

# **SPJ Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

## **July 13, 2002 - Portland, Maine**

**Meeting Date:** July 13, 2002

**Meeting Place:** The law offices of Preti, Flaherty, Beliveau and Pachios

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### **Roll Call:**

Board Members Present: 9

Al Cross, president

Robert Leger, president-elect

Mac McKerral, SPJ Secretary/Treasurer Jim

Highland, Vice President for Campus Chapter  
Affairs

David Carlson, Adviser At Large

Mark Scarp, Region 11 Director

Terrence G. Harper, Executive Director Julie F.

Grimes, Deputy Executive Director

Irwin Gratz, Region 1 Director

### **CALL TO ORDER**

With President Al Cross presiding, the meeting of the executive committee of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 9:18 a.m. on Saturday, July 13, 2002, in the law offices of Preti, Flaherty, Beliveau and Pachios in Portland, Maine.

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### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Harper presented his report. Harper discussed recent staff departures and additions. He explained that a new measure being introduced is the use of the "auto attendant" to answer phone calls. An automated system will assist callers in reaching staff members who can help them, eliminating the need for a fulltime receptionist.

Current member figures stand at 9,324 members, compared to 8,775 at this time last year. The group discussed preparing a new promotional brochure with less text and more graphic appeal.

Harper reviewed the report of the company hired to analyze SPJ's financial system. He explained that financial statements don't match the annual budget, making ongoing analysis difficult. He also pointed out the need for written policies and checklists for the accounting processes.

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### **LINE OF CREDIT APPROVED**

Harper explained that SPJ's funds currently are distributed in seven different bank accounts. He will be looking for ways to better organize and update these accounts. Harper discussed the need to establish a line of credit to make funds available for short-term operating expenses in the near future.

**Motion by McKerral to authorize the Executive Director to obtain a line of credit for up to \$100,000, and, further, that use of the line of credit is subject to executive committee approval. Second by Leger. Motion carried.**

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## **JOURNALISM ORGANIZATIONS MEMEBERSHIP REPORT**

Carlson distributed a spreadsheet of information about several journalism organizations. The spreadsheet showed current membership figures, staff size, dues, and convention information. The group determined that this was an excellent document and decided to create an annual survey to collect this information. The Council of Presidents will be consulted to determine the best time to conduct such a survey. Harper and Carlson will prepare a draft questionnaire, and Carlson will distribute the spreadsheet to the full board of directors. Scarp commented that this information could be useful for chapter leaders as they market SPJ memberships.

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### **FY 2002-2003 BUDGET APPROVED**

The group reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2003 budget located in the board packet. Cross noted that this budget projected a membership growth. Other changes included a cut in staffing, a change in Mark of Excellence entry fees, and the distribution of nine issues of Quill instead of 10.

**Motion by McKerral to approve the budget as presented. Second by Carlson. Discussion followed, and the budget was approved.**

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### **MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVES**

The group discussed the organization's institutional membership program. The program has been dormant for a couple of years. Highland agreed to prepare two letters that will be part of a mail campaign to reach potential collegiate institutional members. He will address letters to past institutional members and prospective ones.

Scarp mentioned the importance of keeping student members after they graduate by reminding them that SPJ is more than a club -- it is a professional organization that will follow them throughout their careers.

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### **CONVENTION REPORT**

Leger reviewed the convention programming and was very pleased with the quality of programs. He noted that sponsorship was at \$99,500. The committed had hoped for \$110,000 or \$120,000. Harper said the annual event is an area where there's an opportunity to expand sponsorship dollars.

Regarding future conventions, headquarters staff should recommend the 2005 convention site and keep in mind that this would be a staff-driven convention without a host chapter. Staff should also consider 2006.

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### **GERMAN EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

Committee members discussed a request from a group of German regional editors from Munich who will be in the U.S. on a State Department trip to participate in SPJ's national convention.

**Motion by Carlson to offer participants in the German Exchange program the early-bird student registration rates -- a complete registration for \$195 or a workshops only registration for \$105. Second by McKerral. Motion carried.**

Cross will let the group know the board's decision.

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### **LDF FUNDRAISER**

Committee members discussed creating a golf outing fund raiser for the Society's Legal Defense Fund. The decided to make the event a part of the Tampa convention in 2003 and consider an event that would coincide with the 2003 board meeting in Indianapolis.

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## **BYLAWS PROPOSAL**

The group discussed proposed bylaws changes presented by the Bylaws Committee. The committee considered the recommendations of the board, but the current proposal does not include every board recommendation.

**Motion by Carlson to approve and recommend to delegates the bylaws changes as prepared by the Bylaws Committee and mailed to chapter leaders. Second by Highland. Motion carried.**

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## **CHAPTER REQUIREMENTS**

The group reviewed the chapter requirements discussion from April 2002 board of directors meeting and examined the report of the committee assigned to refine the requirements. The proposal is located on Page 91 of the board packet. The Executive Committee made the following changes to the proposal:

- Four Star Level. Changed fourth bullet to read, "Chapter displays consistent communication with full membership through such vehicles newsletter, e-mail, and Web sites."
- Three Star Level. Changed third bullet to read, "Chapter displays consistent communication with full membership through such vehicles a newsletters, e-mail, and Web sites."
- Two Star Level. Added the following bullet, "Communication with full membership is on a consistent basis."
- One Star Level. Added the following bullet, "Annual report is filed."

The group discussed awards and consequences mechanisms and decided the chapter committee should develop incentives.

**Motion by Leger to refer this policy as amended back to the committee with Cross' language on incentives (these requirements and rankings will be taken into considerations when making grants and awards) and Scarp's formerly proposed remediation policies. The committee's recommendations should be submitted by the deadline for the board packets. Second by Scarp. Motion carried.**

The VPCCA and campus advisers on the board will be asked to create a similar set of stepped requirements for campus chapters. Highland will begin work on this project.

Cross officially reinstated the organization's Campus Chapter Affairs Committee. Committee members include: the VPCCA, the two campus advisers on the board and the two student board representatives.

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## **ETHICS ISSUES**

Cross explained that SPJ is issuing a statement about the Boston Phoenix's use of the photos of Daniel Pearl. The group discussed that this was a sensitive issue given SPJ's position with regard to the Earnhardt autopsy photos. SPJ must be careful to explain that there are legal issues and ethical issues. SPJ is not protesting the legality of using the photos, but rather the ethics of it.

Committee members briefly discussed the implementation of Ethics in Journalism Week.

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## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

Cross said FOI was the biggest external issue currently before the organization. They discussed several current FOI issues, including: running an FOI ad in D.C. publications; an item regarding the National Zoo and its claim that animals have a physician-patient relationship that protects the animals' privacy; the development of a Web site that reviews state FOI laws; and an organization called Gallery Watch that monitors legal issues for a fee. The group also discussed SPJ's Open Doors project.

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## **BOARD NOMINATIONS**

The group reviewed the current slate of officers prepared by the Nominations Committee. The slate is on Page 93 of the board packet. No candidate for Region 7 Director or Region 12 Director met the filing deadline, but individuals in both regions are considering running from the floor during the convention. The group took a break for lunch and reconvened at 2:20 p.m.

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## **REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

**Cross reviewed the current Regional Conference schedule.**

Region 1: April 11-13, Long Island, N.Y.

Region 2: March, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Region 3: March 3 or April 5, Atlanta

Region 4/5: Cleveland, Ohio

Region 6: March, Minnesota

Region 7:

Region 8: No date, Oklahoma City, Okla.

Region 9: No date, Cedar City, Utah

Region 11: Feb. 22-23, Phoenix, Ariz.

Region 12: Little Rock (?)

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## **IRE / SPJ COLLABORATION**

Committee members briefly discussed the collaboration between Investigative Reporters and Editors and SPJ to host FOI workshops in the next year. Some of these will be in conjunction with Regional Conferences.

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## **BOARD VACANCY**

**Motion by Leger to appoint Bill McCloskey Region 2 Director, replacing Dan Drummond who resigned. Second by Highland. Motion carried.**

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## **JOURNALISM TRAINING DATABASE PROJECT**

Cross briefly discussed SPJ's role with the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations to develop a database and Web site to house journalism training opportunities. SPJ has submitted a proposal to the Knight Foundation to fund the project.

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## **PUERTO RICO EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

The committee members briefly discussed the proposed Puerto Rico Exchange program and determined

that no participants could be selected until the program received funding.

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## **OLD BUSINESS**

Committee members held a brief private session to discuss a personnel issue.

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## **AWARD DISCUSSION**

Regarding the **Mark of Excellence awards**, the group discussed the new plan to announce three finalists and surprise the winner during the national convention. This is an experiment that will be evaluated after this year to determine whether it will be continued.

Committee members discussed the drop in nonmember entries in the **Sigma Delta Chi awards** contest. Staff should research this and determine whether it had to do with one member being part of the team and using the member rate. They also discussed publicizing the contest and winners in trade publications (AJR, CJR, E&P and B&C).

Regarding the **Ethics in Journalism Award**, Cross will contact committee leaders Gary Hill, Fred Brown, and Casey Bukro.

**Motion by Leger to accept Highland's recommendation of Alanna Turner for the Julie Galvan Outstanding Graduate. Second by McKerral. Motion carried.** (The material is on Page 161 of the board packet.)

**Motion by McKerral to name Sue Kopen Katcef the David Eshelman Outstanding Adviser. Second by Carlson. Motion carried.**

**Motion by Carlson to recognize Marcel P. Dufresne with the Distinguished Teaching in Journalism Award. Second by Mac. Motion carried.**

The group selected the outstanding regional director award, and the recipient will be named at the 2002 SPJ National Convention.

No nominations have been received for the Howard Dubin Outstanding Professional Member. Staff should prepare an e-mail from Al Cross to be distributed to chapter presidents.

**Motion by Carlson that criteria for the Dubin award be amended to allow nominations from any chapter officer (rather than the chapter board). Second by Highland. Motion carried.**

The group discussed the Fellows of the Society. **Motion by Carlson to name David Handschuh an SPJ Fellow. Second by Leger. Motion carried.**

**Motion by Carlson to name Leonard Downie and Robert Kaiser Fellows of the Society. Second by McKerral. Motion carried with one opposed.**

Committee members requested that staff change the nomination deadline for Fellows to April 1.

**Motion by Highland to present the Helen Thomas Lifetime Achievement Award to Thomas and Pat Gish of Kentucky. Second by Scarp. Motion carried.** Cross will notify the Gish's of the award.

Committee members adjourned to private discussion to select the recipient of the Wells Memorial Key, to be selected by the four officers.

Staff was excused, and the meeting was adjourned after this discussion.