AGENDA
THE SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
TIME: NOON  DATE: JAN. 30, 2016
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

1. Call to Order – Fletcher

2. Roll Call – Walsh
   a. Fletcher
   b. Walsh
   c. Baker
   d. McCloskey
   e. Radske
   f. Kopen Katcef
   g. Neuts

3. Approve Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
   a. June 27, 2015 (Page 2)
   b. Jan. 6, 2016 (Page 7)

4. Approve Delegate Meeting Minutes
   a. Sept. 18, 2015 – opening business meeting (Page 9)
   b. Sept. 20, 2015 – closing business meeting (Page 11)

5. Report of the SPJ President – Fletcher (Page 16)

6. Report of the SDX Foundation President – Leger (Page 21)

7. SDX Foundation Grant Requests – Fletcher
   a. Drones grant (Page 22)

8. Discussion Items
   a. Membership representation update – Fletcher (Page 24)
   b. ACEJMC appointment process – Walsh (Page 33)

9. Old/New Business
   a. Selection of SPJ Fellow (time permitting) – Fletcher (EXECUTIVE SESSION)

10. Committee/task force reports
    a. Journalism Supporter task force memo (Page 34)
    b. #AccessDenied (Page 36)
    c. Awards and Honors Committee (Page 37)
    d. Community statement (Page 38)
    e. Diversity Committee (Page 40)
    f. Freelance Community (Page 42)
    g. Journalism Education Committee (Page 45)
    h. Legal Defense Fund Committee (Page 46)
    i. Membership Committee (Page 49)

11. Adjournment
The Society of Professional Journalists

Executive Committee Meeting

Jan. 30, 2016
Noon-1 p.m. PT

Hilton Garden Inn
Scottsdale, Arizona

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 Dana Neuts presiding, the meeting of the executive committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:05 a.m. ET on Saturday, June 27, 2015.

In addition to Neuts, the following were present: President-Elect Paul Fletcher; Secretary Treasurer Lynn Walsh; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Immediate Past President David Cuillier; at large members Joe Radske and Bill McCloskey.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon; Membership Strategist Tara Puckey and Awards Coordinator Abbi Martzall.

Guests included SDX Foundation President Robert Leger, Bylaws Committee Chairman Bob Becker and D.C. pro member Kathryn Foxhall.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Neuts shared the president’s report, pointing out that SPJ board member Mike Reilley would spearhead a group to develop delegate training. William O’Douglas chapter member Kristen Kraemer will also help lead the task force. The group will develop ideas, in concert with staff, to help delegates be more prepared for the business meetings that take place during convention.

She also shared that there wasn’t strong support for another community at this point. Several ideas were shared, but the Society will stand pat for now. One of the community goals is to create a landing page that will highlight (and share information about) all available communities. Lastly, she informed the group that the Society is working on model bylaws for all communities, new and existing.

SDX FOUNDATION PRESIDENT
Leger shared that the Foundation is healthy, although market performance was down when compared to the prior year.

He also provided an update from the SDX Foundation programming committee. It is considering a new position, tentatively titled Dr. J. The position would be a one-stop shop for all journalism questions – specifically in areas of SPJ’s core missions. Furthermore, this person could provide training in these areas, and create training content and resources for the website.

STAFF REPORT
Skeel updated the group on the new fundraising position. The new position would spend part of the time focused on day-to-day individual giving initiatives of the Foundation – allowing Vachon more time to focus on building relationships with corporate/foundation funders. However, it the
new position would also dedicate time to focus on SPJ efforts such as the Legal Defense Fund, President’s Club and newly adopted Advocacy Fund.

**ADVOCACY FUND INVESTMENT POLICY**
Skeel presented an investment policy for the newly created advocacy fund. The policy (Appendix A) is similar to the policy in use by the SDX Foundation. The policy is geared toward growth, and is therefore more aggressive than SPJ’s investment policy for its rainy day fund.

Skeel explained that the draft policy was shared with the full board, and no questions or concerns were raised.

**Upon proper motion by Fletcher and second by McCloskey, the committee voted to adopt the policy.**

**NON-AFFILIATED MEMBERS**
Fletcher provided an update from the “41-percent” task force. The task force is working on solutions that would give non-chapter members a voice in organization decisions. Although each member has a voice in national elections, they do not have a voice in matters brought to the house of delegates.

Fletcher shared that the group will reach out to other organizations to learn about their governance structures. It will also send a survey to SPJ’s non-chapter members in an effort to ascertain their level of interest in being represented. The goal is to share this information at the next board meeting, although it was unlikely a recommended solution would be made that early.

**TECHNOLOGY UPDATE**
Skeel shared that the database and website upgrade is progressing. Most of the work to this point has been behind the scenes, focusing on clean-up and groundwork. The expectation is to roll out “staff sites” and “member sites” after EIJ15 – likely in the winter months.

**AWARDS**
Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Walsh, the committee voted to enter executive session at 1 p.m. for the purpose of selecting the Society’s awards and honors.

Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Fletcher, the committee voted to exit executive session at 2:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**
Upon proper motion by Kopen Katcef and second by Walsh, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m., June 27 2015.
APPENDIX A

DRAFT
INVESTMENT POLICY
OF THE
SPJ ADVOCACY ENDOWMENT

adopted Month, Day, Year

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Standard of Care
   1) In managing the assets of the Society of Professional Journalists, the board of directors shall use the care, skill, prudence, and diligence under the circumstances as any reasonable person.

B. Asset Management
   1) The board shall have the authority to obtain the services of professional asset managers and to dismiss same as necessary.

C. Diversification
   1) The board shall supervise the diversification of the assets of the funds, plans and program. This will be done to minimize the risk of large losses unless circumstances make it clearly prudent not to diversify.

D. Restrictions
   1) Fixed income securities may be purchased where issued or guaranteed by the United States Treasury, government sponsored enterprises, or corporate bonds rated by Moody’s or Standard and Poor’s. International Securities may also be purchased. Convertible securities will be considered as equity securities. An average Standard and Poor’s credit rating of “AA,” or the equivalent should be maintained. Commercial paper should be rated P-1 by Moody’s Investor Service, Inc., A-1 Standard and Poor’s, or F-1 by Fitch’s and certificates of deposit or banker’s acceptances of the one hundred (100) largest commercial banks in the United States, or deposit or banker’s acceptance (in appropriate amounts) are fully insured by an agency of the Federal Government.

   2) No direct investments shall be made in commodities, commodity contracts, futures, future contracts, oil/gas, mineral leases, mineral rights, or royalty contracts.

   3) No direct transactions in short sales, options, puts, calls, straddles and/or spreads shall be used. Covered call options strategies on equities can be pursued on a limited basis. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT) are permitted on a limited basis.

   4) No investment shall knowingly be made in which any officer or director of the SPJ board of directors or SPJ staff has a known significant financial interest.

   5) SPJ may invest in mutual funds which are quoted by the National Association of Securities Dealers.
6) SPJ retains the right to remove any stock or bond from the portfolio if it feels that the issuing body or company sells products or services not in harmony with the Society’s goals.

II. INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

Recognizing the need to manage day-to-day operations; fiduciary responsibility to our members; and desire for a prudent guide for the present and future direction of our assets, our investment priorities shall be:

A. Stability
   1) To maintain a high level of stability and security in the Society by minimizing risk and volatility insofar as possible within the rate of return objectives.

B. Growth
   1) To grow the investment principle at a rate commensurate with historical market growth.

C. Preservation of Capital
   1) To preserve the capital investment of the Society.

D. Steady income from interest and dividends
   1) Earned interest and dividends may be re-invested or used for day-to-day operations.

III. ASSET ALLOCATION

A. Equity Investments
   1) The following equity asset classes are acceptable for the Society of Professional Journalists:
      (i) Large Cap Domestic Equities (S&P 500)
      (ii) Mid Cap Domestic Equities (Russell 1000)
      (iii) Small Cap Domestic Equities (Russell 2000)
      (iv) Equity Mutual Funds/Commingled Funds
      (v) Global Equity Funds
      (vi) International Equities
      (vii) Index Funds

B. Cash and Cash Equivalents
   1) Cash balances maintained and generated as a normal course of business may be invested in the money market fund maintained by the custodian firm.
   2) Commercial Paper ratings shall be restricted to A-1 ratings of Standard and Poor’s and P-1 rating of Moody’s.

C. Spending Policy
   1) In recognition of the laws established for endowments, only the earnings may be used for programs and services that meet donor restrictions. The level at which earnings will be spent will be determined by the Society’s board of directors.

D. Target Asset Mix
   1) Domestic Equities 20 percent min. 60 percent max.
   2) Domestic Fixed Income 15 percent min. 50 percent max.
   3) Cash & Cash Equivalents 0 percent min. 20 percent max.
   4) Global/Interntl Equities 5 percent min. 25 percent max.
5) Alternative Investments 0 percent min. 5 percent max.

E. Investment Management
1) SPJ will enter into agreements with investment advisors as it sees fit and will review their performance on a quarterly and annual basis. All agreements with advisors will be cancelable on thirty (30) days notice.

IV. INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

1) To achieve the Society’s investment objectives, we will place tight parameters on investment decisions and advisors. These would include a low to moderate risk tolerance in every portion of the portfolio with no more than 70 percent of the portfolio invested in equities at any time. We wish to avoid large swings in portfolio value and will not accept short-term fluctuation to try to achieve a higher return.

2) The Society’s executive director shall review account balances monthly and suggest investment changes to the board of directors when appropriate.

3) The executive director will share investment performance with the board of directors at the time quarterly financials are issued.
MEETING CALLED TO ORDER
With president Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 2:02 p.m. ET on Wednesday, Jan. 6 via conference call.

In addition to Fletcher, the following were present: Vice President for Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; Immediate Past President Dana Neuts and at-large members Joe Radske and Bill McCloskey.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel and controller Jake Koenig. Representing Greenwalt CPAs were Amanda Meko and Jennifer McVeigh.

FISCAL YEAR 2015 AUDIT
The purpose of the meeting was to consider the draft of the Fiscal Year 2015 audited financials.

Meko shared that the independent accounting team found no misstatements or errors while completing the audit. The Society adopted no new accounting policies and didn’t change any existing policies.

The accounting team returned a clean report, which is the best rating an organization can receive.

McVeigh walked committee members through a few of the financial statements, specifically the Statement of Activities and the Statement of Financial Position.

Regarding the Statement of Activities, McVeigh noted that when comparing line items from FY2013 to FY2014, the Society was lower in association management revenue. This is because NAHJ was part of EIJ in FY2013, but not FY2014. Therefore, SPJ received no revenue for conference (association) management for NAHJ.

Regarding the Statement of Financial Position, McVeigh explained the difference in grant revenue was the result of the new working agreement between SPJ and the SDX Foundation. Because the SDX Foundation is now directly managing educational programming, it no longer provides grants to SPJ.

However, the Society’s expenses remained relatively flat. This is because the expenses are tied to the educational programming tied to grants promised in 2014.

In these reports, in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, grant revenue is recorded when the Foundation promises the funding (typically April of each year). So, what results is expenses from the current year and revenue for the upcoming year. Because we
received far less revenue for the upcoming year – as a result of the transition – it gives the appearance that we finished in the red.

In reality, however, we received funding for those expense last year.

In short, the combination of GAAP reporting requirements and the transition between SPJ and the SDX Foundation paints an inaccurate picture of the Society’s true financial performance. The anomaly will correct itself next year, as the new method of managing the educational programs will be comparable from year to year.

McVeigh shared that the Society has enough unrestricted reserves to last 6 months should it receive no revenue and all operations continued as is. This is up from 4.5 months in FY2014. The accounting team recommends 3-6 months of reserves.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Kopen Katcef, the executive committee voted to approve audited financials for FY2015.

**ADJOURNMENT**
The executive committee adjourned at 2:18 p.m. ET on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016.
CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME
With President Dana Neuts presiding, the Opening Business Session was called to order at 4:05 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 18, 2015 at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Fla.

ROLE OF THE CONVENTION GOVERNANCE IN SPJ
Neuts welcomed those in attendance to Orlando and the annual convention of delegates. Delegates provide direction for the society to best serve its members, she explained. She also outlined voting procedures for bylaws changes and resolutions.

NOMINATIONS REPORT
Neuts explained that full bios of the SPJ Board of Directors can be found on spj.org and the EIJ15 app. She then announced those candidates running for office and/or up for re-election, including:

President-elect: Lynn Walsh
Secretary-treasurer: Rebecca Baker and Jason Parsley
Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs: Sue Kopen Katcef
Director at Large: Bill McCloskey and Alex Veeneman
Campus Adviser at Large: Rebecca Tallent
Campus Representatives (two positions): Monica Dattage, Dustin Ginsberg and Kate Hiller
Region 2: Andy Schotz
Region 3: Michael Koretzky
Region 6: Joe Radske
Region 10: Ethan Chung and Donald Myers
Region 11: Matthew Hall
Region 12: Amanda Womac

Irwin Gratz made a motion to accept all candidates. Carl Corry seconded. Motion passed.

Rebecca Baker delivered a speech.
Jason Parsley delivered a speech.
Alex Veeneman was unable to attend.
Bill McCloskey delivered a speech.
Monica Dattage and Dustin Ginsberg were unable to attend.
Kate Hiller delivered a speech.

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS INFORMATION
Neuts explained that 8 p.m. Sept. 18 is the deadline for submitting resolutions for consideration. They should be emailed to Sonny Albarado at spjsonny@gmail.com. Resolution proposals would
be available after 10 a.m., to be voted on in the closing business session at 3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 20.

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AND CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS
Neuts announced the winners of the Chapter of the Year and Circle of Excellence Awards for 2015. They were:

- **Professional Development in Education**: Large Chapter – Colorado Pro; Small Chapter – Charlotte Pro
- **FOI**: Large Chapter – Northern California Pro; Small Chapter – North Carolina Pro
- **Special Efforts in Diversity**: Large Chapter – Louisville Pro; Small Chapter – North Carolina Pro
- **Outstanding Communication**: Large Chapter – Colorado Pro; Small Chapter – Cleveland Pro
- **Campus Relations**: Large Chapter – Press Club of Long Island; Small Chapter – San Antonio Pro
- **Large Chapter of the Year – San Diego Pro**: Finalists – Press Club of Long Island and Colorado Pro
- **Small Chapter of the Year – East Tennessee Pro**: Finalists – Georgia Pro and Houston Pro

Neuts congratulated all chapters on a fantastic year.

CLOSING
Neuts asked if there was any other business to discuss and after hearing none, said the group would rejoin at the Sunday afternoon closing business session.

MEETING ADJOURNED
CALL TO ORDER AND YEAR IN REVIEW

With President Dana Neuts presiding, the Closing Business Session was called to order at 3:05 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 20, 2015, at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Fla.

EXPLANATION OF VOTING PROCEDURES

Dave Carlson went over voting procedures with delegates.

ELECTION RESULTS

Neuts announced election results.

Paul Fletcher – President
Lynn Walsh – President-elect with 682 votes
Rebecca Baker – Elected secretary-treasurer with 508 votes; Jason Parsley received 215 votes
Sue Kopen Katcef – Elected Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs with 660 votes
Rebecca Tallent – Elected Campus Adviser At Large with 638 votes
Bill McCloskey – Elected Director At Large, with 459 votes, Alex Veeneman received 260 votes
Monica Dattage and Kate Hiller – Elected campus representatives with 336 and 535 votes, respectively. Dustin Ginsberg received 35 votes
Andy Schotz – Elected Region 2 Director with 103 votes
Michael Koretzky – Elected Region 3 Director with 61 votes
Joe Radske – Elected Region 6 Director with 32 votes
Ethan Chung – Elected Region 10 Director with 34 votes. Donald Myers received 24 votes
Amanda Womac – Elected Region 12 Director with 32 votes

There was record voter turnout with 779 people voting, or 11.06 percent of members casting their vote.

SWEARING IN OF NEW OFFICERS

Neuts swore in new officers.

CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

Sonny Albarado said the work of the Resolutions Committee had been pretty intense over the last couple of days. He wants to be sure that, in the future, resolutions are processed and put into proper form early enough that they can be printed at least 24 hours ahead of the Closing Business Meeting so delegates are not left scrambling at the last minute reading resolutions and deciding how to vote. Because of last-minute changes, he explained some of the printed resolutions would be numbered differently than how they appeared on the screen.

Bill McCloskey made the motion to consider all resolutions except 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 15. Hagit Limor seconded. Dana Neuts asked if any in the block were not printed. Ben Myerson, Chicago
Headline Club, said Resolution 9 had changed and did not make it into the packet. Myerson moved to add a friendly amendment that would also remove Resolution 9 from the block. McCloskey accepted the friendly amendment and added Resolution 9 to the group that would be considered separately. Voice vote – motion accepted.

**Those Resolutions considered as a block were adopted – Resolutions 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14.**

**Resolution 1:** Motion – Bill McCloskey, D.C. Pro. Second – Georgiana Vines, East Tennessee Pro. Resolution calls upon delegates to thank departing president Dana Neuts for her service. Albarado read resolution. No Discussion. Neuts requested an amendment to make Jelly Bean, the name of her dog, two words. Voice vote, resolution passed.

**Resolution 2:** Motion – Paul Corry. Long Island Pro. Second – Kym Fox, San Antonio Pro. Albarado read resolution thanking SPJ staff. McCloskey said in first paragraph, should be “makes” instead of “make.” Voice vote, resolution passed.

**Resolution 3:** Motion – Rebecca Tallent, University of Idaho. Second – Georgiana Vines, East Tennessee Pro. Resolution honoring Steve Geimann for his years of service as he prepares to move to England for three years. Voice vote, resolution passed. Standing ovation.


**Resolution 5:** Motion – Tom McKee, Greater Cincinnati Pro. Second – Irwin Gratz, Maine Pro Chapter. Resolution commemorating WDBJ journalists. Voice vote, resolution passed. Albarado asked that everyone observe a moment of silence for the two WDBJ reporters and Dori Maynard. After moment of silence, Albarado said he also wanted to thank Michelle Day, Michelle Boyet, Dennis Myers and Steve Geimann for helping to put the resolutions together.

**Resolution 9:** Motion – Jane Primerano, New Jersey Pro. Second – Kym Fox, San Antonio Pro. Resolution commends North Dakota legislature for its New Voices of North Dakota Act and urges members to actively work to try to pass similar legislation in their states.

Albarado said someone asked him a question about what action is taken on resolutions. He said the SPJ Board of Directors follows up with staff to be sure action is carried out. It is his hope that future resolutions chairs can report back to members to tell them what action was taken. Voice vote, resolution passed.


**Resolution 15:** Name change resolution similar to last year. Change SPJ’s name to Society for Professional Journalism. Motion – Dori Zinn, Florida Pro. Second – Curt Yeoman, Georgia Pro. Carl Corry, Long Island Pro, friendly amendment to remove “gnashing of teeth.”
Mac McKerral, Western Kentucky, encouraged delegates to think seriously about this issue. Focus on what’s important to the society and whether that needs to be reflected in a name change. Reminded delegates that SPJ has changed its name before.

Bill McCloskey, D.C. Pro – Stressed that anyone – an undertaker or a car salesman – anyone can join SPJ as an associate member. There is nothing limiting about the name.

Rebecca Aguilar, Fort Worth Pro – Joined SPJ in 2010. There’s a beauty about SPJ. There are other journalism organizations for various niches. SPJ is only broad-based organization already. Thinks we should not change the name.

Dori Zinn – Florida Pro – If you believe the name should stay as it is, you believe where we are is OK and you don’t believe any changes should happen. Dwindling membership would I hope showcase why we need to change the name. We should be here for anyone who commits an act of journalism. I support this name change.

Abigail Payne, Webster State Student Chapter – Editor in chief of schools newspaper. Over half of staff are not journalism majors, but they are doing journalism. SPJ needs to make ourselves open to people who do journalism but aren’t journalists.

Michael Fitzgerald, treasurer of the New England Pro Chapter – We need to take this seriously as far as changing our name. We are focusing on the wrong thing. I don’t think its radial enough to only change the name change and I think it’s redundant. I don’t think it broadens anything for citizen journalists.

Jim Plante, DC Pro Chapter -- I was a delegate for first name change. I actually suggested it being debated year after year after year. Sigma Delta Chi to SPJ. Probably had some sentimental attachment to the Greek letters. There are many more important issues to worry about for the society and the profession. I would echo what was said by the previous speaker: I don’t think the name, whether you say “of” or “for” makes a difference. Media companies and media in general has bigger impact than our name. That being said, I think we will persevere under either name. There are members who will do their very best to make sure of that. If majority of chapters or delegates want it I think we’ll be just fine and if they don’t, I also think we’ll be just fine.

Mckenzie Romero, Utah Headliners Chapter – Has nothing to do with name of organization. Much work to be done. Why I’ve chosen to remain a member. I think potential to do incredibly more work. I don’t think a name change is going to do anything.

Emily Schweich, University of Maryland Student Chapter President – I think we need to place an emphasis on ethics, media law and learning how to do things right as journalists. Emphasize good journalism rather than who does it. We wouldn’t join a healthcare organization because we support good healthcare. If emphasis were not placed on the journalist, I don’t think I would continue studying journalism…if anyone could do it. Not a good use of resources to change our name.
Alex Tarquinio, Deadline Club – This resolution reads almost verbatim as the resolution last year. It’s good we’re talking about it, but I don’t think it works as it is written – as a joke. I think a name change alone would be a cosmetic change. If we truly want it to change we need to look at the structure. I believe associate members currently are aimed at PR professionals who pay higher dues. We need to look at who associate members are and do we want to target others for associate membership? Once we look at other issues, then we can look at whether we may or may not want to change the name.

Lila LaHood, SPJ NorCal – I know we can make a decision today in this forum, but I think it should be presented to whole organization. I’ve been involved with name changes of other organizations and you need to get broad buy-in and support.

Andy Schotz – I have argued against this proposal with Michael Koretzky when we did a point/counter point on Studio SPJ. A name change goes the opposite way of where I think we should go. A name change could come later. If we approve a name change first, what could happen is the name change happens, and then nothing else happens and it is seen as a pointless maneuver. The Society is loathe to define who is a journalist and we fight very hard on that as we fight for the shield law, etc. I think this resolution makes us think more broadly about the act of journalism. Not sure I support this in its current form, but there is a lot of merit in the idea.

Kevin Kinder, Northwest Arkansas Pro – Call the question. George Daniels, University of Alabama – Second. Voice vote ended debate.

Jim Plante, D.C. Pro Chapter – Motion to table motion to next convention. Rebecca Tallent, University of Idaho, seconded. No discussion.

Vote on motion to table and have resolutions committee work on more professional model for next year. Card vote. In favor of tabling – passes, 54 yes, 47 no; 1 abstention.

Mac Mckerral, Western Kentucky University, moved. Carl Corry, Long Island Pro, seconded. To direct committee to come up with new language and return next year with that new language. Friendly amendment – enact appropriate entities to research what a name change would require McKerral and Corry accepted.

Paul Davis, past president of SPJ, Sigma Delta Chi – I think you’re talking about a job description/mission statement change. You’re changing it from a job description of journalists to anyone who supports journalism. What happens to staff, their jobs, there’s more than just a resolution that is on the table. Direct board and staff to research possibilities and implications including cost of changing name of SPJ.

Sonny Albarado: it’s a discussion that should go beyond resolutions committee, I agree.

Sue Kopen Katcef, Maryland Pro – Substance of the issue – a study on this a year or two ago. It’s already been done. We looked at it already, folks. That information is already out there. You can argue on merits but why direct staff and board to do a study again at this point. Nothing has
substantively changed to do another study. We did it thoroughly, students were involved, pros involved, but information is out there now.

Andy Schotz, D.C. Pro Chapter – There was an SPJ name change task force that did surveys, focus groups, and its recommendation to board was there was not consensus of interest in moving ahead. I have no idea what has happened to that task force even though I’m on it.

Mac McKerral, Western Kentucky University – Carl and I have agreed to withdraw our motion.

That old format comes back. Nothing keeping delegates next year from voting it down and submitting their own language. Come back and do it all over next year. We’re withdrawing motion. There’s nothing to prevent members, chapter leaders, etc., from coming back to resolutions committee next year.

NEW BUSINESS
Irwin Gratz – Brought Steve Geimann to stage. Thank you again for longtime service to SPJ and we have a present for you. Small flask “in case of emergency” while In England, wrapped in newspaper.

Steve Geimann – I will miss you all dearly but I will be back.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Dana Neuts – The Legal Defense Fund live auction will be at 6:30 in Grand 7; Presidents banquet 7:30 Grand 7; Paul Fletcher speaks 9:40 p.m. and the EIJ dance at 10 all in Grand 7

MEETING ADJOURNED
The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

-END-
DATE: Jan. 15, 2016
FROM: Paul Fletcher, SPJ President
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee and Board of Directors

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

This report will accompany the materials for the Scottsdale SPJ Executive Committee meeting in late January. The packet includes reports from committee chairs, who provide a rundown of their groups’ activity since EIJ in Orlando and give a look ahead for the balance of the SPJ year.

In this memo I will highlight some of the activities of SPJ during the first four months of the 2015-16 year, beginning with one of the most important functions – advocacy.

SPJ’s advocacy work has been multi-faceted. SPJ has signed letters in support for cameras in the courtroom and backed college newspaper advisers fighting with school administrators. And we went to Washington to speak with the president’s press secretary.

WHITE HOUSE VISIT

One of the high points of the year so far came on Dec. 15, when a group of four SPJers, joined by representatives from the Society of Environmental Journalists and the American Society of News Editors, went to the White House to meet with President Obama’s press secretary, Josh Earnest.

The meeting was a result of two letters from SPJ and other journalism and open government groups decrying the current practices of federal agencies and their public information officers.

FOI warrior Kathryn Foxhall, one of the SPJ attendees, deserves a hat tip for her perseverance in obtaining the meeting.

I’ve attach a copy of my upcoming Quill column, which provides a rundown of what we talked about with Earnest.

Earnest told us that the president and the White House would be focused on the State of the Union address and not to expect any response until after that. SPJ Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer has begun the follow-up.

#ACCESSDENIED

In December, SPJ launched a new program in partnership with MuckRock to combat PIOs and their tactics.

Under the leadership of President-Elect Lynn Walsh, the groups began the #AccessDenied project, which will gather examples of PIO stalling and obfuscation and ask the offending agencies for answers.

FOIA REFORM

The turn of the year marked the excellent news that the U.S. House of Representatives had passed the FOIA reform bill. The next push will be in the Senate, as we look toward the 50th anniversary of the FOIA in July, to #FixFOIAby50.
STUDENT ADVOCACY
SPJ has supported the work in various states to pass legislation similar to the New Voices bill in North Dakota, which insures student press freedom.

In January, SPJ began SMACK, an excellent new program spearheaded by Region 3 Director Michael Koretzky. The acronym stands for Student Media Aid, Cash and Know-How, and it is designed to provide support to student journalists fighting school administrators.

ETHICS
Ethics Committee Chairman Andrew Seaman has been an articulate and valuable spokesman for SPJ, giving his time and expertise in numerous interviews. His work on the Code Words blog has addressed several of the issues of the past few months:

* Student protesters at Mizzou

* Reporters at the home of the San Bernardino shooters

* The secrecy surrounding the sale of the Las Vegas Journal-Review to Sheldon Adelson

* Sean Penn’s “interview” of El Chapo.

MEMBERSHIP
In Scottsdale, we will hold a workshop hosted by consultant Tim Daniel to address the question of SPJ membership. It has been at least 10 years since the Society pursued this topic. It’s time.

The goal of the session is to start crafting a strategic plan to carry forward in the next few years, and I greatly appreciate the board’s support for this effort.

Lynn Walsh has been working with the “Supporters” task force to develop a means to get non-journalists who are interested in quality journalism involved in SPJ.

Membership Committee Chair Robyn Sekula put together a comprehensive plan for 2015-16 (a copy is attached to her report); at the outset of the year, I asked her to take a look at marketing of SPJ. I personally have wondered why SPJ doesn’t do more to market itself and the many benefits of membership.

We opted not to wait until the Scottsdale session to get started on membership. Robyn and Tara Puckey of SPJ HQ put together an extensive “Come Back to SPJ” pitch to former members that brought back 75 people. Well done.

AWARDS
The board approved the establishment of the Kunkel Awards for gaming journalism on a one-year trial basis. The call for nominations was overwhelmingly successful, with 291 entries in five categories.

TRAVEL
During the past few months, I have been able to travel to a number of SPJ events:
* I made the traditional first-president-visit to Fort Worth in October, where I was greeted with hospitality and open arms. I have the traditional FW gift, a branding iron, displayed proudly on my office wall.

* In November, I attended the Deadline Club’s Hall of Fame luncheon at Sardi’s in New York City.

* December brought the White House trip to DC detailed above.

* And we will be in Arizona this month.
QUILL COLUMN

What we told the White House press secretary

By Paul Fletcher

Public information officers at federal agencies have become gatekeepers and minders of federal employees, preventing journalists from doing their job and getting past a carefully controlled message from on high.

That’s one of the things that Josh Earnest, President Obama’s press secretary, heard on Dec. 15 at the White House.

I had the privilege of leading a group of six people in an hour-long meeting with Earnest and several of his deputies. Our contingent included Past SPJ President David Cuillier; SPJ FOI Committee member Kathryn Foxhall; Tim Wheeler, a Baltimore journalist and chair of the FOI task force of the Society of Environmental Journalists; Kevin Goldberg, counsel for the American Society of News Editors; SPJ Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer; and me.

The meeting with Earnest was two years in the works. In 2014, SPJ spearheaded a letter to President Obama, signed by 38 journalism and open government groups, objecting to PIO practices and seeking to hold him to his 2009 promise that his would be the most transparent administration in history.

In 2015, a second letter, signed this time by 53 groups, reiterated journalists’ concerns, again asking for relief.

In the fall, Earnest’s office agreed to a meeting.

The meeting was on the record. In Washington, much business is done in corners and shadows. In the past, even meetings with journalists seeking to address journalists’ concerns are held off the record.

But I found the idea of holding a meeting to discuss government management of information and secrecy with a highly placed administration official off the record to be unacceptable.

Earnest shared his view of PIOs and the job they are supposed to do: they serve as a clearinghouse, he said. Their role is to help with the flow of information to a reporter, he said.

It is not the job of a government employee to answer the questions from a reporter, he said. That’s the PIO’s job, he added.

There are many times that the story is different if the PIO is not in the room, Foxhall told Earnest. There may be an “official” story and something different.

With PIOs managing information and serving as a pinch-point, there may be stories beneficial to the government that aren’t getting told because of the current constraints. Many times, a reporter simply is seeking information to complete a story or to find facts to bolster an explanation, I said.

The SPJ-SEJ-ASNE contingent made a request of Earnest and the president, one we called “the big ask.”
Last fall, Justin Trudeau was elected prime minister of Canada. In one of his first actions, with the sweep of a hand, he undid constraints on government scientists. Any scientist working for the Canadian government was free to talk to journalists without having to go through a PIO or other minder.

This refreshing approach would be in line with the president’s early call for transparency, I said. In fact, we recommended the anniversary of the president’s promise, Jan. 21, 2009, the day after he took office. That date would be a grand opportunity for the administration in its last year to leave a legacy of actual transparency instead of a promise made and not kept, we said.

Cuillier noted that the president has done some very positive things for government openness – making data available on the web, for example. But he cautioned that the United States is slipping in the world rankings on press freedom. This country now is in the bottom half of the entire world. The president has the ability to reverse that trend, he said.

But Earnest said that any action by that date would be unlikely.

We raised a second issue: too often briefings in Washington are being held on a background basis only, with no information attributable to a spokesperson. Journalists and consumers of news want names attached to information. The only way to determine the credibility of a statement is to know who said it, we argued. We asked for an end to background briefings.

Earnest noted that the percentage of background briefings at the White House has dramatically decreased. He agreed that people need to see names and attribution. There may be a chance to find common ground, he said.

Over the past several years, SPJ has conducted a number of studies and surveys to document the problems with PIOs. We left behind a thick notebook containing all those surveys, along with a lengthy list of examples to top-down information management in the government.

Will our visit prompt any change? We did get the meeting and we were able to set down some markers. Earnest said he wanted to continue the conversation.

He promised a response after the president’s Jan. 20 State of the Union address. Here’s hoping that our visit was an actual discussion that begins work toward some solution instead of an exercise in which we are patted on the head and told, “Thank you so much for coming by.”
SDX FOUNDATION PRESIDENT’S REPORT

A few highlights since we met in Orlando:

■ The foundation’s assets stood at $11,173,937 on Dec. 31, down from $12,464,611 on Jan. 1. That is a decrease of 10.4 percent. Nearly $753,000 of the decrease (or 6 percent) is attributable to a fall in the value of our investments. That number no doubt grew worse in the first two weeks of 2016.

■ Howard Dubin and the finance committee will review our current policy of spending 4.5 percent of a rolling average of the past four quarters, and make a recommendation to the SDX board in April.

■ Our year-end campaign did well. Per Joe Skeel, we received 102 contributions (compared to 59 last year) for $9,331 (compared to $8,369 last year). “Doubling your donor base from one year to the next is no small feat. Kudos to the fundraising team of Katie and Chris.”

■ The programming committee continues to refine the job description, develop a pay scale and consider funding options for the “Dr. J” position – a one-stop shop for advice on journalism practice, FOI and ethics. A plan will be presented to the SDX board in April for approval, with input sought from the SPJ board a day earlier.

■ Fred Brown is working with Jim Schuette of Marion Street Press on the 100+ year anniversary book. An update on the ethics book is also in the works. I’ve asked Fred and the Quill committee to review whether the magazine should continue to be a print product. I don’t expect the full board to take up the matter before our fall meeting, if then.
SDX Foundation Grant Application

Date/Time Posted: 12/29/2015 2:05:58 PM

Contact Name: Michael Koretzky
Organization: SPJ Florida
Title:
Address: 1110 Buttonwood Lane
City: Hollywood
State: FL
Zip: 33019
Telephone: 9542927515
E-mail: michael@koretzky.com

What is the organization's mission statement?: The Society of Professional Journalists is a national organization dedicated to the perpetuation of a free press as the cornerstone of our nation and our liberty.

SPJ Florida does this by:

- Upgrading the journalistic profession wherever possible through Florida.
- Assisting Florida high schools in strengthening their journalism classes and courses.
- Cooperating with and assisting colleges and universities in developing strong journalism schools and departments.
- Growing a scholarship fund.
- Encouraging diversity among journalists and developing a profession that is representative of the public it serves.
- Informing and educating the public on issues concerning freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and speaking out on such issues.
- Encouraging freedom of information and preserving and protecting public access to its government.
- Supporting journalists fighting to maintain the First Amendment, the public's access to government, and the public's right to know.
- Supporting and encouraging professional development and continuing education of journalists.

What is the topic of your program/project?: SPJ LOAN-A-DRONE PROGRAM
SPJ sends a drone journalist/pilot and a high-tech drone to chapters and other groups of journalists for hands-on training and the execution of actual assignments. Participants will learn the law from as well as best flight practices.

How does this program/project complement the society's missions?: While SPJ's mission statement (https://www.spj.org/mission.asp) doesn't address technological training, the organization has focused on that at JournCamps and EIJs. This program is very much in that spirit.

How does this project/program fill a gap that isn't being filled by other projects/programs?: SPJ has offered no formal drone training. In fact, at EIJ, a session on drone journalism involved no demonstration of the technology.

What are the learning objectives for the project/program?: Learn the FAA rule governing drone journalism and learn how to fly a drone in the best way to deliver quality news to viewers.

Describe potential outcomes of the project/program: We'll tally how many journalists we've trained and post on a YouTube channel all the footage shot, and where it appeared.

Address issues of continuity: No other funds are needed. This is a one-time road trip, akin to what Dave Cuillier did for his FOI workshop.

Describe the organization's qualifications to organize and execute the project/program: Brandon Ballenger has attended two days of drone training, taught workshops for high-school journalists.
(FSPA District 7) and professional journalists (SPJ Region 3 conference), communicated directly with the FAA, and spent hundreds of hours flying SPJ Florida's Phantom 3 drone.

Provide the timeline for the project/program: Brandon will book a two-week tour throughout the country sometime over Summer 2016 -- whenever is most convenient for all interested.

How will the project/program be promoted?: The program will be advertised directly to SPJ chapters. SPJ Florida has personal contacts with a myriad of other journalism organizations, and Region 3 director Michael Koretzky will tout the program to college media in February at a national college media convention. We'll use social media best practices as well as direct appeals.

How will the project/program be evaluated?: We hope to train 100 journalists and produce 20 videos that get used for journalistic purposes.

Other sources of funding?: SPJ Florida will match any SDX grant.

Provide a detailed budget for the program/project: Unknown. The only expenses are gas, room, and some meals for Brandon Ballenger. We will book as many appearances as the budget permits.

What is the amount being requested from the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation? $3,000.00

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
Document upload method: Email documents later
MEMORANDUM

To: Paul Fletcher
From: J. Alex Tarquinio
Re: Membership Representation Task Force
Date: Jan. 15, 2016

SUMMARY

The Membership Representation Task Force recommends bringing two proposals for Bylaws amendments to the convention in September and allowing the delegates to decide which governance model they prefer. The two proposals are compatible, so the delegates could approve either one alone or both. Furthermore, the task force has formulated recommendations for best practices implementing the new at-large delegates—should this proposal be approved—recommendations that would be too prescriptive to include in Bylaws but deserve careful consideration by the national board of directors.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Membership Representation Task Force was formed as a presidential task force during the term of President Dana Neuts. Paul Fletcher, at the time president elect, chaired it until becoming president, when he asked me to chair the task force. All of the prior members, other than Fletcher, continued this year. The members of this group are:

- J. Alex Tarquinio, chair
- Rebecca Baker
- Lauren Bartlett
- Michael Fitzgerald
- Joe Radske
- Andy Schotz
- Lynn Walsh

Joe Skeel and Tara Puckey staffed the task force on behalf of SPJ headquarters and provided invaluable insights.

BACKGROUND

This task force was formed to address the long-known problem that the convention, which according to the Society’s Bylaws is the “supreme legislative body of the organization,” is not the democratically-representative institution that it should be. Delegates, who are selected by chapters, represent the Society’s members affiliated with each chapter on a ratio of 1 delegate to every 50 chapter members or fraction thereof. However, 41 percent of our membership is unaffiliated with a chapter. These members are neither indirectly represented by the convention, nor eligible to serve as delegates at the convention.

During the 2014-2015 board’s term, the task force considered various models to provide equal representation to all of the Society’s members in national governance, as well as whether it might be necessary to make special provisions for the new communities in governance structures. The
Task force used two main tools to study the issue: research into the governance structures of other journalism organizations and similar groups, and a special-purpose survey of the Society’s unaffiliated members.

This survey was designed to gauge the interest of unaffiliated members in national governance, as well as their preferences for potential new models. We asked unaffiliated members to rate their interest in the Society’s national governance on a 1-to-5 scale. Although the average response was 3, it is interesting to note that 35 percent of respondents rated their interest as either a 4 or a 5, indicating they were “very interested.” Among the six governance models in the survey, respondents indicated a preference for electing regional at-large delegates to represent the unaffiliated members in each region. The second most popular choice would be the most radical alteration in the Society—eliminating the delegates and implementing a one member, one vote system for all resolutions. The other governance models presented, in descending order of popularity, were a) straw polls conducted before the convention; b) creating virtual chapters for unaffiliated members in each region; c) assigning members to the closest chapter for delegate count purposes only; and d) eliminating chapter delegates and selecting all delegates in geographical voting by region. The survey was conducted for four weeks beginning at the end of July. It was promoted in SPJ Leads and through email to the unaffiliated members.

In light of the majority of the task force concurring with the respondents’ preference for at-large delegates, Paul and I met with the Bylaws committee at the Sept., 2015 convention in order to ask them to help draft language for this Bylaws amendment proposal.

**TASK FORCE CONCLUSIONS**

Once the 2015-2016 board’s term began, the task force continued work, holding one productive phone meeting and a lengthy email exchange, and reaching the following conclusions.

**Bylaws amendments proposed.** The vast majority (6 out of 7 task force members) supports creating regional at-large delegates, believing this to be the most efficient and fairest way to rectify the issue. Four of these six prefer a blended approach—both creating at-large delegates and giving the majority of all delegates at the convention the right to call for a binding referendum of the membership for matters they deem significant. The one task force member who does not support creating at-large delegates favors ending the delegate system and going to one member, one vote to decide all resolutions. However, as an alternative to this minority view, this task force member supports a Bylaws amendment giving the convention the right to call for a membership referendum. So the second Bylaws amendment proposal below is supported by the majority of the task force (5 out of 7.)

The debate of various possible governance models did reveal some philosophical differences. On the one hand, the task force member who supports ending the delegate system said it was a relic of a bygone era when technology did not allow the Society to hold online elections, and delegates did not pay higher dues than non-delegates so they should not have a greater voice in national governance. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority (6 out of 7) believed that preserving the convention as the supreme legislative body of the Society would be more democratic because the Society’s convention gives delegates the power to help shape policy at
the national level. In our study of similar organizations, we encountered examples where the board of directors was the supreme decision-making body, and the majority believed that moving to a similar model would give the Society less democracy—not more. Among the six who support creating at-large delegates, two do not support the amendment to allow for membership referendums, expressing the opinion that at-large delegates would solve the problem the task force was created to address. The other four think that allowing delegates to call for referendums—or at least giving them the option to vote on this proposal at the next convention, an idea that delegates have discussed for years—would be a good starting point for debate.

Although these proposals are not mutually exclusive—and the convention is free to approve both—the majority think that passing the at-large delegate proposal on its own would solve the problem posed to us. Every member of a region is either affiliated or unaffiliated with a chapter, so all members would be eligible for representation at convention, and all members would have the possibility of serving as delegates. However, the majority think that enacting the referendum proposal alone—without also creating at-large delegates—would be insufficient to make the convention fully democratic. Referendums would only allow members to vote up or down on resolutions; while delegates, with their greater opportunity to influence national policy, would still be drawn solely from chapter members.

**Rationale for a regional delegate system.** The task force examined whether a national or regional framework might be better for electing at-large delegates, concluding that the regional model was superior. The main potential advantage of a national framework would be a larger pool of unaffiliated members eligible to serve as at-large delegates. In a system with at-large delegate votes determined by the number of unaffiliated members nationwide, and shared out equally among elected delegates, every unaffiliated member would be represented at convention as long as there was at least one at-large delegate. However, we deemed the risks too great. If relatively few candidates ran for the national at-large delegate positions, we might create “super delegates” with more votes than most chapters. Another concern was the possibility that the majority of national at-large delegates might come from the most populous regions, representing members from smaller regions in name only.

Each SPJ region has a unique character—a strong argument for regional at-large delegates. The main risk identified with this model was the possibility that some regions might not be able to find a single unaffiliated member to serve as an at-large delegate. The smallest regions have around 100 unaffiliated members, more or less, making them eligible for two or three at-large delegate votes. (See Appendix 1.) If none of the unaffiliated members volunteer to serve as delegates, they would not be represented at convention. However, a region that does not send at-large delegates to a convention would be in the same position as a chapter that does not. Out of the 141 chapters that were eligible to send delegates to the most recent convention, 25 did not register any delegates. Under our current Bylaws, every member affiliated with a chapter has the right to be represented at convention—but not the guarantee of representation. The obligation falls on the members themselves to volunteer to serve as delegates.

**HQ should take the lead organizing elections.** The staff at headquarters has become adept at running online elections, whether for the national board, for virtual communities, or by conducting straw polls of membership. The task force worked closely with staff crafting these
recommendations, and staff assures us that organizing regional elections for at-large delegates would not be an undue burden.

After conferring with the staff at headquarters, we agreed on the following timeline:

- No later than 90 days before convention, headquarters staff shall determine which SPJ members are unaffiliated with either a student or professional chapter, and the number of unaffiliated members in each region.
- No later than 75 days before the convention, headquarters staff shall inform all unaffiliated members of their right both to vote in and run in regional elections for at-large delegates.
- Elections of at-large delegates shall be held no less than 50 days before the convention.

**The role of regional directors.** Regional directors clearly have a role to play in encouraging unaffiliated members in their regions to both vote in and run in at-large delegate elections. However, the task force strongly believes that this should not be written into the Bylaws. The current Bylaws do not task RDs with ensuring that all of the chapters in their regions send delegates to convention, and indeed, some chapters do not. Although we do not feel this should be an RD duty specified in the Bylaws, we would advise including a recommendation in the RD Handbook to educate their members about at-large delegates. The spring regional meetings may present ideal opportunities.

**Funding for travel costs.** Some chapters provide their delegates with funding for travel expenses. The task force weighed the option of creating a fund specifically to subsidize at-large delegate travel costs, but rejected the idea. A key goal of this proposal is to treat all SPJ members the same. Although some chapters support delegate travel to the convention, many do not. Creating a travel grant program earmarked only for at-large delegates would be unfair to chapter delegates who do not receive financial support.

The task force has thought of some possible alternatives for the national board’s consideration. The Terry Harper Memorial scholarship, a foundation program, has an application deadline in May, before the proposed at-large delegate elections, which must be held after the determination of the delegate count in June. However, the board might consider creating a similar competitive travel grant to be held after the at-large delegate elections, which all delegates without financial support from a chapter, a regional fund or another grant program would be eligible to enter. There might also be a regional solution, if some regions were to use a portion of their regional funds to help finance travel for their delegates who do not have another source of funding.

**Regarding communities.** The task force carefully considered whether delegates representing the new communities might be an effective alternative to regional at-large delegates, and rejected this idea. By definition, every member is either affiliated with at least one chapter or unaffiliated with any chapter. Therefore, the proposal to expand the convention by creating at-large delegates gives representation to all members, without double-counting any members. In our survey of unaffiliated members, only 15 percent reported belonging to a community. Indeed, three out of four unaffiliated members said they were unfamiliar with the communities. The communities are a new concept, and no one can predict whether they will thrive or not; however, it is highly
unlikely that the Society will ever reach the point where 100 percent of the unaffiliated members belong to communities.

We also weighed the notion of creating community delegates in addition to at-large delegates, and decided this was unnecessary. With the creation of at-large delegates, all members who are unaffiliated with a chapter—whether they are members of communities, national committees, satellite chapters, a combination of the above, or none of the above—will be eligible to serve as delegates. The task force hopes that by giving unaffiliated members the chance to serve as delegates at the convention that community members, national committee members and others who have been barred from serving as delegates because of their chapter status will finally enjoy this opportunity; furthermore, serving as an at-large delegate might inspire some members to become more involved in the Society by joining communities or committees, or by running for regionally or nationally elected positions. By contrast, creating a special category for community members would give them a privilege not accorded to other interest groups, either existing now or in the future. Finally, the task force decided the communities were too new and represented too few members to be written into the Bylaws at present. Roughly one out of every 30 members currently belongs to any of the communities. However, it may be worth revisiting this question in the future if the Society evolves to the point where a significant portion of members are represented by communities.

The question of whether communities should be given board representation was also raised. We felt this was somewhat beyond our remit, as the task force was formed to address the unrepresentative nature of the convention. Such a problem does not exist with the national board. The Regional Directors represent all of the members in their regions, while the officers and at-large directors represent all members. There is no national board position that represents only those members affiliated with chapters. Moreover, any SPJ member may serve on the board. Any member may also approach the board in other ways, such as by petition, or by volunteering to serve on a national committee or task force. The task force concluded that giving communities a designated board position would be a privilege not accorded to other SPJ interest groups.

**BYLAWS AMENDMENT PROPOSALS**

The task force agreed that the following key points should be included in the Bylaws amendments creating at-large delegates (See Appendix 2):

- At-large delegates must be unaffiliated with a professional or student chapter.
- Each 50 unaffiliated members, or fraction thereof, will entitle a region to one at-large delegate, essentially treating the unaffiliated members in a region as a virtual chapter for delegate count purposes only.
- Regional elections for at-large delegates will be organized by HQ.
- If the number of candidates is greater than or equal to the number of at-large delegate positions, each successful candidate within the region will receive one delegate vote at convention. If there are fewer candidates than at-large delegate positions, the votes will be divided equally among candidates, if possible. When the votes cannot be equally divided, the top vote-getter in each region will receive the larger number.
- The date for regional elections should be set well enough in advance of the convention so that at-large delegates can plan their trips.
Some of these key points differ significantly from proposals by the Bylaws committee, written in response to our meeting with them in Orlando, which nevertheless served as a useful basis for our own proposals. The Bylaws committee was also unaware of our recent decision to propose membership referendums. (See Appendix 3.) Therefore, we have drafted versions of both proposals conforming to our recommendations, which we put forward in the hope that these will serve as the starting point for discussion.

FURTHER ACTIONS

After the Executive Committee meeting in January, the task force will incorporate any feedback, whether on the specific language of the amendment proposals or their implementation. The task force also stands ready to help formulate a strategy to educate members about the proposed amendments before the convention.

CONCLUSION

The vast majority of the task force, which has studied this issue in depth for over a year, believes that creating at-large delegates is by far the most efficient and just way to transform the Society into a true democracy. Some other models considered would continue to privilege a subset of our membership. By contrast, ending the convention as we know it and holding all resolutions by one member, one vote would treat all members the same; however, this might also give the rank-and-file membership less voice in crafting national policy and tip the balance of power in favor of the national board.

Among the diverse governance models studied, the task force considers expanding the convention with the creation of at-large delegates to be the best method to simultaneously give all members representation at the convention, and give all members the opportunity to serve as delegates. A majority of the task force also believes that giving delegates the option to call for a membership referendum on issues they deem important might be a nice add on—but would not in itself solve the representation issue.

The task force’s objective is to bring solid proposals to the national board meeting in April that the board will support at the convention in September, with the ultimate goal of making this a fully democratic Society where all members are represented in national governance.
## Appendix 1

**SPJ Membership – Chapter vs. Unaffiliated Members (12/14)**

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<th>Unaffiliated</th>
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Appendix 2
Bylaws Amendment Proposal for Creating At-Large Delegates

Article Five: Governance

- Insert new Section Sixteen, renumber subsequent sections

Section Sixteen. As part of the process of certifying chapter membership for purposes of apportioning delegates to the national convention, no later than 90 days before the convention, the national headquarters shall determine whether each SPJ member in the region is or is not counted as a member of any SPJ chapter within or outside of the region, and establish the total number of SPJ members living in each region who are not counted as members of any SPJ chapter within or outside of the region.

Article Ten: Convention

- Amend Section Two as follows

Section Two. The convention shall be composed of delegates or representatives from each chapter, at-large delegates chosen by SPJ members who are unaffiliated with any SPJ professional or student chapter, the national officers and the national board of directors.

- Insert new Section Three, renumber subsequent sections

Section Three. At-large delegates shall be selected in the following manner. Headquarters staff shall inform all members who are unaffiliated with any student or professional chapter of the opportunity to both vote in and run in elections for regional at-large delegates at least 75 days before the convention. Headquarters staff shall hold elections for at-large delegates in each region at least 50 days before the convention. At-large delegates must be unaffiliated with any professional or student chapter. Each 50 unaffiliated members, or fraction thereof, will entitle a region to one at-large delegate. If the number of candidates for at-large delegates within a region is greater than or equal to the number of at-large delegate positions, each successful candidate within the region will receive one delegate vote at convention. If there are fewer candidates than at-large delegate positions, the votes will be divided equally among candidates, if possible. When the votes cannot be equally divided, the top vote-getter in each region will receive the larger number.

- Amend Section Four as follows

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 at-large delegate vote for each 50 members, or faction thereof, who are unaffiliated with a professional or student chapter in any 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.

- Amend Section Five as follows

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

Appendix 3

Bylaws Amendment Proposal for Allowing Referendums

Article Ten: Convention

- Amend Section Five1 of existing Bylaws as follows

Section Five. All enactments of the convention shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified. A majority of delegates may call for a binding membership referendum to approve resolutions passed at convention, which the staff at headquarters shall hold within 60 days of the convention.

1 This would become Section Six if the proposal to amend the Bylaws to create at-large delegates is passed.

###
MEMORANDUM

To: SPJ Board of Directors
From: Lynn Walsh
Re: ACEJMC seat
Date: 01/07/16

Colleagues –

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

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

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

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

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

1. The SPJ position on the ACEJMC is a position that interested SPJ members apply to be considered for. The applicants are considered by the full board and subject to board ratification.
2. The SPJ rep will serve for a term of three years.
3. The SPJ rep should be a working journalist.
4. The SPJ rep will submit reports to the board, detailing his/her activity, for the spring and fall board meeting packets.
5. SPJ will continue to pay the annual membership fee and the rep’s travel expenses to council meetings.
MEMORANDUM

To: SPJ Board of Directors  
From: Lynn Walsh  
Re: Journalism supporter task force update  
Date: 01/07/16

“Supporters of SPJ” Task Force

Task Force Members:
- Patty Newberry
- Sue Kopen
- Rob McLean
- Eddye Gallagher
- Michael Koretzky
- Lynn Walsh
- Jason Parsley
- Michele Boyet
- Amanda Womac

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

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

How it would work:
This would be different than an Associate Membership. These would be people who are committing a monetary donation to SPJ ($20) to say “we support efforts to protect the First Amendment, freedom of press and the public’s access to information.”
What they would get:
- Separate newsletter in their inbox, highlighting SPJ’s work and what is going on in the field of public access to information, First Amendment, journalism ethics, etc.
- Discount on EIJ conference
- Digital Quill
- Able to join SPJ communities
- MEMBER GIFT (MARKETING TOOL)
- Educational Training/Events: Public Records Day, FOIA tour, etc.

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

Ad Campaign:
We think an ad campaign of some sort may be appropriate. Koretzky is thinking of some ideas. Something along the lines of “If the press didn’t tell you who would?” We may run ads again on TV through the ad council.

Why would someone join?
They want to continue to see journalism that creates change in communities, starts difficult conversations, uncovers information and informs the public. They get to say, “I support that.”
MEMORANDUM

To: SPJ Board of Directors
From: Lynn Walsh
Re: #AccessDenied Project
Date: 01/14/16

This memo will provide additional information about the SPJ and Muckrock project collaboration for #AccessDenied.

#AccessDenied Description:
Since at least 2009, journalist organizations, including SPJ, have been pushing back on the lack of access to government employees and information. In recent years journalists have seen an increasing number of stall tactics being used and a lack of access to government employees and information.

These include agencies forcing reporters to go through Public Information Officers (PIOs) to speak to any employee, which often silences staff on critical matters. Then, once a PIO is contacted, there are sometimes other obstructions or monitoring that takes place. These can include, PIOs sitting in on interviews, asking to review questions or denying direct access to an employee.

SPJ and MuckRock encourage journalists to submit the information and allow it to be shared publicly so other journalists can see what others are experiencing firsthand. It will also allow SPJ and MuckRock to share the information on social media and with government agencies.

Click here to read more about SPJ and other journalism organizations’ push over the years to end these practices or view the timeline here.

Submissions:
Examples are submitted using the link here.

Submissions we have received so far can be viewed here.

Stories can also be shared on Twitter using the following hashtag: #AccessDenied or by Tweeting to @SPJ_Tweets and @MuckRock.

Media Coverage:
Richard Outzen, Independent News Interview
Carolina Journal: http://www.carolinajournal.com/exclusives/display_exclusive.html?id=12709

Future Plans:
MuckRock and SPJ will be filing requests with the agencies we have received responses about and also highlighting some of the responses we have received.
AWARDS AND HONORS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Awards and Honors Committee added a new member this month. Heather Lovett Dunn from the Cronkite School at Arizona State University has joined the group, replacing Mark Lodato, also from the Cronkite School. Lodato suggested Lovett Dunn to replace him when he was no longer able to serve on the committee.

The rest of the committee is: Andy Schotz (chairman), Sarah Bauer Jackson (vice chairwoman), Rebecca Baker, Jay Evensen and Sue Kopen Katcef.

Under a structural change made while Dana Neuts was president of SPJ, the Awards and Honors Committee continues to include the SPJ chapter contest database system, which Bauer Jackson oversees. About two dozen chapter and regional contests are participating this year. The matches for judging swaps were made this month.

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

Once the contest season has begun, SPJ Awards Coordinator Abbi Martzall often consults with me as questions arise about the three contests. We've consulted several times in the last few weeks.

According to charts that Martzall prepares, the pace of SDX Awards entries is down a little this year and Mark of Excellence Awards entries are greater than usual. However, the vast majority of entries for SPJ contests come in on deadline week, so the comparisons don’t mean much.

We expect to again have representatives from other journalism organizations help judge the New America Award this year.

This will be the second year of the MOEy, a best in show for the Mark of Excellence Awards. It seemed to go over well when we introduced it last year.

The only other change since last year's committee report was the introduction of a new contest. Region 3 Director Michael Koretzy created the Kunkel Awards for video game journalism.
STATEMENT ON THE COMMUNITIES

I am delighted to present this statement on the SPJ communities, the first of 2016, for this month’s meeting of the Board and Executive Committee in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Since my last report, a new community has formed. The community journalism community, focused on issues for journalists working in urban, rural and suburban communities, is being led by Al Cross, a former SPJ president and Director of the Institute on Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky. Prof. Cross is currently devising a structure for the community, which will include co-chairs to help support his leadership, as well as related programming and events.

In addition, elections were also held for community offices. However, during these elections there were numerous vacancies in positions. The Freelance community had a full executive by the time elections concluded and the results were announced, and while SPJ’s Digital, International and Generation J communities had elected top leadership positions, there were vacancies in other support positions.

The student community, however, did not have any candidates for positions, including leadership positions, upon the departure of Brett Hall and Jordan Gass-Pooré, the organizers, from the SPJ board. As a result, the student community has no active leadership, and is currently defunct. It is unclear if it is to be revived, or if there will be a new strategy created relating to it.

Immediately after the elections, I asked the elected leaders to search for and appoint interested members to serve volunteer terms, independent of the election cycle. In addition, because of the concerns surrounding the student community, President Fletcher asked me to conduct research and speak to the chairs of each active community to get a status on the viability of the network as a whole. I reported my conversations back to him.

From the tone of those conversations, enthusiasm and drive were evoked, particularly from speaking with Elle Toussi, the co-chair of the International community, Taylor Mirfendereski, the co-chair of SPJ Digital, and Anna Pratt, the chair of the Freelance community. Prof. Cross, chair of the community journalism community, was also passionate about ensuring his community was in place, when I spoke with him prior to EIJ15, and at the time of the authorized conversations, was trying to get the community developed. Generation J data or information could not be obtained.

When I had those conversations, a couple of items were prominent – first, that the communities were being established as competing with SPJ instead of working with SPJ, second, questions as to the broader identity of the communities as there had been confusion at the last EIJ conference as to what they were, third, that the communities must be marketed into the public face of SPJ, and that communities should have their own voice to ensure people don’t get lost in the system, and lastly, to quote Ms. Mirfendereski, that the communities need to be able to give its members tangible things.

At this writing, the Freelance community has been planning chats and events, as have the International community and SPJ Digital. In fact, I am working with Ms. Mirfendereski on a project for the Net Worked
blog to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of Twitter, and the social network’s broader impact on journalism.

Nothing formal has been released to me as far as Generation J is concerned. However, Andie Adams, the newly elected officer which oversees communications, has been regularly posting on Generation J’s Facebook and Twitter platforms. Ms. Adams is awaiting further instructions from Ms. Amezcua on how to proceed.

Programming and events of the community journalism community are still being planned by Prof. Cross and his community colleagues.

Finally, upon a suggestion from President Fletcher, I have approached the communities to submit programming ideas as an entity for the upcoming EIJ conference, in the hope to raise awareness of the communities and their work. Dan Kubiske, the other co-chair of the International community, has solicited ideas on the International community blog and among members, and Prof. Cross intends to discuss the matter with his community colleagues.

While there are some issues to resolve within the communities, I believe in the role the communities have when it comes to SPJ’s future, and that they can continue to make a positive, profound and long lasting contribution to the organization’s future, as well as to the future of the overall industry.

I express my appreciation to President Fletcher and his colleagues on the Board, as well as to Tara Puckey, Maggie LaMar, Jennifer Royer and the entire staff at headquarters, for the support of our work. It is with these communities that we can truly say to members that this is your SPJ, and we want to make things the best they can be for you and your peers, now, and in the months ahead.
DATE: Jan. 14, 2016
FROM: April Bethea, Diversity Committee Chairwoman
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORT

Coming out of EIJ15, the Diversity Committee had several ideas that it wanted to pursue for the upcoming year. Unfortunately, due to time and other conflicts on my end, we’ve not yet launched on many of these. But I believe all are still important efforts for us to work on, so I’m making it a priority to get us started on some or all of them in the coming months.

- **Diversity fellows alumni programming**: We received great feedback from our survey of past diversity fellows -- Thanks again, Becky! --, with many expressing interest in activities such as a mentoring program or year-round training webinars with other fellows. I’d like us to develop a plan to act on some of their ideas. Some recommendations may be easier to implement, such as creating a Facebook or LinkedIn group for fellows. But others, such as hosting webinars and creating a mentoring program, may require more planning and cooperation with other SPJ committees or outside organizations. The goal is to offer more avenues for fellows to stay involved with SPJ throughout the year and, long-term, encourage more people to seek a leadership role within the national organization.

- **Reginald Stuart Diversity Management Fellowships**: Our first two Stuart fellows recently returned from St. Petersburg for the Leadership Academy training. Attached to this report is a recap by fellow Alexandria Alejandro on her experiences. We’ll need to figure out how to continue the program in the future. Among the things to consider: Can we partner with Poynter again, or do we need to look for another training? Should we officially broaden the eligibility requirement to include non-SPJ members?

- **Spreading the word about diversity discussions, initiatives**: There was a lot of interest in finding ways to better let others know about important discussions or events related to diversity in media both in and outside of SPJ. Our blog offers a starting place for us to share these ideas, perhaps in a regular roundup of articles about diversity-related topics or a schedule of upcoming events.

- **Rainbow Sourcebook**: There has been more work to try to get the sourcebook updated and hopefully we’ll have more news to share this year.

April Bethea,
SPJ Diversity Committee Chair
Vice president, Greater Charlotte SPJ chapter
Digital News Editor, The Charlotte Observer
adbethea@gmail.com, spjdiversity@spj.org
Twitter: @AprilBethea
Reflections on Reginald Stuart Diversity Leadership Fellow  
by Alexandria Alejandro, sports editor at the Victoria Advocate

I was grateful I was chosen by SPJ to participate at Poynter's Leadership Academy. There were so many leaders there who came from bigger news organizations, and some had plenty of experience and some had little, yet no one had an ego. We were all there to learn. I think we all connected with each other in one way or another, and we still do to this day, sharing our struggles and successes. It was a short week, but I was so glad to be part of it.

I learned plenty from my experience at Poynter, and I've had to apply quite a few lessons since then.

The No. 1 thing I took away from Poynter is having a "Great Boss Plan," where we were asked to prepare three goals we want to achieve, particularly focusing on areas in which we would want to grow as a leader. My three goals were to connect with people I supervise by giving them more feedback; coaching instead of fixing; and breaking from the norm and planning for more enterprise and feature stories.

Almost immediately after I got back from Poynter, I've had to "coach" one of our reporters who struggled with a story and affected deadline a great deal. I took him aside and asked what he struggled with, what his goal was and how others can help, while asking open-ended questions, applying critical thinking skills, suggesting and encouraging. I plan on using this way of being an effective coach, and not "fix" problems.

I've had to provide a lot more feedback as well. Whether it's praise to an individual or through what we call The Paper Trail, a simple thank you, one-on-ones, noting when someone repeatedly lacks information, or what our department is lacking, I find myself offering feedback --- whether it's positive or negative.

We've had a plan in place to write enterprise stories, but it takes a long time to put those stories together. But we've had quite a few feature stories since I returned from Poynter, and I find my reporters suggesting more and planning for more. Basketball season just started, and one of our reporters already has pitched in a story he would like to develop. He didn't start out suggesting features when he started work in the summer, so it's a nice thing to see our staff making the effort. Another reporter suggested a feature on a team we were already doing a feature on.

Another thing I took away from Poynter was being able to handle a difficult conversation with one of our reporters who violated company policy, which is, in some newspapers, a fireable offense. I've had to arrange a meeting with the newspaper's editor and the reporter. I had to look back in my notes to see how I can prepare before going in that meeting. I had to make sure to list what my expectations of the employee were, inform of what was unacceptable and what harm it did, counter with examples, and come up with a plan to improve. We were all on the same page in that meeting, and I was really glad I prepared for it.

There are other things I learned, and have had to apply daily, like planning well and delegating work, avoiding email conversations, taking time to applaud good writing, planning coverage well, brainstorming with other staff members and prioritizing on a daily basis what is important.
DATE: Jan. 14, 2016  
FROM: Anna Pratt, Freelance Community Chairwoman  
FOR: SPJ Executive Committee

**FREELANCE COMMUNITY REPORT**

**Summary of Freelance Community activities since EIJ15:**

At EIJ15, the Freelance Community got the chance to connect with freelancers, including people who’ve been involved with the group and others who were unfamiliar with the Community. The “doctor is in” table was especially popular for people who were new to the Community. The questions that came up at that table underscored the importance of representing freelancers, who come from all walks of life. The Community also hosted a happy hour gathering, which was yet another opportunity to mingle with freelance members of SPJ and NAHJ (which was part of the conference). A number of programming ideas came out of the conference gatherings and some of the freelancers we met there have since gotten involved with the Community.

Since EIJ15, the leadership on the Freelance Community’s executive committee has changed. We held our elections in November; this took place earlier this year, bringing it closer to the timing of SPJ’s annual convention. Our goal is to make the elections consistent with the convention. We had some turnover for the coming year, and we thanked outgoing leaders Michelle Donahue, Julie Walmsley, and Kathryn Mobley for their hard work (and we hope they’ll remain active with the Community). Now, the executive committee is comprised of Anna Pratt (returning chair), Michelle Sandlin (vice chair), Michael Fitzgerald (former chair and secretary), Hazel Becker (resources coordinator), Amy Ritchart (events coordinator), Ellen Eldridge, Susan Valot (at-large), and Jennifer Karchmer (at-large).

Currently, the group is brainstorming potential programming for EIJ16. There are a lot of ideas that speak to different aspects of freelancing and various career stages, as well. It has been an inspiring starting-point for planning programs and blog posts for the year. We’ll be sending in our EIJ16 program proposals by the January deadline.

On Dec. 16, the Freelance Community hosted its first online chat for the new programming year via SPJ’s website. This continues the monthly online chats that the Community began last year. The chats have been a very popular program, drawing around 15 to 20 participants each time. Our topic was “freelance rates — what they are, how we set them, what the market is like, getting paid.” We tried out a new evening time for the chat. In the past, we’d been hosting them at 1 p.m. CST. The evening chat still had a good turnout, with eight participants. Our next chat will be Jan. 20 (consistent with the third Wednesday of the month). We’re considering adding a second monthly chat at an afternoon time to help accommodate different schedules. We’re in the middle of planning a couple of chats with special guests including Jennie Phipps of Freelance Success, Keren Goldshlager of Beacon, and Keith Campbell, who is spearheading an effort to change predatory practices concerning writers on the "writing gigs/writing services" sections of Craigslist.

Separately, chair Anna Pratt and resources coordinator Hazel Becker met with Tara Puckey via Zoom to discuss the changes that are in the works for the SPJ website and what that means for the Freelance Community’s pages. We’re looking forward to the new website and we think it’ll help cultivate connection across the Community. We appreciate that Puckey took the time to give us a rundown of the changes and to get our feedback.
Off-line, the executive committee has fielded a number of freelance-related questions that have come from SPJ and beyond. We’ve heard from international journalists looking to join SPJ, others inquiring about freelance pay rates, and still others wondering about getting credentialed as a freelancer overseas.

**Brief rundown of the Freelance Community’s plan for the year:**

In the coming months, the Freelance Community is looking to maintain its programs, contribute regularly to Quill magazine and the blog, offer freelance programs/events at EIJ16, be active on social media, and in general, accommodate freelancer needs and interests.

In addition to proposing some freelance-related programs at EIJ16, the Community is considering proposing something like a Freelance Community Corner — our tentative name for a booth or corner for freelancers to hang out and talk shop. We’re finding that freelancers have a lot of business-related questions and we think this might facilitate an ongoing discussion around that.

The Community plans to continue its monthly online chats, and possibly add a second regular chat. Typically, the monthly chats are themed around topics of interest to freelancers, such as making a living as a freelancer or cobbling together a “beat,” though we’re considering a regular chat time for trying out pitches on one another or just talking shop more informally.

Also, our events coordinator, Amy Ritchart, is working on putting together a podcast about pitching national publications.

An email group of people who’ve said their willing to look over pitches and rough drafts of stories has been organized. Thus far, participants have been a little shy about sending their materials to the full group; we hope to find a way for people to connect with one another on a more personal level, to alleviate that.

That speaks to a larger challenge facing the Community. The Community is thinking about ways to help freelancers to get to know one another better. The chats are helpful in that respect (and the EIJ events and so forth), but in general, people don’t have a strong sense of who their colleagues/fellow Community members are. This also comes into play when questions for experts arise. It can be hard to find the “right person” for someone to tap and in a timely fashion. The website’s forums/boards are a tool for fielding these questions but the webpage doesn’t get the level of traffic/interaction that we’d like to see.

To address that, we’ve thought about returning to a Facebook page with members or something of the like. We’re hoping the new website design will help, as well. We want to make our calendar and other webpages and resources guide more of a “go-to.” We frequently hear from people who take the time to dig into these resources, who say the materials have been helpful. However, it can be hard for people to find the resources. We need to do a better job of sharing those resources.

Our Community is growing organically, in a very one-on-one/slow-and-steady kind of way. Naturally, this has its benefits and growing pains. Ultimately, we want to better spread the word about the Community, strengthen our channels for communication and interaction, and be responsive to the needs and interests of a very diverse and growing group of freelancers. We’re looking forward to
building our Community in 2016 and continuing to work closely with SPJ staff, SPJ President Paul Fletcher, and other volunteers, to further our goals.
Committee Meetings
The Journalism Education Committee met during EIJ15 in Orlando, and we maintained email contact during the fall/winter 2015. The committee has plans for our next teleconference in February 2016.

Mentor Database
The first official version of the SPJ Journalism Education Database has been compiled and sent to SPJ headquarters to begin the process of promoting it nationally and getting it online. As of this writing, 36 SPJ members have volunteered to serve as mentors for middle and high school journalism programs. Promoting and supporting this initiative remains a primary goal for the J-Ed Committee in 2016.

Publications
Committee members are still producing Toolbox articles for Quill. Maintaining a regular presence on our blog has been difficult, but I’m hoping the committee will make progress on that front this year.

Still Captive?
The J-Ed Committee is continuing to promote Still Captive?, which is the newest research available focusing on journalism programs at the high school level nationwide.

Membership
There are currently 16 committee members:

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

Butler Cain, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, West Texas A&M University
LDF COMMITTEE REPORT

The Legal Defense Fund Committee acted on six requests during the first quarter of the 2015-2016 term. None involved financial assistance, though I did correspond with several inquirers.

Additionally, upon discovering we had not been thanking contributors in the past, I requested Katie Hunt to inform me when we receive contributions to the Fund so that I can write personal thank letters. I have begun doing so.

Below is a summary of the cases on which we acted:

**Gag Order: State of Texas ex rel. Abelino Reyna  9/12/15**
The committee unanimously approved joining an amicus brief with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in the case of State of Texas ex rel. Abelino Reyna,

The state of Texas filed criminal charges against Matthew Clendennen, one of the many motorcyclists arrested in May after a deadly shootout between rival biker gangs in Waco. The judge handling Clendennen’s trial issued a broad gag order that barred anyone involved in his criminal case from discussing it with the media. The order is so broad it even prevents witnesses or law enforcement officials from making statements to the media that are already part of the public record. The judge claimed he was trying to prevent pre-trial publicity.

Clendennen challenged the gag order. LDF agrees with the Reporters Committee that gag orders cause harm by restricting the flow of accurate, newsworthy information about matters of immense public interest. We also hold that the Texas constitution requires gag orders in criminal trials to be examined under a rigorous legal standard unmet in this case. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals is now deciding whether to vacate the order or leave it intact. The decision will likely establish the legal standard that will apply to all gag orders in criminal cases under Texas law.

**Public Records: North Jersey Media Group v. Township of Lyndhurst  9/29/15**
The committee unanimously approved joining an amicus brief with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey and the New Jersey Press Association in the public records case North Jersey Media Group v. Township of Lyndhurst.

The New Jersey Supreme Court is hearing a lower court appeal that allowed police to withhold records relating to the fatal shooting by an officer of 23-year-old Kashad Ashford in September 2014. The LDF held that access to law enforcement records is paramount and that a government agency’s press release is not acceptable as a substitute for records.

The high court will rule on the scope of the “criminal investigatory records” exception and the “ongoing investigations” exemption of New Jersey’s OPRA. The LDF holds that the press or public must have the opportunity to examine the underlying government records in order to fulfill the state law’s mandate for transparency in government.
In this case, the State’s press release and written reports by law enforcement officials presented inconsistent accounts of what led to this fatal shooting. Without access to the records, it’s impossible to resolve these inconsistencies to determine if the police had a reasonable belief of imminent danger and acted appropriately.

**Public Records: Request for support from ProPublica** 10/13/2015
The LDF Committee joined The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in supporting the case of ProPublica journalist Michael Grabell. He requested public records from the New York City Police Department about its purchase of a controversial police vehicle known as the “Z-backscatter van.” The van is an unmarked vehicle that uses an x-ray device to detect drugs or bomb-making equipment inside buildings or other vehicles. It emits high levels of radiation and also raises privacy concerns. The NYPD denied Grabell’s entire request, saying any disclosure would jeopardize criminal investigations. In December 2014, a New York trial court rejected the NYPD’s argument and ordered the department to produce records about the van. The department is now appealing that order.

The committee is urging the appellate court to affirm the trial court’s decision. We hold that much reporting already is widely available about the backscatter vans, undermining the NYPD’s argument that absolute secrecy is necessary. Equally important, the New York Freedom of Information Law supports press reporting on issues of public concern such as this case, in which the backscatter x-ray technology could pose serious health risks to the public.

**FOIA: Hamdan v. Department of Justice** 11/10/2015
The committee joined the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in the case of a U.S. citizen and resident of Lebanon who made a FOIA request after being detained and tortured by the United Arab Emirates. Naji Jawdat Hamdan requested documents from the FBI related to any U.S. role in his detention. A federal court in California granted summary judgment to the government, and an Appeals panel affirmed the ruling. The ACLU, representing Hamdan, is seeking a rehearing by the full Court of Appeals.

The amicus brief says the court rubber-stamped the FBI’s claim that the records are classified and exempt from FOIA based on national security concerns. We hold that courts are supposed to closely scrutinize agencies’ classification claims to avoid over-classification. The brief aims to avoid setting a bad precedent.

**Restrictive press credentials:** Open letter to Entertainers 11/10/2015

The committee joined various media groups, including the Newspaper Association of America and the National Press Photographers Association in signing an “open letter” to entertainers after some onerous credentialing requirements imposed on journalists covering their shows.

Janet Jackson recently set a list of conditions for journalists covering her current world tour, including the right to pre-approve all photos before they are published, a demand that she be the legal co-owner of any photos taken, along with restricting photos to 30 seconds during the first and second songs only. Other celebrities and sports teams also have imposed similar restrictions, which fly in the face of the important principle that photojournalists are the sole owners of their own intellectual property. The issue is particularly important for freelancers, who may often feel that they have no choice but to sign these credentialing agreements. The open letter calls for an end to these practices.
Actual Malice: Angel v. Winograd  12/17/2015

We joined the Reporters Committee in an amicus speaking out in a defamation lawsuit in California. Tawni Angel, the owner of a business that used to operate a petting zoo and pony rides in Santa Monica sued Marcy Winograd, a local animal-rights activist who led protests against Angel’s business. Winograd filed an “anti-SLAPP” motion, asking the trial court to dismiss the case, but the court allowed it to proceed, ruling that there was “sufficient evidence” that Winograd spoke with “actual malice” when she criticized Angel’s business.

We held that the trial court misapplied the actual malice standard, which says public-figure plaintiffs suing for defamation must show that the defendant knowingly made false statements or recklessly disregarded the truth. Here, the trial court concluded that Winograd spoke with actual malice merely because her statements were inconsistent with the findings of local animal-control officers. That ruling failed to take into account Winograd’s good-faith, subjective belief -- based on her own personal observations -- that the animal-control officers were wrong.

The ruling is currently on appeal to the California Court of Appeal, and the amicus brief explains that the interpretation of actual malice adopted by the trial court would hamper the practice of journalism, because under the trial court’s reasoning, anyone who expresses disagreement with a government official’s findings could be subject to a defamation lawsuit. This could severely constrain the ability of the press to “effectively expose deception in the government” and “preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know.”
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Membership committee roster: http://www.spj.org/com-membership.asp
Blog: http://blogs.spjnetwork.org/membership/

Since my last report in August, we have continued the Member of the Month program. We would like to see more nominations but we have been able to get this accomplished each month. I would like to see more diversity in nominees.

We accept nominations through the 5th of each month, choose a volunteer to honor by the 10th and (attempt to) publish an article about their work by the 15th of each month. We have done so every month since September 2014, and welcome your nominations.

Our biggest accomplishments so far:

Creation of a 2015-16 master plan. Robyn met with Tara Puckey to discuss how to execute the plan with staff’s help and revised it accordingly. The major effort that came out of that was sending out a letter and e-mail to members who have dropped and ask them to rejoin. Tara Puckey reports that about 75 people re-joined. I think we should do this every year.

We invited people to contact me or Paul to discuss concerns, thoughts, etc., and a few folks did contact me and want to discuss their membership, so I did have some phone calls, e-mails, etc. with people who are rejoining or considering it. I also connected some folks to other SPJ volunteers to help get them more connected to SPJ. It’s my contention that those are who more deeply involved tend to stay with us. It was a big effort and I’m appreciative of the staff time it took to accomplish this.

As you know, I’ll be attending the membership strategic session in Arizona in late January/February and I look forward to seeing what that produces.

Our revised membership plan is attached. It will likely change after the January/February meeting.

Please feel free to send me feedback. Thank you!
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**Membership Committee Strategic Plan**

2015-16
Updated January 11, 2016

**Goal:** The SPJ Membership Committee will work to help SPJ become the premier organization for all journalists of any medium, race, ethnicity, ability, age, location, sex or sexual orientation. The membership committee will work in concert with staff, board, chapter leaders and other volunteers to attract new members, retain existing members and cultivate a culture of inclusiveness. By doing this work, the membership committee will support the work of journalists everywhere, whether members of SPJ or not.

**Strategy:** Target lapsed members who have been intensely involved in SPJ in the past and would be most likely to return.

**Tactic:** Send letter to former national board members whose membership has lapsed. Also send a similar letter to chapter leaders/presidents whose membership has lapsed. Cross-reference the lists to avoid duplication.

- Draft a letter to the former national board members who have left SPJ. This will be a personal letter signed by current President Paul Fletcher that includes contact information for Robyn Sekula, membership chair, if someone wants to discuss SPJ (or someone else who is willing to field those calls).

  **E-mails went out Dec. 9, 2015**
  **Letters out Dec. 10, 2015**

- Follow up with a phone call by committee members OR staff retention person (evaluate which is better when the list is pulled).

- Evaluate effectiveness at two months past the letter drop.

**Strategy:** Assess our marketing to members.

**Tactics:**

- Evaluate printed brochures for clarity, attractiveness. Consider outside firm for design if needed. Consider full color.
  
  *Rebecca wrote text, Michael designed a draft. Revisions in process.*

- Evaluate web site portal for joining.

- Evaluate “why join?” portion of the web site, make recommendations for updates.
  
  *In discussions with Tara on this. She has videos from members that she will edit and add to the web site by January 31, 2016.*

**Strategy:** Better market to students who are members of college chapters and work to retain them as members.

**Tactics:**

- Offer $37.50 rate for SPJ chapter advisors.

- Market to students to emphasize our post-grad rate. Membership committee to write language, provide images of student journalists for mass e-mail to students.
What should timing be like on this?
- Create form on our web site that students can complete that will e-mail someone (family/friend) and ask for SPJ membership as a gift.
  *Billy to evaluate by Jan. 31, 2016.*
- Ask campus chapter leaders at all SPJ campus chapters to identify graduates or recent graduates who can be connected with pro chapters in their area. Provide that information to pro chapters and ask them to connect to the students and offer them the opportunity to join the pro chapter and participate.
- Obtain e-mail addresses for everyone who attends regional conferences and market membership to anyone who is marked as a non-member.
  *Tara indicates that this is already being done.*
- Encourage college students to connect with local chapters, but if that fails, to reach out to national staff and ask for roles/connections.

**Strategy:** Communicate with members more effectively.  
**Tactics:** Create newsletters focused on each different membership sector and new ways to involve members in advocacy.

- New members, separate monthly emails for one year post join - need a welcome plan.
- Professional, student and retiree newsletters every two months - a list of things for people to do; task-based things to do, including advocacy.
- Templates for advocacy for everyone - when we release a statement, what can individual members do about it (who to contact, what to say, show their support via Twitter with pre-formatted messages, etc.)

**Strategy:** Better connect with high school journalism programs.  
**Tactics:**
- Market specifically to high school students. Ensure that our membership language encourages high school students to join.
- Encourage relationships between high school programs, college chapters and pro chapters. Seek and promote ideas on how to do this.

*This is on hold until the January executive committee meeting. This will be on the agenda for that meeting to discuss if this is a strategy they want to pursue.*

**Strategy:** Recognize and honor those who do valuable work for SPJ.  
**Tactics:** Continuing to honor the most dedicated volunteers within SPJ each month with the Volunteer of the Month award. Seek diverse nominations in all ways – geography, type of media, college/university, student/pro, race, ethnicity, gender.

- Deadline for nominations 5th of each month
- Deadline for selection 10th of each month
- Deadline for publicizing 15th of each month

**Strategy:** Raise the profile of SPJ in social media and emphasize inclusiveness and diversity.
**Tactics:**

- Hold #SPJ4all event again in May 2016, encouraging everyone who is a member of SPJ to post a selfie and use our hashtag on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Promote the event so that chapters/individuals are prepared and ready.
- **Write biweekly blog posts for the Membership blog featuring members who are part of us and why they're members**, and what they get out of SPJ. Backlog six of these so we can launch with a good supply of these; ready to go January 6, 2016.
  *Robyn’s note: this is still in process.*

**Strategy:** Encourage chapters to connect with potential members who are in their geographic area but not part of their individual chapters.

**Tactics:**

- Offer more training for chapter leaders on how to use the tools under leaders that can help them manage their membership. Ensure that chapter leaders know they can obtain lists of potential members from SPJ headquarters.
- Offer ideas for innovative programs that attract new members and connect with existing members for pro/college chapters (two different types of programs, most likely).
- Identify major news organizations with low membership and arrange visits with top executives or at staff meetings and ask them to consider joining us.
  *This is something SPJ would need to budget for – trips to visit newsrooms. Could be staff or board members or other volunteers.*
- Encourage chapters to consider reducing or eliminating local dues if or when possible.

**Strategy:** Diversify the membership of SPJ by reaching out to HBCUs, non-English publications, individual journalists of color as well as transgender, bisexual and gay journalists and associated groups.

**Tactics:**

- Create a baseline for diversity by adding race, sex, etc. boxes to our membership form.
  *Tara indicates this is in the works.*
- Identify HBCUs by state and assess what needs those in leadership positions have of SPJ and what we as an organization can do to help foster the next wave of journalism students.
  *Tara suggests we consider targeting contacts at HBCUs for Scripps Leadership.*
- Continue to work with NABJ, NAHJ, Unity and other organizations on partnership efforts, including Excellence in Journalism. Consider this at the chapter level as well. Propose that members of other organizations be brought into the makeup of our organization as advisory members to committees, without pushing them to join SPJ.
- Ask SPJ committee chairs to assess the makeup of their committees and work to bring on people of diverse backgrounds.

**PROCESS CHANGES AND UPDATES**

- Create automatic call to action for people who haven’t updated their profile
- Collect information about what they are interested in volunteering for: community service, advocacy efforts, training students, etc.
- Create volunteer opportunities for non-members, make visible on website
- Need group thought: people may want to help a little bit - what can we ask them to do? Critique resumes, call legislators, etc.