AGENDA
THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
TIME: 9 A.M.  DATE: JAN. 19, 2013  ROOM: GOLD KEY 1
ANAHEIM, CALIF.

1. Call to Order – Albarado

2. Roll Call – Neuts
   a. Albarado
   b. Cuillier
   c. Neuts
   d. Eckert
   e. McCloskey
   f. Ralston
   g. Ensslin

3. Approve Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
   a. Dec. 19, 2012 (Page 1)
   b. Nov. 20, 2012 (Page 2)
   c. July 21, 2012 (Page 3)

4. Approve Delegate Meeting Minutes
   a. Sept. 20, 2012 – opening business meeting
   b. Sept. 22, 2012 – closing business meeting

5. Report of the SPJ President – Albarado

6. Report of the SDX Foundation President – Leger

7. Report of the Executive Director – Skeel (Page 15)

8. SDX Foundation Grant Requests – Albarado
   a. Professional Development Committee (Page 18)
   b. Ethics Committee (Page 19)

9. Discussion Items
   a. Spring Conferences (assign conferences to Exec. members) – Albarado
   b. Working Press – Skeel
   c. Social Media guidelines – Albarado (Page 22)
   d. Database upgrade/new billing procedures – Skeel
   e. SPJ transparency – Albarado
   f. Summer Exec Meeting – Albarado
   g. Regional meetings at convention – Skeel

10. Old/New Business
   a. Update on 2013, 2014 and 2015 conventions – Vachon
   b. Member benefits via Westpoint Financial – Neuts
   c. Contest Advisory Group – Neuts

11. Adjournment
THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: JAN. 19, 2013
TIME: 9 A.M. – 5 P.M.

ANAHEIM, CALIF.

THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS WORKS TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT JOURNALISM. THE ORGANIZATION 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.
MINUTES
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
DECEMBER 19, 2012
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Sonny Albarado presiding, the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:37 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19, via conference call.

ROLL CALL
In addition to Albarado, the following were present: Past President John Ensslin; President Elect Dave Cuillier; Secretary-Treasurer Dana Neuts; Vice President Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston; Director-at-Large Bill McCloskey; Region 2 Director Brian Eckert; Executive Director Joe Skeel; Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon; Controller Jake Koenig; Bookkeeper Sarah Beck; and accounting firm Greenwalt Sponsor representatives Amanda Meko and Jennifer McVey.

REVIEW OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Three documents were included as part of the audit report: a letter to the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists; a letter to the Executive Committee of the Society; and SPJ's Audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending July 31, 2012.

Meko reported that the auditors had no disagreements with management during the audit and issued a clean opinion on the financial statements.

Meko then reviewed the Society's statements of financial position and the balance sheet with the committee.

The auditors stated there were no material weaknesses or misstatements identified.

Upon a proper motion and second by McCloskey and Ensslin, respectively, the Executive Committee approved the audited financial statements.

MEETING ADJOURNED
Upon a proper motion and second by Eckert and Ensslin, respectively, the Executive Committee adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.
MINUTES
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
NOVEMBER 20, 2012
CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President Sonny Albarado presiding, the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1 p.m. EST on Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2012, via conference call.

In addition to Albarado, the following were present: Secretary-Treasurer Dana Neuts; Immediate Past President John Ensslin; Director-at-Large Bill McCloskey; Region 2 Director Brian Eckert. Executive Director Joe Skeel was also present.

DISCUSSION FOR SUPPORT OF STOP THE NEW AMERICAN CENSORSHIP’S REQUEST FOR $500
The members of the executive committee discussed SNAC’s request for $500. The request is to help fund an ad that would be placed in the Washington Post, calling attention to government’s use of PIOs to control information.

Group discussed that an advertisement does little more than complain about the issue and likely wouldn’t impact change. Better use of the money would be to spend it on setting up meetings, partnering with other PR organizations and PIOs the ad addresses. The group supports the notion of government transparency, but doesn’t believe this avenue is an appropriate approach.

Upon proper motion and second by Ensslin and Neuts, respectively, the committee voted to deny SNAC’s request for $500 and urge the SPJ FOI committee to go back to the drawing board with the original study and create an innovative way to illustrate problems that arise when PIOs control government messages.

ADJOURNMENT
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Eckert, respectively, the board adjourned at 1:30 p.m. EST on Nov. 20, 2012.
MINUTES
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
JULY 21, 2012
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With President John Ensllin presiding, the meeting of the SPJ Executive Committee was called to order at 9:05 a.m. EST on Saturday, July 21, 2012 in Washington, D.C. The meeting was conducted at the offices of Bloomberg News.

In addition to Ensllin, voting members in attendance included President-Elect Sonny Albarado, Secretary-Treasurer David Cuillier, Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston, Director At-Large Bill McCloskey and Past President Hagg Limor. Also present were SPJ Executive Director Joe Skeel, Region 10 Director Dana Neuts and Washington, D.C. chapter members Julie Asher, Sue Kopen-Katcef, Andy Schutz and Kathryn Foxhall.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Albarado, respectively, the executive committee approved minutes from the following meetings: Jan. 28, 2012; Feb. 27, 2012 and May 23, 2012.

Ensllin asked that his most recent quarterly report to the board be included in these minutes. They are attached as Appendix A.

SCRIPPS LEADERSHIP TRAINING
Skeel shared that University Place Hotel and Conference Center, home to the Ted Scripps Leadership Institute, will be closing its doors in November. This prompted staff to re-evaluate the program in its entirety to ensure it was meeting its full potential.

After careful consideration and some number crunching, Skeel shared that the program could be delivered more effectively as becoming a traveling road show as opposed to hosting it in a central location each year.

The key benefits to the change are:
- Reach twice three times the amount of leaders than previous Scripps programs.
- Have the potential to train a chapter’s entire board in leadership skills and all things SPJ, which in turn strengthens our chapters and helps fill the leadership “black hole” that often occurs in chapter structure.
- Connect leaders with more people in their region, helping make joint programming and local networking easier.

Skeel shared a sample budget and schedule, which were based on the goal of conducting four programs a year.
Although no vote action is required to simply alter an ongoing program, Skeel asked the Executive Committee for its support because of the drastic change from years past.

The Executive Committee gave its full support to move forward with the new concept.

**REPORT OF THE SDX FOUNDATION PRESIDENT**

SDX Foundation President Steve Geimann reported that past SPJ president Jean Otto (who died in September 2011) bequeathed $25,000 of unrestricted funds to the Foundation. That money was received in June 2012.

He also shared that the Foundation board’s would meet via conference call in late July to discuss its involvement in SPJ elections and the potential history book project.

He shared that the Foundation’s assets are hovering around $10M.

**INTERNATIONAL CHAPTERS**

Skeel shared via memo (Appendix B) that SPJ has seen increasing interest from international journalists. Although the organization has always allowed individuals to join regardless of geographic location, journalists abroad are now showing interest in starting SPJ chapters.

Skeel recommended that the Society be proactive in developing a plan for international chapter growth. The idea isn’t to create a marketing strategy for growth, but to be prepared when requests come from outside the U.S.

In the memo, Skeel shared his research into international chapters and how they might impact the Society’s operations. He shared burnings from SPJ’s counsel and other organizations that have an international presence. Furthermore, the memo detailed steps for accepting international chapters into SPJ, including but not limited to, issues related to governance, awards, LDF and tax implications. Skeel concluded that SPJ should support international chapters, if the Society deemed the proposition worthy.

One of the key points of discussion centered around “vetting” international chapters. Some members of the executive committee were uncomfortable with the notion of SPJ deciding who was and wasn’t “worthy” of joining the Society. “It’s a slippery slope considering we don’t do that for our U.S. chapters.”

Limor shared that the idea of international growth goes beyond just journalism. “It’s about spreading our missions and democracy.”

**Upon proper motion and second by Limor and McCloskey, respectively, the committee voted to instruct Skeel to move forward with creating plan for international chapter growth based on the blueprint in the memo.**

Skeel will deliver a final plan to the full board in September for its consideration.
In addition, Skeel was instructed to survey the Society’s international members to find out why they value SPJ and why they have decided to join.

In addition to the discussion on chapter growth, Erssonl read a memo from International Journalism Committee chairman Ricardo Sandoval regarding recruitment of individual international members.

Recommendations from Sandoval’s report were:

• Because we do not now “vet” international journalists – that is hold them to different standards than US journalists – in this new drive we should first reach out and invite a select first generation of international journalists based on recommendations from SPJ leadership and members of the international committee. The idea behind this is to set at least a reputational standard for future foreign journalists seeking to join SPJ’s ranks. In short, we would select and invite the best journalists we know abroad and thus set them up as examples of the kind of journalist we seek as SPJ members.

• Prior to inviting this first crop of potential members, we ought to informally review them. For potential new members who we personally know, there would not be much actual vetting necessary. For other potential new members, I believe that our international committee and SPJ leadership have the global connections necessary to conduct some informal vetting of journalists from a number of regions.

• Subsequent potential new members who seek us out via traditional membership applications should be subject to the reviews we now extend to any potential new member, plus a sharing of the nominees with the international committee to see if they raise any obvious concerns or caution flags.

• We should not alter our fees for international nominees as SPJ’s current structure allows for lower-cost membership. Maintaining our fee structure also helps deliver a message that foreign members will be treated in the same fashion, will have the same membership responsibilities and be eligible for the same benefits as US members and affiliates.

• As we do not discriminate in the United States against prospective members based on national origin or other demographic factors, we likewise should not prevent international membership based on such characteristics.

• We should loudly advertise among foreign journalists our requirements for membership and the alternatives to full membership so as to apply the same limits to SPJ participation that we exercise in the United States.

• We should translate the SPJ Code of Ethics and other basic materials to the benefit of international members who request the information.

• We should make available to groups of international members and interested journalists the types of training SPJ now offers to US-based members. SPJ leadership should
understand that access to this training is an extremely attractive benefit for potential international members.

**INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

In a memo to the Executive Committee, Skeel shared a plan for reviving institutional membership. After meeting with several newsroom leaders of varying mediums and newsroom sizes, a tentative “menu” was created.

Newsrooms would be allowed to choose from this menu, which varies by cost and services that SPJ would provide.

The Executive Committee asked that staff clearly define who would be eligible to be an institutional member. For example, The Indianapolis Star would be eligible, the Gannett Corporation would not be.

**Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Ralston respectively, the committee voted to recommend to the board that it direct staff to pursue institutional members as outlined in staff’s memo.**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Skeel led a discussion on the Society Operations portion of the Strategic Plan.

The Executive Committee evaluated each goal, vetting it for relevancy. Skeel was instructed to create a red-line version of the changes, adding an explanation for each of the changes.

Ensslin said he plans to share that online with the full board in advance of the September board meeting.

**CHAPTER FINANCE**

Albarado shared an update on the situation with the Oklahoma chapter. He then shared his ad-hoc committee’s financial best-practices with the group.

In addition, Albarado said that staff and regional directors must do a good job of monitoring the financial section of the chapter annual report. Failure to complete this section puts the chapter at risk for losing its board standing.”

The group discussed ways to get the best-practices into hands of local leaders and educate them on importance and practice of sound financial practices. Ideas included inclusion in chapter training programs, webinar, etc.

The committee agreed to:

- Send out the recommended best practices to chapter leaders.
- Include financial discussion as part of chapter-leaders session at convention.
- Create an online tutorial based on the best practices.
In regards to regional funds: Albarado will ask RD Caucus chair Brian Eckert to speak with RDs and create a proposal on how to best monitor regional funds.

**SPJ ELECTION 2012**
Skeel asked the Executive Committee to consider changing the by-laws in order to adjust the date of voter eligibility. Skeel is seeking to set the cut-off date to a time when staff is still in the office before leaving for convention.

The committee took no action and Ensslin encouraged Skeel to go through the election cycle this year and bring the recommendation back to the bylaws committee on board if he desired.

**AWARDS**

*David L. Eshelman Outstanding Campus Adviser Award*
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Cuillier, respectively, the committee awarded Jenny Wohlfarth of the University of Cincinnati. Ralston and Limor abstained.

*Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award*
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Ralston, respectively, the committee awarded Mitch Eden of Kirkwood High School.

McCloskey asked that the minutes reflect his thanks to the SPJ Journalism Education Committee for its tremendous work. He found the comments helpful.

The Executive Committee discussed that language for next year’s award needs to be clear of who is eligible: high school or college. The group agreed with the Education Committee’s notion that college and high school are too different to be judged in the same category. Ensslin shared he is going to meet with high school group and talk about the possibility of a joint project for a high school award and high school staff corps.

*Ethics in Journalism*
Upon proper motion and second by Cuillier and Albarado, respectively, the committee awarded Karen Gadbois of The Lens.

Fellows of the Society
Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Ralston, respectively, the committee named DeWayne Wickham a Fellow of the Society.

During discussion, Ensslin asked that we change the deadline for Fellows so that they can be chosen in January by the Executive Committee. This would allow them to be invited to the annual conference earlier, in hopes they could attend. He suggested a December 1 deadline. The Executive Committee supported the idea. Skeel would see if this is a possibility on the staff end.

*Historic Sites in Journalism*
Upon proper motion and second by Cuillier and Limor, respectively, the committee awarded the Tubac Presidio State Historic Park.
First Amendment Award
Upon proper motion and second by Albarado and McCloskey, respectively, the committee awarded Mike Hiestand of the Student Press Law Center. Ralston and Ensslin abstained.

Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member Award: Large Chapter
Upon proper motion and second by McCloskey and Ralston, respectively, the committee awarded Bill Bleyer of the Long Island Press Club.

Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member Award: Small Chapter
Upon proper motion and second by Cuiller and Ralston, respectively, the committee awarded David Sheets of the St. Louis Pro Chapter.

During discussion, the Executive Committee recommended removing language from the criteria that says they must be nominated by chapter. Also, the committee suggested that staff talk to Howard to remove "contributions to their SPJ chapter" as an award benchmark this disenfranchises many SPJ members.

Julie Galvan Outstanding Graduate in Journalism Award
Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Albarado, respectively, the committee awarded Breann Schossow of the University of Milwaukee - Eau Claire chapter.

Regional Director of the Year
Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Albarado, respectively, the committee awarded Dana Neuts of Region 10.

Sunshine Award
Upon proper motion and second by Albarado and McCloskey, respectively, the committee awarded Bloomberg News, Media Immunity Project and the Republican-American newspaper.
During discussion, the committee asked that the 10-page limit on nominations is strictly enforced.

The officers met privately at 4:45 p.m. to choose the winner of the Wells Memorial Key

The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m. on Saturday, July 21, 2012.
APPENDIX A

PRESIDENT’S QUARTERLY REPORT ISSUED ON JULY 1.

Membership....Holding steady at just above 8,000. Holly Edgell is organizing a second round of calls to lapsed members as well as a membership drive in September. I’m working on mailing a series of handwritten notes to people whom I believe would be good members.

International Journalism....Ricardo Sandoval Palos is working on a proposed strategy for attracting new members in North America if the board approves actively recruiting beyond the U.S.

Raising DePauw...Tara Puckey and I made contact in April with a student editor who is interested in reviving a student chapter on the campus where SPJ began in 1909. I’ve made plans to visit the campus on Sept. 8-9 to support this effort.

Joe Skeel reports that he has gotten good and useful feedback from several newsroom leaders on what they would find useful in an institutional membership. In a word, it's training. We expect to have a proposal to be vetted by the Executive Committee in July.

Chapter Assistance....A task force headed by Sonny Albarado submitted a series of recommendations to the New York City Deadline Club on ways to better structure their contest and scholarship programs. The club's board has adopted all of the recommended changes and plans to implement them this summer.

Oklahoma Pro...Sonny has remained in touch with chapter leaders who are exploring their legal options with respect to Scott Cooper. Sonny is also heading a committee that will have recommendations in July on how to better monitor chapter and regional director funds.

Meanwhile, the Board has appointed Edye Gallagher of our Fort Worth Chapter to serve as interim Region 8 director. Members of Region 8 will elect a director in September.

Communications...Held the last five of 12 virtual town hall meetings. While attendance has been small (up to 35) the conversations have been good and I've gotten some excellent feedback and ideas.

Candidates for regional director posts also have been able to use these forums as a way to introduce themselves and answer questions from members. The audio from these meetings will be posted on our Election Central page.

Wrote six columns for the Freedom of the Prez blog, which now has had a year-to-date total of more than 4,200 page views. The most popular column this quarter was one I wrote about the layout of my ideal newsroom which got 305 pageviews.

Studio SPJ....Holly Fisher has lined up two segments and is working on a third in July featuring interviews with winners of our SDX awards contest. These will air in advance of the July 20...
banquet. Where possible, local chapters will be asked to co-host these broadcasts on our Internet radio program.

The SPJ Membership committee also aired three programs, including segments on the FOI committee's Black Hole Awards and an episode on our upcoming national convention. Each program has gathered an audience of between 20 to 50 listeners.

Training...Worked with Michael Koretsky to produce our first ever webinar, Michael's "Weird Careers in the Media." A total of 109 people from around the country tuned in. I received several emails from participants who described how useful they found the program.

Digital Media chair Gil Asakawa and Professional Development chair Deb Wenger are working on producing two more webinars which we hope to air by September.

Advocacy...Wrote a letter in May to the president of Bridgewater State University urging him not to dismiss a student media advisor for a paper where the student editor chose to publish the name of a sexual assault victim who had given a public talk on campus. So far, the advisor still has his job so perhaps the letter had some effect.

I also wrote in June to the sheriff in Washoe County, Nevada protesting an incident in which the photo editor of the Reno Gazette Journal was pushed to the ground and handcuffed after he had been escorted away from an area where he was photographing a fire. I urged that charges against the photographer be dropped.

Held our first virtual board meeting on June 16. We also held virtual meetings with our J-Ed Committee and Diversity committee.

J-Ed is working on an effort aimed at convincing high school administrators not to abandon their journalism programs.

The Diversity committee is working on updating our Rainbow source book and hiring gap resolution. At my request, committee chair Bonnie Davis nominated a minority journalist for one of our Fellows of the Society awards.

Awards....Public Radio host Bob Edwards accepted our nomination for another of the Fellows of the Society award and will travel to our convention in Fort Lauderdale to accept the honor.

I awarded three more Volunteers of the month: Lynn Powell from Region 3; David Sheets from Region 7 and Ian Marquand from Region 10. I have nominated all nine of the "volunteers of the month" as candidates for the Howard Dubin award to outstanding professional member.

Bylaws....In light of the Oklahoma Pro situation, I asked the bylaws committee if they felt there was a need for a specific bylaw needed for removal of a member of the society. There is a specific provision for national board members, but none for members. The committee's unanimous advice was that no such bylaw is required.
Elections... Hagit's committee has continued to refine the details of our first one-member, one-vote election. Staff has created an Election Central page, where we will post podcasts of regional candidates statements from the virtual town hall meetings.

Travel... Traveled to Richmond, Va. to attend and speak at a Virginia Pro chapter’s ethics program which featured a screening of the documentary "Page One."

Visited Silverton, Colorado to take part in a ceremony making the installation of an SPJ Historic Sites in Journalism for The Silverton Standard and The Miner, a weekly that dates back to pioneer days and is currently operated by the San Juan Historical Society.

Also attended the New York City Deadline chapter's awards banquet at the Waldorf Astoria and the Washington DC Pro chapter's Hall of Fame banquet at the National Press Club and the New Jersey Pro chapter's awards banquet at the Dow Jones campus near Princeton.

Upcoming... I'll be returning to Charlotte, N.C. on July 28 to be a speaker in their program for journalists preparing to cover the Democratic National Convention. This is a program funded by an SDX grant.
APPENDIX B

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 12, 2012
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director;
       Tara Puckey, Chapter Coordinator
SUBJ: International chapters
FOR: Executive Committee

In July of last year, the executive committee decided to focus its short-term efforts on individual international members as opposed to chapters. After good discussion, it was clear there were too many hurdles in managing international chapters. John Fenslun then asked the international committee to share its thoughts on attracting international members.

In April, John led a discussion with the full board about recruiting international members, starting a conversation that would be continued in September. That conversation can no longer wait.

The international community isn’t that patient. And the notion of waiting to develop an international chapter plan is no longer an option.

SPJ should act now to begin control its own international expansion.

WHY THE RUSH?
Matt Duffy, adviser to Zayed University’s SPJ chapter in Abu Dhabi, is also a coordinator of the Arab-US Association of Communication Educators – an association that holds a conference similar to AEJMC. The conference, taking place in November, is aimed at “transforming Middle East media” and Matt is making SPJ a part of it.

Because Matt believes there is value in SPJ’s missions to other schools throughout the Middle East, he’s including a session, “How to start an SPJ chapter,” in the upcoming conference and invited us to the table.

We could have tried to prohibit this. But whether or not it is an official session, there is no doubt SPJ would be a topic of conversation among some convention goers – even if it’s just a few. We have already received inquiries from some folks Matt has talked to.

Therefore, we believe it’s in SPJ’s best interest to be proactive and prepare for international chapters. As a result, SPJ will be sending representatives to Matt’s conference, hopefully armed with a clear and thoughtful plan of how the Society will handle international chapters on all fronts.
DEVELOPMENT
Staff has worked diligently over the past two months in an effort to develop a plan for starting and (more importantly) governing international chapters. Most of our research has involved discussions with people we consider “experts” in this area. To date, we have spoken to counsel at Baker Hostetler, our accounting firm, and two non-profit executive directors that have an international presence within their organizations. One of those EDS oversees a chapter-based organization.

Overall, we have concluded that there’s no reason SPJ can’t, or shouldn’t, have an international presence. The standards and oversight in foreign journalism are vastly different. However, as Bill Culbertson of Baker Hostetler said, the “standards of the profession are exportable.”

What follows is our recommendation for international growth. With the board’s support, this will be the basis for the information we share in Abu Dhabi. And we hope it will be the foundation of SPJ’s future international structure.

MOVING FORWARD
Becoming a chapter
- Chapters seeking a charter will follow the same basic process as those in the United States
- Same rules and expectations apply to domestic and foreign chapters
- Before filing for a charter, chapters acknowledge they have received detailed information about the missions and expectations of SPJ
- International chapters will sign a certificate of understanding that explains what SPJ will do on their behalf. (i.e. we will recognize them as a chapter, they will be exposed to our materials, we will advocate on their behalf only when feasible, etc.). Creating a solid certificate of understanding is key to this plan
- Chapters will address additional questions when applying for a charter, including information about their type of government (i.e. are they affiliated with terrorists and is their chapter/media organization funded by government. Staff will research and verify these assertions after receiving their application
- Charters are still granted as they are now—by board approval on a case-by-case basis. Those charter requests will come with a staff recommendation if desired.

Governance
- International annual reports will be assigned to the Directors at Large, both campus and pro
- Initially they will not be part of any region, although we may create new regions over time. They will be represented on the board by the Directors at Large.
- Any international member may run for an appropriate board office
- Headquarters will maintain frequent communication with international chapters, providing the outreach role that our RDs are expected to maintain now. (Should we grow beyond staff capabilities, this role could shift to a Director at Large).

Scholarships & Fellowships
• Open to all U.S. members and non-members and international SPJ members only. This would eliminate the need for staff to research every international application
• Travel reimbursements for all scholarships and fellowships will be capped
• Working Press: international members are eligible, but must speak/write English

**SDX & MOE**
• Open to all US members and non-members and international SPJ members
• Entries will be designated to a region determined by HQ based on number of entries, judges, etc.
• Print entries must include the original piece, as well as English translation; broadcast entries must have English subtitles

**Legal Defense Fund**
• Continues to operate on a case-by-case basis. Any international recipient will be checked against terrorist watch lists and reported accordingly on our IRS Form 990

**Quill**
• International members will receive digital Quill

**Taxes & Finances**
• International chapters cannot be a part of SPJ’s group IRS ruling; individual chapters are required to file taxes as required by their own country
• Headquarters will run necessary checks (background, State Department lists, Office of Foreign Assets Control, etc.) for all chapter officers and those dealing with chapter finances

**CONCLUSION**
We don’t claim to have all of the answers — yet. That’s because there is no way to anticipate all of the questions that may come our way. It was our hope to have met with Mac McKerral before this meeting, but there was a conflict. We will be meeting with him on July 31. We feel he can provide good perspective on the concerns from past leaders, allowing us to find solutions before the September meeting.

This week, know, SPJ would not be the first chapter-based organization to expand internationally. Because it has been done, we are confident we can make it a reality.

It will be hard work. We should expect to spend more time with a new international chapter than we might with a new domestic chapter. They need more handholding. It’s unlikely we will always be able to maintain our growth from Indianapolis. As the SPJ name spreads, expect to make connections with other journalism groups abroad.

As Tom Popenheff said, “If you want to grow, you have to go. That’s the cost of international expansion.” Popenheff is the executive director of Sigma Theta Tau, the world’s largest (and probably only) international nursing honor society.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Jan. 19, 2013
FROM: Joe Skeel, Executive Director
SUBJ: Executive Director Report
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee

The past four months, it seems, have been dedicated solely to infrastructure. Although unexciting when compared to SPJ’s mission work, it is just important.

The groundwork laid the past 120 days will allow the Society to grow and evolve more efficiently.

DATABASE UPGRADE
Members can now join or renew online at SPJ.org without staff manually entering the information or processing credit cards. We still have glitches. A lot of them. And some of them seem to have no rhyme or reason. However, once ironed out staff will have more flexibility to focus on member services and needs – not data processing.

I’ll take the opportunity now to share this: Please forget any misconception that technology saves money. It doesn’t. All technology must be maintained and updated. It must be fixed when a bug occurs. Expect this line item to grow significantly in the upcoming budget.

Furthermore, I will be looking at other areas where technology upgrades are needed. For example, SPJ should consider going away from our current (and outdated) tape-drive back-up system to a cloud system. This, of course, comes with a price tag. But it’s a better solution.

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS
SPJ is now providing bookkeeping and payroll services for RTDNA. NAHJ has recently asked us to pick up their payroll processing. As you know, we already manage its bookkeeping and membership.

We now have a process for setting up new clients in these three areas, making it more efficient for the next partner.

RTDNA and NAHJ are perfect examples of why partnerships are good for the Society. Both came to us in different ways. But both have now expanded beyond the original scope. This has led to new revenue for SPJ and helped bolster their organizations in the process. We are viewed as a good, trustworthy and fair partner. Now let’s hope word spreads.
STAFFING
It was one year ago that I put forth a plan to restructure staff responsibilities. Since that time, we also lost our bookkeeper. Below is an update on our progress.

Chapter support
Tara Puckey was hired nearly a year ago. And while much of her time has been spent on things outside of chapters (one-member, one-vote; database upgrade) she has made strides in developing practices and procedures for chapter support.

She has established (and continues to evaluate) regular communication channels – and uses them to inform chapter leaders of important news. She revamped the chapter grants process, spearheaded our Newsroom Membership program and has taken the lead on planning content for our new Scripps Leadership road shows.

Her next big challenge is to research each chapter to determine its level of activity. I fully expect to learn that many of our “active” chapters aren’t doing much of anything at all. SPJ’s chapters are its lifeblood. It’s one of the few things that separates this organization from others. It’s critical that we turn the tide in this area.

Education
Since Scott Leadingham has taken over as Director of Education, we have conducted two daylong JournCamps (one partnered with ONA), evaluated our overall training offerings (which will be reflected in the upcoming grant cycle), dipped our toe into the webinar game (and determined that our current platform leaves much to be desired if we hope to archive these on SPJ.org). He has also altered the way we develop session ideas for EIJ – with the hopes of improving content.

Although this transition has come with a few bumps in the road, I am confident we are on the right path. The next step will be to increase the frequency of our training programs. One of our goals it to launch a regular (dare I say monthly) webinar series.

Events, meals and banquets
I would be remiss if I didn’t mention Heather Dunn’s transition. Her ability to work with each staffer (namely Scott, Tara and Lauren) has allowed those individuals to focus on the content of their respective programs. Heather manages site selection, hotel contracts, travel, catering, billing, registration, etc., for each of our programs. Furthermore, and this will surprise no one, she is the one that frequently keeps us on deadline.

Membership
With Tara mostly off and running, the goal will be for Linda to focus on individual members. My sincere hope is that Linda will soon have the time to utilize her strengths and improve our member touches: A personal phone call, email, etc. Every piece ever written about member retention comes back to a simple concept: Make them feel wanted and appreciated. That will be our goal.
Bookkeeping
As you know, I spent about eight weeks serving as SPJ’s bookkeeper after EIJ12. I decided this was the only way for me to completely understand what the job required, and what type of person I needed to take SPJ to the next level in this area.

To many, a bookkeeper position seems simple: someone to manage the bills and accounts. For many businesses, that may be true. But with a limited staff, SPJ doesn’t have the luxury of hiring people that can simply “do a job.” We took this approach far too long with this position. We need innovative people that can generate ideas and executive them. This includes our bookkeeper.

Sarah Beck started on Dec. 20 and early signs are that she will be a strong hire. Although she may lack experience, she is very bright and has a desire to learn as much as possible. She is currently working toward her CPA designation.

In one month’s time, she has picked up our day-to-day processes, including managing the human resources aspects of the job and the database. She has taken the lead on developing and implementing processes with RTDNA and she is currently working on improving our processes regarding NAHJ. She is not afraid to jump into the unknown and problem solve. This is critical to her success (and ours).

Moving forward, she will be key in helping us determine the best course of action for auto-dues billing. Beyond that, I’m confident she will soon be able to educate other staffers about the organization’s finances and how each person fits into the overall puzzle.

Because of EIJ12 we couldn’t fully begin our staff transition until October. We still have adjustments to make as staff learns her/her full responsibilities and expectations. But early signs are positive – despite some individual frustrations – and I’m confident the changes will address many of the Society’s perennial shortcomings.

In closing, the past four months have not been our sexiest. Discussions regarding ethics, transparency, diversity, etc., have taken a backseat to member records, Quickbooks, webinar software and chapter activity. However, when comparing this stretch to any other during my time as executive director, I can’t think of a single one that has been more important.

Onward and upward.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Jan. 19, 2013
FROM: Deb Wenger, SPJ Professional Development Committee
SUBJ: SDX Grant Request
FOR: SPJ and Executive Committee

THE PROJECT
In an effort to expand the Journalism Training Program into new arenas, the Professional Development Committee proposes a pilot program targeting colleges and universities. Since the program was founded in 2004, we have had periodic requests for training from schools, but we originally wanted to keep our focus on professional newsrooms. We see value in this new initiative for several reasons:

1. We have more than 800 educator members and this is a way to serve them with professional development.

2. Even schools that have excellent faculty often find it difficult to get every instructor up to speed on topics such as social media, mobile media, etc. We can help with that and our training gets exponential reach as educators take their learning back to the classroom.

2. This is a recruiting opportunity for SPJ. We would promote individual membership and chapter building, as well as our eCampus offerings and other benefits of membership.

COST ESTIMATES
We anticipate being able to provide training at three universities for $3,000 total. Our plan is to reduce the cost to the schools to $250 (just so they have some skin in the game). We would limit the schools to one trainer as well to keep costs down.
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Jan. 8, 2013
FROM: Kevin Smith, SPJ Ethics Committee Chair
SUBJ: SDX Grant Request
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY
This grant requests funding in the amount of $3,000 to launch a new ethical response/evaluation program. The program will also deliver valuation information that will later be used to formulate educational components for journalists.

In 2012 alone, there were three significant news events involving victims of disasters and tragedies: Sandy Hook shooting, Super Storm Sandy and the Aurora, Colo. theater shootings. In each case, various media entities (SPJ, Poynter, imedia, CIME) and ethicists offered assessments of the media. Much of this was done by reviewing reportage at the scene.

This grant does not attempt to replace this. Instead, it would allow SPJ to develop a more proactive and meaningful approach to these kinds of national events by interviewing victims. The goal is to ascertain their assessments of the media – at a comfortable time after the events. This grant would provide funding to allow the SPJ Ethics Committee to conduct post-event ethical discussions with victims of a disaster to gather empirical information about how journalists applied ethical standards in these situations. Funding is to allow for travel, expenses and development of more extensive reports that will be developed into educational components, including but not limited to workshops at the national SPJ convention and regional conferences. Other options for sharing the information – in an educational manner – include social media, websites, blogs, videos, etc.

ORGANIZATION
The SPJ Ethics Committee is one of the premier groups developed for the advancement of high ethical standards within the journalism/communication profession. Our web page at www.spj.org continues to be the most view page outside of the homepage. We answer more than 300 ethical inquiries each year via the SPJ Ethics Hotline and from direct emails and phone calls. Additionally, we handle nearly 50 media requests a year and our recent book Journalism Ethics continues to grow in popularity and is used as a textbook on more than 15 college campuses. Our Code of Ethics has been translated into 13 languages. Additionally, we are indisputably the largest trainer of journalists in ethics, offering sessions at the convention, regional conferences, local chapters and Reporters’ Institutes.
MANAGEMENT
As with all SDX grants awarded directly for SPJ initiatives, the grant will be managed by
the grantee and the executive director of SPJ/SDX or his designee. The money will be
paid out in the form of reimbursement for expenses, as per SPJ and SDX already
established fiscal policies.

OBJECTIVE/NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Each time there is a national disaster, attention appropriately falls on the media’s
management in reporting the event. But, equally, attention is drawn to the ethics of telling
these stories. And, it’s not usually flattering. Event after event we see examples of
reckless disregard for facts and minimizing harm in dealing with grieving victims, plus
refusal to take responsibility for mistakes, carelessness of reporting or its tactless
handling of victims’ privacy and grief.

Often these assessments are made by ethicists and others in the media based entirely on
what they see or hear from the scene. This proposal would allow SPJ’s Ethics Committee,
perhaps working with a local SPJ chapter through local authorizes, to conduct interviews
with victims and town’s residents to get a more thorough picture of the media’s ethical
handling of coverage. To our knowledge, no one outside of a scant few media scholars
working on research has attempted to speak directly and openly with victims about the
media’s ethics. We believe this could deliver some incredible information, which
compilied, could be released in a report and developed into training for journalists. These
sessions could involve an audio/visual component pending approval from the victims to
be interviewed on camera and photographed.

The purpose is three fold – First, we would like to have a more personal avenue for
gathering information that could be used in case studies and for training journalists on
how to ethically manage these types of disasters. Rarely, does the press go back and ask
the victims to share their experiences with the media. In fact, in researching for this grant,
we couldn’t find any institution or entity that’s done this. We think SPJ’s national profile
would allow for this and its Ethics Committee would be the perfect avenue for attempting
it.

Second, because this type of analysis just doesn’t exist and SPJ has the means and
resources to take our findings and make them known on a larger scale, we could drive
solutions by creating an educational movement to remedy some of the problems we are
seeing on TV, online and in print.

Third, SPJ’s Ethics Committee should be taking a more proactive approach to resolving
ethical issues. This grant project would dovetail off the already initiated position papers,
which appear on SPJ.org. At some point we have to stop standing back and offering off-
site analysis and assessments each and every time one of these disasters takes place.
Instead, we need to get proactive and develop training methods to stop bad ethics from
occurring. Getting feedback from the public, however, is critical. We pride ourselves on
wanting to be teachers firsts and critics second. We believe this will help us take a step in
the right direction toward educating journalists about proper ethics before events like these happen.

CONTINUITY/FUTURE FUNDING
This grant is for support of a single event, which will serve as a litmus test. It has the potential to be ongoing if the first is successful. Our initial plan is to conduct this for the shootings at the Aurora, Colo. movie theater. We will gather stories and information and develop a high-level training plan in hopes of reducing the repeat offenses of bad ethical decision making in disaster coverage. Assuming the first is successful, we would likely seek out partnerships with other journalism funders to continue. We would, of course, seek some sort of investment from the Foundation each year as we believe this is something our organization should "own."

MARKETING AND PROMOTION
This project would be promoted via SPJ national headquarters per their standard practices using the communication arm of SPJ. The Ethics Committee would work with headquarters to connect with chapters for the visits, and then work in helping develop the programs using the Professional Development Committee. Because the deadline for programming at national convention has passed, we are looking at this for this to be used in 2014 convention, or perhaps during an ethics-only summit later this year or early next. We do believe there is merit in conducting the interviews and using social media to make the media world aware of what we are doing.

BUDGET
Aurora, Colorado:
- Travel $1,000 (airfare, car rental, parking, public transit, mileage)
- Location rental $300 (in the event we cannot get a suitable location for free)
- Audio/visual photography equipment $200
- Refreshments $200 (Beverages and light fare)
- Hotel accommodations $500 (two people, two nights)
Sub total - $2,200

These numbers represent most expensive scenarios. The intent is to work in conjunction with Colorado Pro chapter to help develop location and arrange for refreshments, recording equipment. Prices are not likely to exceed total estimate presented here. The initial intent is to utilize Fred Brown, a resident of Aurora and two other ethics committee people to conduct the interviews and speak with the victims about ethical standards.

Production costs, materials:
Audio/visual editing and production of the interviews to create training modules, creation of paper and online report, development of training session for convention or summit. Editing will attempted to be done pro bono.
Sub total $800

Grand Total: $3,000

- 21 -
MEMORANDUM

DATE: Jan. 7, 2013
FROM: Brandon Ballenger
SUBJ: Digital Communication Task Force
FOR: Sonny Albarado

OVERVIEW
After the Excellence in Journalism 2012 conference, as the newly installed president you called for a small task force to tackle two things: to develop digital communication guidelines for SPJ leaders, and to address a number of specific questions stemming from previous discussions and disputes.

The tacklers included chapter coordinator Tara Puckey, director-at-large Carl Corry, and pro members James Pilcher, Victoria Reitano and myself. SPJ’s director of education Scott Leadingham also offered some guidance and opinions early in the process.

Our recommendations follow, beginning with our responses to the specific questions you raised and moving on to our proposals for communication best practices during fact-finding missions and for SPJ’s use of social media. The group has also collected a number of social media training and informational resources which we intend to share in some form through SPJ’s website. We hope our work proves useful for advancing SPJ’s efforts in the new year.

APPROACHES TO SPJ’S DIGITAL COMMUNICATION Q&A

When should regional directors and committee chairs inform the president about a planned blog post?
It’s a common-sense courtesy to inform the president if the post is about an issue of national relevance, and particularly if it’s critical of the organization in some way.

Likewise, if a president’s blog post is relevant to a region or a particular region or committee’s expertise, it makes sense to notify them. They may wish to comment on their own blogs.

Prior review of posts is unnecessary, and a poor idea; we should trust our leaders to do their jobs until they give us reason not to. Those who wish to be immediately notified of published posts can subscribe to the blogs’ RSS feeds.
Do chapter leaders or national leaders need to place disclaimers on any communication that they don’t speak for all of SPJ?
In most cases, it should be self-evident that views belong to a specific person and are not representative of SPJ. However, in instances where leaders are publishing on SPJ-branded platforms, clarity is worth the extra step. Photos, bios, and even expressly stating that “I speak for myself” all help.

Where limited space is a concern – as in a Twitter bio – a link to a catch-all disclaimer should suffice. (SPJ could create its own.)

Are committee blogs solely informative or can committee chairs also express opinions?
Opinions create conversations. Committees should be free to express opinions, so long as it’s clear they are – either of the committee, or of its individual members – and are not postured as representing any larger group.

It makes little sense to limit blogs to disseminating information. A blog is an open-ended platform, no different than the pages of a newspaper, which can feature everything from news to analysis to op-eds and the funny pages.

Blogs are used in a variety of ways and have neither the constraints nor expectations of Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and other newer, narrower platforms. Their postings are not as ephemeral as some social media – for instance, it’s fairly easy to relocate an old post, and if people know to check they are not likely to miss the message. A blog also allows for discussion not restricted to a group of “friends” or “followers” – it is public and highly visible. It allows for a back-and-forth conversations.

If there is any expectation associated with blogs anymore, it’s probably that their posts are longer than on other social media. That makes blogs a better place for social media, where time for reflection and a more thorough expression of an idea are allowed.

Should the regional directors express opinions about news events or SPJ issues on their SPJ-hosted blogs or only use them to inform and communicate with members in their regions?
Regional directors should be free to comment on reported events, as well as independently gather facts about newsworthy situations in their region and discuss them publicly. They should also be entitled to their opinions, but label them clearly and emphasize facts. Basic journalistic standards still apply – authors should seek comment from and fairly represent all sides of a story.
In situations where original reporting or research is required, directors should:

- Immediately let the public know they are aware of a situation and are on the job.
- Be an ongoing source for reliable information. Provide updates about progress using social media and other tools. Do the reporting that will lead to an official SPJ position, while sharing facts as they become available.
- If asked to investigate such situations, directors should report back before taking an official position.
- State the position as quickly as possible – be thorough, but also timely and relevant.

In a digital age, advocacy efforts can no longer take the form of a private fact-finding mission and a mailed letter kept private until its recipient acknowledges receipt. Journalists are not gatekeepers; they are scouts and heralds. The public, not institutions, drive change.

**Are blogs even the best way for RDs to communicate with chapter leaders or others?**

They can be, if RDs commit to updating them. Ideally, directors will communicate information in the way readers tend to consume it. But also ideally, users will move beyond their comfort zone and learn to use mediums where the information is most usefully and easily shared.

There's no one right way to communicate; there are many options and the medium is only relevant given a specific purpose. For one as broad as “communicate information,” it makes little difference whether you email, blog, tweet or Facebook as long as everybody uses that platform and is comfortable with it.

Each region should have its own social media accounts, including a blog. These should be networked together in some fashion for potential cross-pollination. But interaction and a commitment to updating the community is the key.

**FACT-FINDING PROPOSAL**

If it is to remain a relevant voice in the fight for First Amendment rights, the Society of Professional Journalists needs a modern, standardized approach to the way it conducts fact-finding missions and releases official statements.

As recent history has made clear, SPJ’s lack of a concrete plan for how to attack free speech controversies has left open the opportunity for miscommunication. And it has
prevented the organization from communicating efficiently and effectively beyond traditional means.

In some cases, that has resulted in the Society coming out with positions long after a controversy is over. As a result, we lose credence as a go-to source for such matters.

Most recently, this lack of clarity resulted in a public argument between two national officers over how SPJ should have responded to a controversy involving The Red and Black student publication at the University of Georgia, in which editors of the publication walked out to protest censorship.

In August 2012, SPJ President John Ensslin asked Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky to conduct a fact-finding mission on the issue. After Koretzky assigned someone to visit the school, he wrote about his findings and conclusions on the Region 3 blog, Southern Drawl, without talking to Ensslin first.

Ensslin said he felt blind-sided and ordered Koretzky to remove the post. Koretzky did take down the post, but criticized Ensslin’s directive.

Part of the problem was that Ensslin expected Koretzky to report back to him before making any comments on the matter, but did not explicitly say so, leaving room for interpretation on how Koretzky should proceed. Koretzky felt he had the authority to move ahead without Ensslin’s sign-off, and was concerned that the organization would drag out stating its position. He also wanted to make sure SPJ served as a leader on the issue as it progressed.

Following that incident, SPJ President Sonny Albarado tasked this working group to propose guidelines on how to handle similar situations in the future.

To be clear, only the President, or someone designated by the President, can officially speak on behalf of SPJ.

That said, here are our suggestions:

- Before SPJ as an organization can release an official opinion on an event or controversy, it must perform due diligence and gather facts. Journalistic standards should be followed, with all sides in a matter provided an opportunity to tell their stories and respond to accusations. However, SPJ should issue an initial statement acknowledging the issue, its potential implications and state the Society’s planned response and its goals.
• The President will appoint investigators; reasonable travel expenses by investigators should be reimbursed by the Society.

• SPJ officers and national committee members should refrain from issuing unqualified opinions until an official statement is stated by the organization.

• During the investigative process, SPJ should frequently update its members and the public about the investigation’s progress using any means available, including blogs and social platforms. These updates should not express opinions, but provide information and observations. Essentially, investigators must act as objective journalists. What types of things can be shared? News and research from other sources and on-the-record interviews. Investigators may use their own accounts so long as it doesn’t go against their company’s social media policy. They may also use a designated SPJ account.

• SPJ may also provide forums for discussion, asking for the public’s input, fostering conversations and engaging with interested parties.

• A complete report with findings and recommendations must be submitted to the president for review.

• An official SPJ statement is issued via a press release on spj.org and shared in all appropriate platforms, including, but not limited to, email, social media, blogs and taped or live audio and video.

This process may take hours, or it may take days, depending upon the complexity of the situation.
PROPOSED SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Scope
This proposal is for members of SPJ’s national board and headquarters staff. This will cover not only the organization’s social media efforts, but how individual members should use social media when discussing SPJ.

This set of guidelines comes after a thorough review of best practices from governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and some of the nation’s largest businesses.

All of those policies can be summed up with two basic words: Common Sense.

So here are the guidelines ...

Disclosure
When discussing SPJ business on social media platforms, SPJ leaders and staffers need to disclose their position with SPJ or have that clearly indicated in their profile description.

The SPJ main web site also needs a page that explains how the organization uses social media, its social media guidelines and what platforms it operates on.

This can branch off into more discussion and instruction on how journalism and social media now go hand in hand, and how chapters and local SPJ leaders can use the medium to leverage social media to spread the word about events, news and the overall mission of the organization.

But there needs to be a place where SPJ’s social media policy is explained for all members to see.

Content
Since SPJ is an advocate of free speech, this section is not going to mandate what can and can’t be said by organization leaders and employees on social media platforms about SPJ. But use common sense, and be sure to state that you are speaking on your own and not on behalf of the organization when discussing SPJ issues. In the case of Twitter, just disclosing this in your profile description should be enough.

Many say in their own profile that their tweets, blogs and Facebook posts are their own and do not represent the position of SPJ. However, these should be on personal accounts: anyone using an official SPJ account or blog (including regional blogs) should follow the guidelines listed below.
Content guidelines

- Any messages regarding SPJ policy or conveying news about the national organization or a position from the national organization need to come from official SPJ channels (Twitter account, Facebook page, LinkedIn page, etc.) and from the president/executive director FIRST. Anything else makes it appear as a usurping of authority from organization leadership.

- This is a situation-dependent guideline. If the leader in question is a Regional Director and the situation does not involve national leadership, they would probably be able to review the content themselves. If it involved national leadership or headquarters, however, the content should be reviewed by national staff or the SPJ president. This includes regional and national blogs, regional and national Twitter accounts and Facebook pages, etc.

- Individual SPJ leaders and staff should use common sense when discussing the organization’s business. Do not disparage SPJ or its members or individuals; do not disclose private or proprietary information; encourage discussion and discourse about SPJ and journalism in general.

Live Events

- When it comes to live, ongoing events, such as open board meetings, and convention business, all members of SPJ’s board and staff are allowed to “live tweet.” Again, common sense is the key here. A guideline would be to inform followers as to what the news is, instead of imparting an individual opinion.

- Anyone who attends a meeting during which SPJ business is conducted also is free to fully report on that meeting through word of mouth, social media and other means. The discussions and information distributed at those meetings may flow freely.

Conclusion

This is just a guideline and not a policy. There are no punishments or sanctions involved. And as an organization, SPJ is in a position to ENCOURAGE the use of social media by all members and as a tool for reaching our members.

After all, SPJ is primarily a volunteer-run nonprofit organization that holds the concept of free speech as one of its core tenets.
But we also need to keep the organization’s best interests at heart when discussing SPJ business and any time when SPJ is involved. So use prudence and common sense, and always disclose affiliation and background whenever possible.