

# THE NATIONAL --- --- PRESS CLUB

## MEETING OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BOARD OF GOVERNORS

April 20, 2009

Myron Belkind, Secretary

Chair Jennifer Sergent called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Present were President Donna Leinwand, Secretary Myron Belkind, Treasurer Keith Hill, Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, Governors Shawn Bullard, Jennifer Sergent, Mike Soraghan, Theresa Werner, and former presidents Sylvia Smith and Jerry Zremski. Also General Manager Bill McCarren, Director of Membership Sarahanne Driggs, and Scholarship Committee Chair Mary Clare Jalonik Cahlink. Absent were Vice President Alan Bjerga and Governors Dipka Bhambhani and John Donnelly.

Belkind moved and the Board approved the minutes of the March 16 meeting.

### MEMBERSHIP

On the recommendation of Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, the Board approved the application of 41 members (see list at end of Minutes), retired status for 31 members and a six-month dues waiver for 7 members. The number of new members so far this year is 193. Hamrick said resignations and suspensions are “no worse than in past years” and that a positive sign was that the Club had more new members this year than last year for the same period: 193 to 110. Total members as of the Membership Report to the April Board meeting were 3,573 compared to 3,593 last year.

### SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

On the recommendation of Scholarship Committee Chair Mary Clare Jalonik Cahlink, the Board approved the selection of this year’s recipient of the Scholarship award, which will be announced at the annual awards dinner on Aug. 3.

### BOARD AND COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

**Photography and International Correspondents:** Plans are being finalized for a double-header event on Monday, June 1, with the opening of a a photo exhibit, co-sponsored by the Photography and International Correspondents’ Committees, on “Faces of South Asia,” featuring photography by NPC member Michael Foley, June 1-12. The

opening of the exhibit on Monday, June 1, will coincide with the annual International Membership Recruitment Reception in the evening.

**Photography:** The new system of having an enlarged group of NPC Member photographers cover NPC events continues to work very well, with prompt availability of the coverage for NPC publications and Members. Sharon Farmer, former director of the White House Photography Office, will be the guest speaker at the Photography Committee's next meeting on April 29, which has been moved to the Conference Rooms to accommodate the anticipated large turnout. Lunch will follow in the McClendon Room.

**International Correspondents:** Former NPC President Sylvia Smith gave a presentation on covering Congress, focusing on how DC-based foreign correspondents can cover Congress even if they do not have direct access to Senators and Members of the House, at the committee's monthly meeting on April 14. Forty members and guests attended, a record for the committee! Invitations are being prepared for the Fifth Annual International Membership Recruitment reception on June 1.

**Broadcast Committee:**

1. Committee leaders have a meeting this week with WFED regarding clearing our radio show.
2. Working on final details for the lobby exhibit "Tools of the Trade".
3. Committee members will assist Professional Development Committee at the May 2 boot camp.

**Professional Development:** Preparations have been completed for the NPC Journalism Survival Boot Camp on Saturday, May 2.

**Young Members:** Upcoming events:

- April 30 – Spring Hoot (w/History and Silver-Golden Owls Committees)
- May 2 – Boot Camp (w/Professional Development)
- May 5 – Cinco de Mayo 5K Fundraiser (w/5K Committee)
- June – YMs @ NPC Fundraiser
- June – YMs Outing (w/Events Committee)
- July – Independence Day Celebration
- Fall 2009 – 5K (w/5K Committee)
- Fall 2009 – Women in Media Symposium (YM Event, co-sponsorship TBD)
- Fall 2009 – Book Fair (w/Book Fair Committee)
- November 2009 – Holiday Party and Community Service Activity

**Publications Committee:** The final issue of the Record will be dated June 1, 2009 and will include the June Calendar of Events.

**History Committee:** The committee has three upcoming events, plus its ongoing oral histories project, and is looking to the Board to help both with promotion and with finding a vice-chair replacement.

Upcoming events are:

April 30: An Owls-only photo-tagging event 4 to 6pm, and the Spring Hoot at 6:30pm.

May 13: Panel discussion on the closing of DC news bureaus, moderated by Gil Klein.

**Communications and Marketing:**

-- the first "Connections" program, "Can We Talk Off the Record," is set for April 23. -- brainstorming ideas for upcoming programs targeted toward Associate and Affiliate members.

-- looking for ideas on organizations that can be approached for sponsorships for Associate/Affiliate programs

-- considering a non-resident weekend program-- discussing merits of developing a service on the club's web site along the lines of Help A Reporter Out (HARO). Reporters will be able to post source needs; PR practitioners will be able to offer experts willing to comment on their areas of expertise.

**Newsmakers:** Through April 19, there were 19 Newsmakers held since the beginning of the year.

**Board Membership Committee:**

1. Working toward September recruitment event called "Bring a Friend". Members who wish to attend would be required to bring at least one person (and register or RSVP with their contact information) who is a good candidate for membership. Getting contact information for potential members is a key to success for this kind of event.

2. Seizing upon ideas presented recently by board members, the Membership staff will review journalism and other organizations paying for memberships and seek to bring those leaders into the Fourth Estate for a meal with NPC leaders/staff.

3. Reviewing possible new incentives for new applications.

4. Planning to place recruitment display in front lobby display case in the coming months. Also looking into what recruitment information might be provided in the Fourth Estate.

5. Board Membership Committee plans to meet again in June.

**Events:** The Events Committee helped with volunteers for last month's successful Commedia dell Media, and is continuing its business breakfast series with Robert Samuelson on April 21 and on May 7 is dinner-and-a-movie with "The Insider." Committee members are also looking at setting up museum tours.

**Speakers:** Upcoming luncheon speakers are Country music star Toby Keith, April 21; Jeff Idelson, Baseball Hall of Fame and special guest Hall of Famer Brooks Robinson, May 11; John W. Rowe, chairman and CEO, Exelon Corp., May 15; Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, May 21; Mary Tyler Moore, actress and spokesperson for the juvenile Diabetes Association, May 28; David Simon, author and producer, creator of the

HBO series “The Wire”, June 8. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsak canceled his luncheon scheduled for April 22, Earth Day, to travel with President Obama.

**Freedom of the Press:**

Shield Bill advocacy continues. The NPC joined with other media organizations in a statement of support of the Shield bill. NPC President Donna Leinwand issued her own statement of support and urged the Senate to pass the bill. Also ran an ad with the coalition of media groups in Politico and CQ.

Training classes are under way: the first one was held on March 21 in the Library conference room and concerned the Freedom of Information Act.

The next is on April 21 in the Library and covers business reporting---products, bankruptcy, markets, scandals or consumer issues. The classes are free to NPC members, \$10 for non-members. Class sizes are limited.

And on May 14, at 10, there will be a class on “Copyright in the Online World.” The class will cover the overall basics of copyright law and fair use.

**Book and Author:** The following events have been scheduled:

April 28, Chris Matthews, *The Hardball Handbook: How to Win at Life*

June 3, Michael Connelly, *The Scarecrow*

June 16, David Ignatius, *The Increment*

June 18, Joe Scarborough, *The Last Best Hope: Restoring Conservatism and America’s promise*

July 8, Sen. Jim DeMint, *Saving Freedom: We can Stop America’s Slide into Socialism*

July 9, Burt Solomon, *FDR v. The Constitution*

**5K Committee Report:** The 5k Committee held its second meeting on April 6, which was attended by over a dozen committee members. At the meeting, Melinda Cooke gave a more specific presentation on sponsor recruitment and followed up with emails to committee members with assignments on potential sponsors to call. Jessica Brady and Melinda have discussed raising the registration fee by \$5.00 to help cover costs of the race, and charging a nominal fee for the pancake breakfast. Lori Russo and Adam Pratt, associate members on the 5k Committee, launched pages on Facebook and LinkedIn. Both pages have remained quiet since being launched, but the committee plans to use them to advertise the race, court sponsors and encourage member involvement. One thing the board might be able to help with is recruiting VIPs to participate in the race. We’d love to have notable journalists and government officials run in the 5k, even if they’re slow, to help bring some big names to our race promotions. The 5k Committee will hold its next meeting on Monday, May 4th. The 5k and Young Member Committees are also planning a joint happy hour on Tuesday, May 5.

**Travel:** The committee is planning to have its semi-annual Travel Committee reception on April 28 at 7 p.m. at the Club. The reception is held twice a year to drum up interest in our upcoming trips. They usually have 40 to 50 people in attendance. Board Liaison Mike Soraghan attended the March 24 meeting of the Travel Committee and heard a lot about the toll this economy is taking on travel. Despite their best efforts, they’re having trouble finding takers for their trips. The Costa Rica trip was cancelled because no one

had signed up. And at that point, no one had signed up for the Adriatic trip. One person had signed up for Tunisia. Their travel agent said that people simply are not taking group trips. A lot of people are holding out for cheaper fares, so they don't want to lock in.

One trip, of course, is free. The Civil War trip is in late June. We will need to do a motion in the near future to approve a room for their press conference in exchange for the trip. Any guidance or historical perspective that can be brought to bear from other board members on this would be greatly appreciated. Also, the committee chose not to co-sponsor a nature trip with the Events Committee, and they have a new "non-resident liaison," who is a member from Seattle.

**Awards:** The new deadline for entries is May 1. Larry Lipman says things seem to be in good shape. He and Joann Booze are making outreach to journalism organizations. All the panels are in place and are awaiting entries.

**Professional Development:** Arrangements have been made for the NPC Journalism Survival Boot Camp on Saturday, May 2.

**Wine Dinners:** The Club hosted a wine dinner based on the book "Gourmet Getaways" by Club Member Joe David. The dinner was sold out. Committee Chair Lori Russo has created a template pitch to chefs so that our recruitment efforts are now standardized.

**Young Members:** Upcoming events:

- April 30 – Spring Hoot (w/History and Silver-Golden Owls Committees)
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**Board Approves Strategic Plan; Members to Vote May 8  
(From the report to Members circulated in The Wire April 22)**

The Board of Governors unanimously approved the Club's first-ever five-year strategic plan Monday, sending to the membership a 23-page blueprint designed to keep the Club's member services vibrant and its financial base stable.

"This is really historic," said Jennifer Sergent, chairwoman of the Board of Governors, after the board vote. "It's really going to make the Club a better place."

Members will be asked to approve the plan at the May 8 general membership meeting.

The strategic plan, called “Preserving and Growing the World’s Leading Professional Organization for Journalists,” aims to ensure improved journalism training, continued excellent restaurant and bar service, better governance and financial stability at the Club.

Former NPC President Jerry Zremski, who has headed the Strategic Planning Committee since its inception, said the plan is built around the following mission statement:

“ The National Press Club is the world’s leading professional organization for journalists. It serves its members through professional development activities that bolster their skills, through services that meet the changing needs of the global communications profession and through social activities that build a vital media community in Washington and across the world. The Club is where news happens in the nation’s capital and is a vigorous advocate of press freedom worldwide.”

The board made only two modest changes to the plan approved by the Strategic Planning Committee last month. In both instances, the board inserted language aimed at making it clear that Affiliate and Associate members must see their interests served.

Most notably, the board inserted the following sentence: “Affiliates and Associates are valued members and contributors to the life of the Club and more should be done in the future to provide programs, symposia and training opportunities for their benefit and professional advancement.”

The board rejected a handful of other proposed changes.

“I’d hate to start tinkering with a comprehensive strategic plan,” said Secretary Myron Belkind.

The product of focus groups, member and nonmember surveys and the work of dozens of members who participated in “work teams” aimed at assembling the best ideas, the plan “is the most examined document in the history of the Press Club,” said governor John Hughes.

The plan sets the following central goals for the Club to pursue in the coming years:

- \* To develop a more extensive journalism and communications training program, funded by foundation grants and corporate sponsorships, that serves the Club’s members and fulfills the Club’s mission as the world’s leading professional organization for journalists.

- \* To continue to lure the world’s top newsmakers to the Club’s luncheon program and the nation’s top news events to the Club’s conference rooms.

- \* To develop the Library so that it is operationally self-sufficient and funded substantially through an endowment.

\* To fulfill, in 2009, the cost-effective member service requests revealed in the Club's 2007 member survey.

\* To simplify the membership application process and grow the Club's 2008 membership levels each year through 2014.

\* To update the Club's governance structure to clarify and expand the board committees and to enhance the voice of Affiliate-Associate board members.

\* To build the Club's financial reserves to \$1 million in July of 2009 (as mandated by the board) and to \$3 million by July 2012.

\* To improve profitability in all of the Club's business units, especially in Banquets and the Broadcast Operations Center, through a strategy that includes the following: improved sales and marketing; cost cutting; and a profit sharing plan.

The goals are accompanied by a series of action items. In some cases, the action items are instructions to the Board, its committees, and staff. Action items that require further board or membership action, such as constitutional and bylaws changes, are outlined as proposals. In other words, board approval of the Strategic Plan will not automatically constitute board approval of these important steps. These items would have to be approved separately, by the 2009 Board of Governors and the general membership.

Zremski said the plan attempts to address the current troubles in the media industry by calling for more training programs in the Club. In addition, it suggests making it easier to join the Club by eliminating the initiation fee and replacing the requirement that two members sign each membership application with a system whereby members can simply refer others for membership.

Gayela Bynum, an affiliate-associate governor, called the plan "fantastic." She said she was particularly happy it suggests creating a third board seat for affiliate and associate members and gives them more power by enhancing the influence of board committees. "We may not have a vote on the board, but we've come a long way," Bynum said.

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Keith Hill reported that the Club in March generated a profit of \$273,000, the best performance of the year, which contributed to a first quarter profit of \$459,676, a 188 percent improvement over the same period last year. Hill said the first quarter's profits were achieved through cost reductions and increased new revenue generated in part by the availability of new spaces for rentals that were not available last year. Looking ahead, Hill said a small loss is projected for April and reasonable to conservative profits for May and June. However, he warned that July and August would likely produce significant losses during the traditional slow summer months.

**President's Report:** The Fourth Estate will offer all-day restaurant services, including brunch and dinner, starting Saturday, May 2, as part of an effort to increase member

services and further improve the Club's continuing strong financial performance this year.

The president announced the May 2 start-up following an 11-1 vote in favor of the change earlier this month in an e-mail ballot that enabled the Club to start planning for early introduction of the enhanced Fourth Estate operations.

Leinwand said the current Saturday brunch and bar services in the Reliable Source, which had proved to be unprofitable for years, would be moved instead to the Fourth Estate, which would offer an expanded brunch menu at the same prices.

She also said there would be a members-only bar set up in the Winners Room, so that everyone who wants to come to the Club on Saturday for drinks can still do so.

Leinwand said she hopes that the Fourth Estate would eventually also offer an afternoon "High Tea", so that members and guests could have a further opportunity to enjoy the Club on Saturdays.

**New Business Motions**

**Fourth Estate Award Selection Committee:** The Board approved the appointment of Sylvia Smith and Ellyn Ferguson to three-year terms on the Selection Committee. As background, the Committee is chaired by the NPC president, who has a one-year term. The Committee includes six members with staggered three-year terms. The NPC president presents two nominees to the Board each year for ratification. Current sitting members are David Hess, Jerry Zremski, Tammy Lytle and Ann McFeatters.

**Awards:** On a motion by Mike Soraghan, Board Liaison to the Awards Committee, the Board authorized the NPC Archives to dispose of the hard copies of honorable mention awards from previous and future NPC contests in an effort to resolve space constraints.

**Copyright Agreement:** The Board approved a motion directing the two coordinators of assignments of photographers for NPC events to draft an agreement covering the use of the photographers' photos by the NPC.

**The Board approved Monday, May 18, as the date for the next BOG meeting.**

**The April 20 meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm.**

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**NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS APPROVED**

The Board approved the following 41 new members:

**Active**

Sandra Abrams - Thomson Reuters, Producer; Alegra Hassan - CBN News, Producer; Charles Leocha - Tripso.com, Columnist; Robin Mazyck - Christian Broadcasting



Network, Executive Producer; Molly Peterson - Bloomberg News, Reporter; Richard J. Simon - Los Angeles Times, Congressional Correspondent

**Active Non-Resident**

Janet A. Begley - Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers, Reporter; Douglas R. Currin - Nexstar Broadcasting Group, WBRE-TV, News Anchor

**Active Under 35**

Leigh Ann Caldwell - Free Speech Radio News - Pacifica Radio, DC Editor/Correspondent; Jacqueline C. Palank - Dow Jones, Reporter

**Active Under 30**

Peter Gartrell - McGraw-Hill/Platts, Associate Editor; Laura Isensee - The Dallas Morning News, Intern; Jasmin Melvin - Thomson Reuters, News Assistant

**Provisional Under 30**

Frank Vincent Vernuccio – Journalist, Freelance

**Affiliate**

Stig Berglind - Embassy of Sweden, Press Counselor; Tina Butler – Unemployed, Former Communications, TV Associate; Patrick J. Cullen - Ariel Consulting, LLC, Principal; Leonardo Marcos - Embassy of Spain, Press Counselor; Jin Soo Nam - Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Minister, Counselor

**Affiliate Reinstate**

Elizabeth Bowen – USAID, Strategic Communications Consultant

**Affiliate Under 35**

Elijah G. Evans - Macfadden & Associates, Geographic Information Systems Analyst; George A. Williams - District of Columbia Public Library, Media Relations Manager

**Associate**

Gerard Carney - Fleishman Hillard, Partner; Lorelei Harloe - Ascend Communication, LLC, Public Relations, Marketing Communications; Anju Kaur - Sikh News Network, Journalist and Editor; Carlos De La Guardia - The DLG Group, Revista Competencia, President, Director; Joseph B. Mistrett – Retired, Federal Public Defender; Anthony N. O'Brien - Morningside Partners, Partner; Theresa Spinner - National Association of Social Workers, Sr. Web Communications Associate; Dr. Mila S. Sturgis - Glevum Associates, Vice President – Operations; Julius Terrell - National Sports & Entertainment Services, General Counsel

**Associate Reinstate**

Stephen Carr Davis - Morningside Partners, CEO; Jonathan French – HIMSS, Consultant; Michael E. Kavoukjian - White & Case, Partner; Chanel Lagarde - Entergy Corp., Director of National Communications

**Associate Non-Resident**

Carleen Lyden-Kluss - Morgan Marketing & Communications, President, Corporate Communications

**Associate Under 35**

Vince Blaser - Global Health Council, Policy Communications Coordinator; Kristopher Larsen - American Physical Society, Policy Specialist; Anna Pope - Husch Blackwell Sanders LLP, Office/Chapter Administrator

**Student**

Amy D'Onofrio - George Washington University, Student; Nicole Marie Mann - The George Washington University, Student - School of Media & Public Affairs

