

**MINUTES  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
SIGMA DELTA CHI FOUNDATION  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2011  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA  
SHERATON HOTEL**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

With President Steve Geimann presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation was called to order at noon on Monday, September 26 at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel.

**ROLL CALL**

In addition to Geimann, the following board members were present: Vice President Robert Leger; Secretary Irwin Gratz; Treasurer Howard Dubin; Directors Dave Aeikens, Lauren Bartlett, Fred Brown, Dave Carlson, Jodi Cleesattle, Al Cross, Brian Eckert, John Ensslin, Jay Evensen, Todd Gillman, Liz Hansen, Bill Ketter, Jane Kirtley, Al Leeds, Hagit Limor, Dori Maynard, Mac McKerral, Dana Neuts, Sue Porter, Kevin Smith and Amanda Theisen.

Staff members present included Executive Director Joe Skeel and Director of Development Amy Posavac.

**SDX PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

SDX President Geimann reports the endowment is up 9 percent as of early August but changes in the past few weeks may have caused some drop. But, we'll "hold tight," to quote Howard Dubin.

Geimann also reports that Todd Gillman is chairman of the new Projects Committee.

Mark Woods from the Florida Times-Union was selected as the Pulliam Editorial Fellow and was awarded \$75,000 in Indianapolis last weekend.

The Pulliam First Amendment Award will be presented to the Associated Press tomorrow (Sept. 27) and with it a cash award of \$10,000.

Geimann took a few moments to reflect on the lives of three leaders SPJ lost this past year, all of whom meant a great deal to the organization. Jean Otto, the Society's first female president, who passed away last week. Jean asked Howard Dubin, many years ago, to chair the finance committee, and was at the helm for the removal of the comma from our name.

Ernie Ford, who served as both the executive director and president, will be remembered as a great storyteller.

Phil Record, also served as president of SPJ, has been described as the conscience of journalism.

**STAFF REPORT**

Joe Skeel reports that the Foundation's assets are up \$840,000.

NAHJ (National Association of Hispanic Journalists) is reviewing an agreement enlisting the help of SPJ for "back office" membership and bookkeeping services. Our hope is to be up and running with this by the end of October. The rate they pay will offset SPJ's payroll with no new expenses incurred.

The second floor of the Headquarters building is available for lease and being shown to possible tenants.

**SPJ PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Limor reports on the success of the 2011 Excellence in Journalism Conference, saying it is a culmination of two years of work, but this is just a beginning of a collaboration with other journalism organizations.

Membership numbers show a decline of 250 members in the past year.

The FOI Committee presented its first “award” to the Utah Legislature, highlighting the worst in journalism. After receiving the inaugural Black Hole Award, the legislature reversed its law restricting access to government records.

With regards to the Society’s conflicts this year, Limor hopes that it sparks thoughtful and respectful debate on an ongoing basis.

## **TREASURER’S REPORT**

Dubin reports that the finance committee met earlier today. The Foundation currently has more than 15 “accounts” on its books, and Controller Jake Koenig and Joe Skeel have spent much time reviewing and consolidating these funds.

Dubin reports that the Edridge Lowe trust is \$15,000 but, per the donor, it can’t be distributed until 30 years after his death.

A surplus of \$25,000 is sitting in the “Ethics Fund,” which is leftover from the publishing of the most recent ethics book. Dubin suggests moving that into the general fund.

**Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Aeikens, respectively, the board approved the transfer of \$25,000 from the Ethics Fund to the General Fund.**

Also among the many funds held by the Foundation, is a Speaker’s Bureau which totals \$6,300, a gift from the Harnisch family in 2004. Dubin recommends we contact Ruth Ann Harnisch and ask to move the money into the General Fund. John Ensslin comments that he intends to create a Speakers Bureau committee this year, which could possibly use the funds.

The New England Chapter Fund is currently valued at \$1,200 from a gift in 2004. It was recommended that the Foundation contact Emily Sweeney in an effort to use the money, or get approval to roll it into the General Fund.

The Beverly Kees Fund is currently at \$1,300. The family has made recent contact with us regarding the funds.

The Dallas Pro Chapter Fund is currently at \$27,900. The use of those funds has been referred to the Awards and Honors Committee.

The Taishoff Fund, valued at \$25,000, was originally given to the Foundation in 1983. It is recommended that the Foundation go back to Larry, son of the donor, and get permission to roll the funds into the General Fund or to make an additional gift.

The Ward Neff fund is \$425,000 and pays for an intern each summer.

Funds from the Paul Atkins trust have been rolled into the Harper Memorial Fund, which currently holds \$106,000 and funds about five convention scholarships annually.

Dubin reports The Pulliam Editorial Fund is split off into high-yield investments and has \$500,000 cash in surplus now. It is suggested that \$250,000 be used to cover 2012 operating expenses, which leaves \$250,000 open to new ideas and projects. It was suggested that the Projects Committee be tasked with coming up with ideas to use that money. Kevin Smith suggests a memorial scholarship in honor of our three recently deceased past-presidents (Otto, Record, Ford). Bill Ketter suggests to partner with a university fellowship or chair program for mid-career journalism training/retraining.

**Upon proper motion and second by Gillman and Porter, respectively, the board approved the use of \$250,000 of the \$500,000 surplus for its 2012 financial obligations and tasked the Projects**

**Committee with finding potential uses for the remaining \$250,000.**

## **GRANTS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE**

Robert Leger reports that the Grants and Awards Committee will meet tomorrow (Sept. 27).

A handful of contributions with specific requests were received in the 2011 fiscal year:

— Scripps Howard Foundation: \$5,000 to support educational programming at the Excellence in Journalism 2011 Conference.

— Gannett Foundation: \$3,000 to support educational programming at the Excellence in Journalism 2011 Conference.

— Scripps Howard Foundation: \$50,000 to support educational programming at the Scripps Howard Leadership Institute.

— Marta Bender: \$50 in honor of Ernie Ford to support SPJ's educational programming

**Upon proper motion and second by Bartlett and Brown, respectively, the board approved to move the gifts from Scripps Howard Foundation, Gannett Foundation and Marta Bender to SPJ for their intended purposes.**

## **DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Amy Posavac reports an increase of 21 percent in number of donors. She attributes the increase to a more narrow focus on whom we're soliciting, and good phone scripts and appropriate ask amounts. She notes one particular audience on a do-not-call list who received a mailing instead. This small group ultimately had a 21-percent response rate for \$2,250, at a cost of 12 cents to raise a dollar.

The Foundation has made a bit more noise in the past 12 months with regards to The 1909 Society. Last week, the Foundation received a modest \$500 gift from the estate of Carol Ann Mueller.

Due to printing and mailing costs, Posavac reports that she'll be making the transition from a printed newsletter to an e-delivery newsletter, perhaps in conjunction with SPJ's weekly Leads email.

Posavac reports that money's been put in the budget for some face-to-face donor visits this next year.

Gillman suggests using "flash point" appeals when a hot topic hits the headlines. "Aren't you outraged that this is happening and threatening our First Amendment rights? Give now and help us fight that fight!"

Geimann stressed the importance of a giving board. All members of the board should contribute to the SDX Foundation. Participation is more important than the dollar amount.

## **OFFICER ELECTIONS**

Gratz reports that an effort is being made to downsize this board. The following members have agreed to an additional 3-year term.

Fred Brown  
Jay Evensen  
Jane Kirtley  
Dori Maynard  
Mac McKerral  
Sally Lehrman  
Sue Porter  
Kevin Smith

**Upon proper motion and second by Limor and Aeikens, respectively, the board approved the above members to serve another 3-year term.**

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

The board heard a presentation from Paul Steinle regarding his recent project "Who Needs Newspapers?"

He traveled the country for the project, but says the death of newspapers isn't the story, the transformation of them is. He encourages the board to visit his website [www.48states.com](http://www.48states.com).

Associate Executive Director Chris Vachon reports on conference-related items. A partnership for the 2013 conference still needs to be discussed, and a vote on that will happen later this week.

The 2011 conference has 1,200 attendees:

57% = SPJ members

27% = RTDNA members

12% = non-members

4% = members of both SPJ and RTDNA

One third of all attendees at the 2011 conference are students. Vachon thanks those who helped make this conference a success, and especially thanks Limor for opening her suite for the student reception.

Robert Leger reports on the history book, which will update SPJ's history since its 75th anniversary in 1984. A potential author has submitted a quote for doing the work: \$36,000 for 18 months of work, plus \$5,000 in expenses.

**Upon proper motion and second by Gratz and Carlson, respectively, the board charged the Grants and Awards Committee to continue searching for an author for the history book.**

Fred Brown reports the new ethics book is the top listing on Google.com for the search "journalism ethics." Eleven universities are purchasing the book, and Kevin Smith reports he sent a copy to the British Prime Minister.

The next meeting of this board will be the last weekend in April, 2012.

**Upon proper motion and second by Brown and Gillman, respectively, the board adjourned the meeting at 2:00 p.m.**