethics Week and discussed partnerships.

SDX FOUNDATION REPORT
SDX Foundation President Robert Leger talked about “Dr. J” funding and shared the 1909 Society had received a pretty sizeable pledge from 56-year-member Donald Ferguson’s estate. He shared that a survey showed overwhelming support for keeping Quill magazine in print. Within a month the board hopes to come up with a recommendation for Quill.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Sept. 21, 2016 – Fletcher was omitted on Page 21. Sept. 18, Neuts was omitted on Page 15 and Baker’s title was wrong and Fletcher’s title was omitted. Also, the Region 7 fellowship was left out of the SDX report.

Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by McCloskey, the board unanimously approved the minutes pending edits.

SPJ BUDGET
Finance Committee chairwoman Tarquinio shared that the finance committee met the day earlier, and went over the proposed budget in detail. Skeel explained the process of how the budget came together,
and offered a few highlights. There was some discussion about a decline in awards revenue and whether a presidential election year affects the number of awards submissions – and whether the awards program is “maxed out.” Skeel said unless we add new awards, he doesn’t see the program increasing. History tell us it will stay the same unless we make dramatic changes. He shared that revenue from assisting other organizations with their bookkeeping, membership, events and communications are other revenue streams could grow. Walsh said the board would entrust the awards committee to start the discussion on possible changes and then they could bring their ideas to the larger board.

Upon proper motion by Tarquinio and second by Baker, the board unanimously adopted the Fiscal Year 2018 budget.

CHAPTER ACTIVITY
Associate Executive Director Tara Puckey shared that Austin Peay State University in Region 12 has met all charter application requirements and can be activated.

As in past years, regional directors and staff review chapter activity following annual reports (due May 31) and make inactive recommendations that will be presented to the board in September.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Fletcher, the board approved the Austin Peay State University Chapter.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY
At the request of Schotz, the policy was edited to strengthen the language to say once a conflict is disclosed to the board, the person must excuse themselves from the meeting and not participate in the discussion.

Under proper motion by Schotz and second by Tarquinio, the board voted unanimously to change the language.

CREDIT CARD POLICY
Skeel explained that the Society’s auditors recommended the Society have a credit card policy. Only certain staff have credit cards and auditors recommend rules for use and consequences for misuse. Skeel shared a policy for the board’s consideration.

The board recommend that policy read “Society” instead of “company.”

Upon proper motion by Koretzky and second by Tarquinio, the board unanimously approved the policy pending legal review.

DISCRETIONARY SPENDING POLICY
There was discussion regarding the use of consultants in recent years. The discuss centered around spending limits and how much authority the president has to approve a consultant without board approval. After much debate, the board asked the Finance Committee to draft a policy for board consideration in September.

NOMINATIONS REPORT
Fletcher shared that the Nominations Committee got off to a slower start because of the board restructuring discussion. If adopted, people who are in office now (elected last fall) would serve out
their two-year terms. People elected this fall would serve two years as well, moving the board from 23 to 9 in three years. Fletcher then shared the nominations report: Director at-large, (McCloskey not seeking another term) Alex Veeneman, Elle Toussi and Randy Bateman; Campus adviser at-large (Tallent not seeking another term), no candidates at this time; Campus representative, Rahim Chagani and another open spot; Also running again are Kopen Katcef for Vice President Campus Chapter Affairs; Schotz for Region 2 Director; Koretzky for Region 3 Director; Radske for Region 6 Director; Chung and challenger Don Meyers for Region 10 Director; and Muhammad for Campus Representative. Fletcher is in conversations with Hall (Region 11) and Womac (Region 12) to see if they are running for re-election.

STRATEGIC MEMBERSHIP UPDATE
Puckey shared that membership is now tied more closely to everything we’re doing and all the pieces are coming together. Compared to this time last year, we are up 12 percent in new members and renewals. Staff is working hard to meet internal goals each month. Personal connections from staff, board, committee members are producing a lot of good results.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE
Skeel updated the board on progress being made in communications and advocacy since the January strategic planning meeting in San Diego. He highlighted the upcoming Ethics week, including securing space on an electronic billboard in Times Square, and the efforts to educate the public about ethical journalism.

Walsh also discussed media literacy and the importance of the SDX Programming Committee and SPJ Education Committee working cohesively on those efforts. Walsh said if SPJ leaders receive requests to do media literacy programs and they need help with resources, to contact her and she will put them in touch with people who already have programs ready to go. Content will need to be created, though, including things like written materials and “programs in a box.”

Walsh also referred everyone to a document in the packet that tracked all the interviews she and Ethics Committee Chairman Andrew Seaman had done so far and links to clips where SPJ was mentioned.

FIRST AMENDMENT T-SHIRTS
Schotz asked the board to support printing “I back the First Amendment” t-shirts he thought up. The goal is to sell them during EIJ, giving attendees a chance to show their pride and raise awareness. The board supported the initiative.

AWARDS DIVERSITY
Discussion then shifted to the Wells Key and whether there is a diverse poll of nominees. It also addressed a question about whether the Diversity Committee has been able to carry out its work. Walsh said she would reach out to Diversity Committee Chairwoman Dori Zinn.

EXECUTIVE SESSION
Upon proper motion by Baker and second by Hall, the board entered executive session at 2:58 p.m. to discuss personnel and choose the Fellows of the Society. Upon proper motion by Baker and second by McCloskey, the board exited executive session at 3:49 p.m.

GOVERNANCE TASK FORCE
Newberry set the stage for the following morning’s discussion by sharing the Governance Task Force report, which recommends paring the SPJ board from 23 members to 9. This would be done by
removing seats set aside for specific constituents, including Regional Directors, student representatives and campus advisors. Instead, the board would be made up of three officers, four at-large members and two appointed seats.

The goal of the plan, as Newberry explained, is to enhance the Society’s chances of building a board full of high-level, strategic-thinking individuals – then giving them a structure that allows them to be nimble.

Walsh said the task at hand is to see if the board supports the idea and if so, be ready to explain it come September.

The board worked through some of its questions, providing feedback for Newberry. She agreed to craft a memo for the next day’s discussion.

Upon proper motion by Newberry and second by Steffen the board recessed at 6:08 p.m.

The group resumed discussion at 9:09 a.m. the following day, and Newberry began by outlining their discussion up to this point. According to her, the following concerns had already been voiced: lost institutional knowledge from removal of the past president; the nominations committee and how that process would work; the overall loss of representational structure; and, term limits and how they might impact the structure.

Discussion followed and additional suggestions were made, specifically about sharing the information with delegates. Hall expressed concern about a reduced Regional Director stipend and, in response, Koretzky suggested the funds remain the same, which will allow Regional Directors (to be called Regional Coordinators under the new plan) to explain to their chapters that they will have more flexibility and opportunity to help them. Additionally, it was suggested that an organizational chart be created to share with delegates so they could see the flow of contact between the board and members.

Kopen Katcef expressed concern about the lack of student representation on the proposed board. Tarquinio worried that appointed delegates might misuse their position, and also expressed concern about appointing non-members to serve on the board. She noted that the board could appoint someone who had lost an election and skew the democratic process of the election.

A straw poll of board members was taken, resulting in 12 supporting the proposed governance plan, 2 not supporting it and several who did not feel comfortable voting until more of their questions were answered.

Discussion continued, with conversation about diversity, representation and the process of the nominating committee, along with appointed board members, at the forefront. Newberry collected all questions, concerns and thoughts and said she planned to continue working with the task force and bylaws committee to provide additional documents explaining the structure and to address some of the specific concerns the board shared during the meeting.

The board agreed that the next step would be to conduct a virtual meeting to vote on the new structure – which would come in the form of a bylaws proposal.

Upon proper motion by Hall and second by Baker, the meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Lynn Walsh presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 12:05 p.m. ET on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2017 via Zoom virtual conference service.

In addition to Walsh, the following were present: Immediate Past President Paul Fletcher; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Campus Representative Keem Muhammad; Campus Advisers At-Large Becky Tallent and Leticia Lee Steffen; At-Large Director Bill McCloskey; Regional Directors Jane Primerano, Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Gallagher Newberry, Michele Day, Joe Radske, Kari Williams, Eddye Gallagher, Ed Otte, Ethan Chung, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

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

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed governance makeover, specifically the proposed bylaws changes.

ARTICLE 6, SECTION 3
Koretzky asked to include “community manager” as an allowable pre-requisite to run for president-elect.

None opposed Koretzky’s suggestion.

ARTICLE 8, SECTION 5
Kopen Katcef shared that she would like to see more students plugged into national leadership. Her experience is if they are engaged, they will do it. However, she isn’t convinced it should be in the bylaws.

Primerano agreed with Kopen Katcef. She has some very enthusiastic student members in Region 1.

The board discussed the options for involving students in other ways, such as a student community.

Koretzky said it’s important to explain to membership how students will be represented by the smaller board. He doesn’t believe having more students help regional coordinators will answer that question.

Newberry and Skeel were in favor of leaving the bylaws as is and make sure RDs know to recruit one or more students.

The board decided to keep the language as is currently written. But, it should do more to get students involved.
ARTICLE 7

Because Wedding McClelland wasn’t able to participate in the call, Walsh shared her concern about having non-members be eligible for board appointments. Primerano, Gallagher, McCloskey and Schotz shared that concern.

Newberry supported leaving it open to non-members, giving the new strategic board as much flexibility as possible to bring the best people together. In some instances, she explained, the board may wish to have expertise outside of the journalism field—such as fundraising or technology.

Upon proper motion by Newberry, and second by McCloskey, the board voted 7-6 to accept the bylaws document as drafted, and allow the newly constituted board to select non-members as appointments.

Those voting yes were Walsh, Otte, Radske, Gallagher Newberry, Tallent, Kopen Katcef, Koretzky. Those voting no were Gallagher, Schotz, Fletcher, Primerano, McCloskey, Womac.

Under proper motion by McCloskey, and second by Fletcher, the board voted unanimously to recommend to the delegates that the bylaws changes be approved (with the addition of adding community chairs to the qualifications for the ladder).

Andy shared concerns about the sample nominations process. He isn’t comfortable having a group of volunteers recommend candidates. Gallagher agreed. The group discussed the pros and cons of each approach, but agreed that any nominations process is under the purview of the board of directors.

For the purposes of the delegate meeting at EIJ, it would be explained that the sample policies are intended to help answer questions that delegates may have. However, it will be up to a new board to finalize any policy.

Upon proper motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m. ET.
DATE: August 25, 2017
FROM: Robert Leger, SDX Foundation President
FOR: SDX Foundation Board of Directors

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

This is our last meeting with Joe Skeel and Chris Vachon. Their tremendous partnership over the past decade leaves SPJ and SDX in great shape for those who will follow. They move on to their new opportunities with my best wishes and deep gratitude.

So do Mac McKerral and Kevin Smith, who will leave the board after today’s meeting. Mac and Kevin were already well-established leaders when I joined the SPJ board in 1996. I learned much from them, and know SPJ is better for their contributions.

There is much left to do, starting with hiring the next executive director. This is the plan:

The SPJ board, with input from you, is scheduled to finalize the job description two days before we meet. The search committee, chaired by SDX Vice President Irwin Gratz, will begin advertising the position after we leave Anaheim. (Other search committee members are Evelyn Hsu, Bill Ketter, Hagit Limor, Rebecca Baker, Andrew Seaman, Emily Bloch, Lynn Walsh and me.) The aim is to have someone on board by the end of January.

Our investments, the stock market willing, may have surpassed the next milestone by then. As of July 31, the end of our fiscal year, the Foundation’s holdings stood at $12.8 million. That’s up $1 million from July 31, 2016, and the closest I can remember that we’ve been to $13 million. We are in great financial shape.

That should frame our discussions today. Highlights:

Journalist on Call.

Three foundations and an individual have declined our requests for funding this position, which we have discussed and refined for the past three years. It now appears that we need to demonstrate the value of this position before outside funders will jump on board. I shared thoughts with you in mid-August to prime the discussion we’ll have today. I hope we will leave Anaheim with a commitment to fund this position by making adjustments in our budget.

Joint meeting.

SPJ President Lynn Walsh, SPJ membership chair Robyn Sekula, and SDX Foundation officers Gratz, Limor, Howard Dubin and I met in Indianapolis with Skeel, Vachon and associate executive director Tara Puckey to discuss collaborative approaches to fund-raising. (SPJ President-elect Rebecca Baker would have been there, too, but her flight was cancelled because of weather).
Skeel framed the discussion with a vision of the two boards engaging in regular strategic planning that would establish a handful of goals for a five-year period. Each year, we would pick one to three goals to focus on, with tasks allotted to communications, education, fund-raising and membership staffers and volunteers. This would then feed into our budget for that year. (Structural changes are necessary to do this properly, which I have discussed with President-elect Baker.)

That was the blue sky thinking. The rest of the day focused on practical considerations:

- The challenge of raising funds for SDX Foundation (tax-deductible) and LDF & First Amendment Forever Fund (which are not tax deductible). Staff believes it is important to have an employee with higher-level skills to focus on this, particularly in developing relationships and pursuing deeper pockets. This tracks with recommendations from the development committee.
- The importance of presenting options to donors and letting them pick which opportunities match their passion.
- Deciding where our efforts should be concentrated (outreach to major donors, such as big foundations and corporations, and individuals ranked high; the LDF auctions and year-end appeals did not). The group saw value in developing partnerships to attract funds for major projects.

We also discussed responsibilities of the board and the staff for fund raising. Here are the big-white-sheet summaries of our discussion.

No action is necessary on this. I will be happy to take questions.
History book

Fred Brown’s publications committee report goes into greater detail on what has transpired since April. The gist: We were able to amicably end, on terms favorable to the SDX Foundation, the contract with Marion Street Press for a history book.

New members

Sonny Albarado and his nominations committee did a tremendous job of outreach.

Assuming your positive vote at today’s meeting, I am delighted to welcome April Bethea, Michael Bolden and Robyn Sekula to the board, with SPJ Immediate Past President Paul Fletcher moving into a three-year term.

And I am privileged to continue working with everyone on this board. Thanks for all you do.
STAFFING UPDATE

Given the recent, and pending, employee departures, I want to take a moment to update leadership on the staffing situation. I also want to leave leadership with a potential roadmap for moving forward – should it decide to use it. I hope this alleviates any potential concerns, as I’m confident that we have a plan to move forward that positions SPJ and the SDX Foundation for future success.

As a reminder, I will remain on staff until Dec. 1. This will give us plenty of time to fill vacancies created by the departures of Scott Leadingham, Katie Hunt and Chris Vachon. Associate Executive Director Tara Puckey will be heavily involved in that process as well.

Before I dive in to staffing, however, it’s important to understand the basis for this plan. During most of my time at SPJ, staff was counted on to provide vision and execution. We are beginning to transition away from this, relying on volunteers and leaders to provide vision and set goals. This is how it should be. Examples of this include the strategy sessions on membership, communication and, most recently, fundraising. However, I consider these “temporary fixes” that provide us with some level of guidance (in our major operational areas) over the next 2-3 years.

Whether or not a new board structure is adopted, it will be critical for SPJ and the SDX Foundation to develop a holistic strategic plan in the next 2-4 years. Otherwise, I fear we will remain the same: Doing some good work, but never maximizing our potential or making a dramatic impact on the national landscape.

At the end of this memo, I’ve included a model that illustrates how such a plan could work. And I’ve used this model to help guide me in addressing the current staffing vacancies.

DEVELOPMENT

As you know, Katie Hunt will be departing SPJ immediately following EIJ17. Chris Vachon will be leaving a week later. To replace them, we will be hiring a Development Manager. That position will be posted by the time you read this memo. Deadline to apply is Sept. 22. I hope to have the position filled no later than Oct. 31.

This would provide about one month of overlap for me and the new hire. Furthermore, Vachon has offered to be “on call” to answer any questions that our new employee has. Because Vachon will be working remotely, she has even offered to come to the office if necessary. I will also only be a phone call away after Dec. 1. As we shared earlier, we will do whatever we can to help new (and existing) staff members through the transition.

Regarding position responsibilities, this individual will be our sole fundraising staff member. (S)he will work closely with others staffers and volunteers to create, execute and evaluate our fundraising efforts for both SPJ and the SDX Foundation. As you will see in the model below, this individual will get guidance from a strategic plan and annual goals, set by leadership.
How can one person replace two? By realigning responsibilities and narrowing our priorities. Again, this will come from the strategic plan and annual goals. We got off a good start on creating the structure of the position during our Aug. 5 meeting in Indy (which you can read more about in the Fundraising Summit memo). The basis of that conversation was also the model I share below.

As a reminder, Katie was hired in large part to provide administrative support to Chris, allowing her to work on programming and partnerships. That turned into Chris spending much of her time managing the Google training program.

The new Development Manager will not work on Google, or any other educational programming. Partnerships will still be important, but (S)he will also spend time a significant amount of time on targeting individuals – specifically major donors that align with our annual goals. Furthermore, (S)he will manage our ongoing programs such as the Day of Giving and year-end appeal. Eliminating the programing aspect of the job will create enough time to manage the administrative work.

Should we enjoy success with our development efforts, we can always hire more staff if necessary. That would be a good problem to have.

EDUCATION
The new Education Manager (who replaces Scott Leadingham) will eventually take over the Google program. Until (S)he is up to speed, however, Vachon has agreed to manage the program on a contract basis. Google is aware of our transition and has no plans to end the program at this time. They have committed through 2018.

Our new Education Manager will have time to focus on Google, and our other educational programs, because we will be doing fewer issues of Quill, presumably. In addition, the Foundation is considering other changes to its educational offerings, which will impact this individual’s available time – likely creating more freedom. And, like the Development Manager, this individual will be working on more narrowly defined goals, which will lead to better efficiency.

Regardless of what happens with Quill or the Foundation’s training programs, however, I’m confident that our new hire will be able to handle the workload necessary to carry out our educational efforts.

MAXIMIZING POTENTIAL – A POTENTIAL ROADMAP
The outline below illustrates a path for SPJ and the SDX Foundation to maximize collective potential. Developing a strategic plan takes time and patience. But once it’s complete, the organization will be poised for maximum performance. Operating without a strategic plan leads to organizational detours. SPJ has been on non-stop detours since my hiring. That’s not to say the work hasn’t been important. It has been. And we have enjoyed many successes over the years. But we have never fully realized our potential because of our scattered focus over the years.

With that said, here is a potential roadmap for moving forward:

**Step 1.** Create a unified strategic plan (with 3-4 large goals) to be followed by SPJ and the SDX Foundation. I recommend going no further than 3 years out. Journalism evolves too quickly to plan for 5 years. Should a new governance model be adopted, this should be their first course of action – as recommended by the Governance Task Force. To illustrate how this process would work, we will use a familiar topic: Improve Media Credibility.
Step 2: Set annual goals that help achieve one or two of the strategic goals. An example of an annual goal, to help accomplish the strategic goal listed above, could be to mobilize/educate journalists to be liaisons to the public. Another could be for SPJ/SDX to directly engage the public. Like the strategic plan, leadership and staff work together to create the annual goals. This could be done at a January meeting each year.

Step 3: Focus SPJ’s programs and services on these annual goals. Continuing with the example from above, messaging that engages the public or mobilizes journalists will dominate our communications for a year. We will conduct training, and provide resources, to help journalists/chapters accomplish this goal. We will conduct training and provide resources for the public. We will encourage journalists to join our fight to educate the public. We will launch fundraising campaigns around the concept — seeking big-pocket donors to help in this mission. We will focus our high school essay (or other awards) on this topic as much as possible, etc., etc. This work is carried out by staff, committees and working groups.

Step 4: We develop a budget that helps support these efforts. This could include staffing support, marketing/ad campaigns, lobbying trips, etc., etc. Currently, we develop the budget in April, then try to fit what we want to do after the fact. This is backwards.

Step 5: Execute, evaluate and adjust as necessary.
CHAPTER ACTION MEMO

CHAPTERS TO ACTIVATE
Chapter listed here have met all charter application requirements. While additional materials are not included in this packet, they can be provided at any time.

No chapters to activate at this time.

CHAPTERS TO INACTIVATE
As in past years, RDs and staff review chapter activity following Annual Reports (due May 30 this year) and make inactive recommendations that will be presented to the board during the September meeting.

Region 2
Boston University
Brockport College
Canisius College
Franklin Pierce University

Region 3
Winthrop University

Region 4
Kent State University
Wayne State College
Western Michigan University

Region 5
DePauw University
Franklin College
Indiana University - Purdue University – Indianapolis
University of Southern Indiana

Region 6
Marquette University
University of Wisconsin – Madison
Milwaukee Pro

Region 7
University of Central Missouri
University of Missouri
Region 8
Abilene Christian University
Baylor University
Southern Methodist University
Texas Christian University
University of Oklahoma

Region 9
Utah State University

Region 10
Inland Northwest Pro
Seattle University
University of Idaho
University of Oregon

Region 11
Cal State University – Long Beach
GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Behind this memo are the proposed bylaws changes that delegates will consider during the closing business meeting. A quick update on what has happened since we last met June 14.

During that virtual meeting, the board voted to recommend that delegates approve the proposed bylaws changes. It also asked the Governance Task Force to tweak some of the sample policies that would be shared on SPJ.org, along with other supporting materials. I worked closely with Task Force Chairwoman Patti Gallagher Newberry and Andy Schotz to update the sample policies, clarifying they are merely options that a new board could consider.

Once the sample policies were finished, we updated the webpage with the proposed bylaws and other supporting material. We then shared the link with members. At that time we also sent a note to chapters about the proposed changes. Members were notified via SPJ Leads and encouraged to offer input. As of Aug. 23, there were just four comments on the page (two were from Schotz and I answering a question).

On Thursday, Aug. 24, a day after this writing, the Task Force was scheduled to host a virtual membership meeting about the proposed bylaws. We can update the board in Anaheim about this meeting. In response to the direct e-mail announcing the meeting, I received about six comments, all but one being in support of the change.

We are also scheduled to host a virtual meeting for delegates, which is set for Tuesday, Aug. 29. Gallagher Newberry or I can update the board when we meet in Anaheim.

Lastly, we will host a meeting during EIJ so that members and delegates will have the opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns. We hope our ongoing outreach efforts will allow us to have a more informed discussion (and vote) during the closing business meeting.
ARTICLE SIX

Society Officers

Section One. The Society's officers shall be a president, a president-elect, and a secretary-treasurer.

Section Two. The officers shall be elected in accordance with procedures established in Article Nine of these bylaws, and shall hold office between successive, annual national conventions.

Section Three. To serve as president or president-elect a person must be a member in good standing of the Society and must previously have served as a member of the board of directors, or the board of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation, or been the chair of a national committee, a professional chapter or community president who also has been or is a member of a national committee.

Section Four. Vacancy in any office, except those of president and president-elect, shall be filled by the board of directors. Should vacancies occur in both top offices, the board shall designate one of the elected directors to serve as acting president until the next convention, when elections will be held to fill both offices.

Section Five. The president shall be the chief executive of the organization and shall preside at the convention. The president shall have charge of the relations of the organization with other organizations and shall have the usual powers and duties of a president in accordance with the spirit of the bylaws. The president shall have authority to require a report from any chapter or national or chapter officer of the organization at any time. The president is authorized to appoint and assign duties to committees that the president deems necessary.

Section Six. The president-elect shall succeed to the office of the president at the end of the president's term or in the event of a vacancy in the presidency, and shall serve in the president's absence or incapacity.

Section Seven. The secretary-treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing an accounting of all receipts and disbursements, assets and liabilities, and shall report to the president, to the board of directors, or to the convention when requested.

ARTICLE SEVEN

Board of Directors

Section One. The board of directors shall be composed of the national officers, four
Section Two. The board of directors shall determine the boundaries for regions.

Section Three. The board of directors shall be the executive body of the Society and shall have the responsibility of maintaining the fiscal integrity of the Society by keeping it financially solvent. The board of directors is authorized to appoint and assign duties to committees that it deems necessary. It shall determine its own written rules of procedure, including procedures for selecting appointed directors, but its acts shall be reported to the convention.

Section Four. Any at-large or appointed director vacancy shall be filled by vote of the remaining members of the board of directors. If the position so filled is of an elected member, the replacement member of the board shall serve until the next convention, at which time an election will be held to fill the unexpired portion, if any, of the term for which the predecessor was elected. If the position so filled is of an appointed member, the replacement member of the board shall serve the unexpired portion of the term for which the predecessor was appointed.

Section Five. The board of directors shall encourage and assist professional chapters in carrying on activities of a professional nature in furtherance of the Society's aims and to enhance and strengthen the professional aspects of journalism.

Section Six. The board of directors may declare any national office or the position of any director vacant if the board determines the incumbent has failed to perform the duties of the office or no longer meets the qualifications for the office. Such action shall require approval of two-thirds of the members of the board. Any elected person whose removal will be considered shall be notified in writing 14 days in advance that the board may take such action. The national board shall notify all campus and professional chapters of that meeting 14 days in advance.

Section Seven. The board of directors will meet at least annually; additional meetings may be scheduled at the call of the President or of a majority of the members of the board.
ARTICLE EIGHT

Regional coordinators

Section One. Regional coordinators shall be elected by members of the Society from their respective regions pursuant to Article Nine of these bylaws.

Section Two. Regional coordinators shall be elected to two-year terms. Elections shall be staggered so that terms of approximately half the regional coordinators expire each year.

Section Three. No person shall serve as a regional coordinator for more than six months in which she does not live in the region that she has been elected or appointed to serve.

Section Four. The board of directors may declare any regional coordinator position vacant if the board determines the incumbent has failed to perform the duties of the office or no longer meets the qualifications for the office. Such action shall require approval of two-thirds of the members of the board. Any regional coordinator whose removal will be considered shall be notified in writing 14 days in advance that the board may take such action. The national board shall notify all campus and professional chapters in the region affected of that meeting 14 days in advance.

Section Five. The regional coordinators shall be responsible for organizing, guiding and supervising, and stimulating the activity of each chapter in their regions. Each regional coordinator shall appoint a student member as a regional assistant for campus affairs. The latter shall advise the regional coordinator on campus problems and activities, shall act in a liaison capacity with campus chapters in developing programs, and shall assist the regional coordinator in any other ways desired or requested.

ARTICLE NINE

Elections

Section One. There shall be an election annually at the convention or, if no convention is scheduled, during the fourth week of September, to elect the Society’s president-elect, secretary-treasurer, and to fill the positions of elected at-large directors and regional coordinators whose terms are expiring.

Section Two. There shall be established a Nominating Committee as a standing committee chaired by a member of the Society who is not an officer or at-large member of the board and is appointed by the president. The Nominating Committee is responsible for recruiting and screening nominees who wish to be elected officers or at-large directors, recommending individuals to serve as appointed directors, and recruiting and screening nominees who wish to be elected regional coordinators.

Section Three. No later than April 1 the Nominating Committee shall forward to the
board of directors and executive director a list of qualified candidates for each officer, director and regional coordinator position to be filled.

Section Four. No later than July 1 the board of directors shall publish the names and qualifications of candidates for elective office and for at-large director and regional coordinator positions to the Society’s membership.

Section Five. National staff and officers will do everything feasible to facilitate interactive forums online for each candidate to respond to members’ comments and questions.

Section Six. Any member of the Society in good standing may nominate a candidate or candidates to run against candidates submitted pursuant to Section Three. Nominations must be received by the president no later than 5 days before the start of balloting, and must include a statement of the candidate’s qualifications to hold the office for which s/he has been nominated. Upon verification that a candidate nominated in this way is a member of the Society in good standing, is qualified to hold the office for which s/he is being nominated, and is willing to serve if elected, the board of directors immediately shall publish the names of candidates and their qualifications by the same method used pursuant to Section Four.

Section Seven. The election shall be conducted electronically by secret ballot beginning at the end of the opening business meeting of the convention and ending one hour before the start of the final business meeting of the convention. In a year when no convention is scheduled, balloting will begin at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Time on a date in the fourth week of September set by the board of directors and balloting shall remain open for at least 48 hours. Ballots shall be cast using a system established by the executive director with the approval of the board of directors.

Section Eight. All members of the Society in good standing at the date and time balloting begins are eligible to vote for officers and at-large directors.

Section Nine. Each member of the Society in good standing may vote in the election for the regional coordinator representing his or her home region. The member’s home region shall be determined on the basis of the postal address used by the Society to communicate with the member. If a member of the Society is a member of two or more chapters in different regions, the member may choose the region in which s/he will vote for regional coordinator by notifying the Society in writing no later than 30 days before balloting begins of where s/he intends to vote.

Section Ten. A committee appointed by the president shall count the ballots and report the results of the election to the membership at the final business meeting of the convention. In a year when no convention is scheduled, the committee shall report the results to the board of directors no later than eight hours after balloting is closed, and the board shall immediately publish the outcome of the election to the membership.
ARTICLE NINE A

Transition to new governance structure

Section One. Officers

Paragraph A. In addition to the officers identified in Article Six, Section One, there shall be a vice-president for campus chapter affairs.

Paragraph B. The vice-president for campus chapter affairs shall be the adviser to the president and the board of directors on matters pertaining to campus chapter affairs.

Paragraph C. The incumbent when these bylaws take effect shall serve the remainder of the term to which s/he was elected, and at the end of that term the position of vice-president for campus chapter affairs shall be abolished.

Section Two. Board of Directors

Paragraph A. In addition to directors identified in Article Seven, Section One as members of the board of directors, each at-large director, campus adviser at-large, regional director and student member at-large elected prior to the date on which these bylaws take effect shall serve the remainder of the term to which that director was elected.

Paragraph B. In the first election after these bylaws take effect, the membership shall elect two at-large director who will serve terms of one year, and two who will serve terms of two years.

Section Three. Executive Committee

Paragraph A. The executive committee shall consist of the officers and two directors chosen annually by the board of directors.

Paragraph B. The executive committee shall possess and may exercise all of the power of the board of directors while the board is not in session, except to the extent, if any, that such authority shall be limited by action of the board, and except that the executive committee shall not have the authority of the board of directors to:

— declare a board office vacant.
— effect the sale, lease or other disposition of all or substantially all of the property and assets of the Society.
— hire or fire the executive director.

Paragraph C. The executive committee will meet at the call of the president or of a majority of the members of the committee.
Paragraph D. The Executive Committee shall be abolished at the date and time when balloting pursuant to Article Nine, Section Seven begins two years after the date on which these bylaws take effect.

Section Four. Without the need for further action by delegates at a convention, this Article shall be repealed at the date and time when balloting pursuant to Article Nine, Section Seven begins.

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 at-large 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.
Section Ten. The regional directors (members of the board) shall be responsible for organizing, guiding and supervising, and stimulating the activity of each chapter in their regions. Each regional director shall appoint a student member as his regional assistant for campus affairs. The latter shall advise the regional director on campus problems and activities, shall act in a liaison capacity with campus chapters in developing programs, and shall assist the regional director in any other ways desired or requested.

If the person whose removal is being considered is a national officer or director at large, t

If the person under consideration for removal is a regional director, the national board shall notify all campus and professional chapters in that region 14 days in advance.

Executive Committee

Section One. The executive committee shall consist of the officers, the immediate past president and two directors chosen annually by the board of directors.

Section Two. The executive committee shall possess and may exercise all of the power of the board of directors while the board is not in session, except to the extent, if any, that such authority shall be limited by action of the board, and except that the executive committee shall not have the authority of the board of directors to:

— declare a board office vacant.
— effect the sale, lease or other disposition of all or substantially all of the property and assets of the Society.
— hire or fire the executive director.

Section Three. The executive committee will meet at the call of the president or of a majority of the members of the committee.
be nominated in a manner determined by the board of directors, and shall

In preparation for the annual election, no later than January 4 of each year, the president shall appoint a Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of candidates including at least one nominee for each officer and director position to be filled.
COMMUNICATIONS PLAN UPDATE

The following is an update/summary of strategic communications progress since the planning session in San Diego on Jan. 28, 2017.

GROUNDWORK

- **Utilizing social media with short graphic messages and social cards** – We have increased the use of social cards to include quotes/photos from members about why they are journalists, members of SPJ, why a free press is important. We’ve also used them to promote things like Twitter chats, Ethics Week, EIJ17 and other events. We have also been creating them to help promote the International Community’s blog series on women in journalism. Social cards often receive more attention, comments, retweets, likes, etc., on social media than other posts. Graphic elements and social cards have become one of the consistent ways SPJ posts information to social media.

- **Create Influencer campaign** – In addition to the work we do every day to maintain and build relationships with influencers, we developed a plan for reaching out to potential influencers in person when SPJ staff and leaders travel across the country. We first tried it in Denver when Tara Puckey traveled there for JAWS training. She met separately in her “free time” with Jon Murray of the Denver Post and Jace Larson of KMGH-TV to discuss journalism generally, their needs, what SPJ can do for them, etc., in a very low-pressure, casual meet up. Overall feeling was that this was beneficial, however, building relationships this way will take a lot of time and planning and can make an already hectic schedule even more so. We’ve begun exploring other ways we might be able to more quickly and effectively build a list of influencers. For example, by reaching out to specific reporters/outlets electronically to offer SPJ experts as sources.

- **Establish social media, web, email strategy** – Upon conducting a communications audit, it was determined that SPJ’s social media and email strategies do not need drastic changes at this time. We continue to work on targeted messaging, focusing on the channels that matter for the different types of messages. We’ve created two microsites – fight.spj.org and ethics.spj.org – to relay messages when the media is attacked or as other current events warrant. Focus is on Twitter and Facebook primarily for social media, then Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat, in that order. We have been experimenting with Facebook Live, Twitter chats and Snapchat/Instagram takeovers, which will likely continue in the near future. Emails continue to be more targeted, through segmented newsletters and other messages. We have begun reviewing lists of web pages that can either be updated or deleted completely in an effort to begin streamlining the website.

- **Establish criteria for how and when to engage at the local level** – The Communications Committee developed guidelines for chapters in working with SPJ national and vice versa. They were developed by the Communications Committee and will be distributed to chapters.
Create a strategy for dealing with Trump administration – The fight and ethics microsites were developed as part of this strategy. We also have talking points and “evergreen messages” that continue to be developed and updated about topics that regularly come up and SPJ is asked to comment. These can be given to the SPJ president or other designated spokespeople to quickly respond to some of the questions and requests we receive frequently.

COMMUNICATIONS OVERARCHING GOALS (and bulleted action items that support each goal):

1. In 2020, SPJ will dedicate itself to the inclusion of all who practice and support ethical journalism and journalists of all types.
   - We expanded SPJ’s email distribution list to include other like-minded organizations and diverse groups and continue to build relationships with other organizations so we can more effectively partner and share each other’s work.

2. In 2020, SPJ will lead the charge and mobilize journalists to educate the public on the role of the press and ethical journalism.
   - We are strengthening our partnerships with other journalism and open government groups and individuals in writing/signing letters, joining amicus briefs, offering help to journalists who need it, etc., and promote those activities via social media, press releases, Meltwater messages, etc.
   - We have used the Code of Ethics more often via social media, blog posts, statements, etc., as a license to speak out for press rights
   - We have highlighted and celebrated more award-winning journalism and other success stories of real journalists/journalism and why they are/it is important. For example, we were more active on social media the night of the SDX Awards banquet than we have been, we highlight/feature award-winning journalism on the ethics microsite, we have responded to some on social media who say there isn’t any great journalism anymore by pointing them to the award-winning journalism on our website, etc.
   - We have mobilized individual members to share and promote real journalism and why it is important via social media by doing mini social media and membership campaigns.
   - Getting SPJ and journalists into the public arena (schools, etc.) is president-elect Rebecca Baker’s primary goal. You will see a lot of activity in this area during the coming year.

3. In 2020, SPJ will proactively engage, fight and lobby on behalf of the press and the public for press freedom, government transparency and accountability.
   - We developed and executed a plan for providing support for the annual Sunshine Week
   - SPJ is becoming the primary source on information related to ethical journalism. We are receiving more clips of stories from across the country in which the Code of Ethics is referenced; more mentions of the code on social media, etc.
   - SPJ leaders met with staff of lawmakers in June when they were in Washington, D.C. for the SDX Banquet and invited them to the banquet. Two staffers attended. Overall
response was positive. We anticipate those relationships will continue to build as we continue these visits in the coming years.

4. In 2020, SPJ will lead the discussion in media literacy.
   - We are making strides in leading the discussion about journalism ethics. Media literacy in general is something we will focus on in the coming year under the leadership of President-elect Rebecca Baker. This goal intersects with her desire to engage the public more often.
   - The ethics microsite was created to promote Ethics Week, including the announcement and photos of the Times Square billboard. We will continue to leverage this.
   - Op-eds, blog posts, Facebook Live, Twitter chats, social media cards were used.
   - Continued to promote the Code of Ethics (bookmarks, posters – both printed and online on Downloadable Resources page)
   - We believe and frequently communicate in our messages:
     - The Code of Ethics is a license to speak out for press rights.
     - The Ethics Code remains the gold standard taught in j-schools across the country
     - SPJ helps the public learn what is or isn’t credible information and to consider the source
     - We are the go-to journalism organization for the public’s questions
     - SPJ and the Code can help the public learn what is or isn’t credible information and to consider the source.

5. In 2020, SPJ will provide the support and services that make membership essential. (Note: This is already being done largely via the membership strategic plan adopted in 2016.)
   - Send message to employers twice a year about job bank.
   - Better communicate networking opportunities – Chapter leaders, college chapters, online
   - Promote Volunteer Square to show members how they can be more involved
   - Continue sending segmented Leads for student, pro and retired members, supporter newsletters and prospect emails/ebooks.

Over the coming year, we will continue to evaluate metrics, what works and what doesn’t, and adjust the plan as needed. President-elect Baker has identified media literacy and outreach to the general public as her main goal (primarily Goals 2 and 4), so we will work on ways to help get more SPJ members speaking to community groups and schools about the importance of journalism and the First Amendment.
Note: Information below was taken from Brown’s longer report about all of the Foundation’s publications. Because the SPJ Board has no involvement in the proposed history book or Ethics book, they were removed. You can find the full report in the SDX Foundation meeting packet at www.spj.org/board-meeting.asp.

Prepared by Fred Brown, chair. Members of the committee also include Jay Evensen, Paul Fletcher, Irwin Gratz and Alex Tarquinio. The Quill task force includes them, plus Ethan Chung and Keem O. Muhammad from the SPJ Board.

We don’t believe any of our recommendations require formal approval by either the SPJ or SDX boards. But we did want you to be aware of what we’ve been up to. Overall, though, we endeavored to avoid micromanaging; it was our intention to let headquarters staff handle the details of implementation.

Quill, in print and online

The committee/task force had several discussions, the most recent a telephone conference call on June 27, to discuss any possible amendments to an initial May 17 draft of recommendations. We pretty much endorsed that draft, with a couple of exceptions and amendments.

We agreed that it’s a good idea to continue to follow the recommendations of an earlier Quill committee to focus the magazine’s content on education, but also to add some in-depth analysis of trends in journalism.

We attempted to offer a bit more guidance about what sort of skills Scott Leadingham’s successor should have — Keem Muhammad followed up with an email to headquarters suggesting job descriptions. We backed off quite a bit from the idea of turning over major parts of Quill production to campus contributors, but we did agree that there’s a need to get students more involved as content providers. Here’s what we’re recommending:

1. Continue Quill as a print publication, but with fewer issues each year. SPJ’s bylaws say Quill should be published at least six times a year. But according to Bill Culbertson, our attorney at Baker Hostetler, that doesn’t mean they all have to be in print format. Joe Skeel contacted Culbertson, who “sees no conflict with the bylaws if we decide to print four issues of Quill and beef up our online content.... He said we are lucky the bylaws used the word ‘publish’ instead of ‘print’.”

We recommend printing Quill quarterly, with more in-depth, perhaps themed content. Regular columns – ethics, FOI, writing tips – could use either platform, print or online, or both. All chapter- and headquarters-related content should be published online only. And everything that appears in print also should be available online.

2. Make the website more compelling, with more current content.
Trying to replicate the daily updates of other journalism websites, such as Poynter or CJR, is probably too ambitious. But we should at least endeavor to have more emergent and relevant content online. We also could use content generated by the existing communications staff, such as position statements and other announcements, and put the Quill brand on it.

3. Develop more student participation in all Quill formats, especially online. Initially the committee was intrigued by the potential of turning over major parts of Quill and/or online design and content to one or possibly more campus chapters, as a way to create student buy-in and increase the amount of available material. But it may be too complicated, and there are other potential problems. Coordination of efforts would be difficult from a distance. Campus politics could create jealousy among chapters. We would lose the synergy of having all communication efforts centered at the Indianapolis headquarters. So the idea of involving more students has come down to using their input mostly for online content. It still will require a little more work at headquarters, but it should enhance campus awareness of SPJ and SDX, and being a regular contributor could be a real résumé booster for a young job-seeker. We should try to come up with a system where students compete for coveted available positions.
DATE: Aug. 21, 2017
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY SESSION

NOTE: Much of this memo was taken from SDX Foundation President Robert Leger’s note to the Foundation board.

SDX officers Irwin Gratz, Hagit Limor, Howard Dubin and Robert Leger, along with Lynn Walsh and SPJ membership chair Robyn Sekula (SPJ President-elect Rebecca Baker’s flight was cancelled because of weather) met in Indianapolis with Joe Skeel, Chris Vachon and associate executive director Tara Puckey to discuss collaborative approaches to fundraising.

Skeel framed the discussion with a vision of the two boards engaging in regular, joint strategic planning that would establish a handful of goals for a five-year period. Each year, we would pick one to three goals to focus on collectively. To achieve that, we would create tasks tied to our operational areas: communications, education, fundraising, membership, etc. Having organization-wide focus (from SPJ and the SDX Foundation) is the key to maximizing efforts toward the strategic goals. Once the goals and tasks are set, we would then build budgets for SPJ and the SDX Foundation that would help achieve those goals. This would require some structural changes are necessary to do this properly, which I have discussed with President-elect Baker.)

When putting all of this together, we would be an organization with:

- Realistic strategic goals (3-5 over a 5-year span).
- Annual goals (1-3) to help achieve designated strategic goals.
- Organizational focus on those yearly goals from all “departments.”
- A budget that supports achieving specific annual goals.

That was the blue sky thinking, which you can read more about in my staff report. The rest of the day focused on practical considerations:

✓ The challenge of raising funds for SDX (tax-deductible) and LDF & First Amendment Forever Fund (which are not tax deductible). Staff believes it is important to have an employee with higher-level skills to focus on this, particularly in developing relationships and pursuing deeper pockets. This tracks with recommendations from the development committee.
✓ The importance of presenting options to donors and letting them pick what matches their passion.
✓ Deciding where our efforts should be concentrated (outreach to major donors, such as big foundations and corporations, and individuals ranked high; the LDF auctions and year-end appeals did not. In fact, the group supported the idea of eliminating the LDF auctions, believing that this time and energy could be used more effectively). The group saw value in developing partnerships to attract funds for major projects.
✓ All of this, ideally, would be done with a specific goal/campaign in mind each year.

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We also discussed responsibilities of the board and the staff for fund raising. Here are the big-white-sheet summaries of our discussion.

**Board Responsibilities**
- Develop leads in area - open doors
- Meet w/ current/potential donors - with stuff in box
- Should donate
- Grant coaching
- Connectors to partners
- Work on stake on coordination
- Visually for fundraising ideas
- Do'ers
- Sit in on fundraising training
- Being in touch with industry
- Passion for mission

**Staff Responsibilities**
- Marketing messaging
- Develop materials
- Help stay vested in board member
- Monitor "wild" in areas of interests
- Close deals
- Coordinate meetings - logistics support
- Coordinate with partners
- Staff wide focus
- Record keeping / data
- Admin (thank you's, stats, etc.)
- Understanding and organizing history
- Event planning
- Passion for the mission / understanding of opportunity

No action is necessary on this. President Lynn Walsh or I will be happy to take questions.
DATE: Aug. 21, 2017
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

DESIGNATION OF WIGGIN DONATION

A few months ago, we received a $51,577 donation from the estate of Hillary Wiggin – a member who joined in 1959. The request was to use the money however SPJ saw fit, giving us complete freedom to do as we wish.

After much thought, I am recommending that the board designate this money to the First Amendment Forever Fund. Here is what happens with this action:

• The money would earn interest in perpetuity. Calculating for a 5-percent return on just this amount, that would be about $2,600 in additional revenue in Year 1. That amount would grow as the money grows.
• Because it would be a board-designated contribution to the fund, it could be pulled out of the account at any time, for any reason.
• Because the First Amendment Forever Fund has a broad definition for usage, it could be used any number of ways. That could include special projects each year or as an additional revenue stream for regular advocacy operations, such as the D.C. lobbying trip, Ethics Week, Sunshine Week, or to offset staff salary – freeing up money for other things.
• This would push our balance to about $190,000, bringing our annual earnings to about $9,500. At this point, those earning are being reinvested into the account. But, at any point, the board could decide to use those earnings.
• Lastly, by designating the money to the First Amendment Forever Fund, SPJ would be adding to its war chest of unrestricted money – which is hard to come by.

Other options to consider:
• The Legal Defense Fund, which currently has a balance of about $92,000. We have held steady on this balance for the past few years, replacing expenses with current year donations. I don’t recommend LDF because we have plenty in that fund. Furthermore, because the action is board designated, it could be pulled back and used for LDF at any point if necessary.
• General operating budget, which means the money would be spent on day-to-day activities – or earmarked for our rainy-day fund if we finish the fiscal year flush with cash. I don’t recommend the operating budget because our rainy-day fund is healthy and we are a budget-conscious group. Should our rainy-day fund be depleted a bit, we should work to restore that through budget mechanisms, not donations.
SPENDING POLICY

Over the summer, the finance committee continued the conversation about a spending policy that was raised at the April board meeting. The committee recommended moving the issue to the agenda of the national board meeting in Anaheim.

In the April finance committee meeting and the meeting of the full board, questions were raised as to whether a spending policy should focus narrowly on the hiring of consultants or should focus more broadly. Finance Committee Member Andrew Schotz and Regional Director Matt Hall returned to the committee with the following newly-proposed language:

*Executive Committee approval is required for any consulting cost of $3,000 or more unless the board previously authorized the expense.*

Some committee members questioned how consultants would be defined. Broadly speaking, that could include auditors, lawyers or tech support. The committee revised the draft language:

*Executive Committee approval is required to pay for any services costing $3,000 or more unless the full board previously authorized the expense.*

Four of the committee members approved of this language, while three were concerned that the $3,000 limit might be too low.

The committee chair discussed the new draft language with the executive director. He did not view the $3,000 spending limit as problematic as long as the board interpreted this as expenditures that might exceed the budget. He gave a real-life example of potential repair work to the headquarters parking lot that would exceed $3,000, but could be included in the building maintenance line item of the budget.

The committee unanimously approved of moving the item to the September board meeting in Anaheim.
AWARDS AND HONORS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Awards and Honors Committee is: Andy Schotz (chairman), Sarah Bauer Jackson (vice chairwoman), Sue Kopen Katcif of the University of Maryland, Heather Lovett Dunn of the Cronkite School at Arizona State University, Jay Evensen of Deseret News and Jason Parsley of the South Florida Gay News. Pat Duggins of Alabama Public Radio has just joined the committee, too.

• 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 system is working well.

The committee’s busiest time 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 are about to launch into those discussions.

SPJ had some challenges in deciding how and whether certain entries fit our rules. Some of those questions came very late in the process, necessitating quick reactions. Those situations will be addressed as part of our offseason review.

• On behalf of the committee, I have worked closely the last few years with Abbi Martzall on SPJ awards issues. Christine Cordial, who will replace Martzall, has just started in the position and is learning the ropes.

• As Executive Director Joe Skeel pointed out, the number of entries for the Sigma Delta Chi Awards, the Mark of Excellence Awards and the New America Award were all down this year.

The figures were:
— SDX: 1,341 for 2016 contest, down from 1,467 in 2015 and 1,652 in 2014
— MOE: 3,502 for 2016 contest, down from 4,062 in 2015 and 4,158 in 2014
— New America: 76 for 2017, down from 91 in 2016 and 91 in 2015

• Skeel asked the committee to consider a notable change. He shared with us the possibility of SPJ managing and co-sponsoring an annual competition on behalf of another journalism association. All members of the Awards and Honors Committee supported the proposal.

• In 2016, for the first time, SPJ helped the Family Travel Forum with its annual Teen Travel Writing Scholarship competition.

http://myfamilytravels.com/content/65074-family-travel-forum-announces-winners-its-2016-teen-travel-writing-scholarship

I was part of the pool of judges who decided on first place, second place and third place, as well as 20 honorable mentions.

SPJ was credited and thanked for its assistance.
I will help with the judging again this year.

- The Kunkel Awards for video game journalism were announced, one per day, at the end of March. Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky runs the contest, which is in its second year, and SPJ helps promote it.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Schotz
Chairman
SPJ Awards and Honors Committee
The Community Journalism Community has created a Facebook page in addition to its list-serve. Both are used to share items from The Rural Blog and other information from the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues.

One issue with the Facebook page is requests to join from people who are not SPJ members or don’t even appear to be journalists. I have been adding people who appear to be journalists and inviting them to join SPJ. I have no data on how effective that has been in building membership; I let my graduate assistant handle this during the fall and spring semesters but she tailed off in the final month of the spring and I have been too busy to pick up the ball and run with it. But with school starting again, we will become more active.
Society of Professional Journalists — Diversity Committee Updates

By: Dori Zinn, Chair

Six fellows will be at Excellence in Journalism this year, and they were hand-picked by a selection sub-committee that weeded through 23 applications — the most we’ve gotten in a decade.

Despite a little bit of a late start, most of our application updates were accepted. Another change to the fellowship was the schedule of the fellows at EIJ and beyond: there was a virtual introduction so they aren’t required to meet before the conference; there’s more encouragement to talk to other conference-goers and SPJ leaders (not just each other); they are looking for more out of SPJ and the inclusion of diversity in newsrooms and media outlets. These are all simple but wonderful things I think SPJ re-use when setting up the fellows next year with the incoming chairperson.
Old Business (since Fall 2016):

The Ethics Committee spent much of its times this year educating about the Society’s Code of Ethics through conference appearances, blog posts and the Ethics Hotline.

The Ethics Hotline received roughly 350 calls and emails since EIJ 2016. Questions are often submitted to the Ethics Hotline email or phone number. Additionally, members of the committee often directly receive questions. The rate of calls appears to be increasing – possibly due to increased recognition of the Society and its work.

The Ethics Committee also posted a number of blog posts about various topics throughout the year including Facebook’s and Twitter’s approaches to tackling “fake news,” Sean Spicer’s treatment of the press, anonymous sources and Melania Trump’s lawsuit against the Daily Mail, which heavily quotes from the Society’s Code of Ethics. Most recently, the blog focused on reporting on discrimination in the wake of Charlottesville.

Ethics Committee members are also active in promoting the Code of Ethics and ethical journalism through talks and conference appearances. In November, Member Elizabeth Donald attended the Walter Cronkite Conference on Media Ethics and Integrity in St. Joseph, Missouri. She spoke about how the Society revised the Code in 2014. President Lynn Walsh also spoke in November about the Code at the National High School Journalism Convention in Indianapolis. She also spoke in March at the College Media Association conference in New York with Chair Andrew Seaman and CNN’s Brian Stelter. Seaman also spoke at a number of conferences and spoke in March about the Code at the University of Kentucky.

Ethics Week was generally a success with few distractions by outside forces. Unfortunately, publicity plans largely fell through due to other media news taking up a lot of oxygen, including the chaos at Fox News caused by sexual harassment allegations. The Society did get a sizable amount of advertising space thanks to generosity of Thomson Reuters, which donated the use of its billboards in Times Square. (see photos on reverse side) Additionally, the Society sent letters to all members of Congress and met with a number of congressional staffers before the SDX dinner in June.

The ethics committee is also looking for opportunities to get the Code of Ethics in front of a wider audience. For the past few months, we’ve been sending bookmarks with the Code to the Paley Center in New York City for its journalism-related events.
New Business:

The ethics committee is looking forward to continuing its work educating people and journalists about responsible journalism through its Ethics Hotline, conferences and general outreach.

Specifically, the committee chair will be attending in November a working group put together by the Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The working group will discuss the ethics and legal issues for journalists reporting on national security leaks.

Additionally, the committee will be seeking members or an advisory panel of influential journalists to advise on issues and amplify our messages. The hope is that these members can assist on important events, announcements and provide guidance when necessary.

Additional activities will be discussed at the ethics committee meeting at Excellence In Journalism 2017.
Report to: SPJ Board  
From: Hazel Becker, Freelance Community chair  
Date: 8/18/2017

**Summary of community activities since the April report**

Summer has been a time to work on Freelance Community resources. Despite the resignation of Resources Coordinator Cirien Saadeh from our leadership team, we have:

- updated our website with a fresh look and new copy for our welcome and FAQs pages;  
- created new chapters on copyright for *On Your Own: A Guide to Freelance Journalism* (not published yet), and excerpted them into a handout for EIJ;  
- written for The Independent Journalist blog and the Freelance Toolbox in *Quill*;  
- collected a [library of “rights” clauses](#) from freelancers’ contracts and begun a [library of indemnity and warranty clauses](#); and  
- continued to update our [crowd-sourced lists](#) of fellowships and contests.

We held a well-attended chat on April 26 discussing rights clauses in freelance contracts. We have encouraged local chapters to hold events for freelancers, assisted when asked, and helped publicize training by Region 3 and SPJ Florida as well as freelance fairs and meet-ups in Georgia, Cincinnati, and D.C. through our website, [Facebook group](#) and [Twitter feed](#). We proposed and are producing two freelance-oriented sessions for EIJ, one on reselling and retelling stories and the other on how to do investigative reporting as a freelancer.

Several Freelance Community members and other SPJ freelancers attended the Collaborative Journalism Summit at Montclair (N.J.) State University in May, where we connected with representatives of other programs and groups to explore how independent journalists can gain access to collaborative projects and efforts. Discussions with Montclair State’s Center for Cooperative Journalism will continue in the fall.

Our membership is at 133 – down from 140 in March, but the same as at the beginning of 2017. Membership Coordinator Holly Fisher has been sending “welcome” emails to new members of the Freelance Community whenever we get a roster. We have new members every month, but we have lost a member for every one we have gained this year.

As always our social media activities have kept us busy, with Susan Valot tweeting [*]@SPJFreelance and all of us joining close to 700 others in discussions on Facebook. Discussions and tweets run the gamut from tips about pitching and available gigs to long discussions about ethics and business issues.

We are looking forward to connecting with others at EIJ, where we will staff the Freelance Corner, hold our annual meeting, attend mixers and other social events to spread the word about the Community, lead and attend sessions, and attend business meetings.
SPJ International Community

Community Report
18th August 2017

OVERVIEW

January 2017 the International Community made a commitment to grow the online community and provide the services that were needed in requests that have been given in the past year. These benchmarks are the following: Growth on Facebook and Twitter, collaborations with international organizations and press associations, database for community members for fixers, translators and logistics personnel, and promoting community activity.

April 2017, community chair, Elle Toussi attended the World Journalism Conference in South Korea along with current president Lynn Walsh and president-elect Rebecca Baker. From this trip we have forged connections with over 90 international journalists that have collaborated and helped the International Community in their respective countries.

Requests are received regarding assistance in logistics, fixers and translators on a weekly basis. This year we set a benchmark goal to provide a data base to members that will be a “go-to” for these requests.

We have also assisted in helping international journalists in danger by coordinating with the CPJ and Reporters Without Borders for journalists in Pakistan, Oman and Norway. We hope to forge an outreach to these organization to create a flow of communication for future work like this.

GOALS

1. Growth of International Community participation and outreach international. (Including online via Facebook and Twitter).
2. Collaborations with international journalism associations, organizations to inform and provide opportunities for our members.
3. Training for members for safety, both digital and hands on hostile-environment.
4. Database for requests regarding fixers, translators and logistics when reporting abroad.

UPDATES

1. Beginning of this year, the SPJ International Community had 35 members in the FB private group and 185 “likes” on the public page. As of Aug 16, the private group has grown to 230 members and there are now 400 likes on the public page. Twitter has 300 followers and will given some focus later this year.
2. SPJ International has reached out and forged collaborations with ONA, GEN, AAJA, WAN-IFRA, EJC, IJNET, FCAEA, GIJN and Coalition of Women In Journalism.
3. The Telluric group is currently working on a safety training program for our community. More information to be provided in the fall. This will include hands on training that will be TBD in the coming weeks.

4. A collaboration will be announced at the EIJ conference with World Fixers. The founder will be attending the International Community session to announce the collaboration. He will also be contributing a monthly piece for the SPJ IC blog. The Coalition for Women in Journalism will also be announcing their collaboration with the International Community. They will be contributing once a month to the blog also.

5. The #PressFreedomMatters #WomenMatter blog series started in June. Was planned to be a month, but there has been lots of feedback to continue the series and many women have reached out to contribute their narrative. Every Wednesday we release another narrative.

**MILESTONES**

**Social Media Presence**

Plan to grow our presence on FB to 1,000+ before end of the year. For the private group, would like to see 500+ before the end of the year.

**International Associations/Publications Database**

There has been a request to provide a resource to international associations and publications. Will launch this effort in the fall with the help of the community.

**Community Involvement**

Will do a call out in the fall for members of the community to help with portions of the community (i.e. social media manager, content manager - blogs, community engagement, research).

**International Journalists EIJ 2018**

Launch a fundraiser or seek a grant to create a fund for future international journalists that would like to attend the conference to assist with financial aspects of attending (lodging, program ticket, travel).

**SPJ Outreach**

We will be looking to get more support from headquarters for letting all SPJ members learn about the resources available from the International Community. We would like to get more core members involved and letting student chapters know about what their needs are in regards to doing international work. A possible collaboration with the student community to do a mentorship program would be something that would interest members of the community.
JOURNALISM EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The SPJ J-Ed Committee worked on several initiatives this year. The committee worked to promote and share resources such as helping people better understand the concepts of fake news. Becky Tallent successfully recruited NAJA and the Indigenous Media Freedom Alliance Frontier for the project. Resources were shared amongst the committee. The current discussion is where and how to share the resources with SPJ members.

Committee members also made ongoing contributions to Quill. Articles included ways to address fake new, use documentary filmmaking with students, and ideas for teaching design principles. Additional contributions are scheduled for the remainder of the year. A subgroup was formed to possibly publish or create a site to share stories on Media Literacy and instructional resources.

Also, the committee received greetings and thanks from SPJ President-Elect, Rebecca Baker. She thanked committee members for their service this year. She also announced Becky Tallent will serve as committee chair for her term, so the fall EIJ meeting will serve to transition the committee to new initiatives.

It has been an honor working with the committee and serving as chair. Looking forward to Anaheim.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard F. Gaspar, Ph.D. 2016-2017 Committee Chair
DATE: March 27, 2017
FROM: Hagit Limor, LDF Committee Chairwoman
FOR: SPJ Board of Directors

LEGAL DEFENSE FUND COMMITTEE REPORT

The Legal Defense Fund Committee has risen to the challenge of challenging times over the past 12 months. In addition to the regular course of business addressing requests for legal assistance, we’ve made new alliances, improved our application process, settled into new leadership in our advising attorney, and thanked a record number of contributors.

Highlights: (statistics thanks to Katie Hunt, SPJ Development Coordinator)

Donations:

- **Number of donations skyrockets:** In Fiscal Year 2016 (8/1/15 – 7/31/16) the LDF received 79 contributions. This year, we received 526.

- **Amount raised up five-fold:** Individual contributions rose from a total of $4,695 in FY16 to $21,423 in FY17. These revenues exclude proceeds from the silent and live auctions at convention.

- **Monthly donors up:** 27 donors now give monthly, for a combined $400 each month.

  Bottom line, people now are thinking of us. For example AP Radio alums got together in Northern Virginia for a reunion and when proceeds exceeded their costs, they kindly donated the excess $194 to the LDF.

- **Legal Team stability:** Mark Bailen has settled in beautifully as our new Baker Hostetler attorney. He and I met in Washington DC in June to discuss priorities and strategies, and he has done an excellent job attending to requests in a timely manner.

- **New LDF email up:** Our new general email for the fund, legaldefense@spj.org, seems to be working well since its debut this year.

- **NFOIC Partnership in place:** We have received a few joint applications via our new collaboration with NFOIC, allowing people to apply for funding from both organizations in one application, ‘though the majority still seem to be coming in via our direct form.

LDF ACTIVITY FY17

In addition, the committee has continued to handle requests for information, funding and support. As this is an annual report, I will list the cases for the entire term, starting with the ones from the first six months as reported in the April 2017 board packet.

**8/31/16 Prior Restraint/Access – Microsoft v. U.S. Department of Justice**

The committee joined the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in a case that impacts the media’s ability to report on government surveillance of private digital information stored in the cloud.
Under the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, the government can get a court order requiring digital service providers like Microsoft to turn over electronically stored information about a customer. This would include customer emails, cell phone records, and web history. One section of the act also allows the government to get a gag order preventing the service provider from telling the customer - or anyone else - that the government is monitoring the information. The amicus argued that the gag orders act as a prior restraint on speech and inhibit journalists from learning about and reporting on government surveillance. This also undermines the right of access to warrant materials.

9/8/16 Public Records – Scheeler v. Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund
The committee joined the Reporters Committee to support the rights of all people, be they citizens or residents of New Jersey or not, to access information under the New Jersey Open Public Records Act. In this case, the state argued that despite the language in the statute authorizing “any person” to make records requests, the law should apply only to New Jersey citizens. The amicus brief we joined argued that this interpretation would harm the media’s ability to report. Many New Jersey citizens get their news from press outlets based in New York and Pennsylvania and the brief points to specific stories that have been done using the N.J. Open Public Records Act by out-of-state entities like USA Today, ProPublica, Politico, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal.

9/29/16 FOIA - Schwartz v. Drug Enforcement Agency
The committee joined an amicus brief pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Freelance journalist Mattathias Schwartz, working on a story for the New Yorker, requested the release of a video taken from a government surveillance plane during a DEA drug raid in Honduras in which four civilians were killed. The trial court ordered release of the video and rejected the government’s assertion that it was exempt from disclosure under FOIA exemption 7(E). The government is appealing that ruling. The brief focused on FOIA’s legislative history, in particular Congress’s intent that courts carefully scrutinize agencies’ exemption claims.

9/29/16 Acess - Porco v. Lifetime
The committee weighed in on New York’s so-called “right of publicity” statute. A prisoner sued the Lifetime television network over a dramatized account of the murder of his father and bludgeoning of his mother -- crimes for which he was convicted. The amicus brief makes clear that “right of publicity” claims cannot be used to stifle reporting of newsworthy events or matters of public interest, including docudrama, which we held is covered under the First Amendment.

10/21/16 Public Records – Kenneth Jakes v. Sumner County Board of Education
The committee awarded the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government $4,000 to support legal fees in its amicus arguing that the Sumner County Board of Education violated the Tennessee Public Records Act by refusing to allow a state resident to inspect the Board’s public record policy because he submitted his request via email. The Board held it would only honor requests made in person or by U.S. mail. After a trial court ruled in Jakes’ favor, the Board appealed. Eventually it relented, but the TCOG wanted to ensure all state government agencies understood clearly the state’s broad protection of the public’s right to access of public records with no limitation as to the manner of submission. Many in Tennessee saw this as an important test case to create a precedent.

10/31/16 Citizens’ Right to Record Police – Fields v. City of Philadelphia
The committee joined the RCFP in an amicus brief supporting the right to record the police. Police arrested a Temple University undergraduate for photographing on-duty Philadelphia police officers. He
filed a federal lawsuit alleging that his arrest was unconstitutional, and the trial court held that bystanders do not have a First Amendment right to record law enforcement officers unless the bystanders are actively engaged in “expressive conduct” like criticizing the police, as opposed to just observing and recording. The student appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. The brief focused on the importance of user-generated video to the news media, arguing that not recognizing a First Amendment protection would ultimately harm the public. The brief highlighted many of the recent videos of officer-involved shootings as part of its argument.

11/30/16 Indemnification Rights – Gawker bankruptcy case

SPJ LDF took the lead in an amicus affecting the rights of individual journalists losing legal protection as Gawker sought bankruptcy. As is standard at most media companies, Gawker’s employment contracts included indemnification clauses requiring Gawker to provide a legal defense to its journalists if they got sued while doing their jobs. Under Gawker’s proposed Chapter 11 Liquidation Plan, these former employees would lose their indemnification rights; they would have to bear the cost of their own legal defense. The amicus brief argued that if reporters and editors can’t rely on the durability of their indemnification agreements, they’ll be chilled by the potential for crippling personal liability and therefore less likely to engage in the ground-breaking journalism the First Amendment endorses. The brief also held that it’s inequitable for Gawker to enjoy the protections of bankruptcy laws as a company while leaving individual journalists exposed.

12/7/16 Republication Liability - Rolling Stone case

We joined the Reporters Committee in a brief that quoted widely from the SPJ Code of Ethics in the now-infamous “A Rape on Campus” story for which a jury found Rolling Stone liable for defamation. The brief limited to a single issue in the case: whether the addition of an editor’s note to the original article constituted a “republication” of the underlying facts of the article, subjecting the company to liability for actual malice even though the company was found not to have acted with actual malice for the article as it was originally published. The brief argued that public policy and court decisions have long favored getting the best information to the public by encouraging publishers to add notes, corrections, and clarifications to articles when new information comes to light. The decision in this case – subjecting the company to liability by treating the editor’s note as a “republication” – runs counter to that tradition and could discourage publishers from issuing clarifications in the future. The brief quoted extensively from SPJ’s Code of Ethics on the importance of error correction.

12/19/16 FOIA – Detroit Free Press vs U.S. Marshals Service

We signed onto an amicus from the Reporters Committee to support the Detroit Free Press after it filed a FOIA request for mugshots of people indicted on federal criminal charges. The U.S. Marshals Service withheld the photos under exemption 7(c) of FOIA. SPJ originally joined an amicus brief filed by the Reporters Committee when the case reached the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, arguing that the mugshots should be released. The Appeals Court disagreed with this position. The Free Press appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, and we’re joining the Reporters Committee in this new amicus. The brief argues the people who have been indicted have no privacy interest in their booking photos to trigger a FOIA exemption, and that public access to mugshots serves the public interest in letting journalists report on law enforcement.

12/27/16 First Amendment Retaliation / Citizen Journalists - Buehler v. City of Austin

We signed on to an amicus from the National Press Photographers Association to support an Army veteran whom Austin Police arrested three times while he exercised his constitutional right to record police via cell phone. While he was never found guilty of any charges against him, the Fifth Circuit
denied his suit for false arrest. The brief argued against the “independent intermediary doctrine”—a sweeping immunity doctrine that immunizes from liability officers who make unconstitutional false arrests based on post-arrest probable cause determinations by grand juries or magistrates. The brief argues this case to be of national importance because it’s one example of police harassment of citizens and journalists merely recording matters of public concern.

2/17/17 Open Courts – Weaver v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts

We signed onto an amicus by RCFP and the Yale Law School Supreme Court clinic in an open courts issue. A Massachusetts court closed a criminal trial from any public access. The critical issue was the public’s right of access to jury selection proceedings. The amicus argued this to be essential in ensuring the fairness of a trial for the integrity of the justice system.

3/2017 For the first time, we funded the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press with $5,000 toward their amicus brief practice. As you’ll see below, LDF joins many RCFP friend-of-the-court briefs on major media and First Amendment cases in state and federal courts, up to the U.S. Supreme Court. RCFP doesn’t charge for its services but their work aligns with our interests. The committee felt this funding request was justified and worthy.

3/9/17 The committee awarded $5,000 to News Media for Open Government (NMOG) to support the Open Government Coalition. Together, we’re working on shield law legislation and other common interests.

3/9/17 Prior Restraint - Isaac Avilucea

The committee supported Trentonian reporter Isaac Avilucea with $5,000 toward his legal fees as he fought a New Jersey judge’s standing emergency order forbidding him and his paper from publishing a child custody report he received from the child’s mother. Avilucea is defending himself, separately from the paper. Restraining orders usually are quickly withdrawn because of the presumptively unconstitutional nature of prior restraints. But the judge in this case entered the order in October 2016 and, even after two hearings, did not reverse or withdraw it. This extended time frame, with multiple hearings, including an evidentiary hearing, is unusual. Also, because the State has claimed that Avilucea unlawfully obtained the child custody report, he may be subject to criminal penalties, which arguably could necessitate separate counsel from the paper which employs him.


The committee voted to support two newspapers in a public records dispute with the University of Arizona over its failure to publicly disclose the candidates under consideration to become the school’s next president. Reporters for the Arizona Daily Star (a Tucson paper owned jointly by Lee Enterprises and Gannett) and the Arizona Daily Wildcat (the student newspaper for UA) filed public records requests for the candidates’ names. UA said no to both despite a 1991 Supreme Court of Arizona ruling that required Arizona State to disclose the names of the presidential candidates under consideration at that time. The committee granted up to $2,500 to support an attorney’s preparation of a letter to the University’s General Counsel and, if necessary, to draft and file a lawsuit over this common issue of a good public information law on the books not being followed by those supposed to carry it out.


The committee voted to support an RCFP amicus to the New York Court of Appeals, the state’s highest court, to get documents from the New York City Police Department under the state’s Freedom of Information Law. The NYPD issued a “Glomar response” to the FOIA request, refusing to confirm or deny whether responsive documents even exist. The amicus supports an appeal to overturn a lower court
decision backing the government’s right to make a “Glomar response.” We earlier joined as an amicus in the lower court and now join the appeal. This case marks the first time that a state’s highest court will be considering application of the Glomar doctrine under a state public records law.

Cases joined since the April midterm report:

4/2/17 Defamation - Montgomery v. Risen
The committee voted to join the RCFP in supporting reporter and author James Risen in a defamation suit by a former CIA contractor. Risen wrote Pay Any Price: Greed, Power, and Endless War, with statements questioning the work of Dennis Montgomery, a computer programmer who contracted with the federal government to develop anti-terrorist technologies after the September 11 attacks. Montgomery is appealing in the D.C. Circuit after Risen and his publisher won on summary judgment. The amicus brief addresses two important First Amendment issues: 1) that Montgomery was properly classified by the District Court as a limited purpose public figure because of his role in an important government military contract.; and 2) that the challenged statements are protected opinion and hyperbole. As more and more government functions are outsourced, it is important that, in proper situations such as here, government contractors are deemed public figures.

4/2/17 Definition of Newsworthiness Porco v. Lifetime
The committee expressed its continuing support of Lifetime network’s right to air a movie about Christopher Porco, convicted of murdering his father and attempting to murder his mother. We previously joined an amicus at the Appellate Division. Now the network is appealing to the New York Court of Appeals – the state's highest court – after an intermediate appellate court revived Porco’s claim under the NY Civil Rights law / right of publicity statute, with a narrow interpretation of the newsworthiness exception. Porco is claiming he didn’t give his consent. The amicus brief argues that new forms of reporting and story-telling call for a broader interpretation of the newsworthiness exception.

4/11/17 Access - Courthouse News Service (CNS) v Yamasaki
The committee joined the RCFP in an amicus brief supporting the Courthouse News Service (CNS) in its lawsuit to get timely access to newly-filed civil complaints in the Orange County (CA) Superior Court. The amicus brief argued that timely access to civil filings promotes and fosters timely news reporting and that CNS’ business model and for-profit status is irrelevant to the First Amendment values at stake.

The committee joined RCFP to support Yelp’s appeal to the California Supreme Court over a section of the Communications Decency Act. Yelp wants a reversal of an appeals court decision affirming a trial court that ordered it to remove third-party content posted on its website, even though Yelp was not a party to the underlying lawsuit by a law firm against the poster, and Yelp got no notice or opportunity to be heard. The amicus brief emphasizes the importance of forums and comments sections on news media websites, arguing that they benefit the public by enhancing the accuracy of reporting and fostering relationships between readers and reporters. The brief argues that the lower court’s decision threatens online public discussion and stresses the importance of preserving news organizations’ ability to protect anonymous speech.

The Committee approved an additional $2500 to reporters seeking records and information about candidates to replace the President of the University of Arizona. See case description above dated 3/16/17

6/30/17 Free Speech/Restriction of Publication - Steve Wilson vs Costa Verano Condominium Association
The committee agreed to support reporter Steve Wilson with up to $5,000 in his defense against his condo association, which imposed penalties after he reported on alleged malfeasance by the board. Wilson claims the Association set rules prohibiting his right to free speech, then issued fines for his publication on a website. The issue could set helpful precedent that condo associations and similar organizations cannot impose unduly restrictive prohibitions on publication of information for which there is a public interest.

7/5/17 Access - Courthouse News Service (CNS) v Planet
The committee joined another RCFP amicus brief on behalf of CNS, this time on behalf of Planet. While very similar to the Yamasaki brief in April (see above 4/11), the Planet brief includes a much more extensive argument that the First Amendment right of access covers newly filed civil complaints and that Ventura County (CA)'s refusal to provide access until after complaints are "processed" violates that right of access. The brief argues that prompt access to civil complaints benefits the public by fostering timely and accurate news reporting and promoting public understanding of cases on the courts' dockets.

7/9/17 Public Records PPOA v. City of Pasadena, Los Angeles Times
SPJ joined RCFP/CNPA in an amicus brief in support of the Los Angeles Times over the Times' California Public Records Act (CPRA) request for a report about the Pasadena Police Department's investigation into an officer-involved shooting. The Times was denied in a “reverse-CPRA action.” This is where a third party – not the requestor of public records – files suit to prevent disclosure of the government records. The Times ultimately prevailed in obtaining records, but the court gave short shrift to the Times' request for attorneys' fees and denied the request entirely for fees from the third party, apparently because this was a reverse action, not a straightforward CPRA action. The appeal addresses those issues, including whether reverse-CPRA actions should be permitted. The brief holds that reverse-CPRA lawsuits inhibit disclosure of public records by permitting third parties to obstruct and delay access to public records that shed light on the public’s business, promoting secrecy in government by forcing government agencies to withhold records that the agencies may agree must be disclosed under the Act.

7/21/17 Shield Law - People v. Juarez (Frances Robles)
We joined RCFP to fight a subpoena to NY Times reporter Frances Robles, demanding her interview notes with the defendant in the “Baby Hope” murder case in New York. Robles won at the Appellate Division but the Manhattan District Attorney's Office is appealing to New York's highest court, the Court of Appeals. This brief explains the burden a prosecutor must meet before a reporter can be forced to turn over her notes. The RCFP brief discusses the history of the Shield Law and the importance of the Shield Law's privilege for non-confidential information. It argues that privilege for non-confidential information can be overcome only if the party seeking the information demonstrates that his or her case "virtually rises or falls" based on the information sought.

7/27/17 College Freedom of Press - The Koala v. Khosla
We joined the Student Press Law Center (SPLC) to fight for college press freedom in a case in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals supporting an appeal by a student-run human/satire newspaper – The Koala -- at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). The case involves the withdrawal of funding for
student media organizations at the University of California-San Diego. Because of outrage over an offensive magazine, *The Koala*, that traffics in juvenile shock humor purposefully calculated to push the boundaries of good taste, the university entirely canceled all funding for all student media organizations -- a strategy that their lawyers believed would avoid the obvious First Amendment issues with targeting one publication for its content. The SPLC brief argues that eliminating or withholding funding for student news organizations due to content is detrimental to student journalism generally and could lead to widespread discrimination of the student press. The brief argues in favor of neutral principles and protection of the First Amendment. The legal principle at stake is an important one with relevance beyond student journalism: Can a government agency, having established a limited public forum, close that forum at any time for any reason without inquiry into its motive, even where there is ample (indeed, undisputed) evidence that the motive is content-retaliatory and targeted at a particular speaker?

8/1/17 Public Records Act – *James Hurt v Liberty Township, Ohio*We awarded up to $4,800 to defray the cost of an appeal in an Ohio Public Records Act (OPRA) case. Mark Gerber and James Hurt requested records under OPRA from Liberty Township in Delaware County, Ohio. Gerber is a former fiscal officer for the Township, and Hurt is a resident of the community active in local politics (and is a television broadcast engineer at the local Columbus, Ohio CBS affiliate). Gerber and Hurt sought records relating to the controversial firing of the Township’s fire chief. The Township refused to produce the records so they pursued an appeal under OPRA. A recent amendment allows for an expedited judicial review process before the Ohio Court of Claims when records are denied by public agencies. Gerber and Hurt, without legal assistance, won before a judicial hearing officer and then on review before the Court of Claims. The Township has now appealed to the Ohio Court of Appeals for the Fifth Appellate District. Our attorney concluded it is not a slam dunk that the lower court rulings – which allow for disclosure of the interview notes by an attorney retained by the Township to investigate the firing – will be upheld. The issue is important because it raises the question of whether outside contractors, when retained to perform government functions, should be subject to the same public records requirements.

8/6/17 Confidential Sources - *Carpenter v United States* The committee joined an RCFP brief in a case before the U.S. Supreme Court about the government’s ability to get long-term location-tracking information from phone service providers. The brief argues the government must obtain a warrant before accessing such data and explains how this data can disclose sensitive details about the journalistic process, including revealing information that could lead to the disclosure of the identities of confidential sources. The brief quotes from an SPJ Ethics Committee Position Paper on the importance of confidential and anonymous sources in newsgathering. The brief also supports other First Amendment arguments on why the warrantless searches are problematic.

8/7/17 Privacy v First Amendment rights *PETA v. Stein* The committee joined the RCFP to challenge a 2016 North Carolina law that allows employers to sue employees and potentially others who intentionally access nonpublic areas of a private workplace and then capture or remove information or records or images or sounds. The statute targets employees or anyone who helps them make video or audio recordings, place electronic surveillance devices or otherwise captures an employer’s data. This law codifies privacy rights for individuals and corporations, a substantial departure from the common law where corporations generally can’t assert invasion of privacy claims. The brief documents the importance of inside-the-company sources for reporting on misconduct and other dangerous activities in companies and will argue journalists could be accused of “assisting” the employee-source.
Dear Lynn:

The purpose of this letter is to announce my resignation from the Society of Professional Journalists, effective Dec. 1, 2017.

This was not an easy decision. The past 13 years have been incredibly rewarding, both personally and professionally. As shared in my memo to the board of directors, I feel SPJ and the SDX Foundation are on the rise – gaining relevance by the day. Credit for that goes to the amazing volunteers and staff members I have had the pleasure of working with over the years.

SPJ is in a great place, and I can leave knowing that our accomplishments over the past decade will serve as a springboard to bigger and better things. I’m excited to see where the Society goes from here.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as SPJ’s Executive Director. I would also like to thank the other leaders and members I have had the pleasure to serve over the years. It has been an honor and privilege. Of all the things I will miss most, it’s the friends I have made during my tenure.

In my remaining time with SPJ, please know I will do whatever I can to help create a smooth transition. My goal is to keep things “business as usual,” and help leadership in any way they feel necessary.

I wish SPJ and the SDX Foundation all the best. I plan to remain a member, and have little doubt that our paths will cross again down the road.

With heartfelt thanks,

Joe

Joe Skeel
Executive Director