

PRESIDENT'S MEMO

JUNE 28, 2009

Here are some highlights from the executive board meeting and the Historic Site in Journalism Dedication June 26-27. The executive board is President Dave Aeikens; President-elect Kevin Smith; Secretary Treasurer Hagit Limor; Immediate Past President Clint Brewer; Region 3 Director Darcie Lunsford; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Neil Ralston and At-large Director Bill McCloskey. Co- Interim Executive Directors Joe Skeel and Chris Vachon were also on hand.

Historic Site In Journalism

On Friday, SPJ presented the annual Historic Site In Journalism Award to Hubbard Broadcasting in St. Paul, Minn. Hubbard owns KSTP-TV and KSTP-AM among other stations. Hubbard was a pioneer in numerous broadcasting areas that we take for granted today. Founder Stanley E. Hubbard bought the first TV camera in 1938 and got on the air as the first TV news station west of Chicago and east of the west coast in 1948. It produced the first color newscast, the first 10 p.m. newscast and the first satellite feed inside a newscast on TV and radio. The radio station broadcast the first live sporting event.

Members of the Hubbard family, their friends and some current and former employees were on hand to accept the plaque, which will stand in the lobby near the station's front door. Stanley S. Hubbard accepted the award and spoke about the rich history of investigative reporting at KSTP.

The event was part of the continuing 100th anniversary celebration this year. Former SPJ President Steve Dornfeld (82-83) and Doug Stone, the first Barney Kilgore Scholarship Award winner (69), were recognized with the Minnesota Pro Chapter. Board member and KSTP-TV employee Amanda Theisen spoke at the event.

Membership extensions

In April, the SPJ board approved a six month-membership extension for anyone member who loses their job within a year of the board action. So far, eight people have taken advantage of the offer.

Annual reports

The executive committee voted to ask the full board to consider in August a plan to eliminate the star system for grading pro chapters. It would require chapters meet minimum standards, allow for successful chapters to receive honors and struggling chapters to get help. To remain in good standing, a chapter must have officers, one membership meeting each year, report in with the regional director or submit annual report to headquarters. Regional directors would touch base with chapter leaders.

The honors and awards chapters receive for achieving four-star status would be replaced by a voluntary awards program called chapters of excellence. The program that honors best chapters will continue.

The committee of RDs that Darcie Lunsford chairs will continue to work on this proposal.

Conventions

The 2009 convention is Aug. 27-29 in Indianapolis. We have a full program of professional development and will include a number of things to recognize our 100th anniversary. We will also remember the life and work of Terry Harper, who served as executive director for seven years before dying June 2. This year's Legal Defense Fund Auction will be for one year be used to raise money for the Terry Harper Memorial Fund, which will create a lasting tribute to him.

The Centennial Yearbook will include essays commissioned by the Sigma Delta Chi Board and a history that lists past SPJ leaders and award winners. It will be a magazine similar to the Journalist and will be

available at the convention.

Please sign up for the convention and book your hotel rooms while you can get the special rate. Please consider staying in the Westin, the convention hotel, so SPJ can meet its room night requirement.

The 2010 convention is at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas Oct. 3-5. That is a Sunday, Monday and Tuesday schedule.

The 2011 convention will be conducted jointly with the Radio Television Data News Association. A location could be selected at the August board meeting.

Executive director search

The search will be launched by posting ads on July 11 and applications will be accepted for about six weeks. The eight-person committee will vet the applicants with phone interviews and narrow the field to three to five. Those people will be interviewed in person. The hope is that a candidate will be present for consideration of the executive committee and full board in October. Kevin Smith and Hagit Limor are co-chairs of the committee.

Joe Skeel and Chris Vachon will serve as executive directors until the new executive director is able to start. The committee approved a pay raise for their work in 2008-2009 and a bonus that will be paid upon completion of their duties as interim executive directors.

Awards

The executive committee selected numerous awards including the Wells Key, Historic Site In Journalism, First Amendment and Helen Thomas Awards. Those winners will be announced at a later date.

Board update

At large director Michael Koretzky of South Florida Pro plans to resign July 6 to run for the Region 3 director position. The board will seek applications from July 6-20 from those interested in serving on the national board. An appointment will be made shortly after July 20 and that person will serve on the board at any special board meeting teleconference and at the Aug. 27 full board meeting in Indianapolis. Bylaws require board members that have been appointed to run at the next national convention. The delegates' meeting is Aug. 29. That winner would serve the one-year remaining on Koretzky's term and would have to run again in 2010 for a two-year term. Applications that include SPJ credentials and journalism work experience should be sent to headquarters by July 20.