

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
Dec. 15, 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, Vice Chairman John Donnelly, former president Jerry Zremski and Governors John Hughes, Lou Priebe, Jennifer Sergent, John Gallagher, Theresa Werner and Dipka Bhambhani. Also General Manager Bill McCarren, Director of Membership Sarahanne Driggs and incoming board members Jessica Brady, Mike Soraghan, Myron Belkind and Shawn Bullard.

Hill welcomed the incoming board members.

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

Groppe reported the following election results:

Pursuant to the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Press Club, I hereby transmit the results of the annual Club election held today in advance of the annual Club meeting on January 16, 2009. A total of 146 votes were cast, of which 37 were absentee.

For President: Donna Leinwand 133 votes; write-in candidate(s) 6 votes.

For Vice President: Alan Bjerga 130 votes; write-in candidate(s) 5 votes.

For Secretary: Myron Belkind 112 votes; Nancy Shia 32 votes; write-in candidate(s) 0 votes.

For Treasurer: Keith Hill, 124 votes; write-in candidate(s) 5 votes.

For Membership Secretary: Mark Hamrick, 139 votes; write-in candidate(s) 1 votes.

For Board of Governors (Three-Year terms): Jessica Brady 126 votes; Mike Soraghan 126 votes; write-in candidate(s) 4 votes.

For Board of Governors (Two-Year term): Shawn Bullard 34 votes; write-in candidate(s) 27 votes. Total: 63 votes.

MEMBERSHIP

Hamrick moved and the board approved the applications of 78 members. Hamrick said that's just under the record of 96 new members set in November 2007. He attributed the success to aggressive retention and recruitment efforts and predicted the Club could end the year with a net gain in members, which hasn't happened in a long time.

Hamrick moved and the board approved retired dues status for two members and a sixth-month dues waiver for one member.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE LIASON REPORTS

Photography: Meeting this week to view Pulitzer Prize-winning photos of AP photographer Scott Applewhite. Conducting a mini photo contest.

Broadcast: The NPC show was dropped after the merger of XM and Sirius. The committee is working to get it back on.

Strategic Planning: Meeting this week on the plan, which will include action ideas and goals for the next few years.

Travel: The next trip is to Dublin and will be well attended. Trips have been planned through most of 2010.

Books & Brunch: Meeting in January to discuss "Team of Rivals."

House: Discussed adding carpeting to the Reliable Source and complaints about bathroom cleanliness.

Professional Development: Planning January workshops on covering the new Congress and the new administration.

Young Members: Held last Pub Quiz and last happy hour. Co-hosted Cyprus embassy event.

Communications and Marketing: Promotion of luncheons and forums continues.

History: Meeting this week.

Book and Author: Held the most successful book fair ever, generating \$18,000 in profit. Reasons include the high caliber of this year's authors, holding the event close to the holidays and the recession prompting people to buy cheaper gifts.

Upcoming author events include Michael Davis ("Street Gang"), James O'Donnell ("The Ruin of the Roman Empire"); Paula Fredriksen ("Augustine and the Jews"), Bill Moyers ("Moyers on Democracy") and Helen Fisher ("Why Him? Why Her?").

Upcoming wine dinner authors include Jane Butel and Anna Teresa Callen.

Freelance: Held events on freelancing, creating a Web site, networking and making the perfect pitch. Working on a "pitch slam" event in which editors talk about what they like and don't like.

Speakers: December lunches included the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church and Paul Krugman. January lunches include ConocoPhillips CEO James Mulva, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Dolly Parton.

Newsmakers: Held 73 newsmakers so far and will hold one more before the end of the year.

International Correspondents: Co-hosted a Cyprus embassy night. Exploring a night at the South African embassy.

Smith led a toast to incoming-president Leinwand.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Bjerga reported that October and November significantly outperformed the budget and the Club should end the year a little better than expected. The 2009 budget forecasts some big revenue months in part because of higher rates and new rental spaces. Some changes in the budget include: an increase in food and

beverage costs due to inflation; slightly lower committee expenses; dedicating \$10,000 to improve the online directory; an increase in the marketing budget and much lower capital expenditures.

Leinwand moved and the board approved moving into the Committee of the Whole.

Bjerga moved and the board approved the 2009 budget.

Leinwand moved and the board approved leaving the Committee of the Whole.

Bjerga moved and the board approved following the recommendation of the Committee of the Whole to approve the 2009 budget.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

McCarren reported that while the Club lost money for three of the five years between 2002-2006 and made a small profit in 2007, the profit this year was nearly double that of last year. The 2009 budget projects profit will increase from \$400,000 in 2008 to \$600,000. The ultimately goal is to consistently make about \$1 million in profit.

Leinwand explained that the point of the profits is to replenish the reserve funds. McCarren added that the current budget does not allow for many unplanned expenditures. Smith said the reserves were depleted by the big drop in business after 9/11 and must be built back up to protect against a similar event.

Werner asked how much progress had been made in making the library self-sustaining. McCarren said there's been progress but more is needed.

Sergent asked whether the 5K is being re-evaluated as a fundraiser. McCarren said it's a great event but not a great fundraiser. For example, the Club pays \$11,000 for police, which it would not have to do if it held a fundraising dinner for the scholarships.

McCarren made a proposal for a profit-sharing plan for employees to the budget committee. The board discussed the idea and asked for more information.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Smith said the Fourth Estate Dinner was a roaring success. It was well attended, funny, had good food and made money. She thanked Zremski for his efforts.

Groppe asked if the policy that prohibits board members from free attendance at fund-raising events should be extended to include former presidents. Smith said she would support the change.

Smith reported that the next General Membership meeting is Jan. 16, the memorial service for board member Gayela Bynum's husband is Wednesday, and Toyota will be given the Founder's Award Tuesday for its \$30,000 contributions to the Club this year.

Smith moved and the board approved having the general manager create a year-end thank you fund for employees of \$20,000, minus what is contributed by members.

Smith said a set of four, laminated Club placemats are now available for \$20.

Smith said the final forum was held in Naples, Fla., and about 300 people attended. Belkind suggested compiling all the write-ups of the forums into a book.

Smith said the Club documentary won an award from the Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals. Only 15 percent of the 2,200 entries won the Platinum Award.

Smith encouraged board members to stop by the employee holiday party Thursday to thank staff for their work.

Smith said the Vivian Awards will be given out Jan. 13 and encouraged nominations.

OLD BUSINESS

Groppe moved and the board approved that the new language for the one online award would be as follows:

Joan M. Friedenberg Online Journalism Award

This award, sponsored by the National Press Club, is designed to recognize online journalism. It is named in memory of Joan M. Friedenberg, founding editor of the Online Newshour and wife of former Club President Jonathan D. Salant, and is partially funded by donations from Joan's friends and family.

The winner will have done original reporting and have taken advantage of online technology in order to provide a thorough and graphically attractive report. Judges will be especially interested in the use of multimedia. Both online-only reports and sites that accompany print or broadcast stories are eligible; in the latter case, entrants must show how they used online content to enhance the print and broadcast reports.

ENTRIES: Entries consist of a single topic and must be submitted via the Web using our online entry form. Please provide specific URLs where appropriate or note a designated area for the award material on the site.

Entrants must electronically submit a body of work that substantially represents the way it looked during the award year. Entrants must submit a cover letter explaining why their entry deserves the award. Entrants must also submit passwords if they are needed to access the material online. This contest is not restricted to traditional media, though advocacy groups and others that lobby are ineligible.

PRIZE: \$750.

Groppe moved and the board approved that the new language for the one newsletter award would be as follows:

Newsletter Journalism Award

This award recognizes the best example of coverage that demonstrates clarity of writing, exclusivity, significance of the issue and any difficulties that had to be overcome in reporting.

ENTRIES: Entries can be a single article or a series of up to 5 articles. Entries must be published by an independent newsletter and serve the audience and mission of the newsletter. A mission statement of the newsletter should be included by the publisher in the form of a letter to the judges.

PRIZE: \$750

Groppe moved that the board keep the Robin Goldstein Award for Regional Reporting as its one award for regional reporters. Sylvia said the name should be the Washington Correspondents Award since the Goldstein family is no longer involved and keeping the name prevents another donor from underwriting the award. Groppe questioned whether there would be confusion with the new and old awards. Sergent suggested the name be the Washington Regional Reporting Award with the same criteria as the current Goldstein award. **Groppe accepted the change as a friendly amendment and the board approved the motion.**

NEW BUSINESS

a.) Security at the Club

Leinwand reported a theft of an I-Pod during an event on the 13th floor. She asked board members to spread the word that purses and briefcases should be kept close. Hughes said he had a hat stolen. Werner said she lost a digital camera but it was returned.

b.) Discussion of The Record

Leinwand said the editor of The Record will continue for another six months but only publish once a month. She said about 300 people are still getting the printed

Record because they don't have email. She suggested she mail out a "president's letter" twice a month to supplement The Record.

Hamrick asked McCarren if the Club could measure how many people are reading the electronic version of The Record in order to gauge if its readership has been supplanted by the Wire.

Smith said no one has complained about the reduced publication of The Record from weekly to twice-a-month. Many members have praised the Wire and an increase in attendance at some events may be due to the Wire.

Groppe pointed out that if the Record doesn't exist next fall or is not publishing regularly enough, the board may have to change the requirement in the bylaws that the election ballot be printed in the Record at least 10 days before the election.

Hughes said he would like the board to use the six-month period to really decide how it wants to communicate with members. Donnelly likewise said he wanted to avoid making a last-minute decision in six months about what to do.

Smith moved that the board encourage the incoming president to produce an every-other-week letter to members without email, summarizing what's in the Wire, and encourage her to work with the general manager on a plan for a quarterly publication.

Hughes said he wasn't ready to commit to a quarterly publication and would be willing to serve on a task force to look at the issue.

Zremski said the board is losing site of how much progress has been made in communications with members, the number one complaint he received as president. He suggested moving cautiously on a quarterly publication as that could be a big ticket item at a time when the Club is moving away from print publications.

Smith said she was trying to avoid continuing to kick the issue down the road. Any option other than what the Club is currently doing has consequences including possibly needing changes to the bylaws that would have to be adopted at the May General Membership meeting.

Bjerga said he would prefer the motion set up a task force.

Bhambhani suggested the next president be given a deadline to report back to the board on a plan.

Smith withdrew her motion. She said it's obviously an issue of great concern to the incoming president who will revisit the issue with the board quickly whether or not there is a task force.

Donnelly said the questions that need to be answered are whether there will be a Record after May and what, if anything, the Club will publish besides the Wire.

Leinwand encouraged board members to email her their suggestions and to tell her what information they need to decide whether The Record should continue to exist.

Hughes said he would like to know the utilization of The Record and the cost of other options.

c.) Discussion of buying a table at the Washington Press Foundation dinner

Bhambhani moved that the board buy a table for the Washington Press Foundation's 2009 dinner.

Bhambhani said the dinner is a major chance to recruit new members and luncheon or newsmaker speakers. She said she met D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty at a dinner and he later agreed to speak at the Club. She said the dinner is very high profile and board members need to see it and be seen.

Bjerga said there is a benefit to going, but it doesn't meet the \$3,500 cost. He said members and speakers can be recruited without spending that much money and there are better ways of using \$3,500 to benefit the Club.

Leinwand said the Washington Press Foundation did not participate in the Club's Centennial celebration and has not treated the Club well at its own dinners.

Zremski said if the Club is going to support another journalism organization, he would rather spend the money on the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Groppe said the dinner is primarily a perk for board members and is not the best use of the Club's money.

Werner suggested the Club buy a table and then sell seats to members to cover the cost.

Bhambhani said the board shouldn't underestimate the value of marketing and advertising for the Club, which needs to do everything possible to show itself as the premier journalism organization. She said the Club has the money so there's no reason not to do it when the Club has been participating for years. She said it would hurt the Club more than it would hurt the Washington Press Foundation not to participate.

Smith said if the board wants to participate in such dinners, the board should evaluate all dinners by journalism organization to determine which one it most wants to be associated with.

Hamrick said if marking is the goal, the board should have a broader discussion of how best to spend money on marketing. He said board members would have to recruit a lot of new members at the dinner to cover the \$3,500 expense.

The board rejected the motion. Voting no were Smith, Hill, Groppe, Donnelly, Hughes, Hamrick, Leinwand, Bjerga and Sergent. Voting yes were Bhambhani, Werner and Gallagher.

d.) Reporting on email vote

Hill reported that Smith offered the following motion by email on Nov. 21, 2008: That the board authorize General Manager Bill McCarren to propose to union management a swap of holiday days, trading the scheduled day off of Monday, Jan. 19, 2009, (Martin Luther King Jr holiday) for Jan. 2, 2009, (the day after the Jan. 1 holiday and a day employees are now scheduled to work). "This swap will provide employees a 4-day weekend and allow the Club to be open on Monday Jan. 19, the day before the presidential inaugural.

Notice was sent to all board members via email and all members except Groppe acknowledged receipt within 24 hours. **The motion was approved.**

Hill moved and the board approved the following resolution: Whereas Jerry Zremski has served the Club with distinction for many years as membership secretary, treasurer, president and board member; Whereas Maureen Groppe has served the Club with distinction as Awards Committee chairwoman, board chairwoman, board member and secretary; Whereas John Gallagher and Lou Priebe have served the Club with distinction as board members, be it resolved that the Board of Governors thank the members for their service and urge them to continue their involvement with the Club for many years.

Smith said it was a pleasure to serve with the departing board members who were thoughtful, insightful, participatory and helpful to other members, especially her.

Hill moved and the board approved the following resolution: Whereas Sylvia Smith has served the Club with distinction for many years as secretary; Whereas Sylvia Smith has served the Club with distinction as president in 2008, the centennial year and a year that include the Club's most profitable month ever, the renovation of the library and the Fourth Estate, be it resolved that the Board of Governors thank Sylvia Smith profusely for her tremendous and prodigious service to the National Press Club. We look forward to her service on the board as an ex-officio member in 2009.

The board gave Smith a standing ovation.

Hill thanked the board for the pleasure and opportunity to serve as chairman in 2008 and as vice chairman in 2007. He announced that the board appreciation dinner will be Jan. 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.