

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
APRIL 21, 2008
Maureen Groppe, Secretary**

Chairman Keith Hill called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Present were President Sylvia Smith, Vice President Donna Leinwand, Treasurer Alan Bjerga, Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, Secretary Maureen Groppe, and Governors John Hughes, Lou Priebe, Theresa Werner, John Donnelly, and Gayela Bynum. Also General Manager Bill McCarren, Membership Director Sarahanne Driggs and member Kristen Jensen.

Groppe moved and the board approved the minutes of the February meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

Hamrick moved and the board approved the applications of 45 members. Hamrick moved and the board approved retired dues status for eight members.

McCarren asked for a sense of the board on whether he should pursue a corporate membership pilot program. McCarren said that could help the Club get membership from the large bureaus, although he recognizes that small or one-person bureaus could see that as unfair. Board members expressing support for McCarren to pursue the idea included Leinwand, Donnelly, Hughes, Werner, Bjerga, Groppe, Priebe and Hill. Groppe suggested looking at offering "training memberships" if bureaus wanted to pay for their reporters to attend the Club's training programs. Leinwand said the Club could look at offering discounts through groups like the Regional Reporters Association, which would enable small bureaus to get the benefit. Smith asked Hamrick to research the constitution and bylaws to make sure they would allow a discount program.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Groppe moved and the board approved the Scholarship Committee's recommendation that this year's Persina Scholarship go to Armando Montano of Colorado.

Smith moved and the board approved that the Zimmerman Scholarship go to Elijah Mercer of New Jersey.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE LIASON REPORTS

Awards -- Is in the process of judging entries.

Book & Author -- Upcoming authors include Rajmohan Gandhi, Sen. Jim Webb, Jeff Shaara, Harry Turtledove and Ted Sorensen.

Travel -- Has trips planned through February, 2009, including to New Orleans, Bermuda, Chicago, Quebec City, Southeast Asia, Hong Kong, Dublin and Egypt.

Leinwand moved and the board approved accepting a free trip for members to the Monocacy Battlefield in exchange for giving the Civil War Preservation Trust the use of a free room for a press conference at a time mutually agreed upon.

Affiliate/Associations -- Bynum thanked Smith for recognizing at the centennial gala the contributions of the affiliate/associates.

Freedom of the Press -- Two cases the Club spoke out on ended well. Terrorism related allegations against Associated Press photographer Bilal Hussein were dismissed and New York Times correspondent Barry Bearak was released from a Zimbabwe jail.

Donnelly moved and the board approved the following sense-of-the board resolution to clarify for the committee and for future boards and presidents certain guidelines for pursuing press-freedom and open government issues.

In coordination where necessary with the Press Freedom Committee, the National Press Club president (or designee) should, at his or her discretion, speak out on press-freedom issues, domestically and abroad, that bear upon direct threats to press freedom--such as when news professionals are, as a result of their work, charged with a crime, imprisoned or fined; or injured/killed; or there is systematic repression of the media. The president should inform the board before or after speaking out, but is not required to seek the board's consent on such decisions. The president should also speak out, as he or she sees fit, on major legislative and judicial issues in the United States affecting either the public's access to information or press freedom. Board approval should be required for signing on to amicus briefs or statements of support for bills when the issue is one on which the board has not previously supported action. But the president should be able to act swiftly to respond to events, including amicus briefs and statements of support for legislation, when it concerns an issue on which the board has already backed action, such as the recent cases of a bill that would strengthen the Freedom of Information Act and another that would provide a national shield to protect reporters from having to divulge confidential sources except in extraordinary circumstances. The actions an NPC president might take on a press-freedom issue typically involve but are not necessarily limited to:

**** Signing amicus briefs, statements of support for legislation, press statements or letters, and then publicizing them as quickly as possible on the NPC web site and sending them to news contacts.**

**** Cosponsoring forums, newsmakers, luncheons, press conferences and other events on press-freedom issues of fundamental importance. These events may either be NPC-generated or created by kindred organizations with NPC hosting and/or cosponsoring.**

The Press Freedom Committee believes that, via such events, the NPC can add the most value to the cause by educating news professionals and potentially affecting coverage. One area of potential interest is the growing restrictions sports leagues are putting on access to information and control over content.

The president should seek to focus the Club's involvement on free-press matters to a core set of issues and high-profile cases and not weigh in too often and thus dissipate the impact of its activities.

Books & Brunch -- Will discuss "Under the Banner of Heaven" in May.

Broadcast: The studio for the XM team is nearing completion. Three centennial programs are in the words as are a series of programs on online video news.

Professional Development: Cosponsored an event with the Society of Professional Journalists on ethics and blogging. Hosting an event on how online resources have changed campaign coverage.

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Young members -- Activities include Breakfast with Champions with the Wall Street Journals Washington bureau chief, a karaoke night and an upcoming rafting/tubing trip. History -- Hosting a panel discussion on the legacy of Edward R. Murrow and a celebration of Margaret Bourke-White.

Marketing -- Working on better promotion of luncheons, the 5K and the Kalb Report. Tony Cully Foster is working on the centennial DVD distribution.

Events -- Is showing the movie "Good Night, and Good Luck" and planning the summer picnic and the annual arts program.

Speakers -- The luncheon with Rev. Jeremiah Wright quickly sold out and there will be an overflow room.

Silver Owls -- The Hoot is May 1.

Fourth Estate award -- Meeting mid May to select recommendations.

Newsmakers -- Held 24 so far. Upcoming newsmakers including the president of Latvia.

International Correspondents -- Holding a recruiting reception May 20 and planning more embassy nights.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bjerga said the Club made a healthy profit in March and could bring in record revenues in April. But the Club will still have a cash flow crunch in July and August. Bjerga said the Club is looking at pricing increases and staff adjustments to address the situation. The budget committee also approved a loan consolidation, which would lower the interest rate on the existing loan and add \$300,000 in credit for capital projects. McCarren said the money would be spent on projects that will help generate more revenue.

Bjerga moved and the board approved giving McCarren authority to negotiate a final loan agreement with BB&T.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

The board went into executive session to discuss personnel issues.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Smith updated the board on proposed changes to the library. The architect's concept includes putting the offices where the training room is now; putting the reading room where the offices are; putting a few computers where the stacks are but moving most computers to the 14th floor alcove; creating a multi-purpose room which would primarily be used for a training center and other library events. When the library is not using the space, it can be used for other Club activities or be sublet to the catering department. There would be a moveable wall between the room and the First Amendment Lounge. Funding for the changes would come from the library reserves and the Freidham bequest. Smith said she will present the idea at the May 9 general membership meeting.

Smith thanked McCarren and his staff for a spectacular gala.

Smith reported that a weekly daybook of Club events is now being emailed to members and the Publications Committee has informed her that, after Labor Day, they will not have the resources to put out a weekly Record.

Smith said she is looking at the costs of providing memorial services to members so the Club can be more systemic and clear about those costs.

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Smith said she is encouraging members to make the Club's Web site their home page to increase the number of hits.

The next meeting was set for May 19.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11p.m.

