



SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS.
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To all of our members, colleagues and peers:

The board leadership of the Society of Professional Journalists apologizes for events of the past week that were counterproductive to the aims of the organization.

As you may know, last Saturday's SPJ board meeting turned contentious over the composition of a committee that will search for a new SPJ executive director. The discussion, in a word, was disrespectful, and proper deference was not given to all participants.

This was compounded by the fact that SPJ erred in failing to publicize the meeting and its agenda 72 hours in advance, violating a policy that obligates the president to post and SPJ to promote meeting materials in a timely way and bring greater transparency to proceedings.

After the meeting, board member Michael Koretzky wrote a personal blog post calling to impeach SPJ President J. Alex Tarquinio, which led to a story in Columbia Journalism Review.

We apologize for these failings and dedicate ourselves to civil and productive discourse among board members and improved transparency with you, our members. As SPJ national president, Tarquinio recommit to maintaining meetings that run smoothly and courteously through the completion of her term. As the second and third SPJ officers, Patti Newberry and Matthew T. Hall believe asking Tarquinio to step down would be divisive and a poor use of board time and energy in the remaining three months of her term. In that time, we have an executive to hire, an annual conference to plan and journalism advocacy to focus on.

As the top three officers of this organization, and three of the seven members of the executive director search committee, we are fully committed to working for SPJ and its members to identify and recruit an exceptional leader for our operational needs. We are also eager to produce the best possible Excellence in Journalism conference in San Antonio, Texas, Sept. 5-7, and continuing to promote and protect journalism through SPJ's chapters, committees, communities and many other initiatives.

While some of our efforts involving personnel matters, by necessity, will be private, we pledge regular communication with members regarding the executive director recruitment timeline, workplan and progress.

We also learned in recent days that Koretzky wrote a post on his personal blog in April that inappropriately involved SPJ. While acknowledging Koretzky's free speech rights, we believe SPJ board members should be held to the highest standards of integrity and agree with those who find the post offensive.

In processing all of this, we promise to foster a culture of mutual respect, inclusivity and collaboration. SPJ works best when it is listening to, learning from and working for its members. Please know that your voices have been heard.

We thank you for your dedication to SPJ.

Respectfully,

J. Alex Tarquinio
President

Patti Newberry
SPJ President-Elect

Matthew T. Hall
SPJ Secretary-Treasurer