

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BOARD OF GOVERNORS
December 22, 2009
Myron Belkind, Secretary

Board Chair Jennifer Sergent called the meeting to order at 6:40pm. Present were President Donna Leinwand, Vice President Alan Bjerga, Secretary Myron Belkind, Treasurer Keith Hill, Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, Jennifer Sergent, John Donnelly, Mike Soraghan, John Hughes, Gayela Bynum, Shawn Bullard and Sylvia Smith (ex-officio), plus newly elected Board members Edward Barks, Rodrigo Valderrama and Mark Wojno. Not attending: Dipka Bhambhani, Jessica Brady, Theresa Werner. Staff present: Bill McCarren, Sarahanne Driggs

The Minutes from the Nov. 23, 2009 meeting were unanimously approved.

Membership Report

On the recommendation of Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, the Board unanimously approved the application of 33 members (see list at end of Minutes), retired status for 1 member and a six-month dues waiver for 3 members. The number of new members so far this year is 418, compared to 425 for the same period last year. Total members as of the Membership Report to the December Board meeting were 3,503 compared to 3,639 last year. Separately, Sylvia Smith requested a full report regarding the status of Harvard Club members and whether they qualify for retired status membership as other NPC members do. Hamrick said the membership department would study the matter and report back to the Board.

The Board then went into executive session and returned to open session to carry on with the agenda.

Committee Liaison Reports

Photography Committee: A panel discussion is being organized on January 20 with The White House News Photographers' Association featuring award-winning visual journalists who will show their images and discuss their experiences in covering the first year of the Obama Administration.

Newsmakers: There were 79 Newsmakers in 2009 including 3 in December.

Travel Committee: The Cartagena trip for February was cancelled. Enough people signed up, but not enough from Washington. The people who wanted to go were scattered across the country, making the trip logistically impossible. The Madrid trip for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday has 24 people signed up.

Young Members' Committee: In December, the YM's participated in the Dec. 10 Pub Quiz, sponsored Cocktails with Champions with Steve Roberts and discussed hosting a YM's planning retreat in early 2010.

International Correspondents' Committee: Thirty members and guests attended the traditional year-end get-together at an international restaurant, this year featuring Chinese food. The committee will have a brainstorming session early in 2010 to plan events for the coming year that it is hoped will further enhance the international programs at the NPC.

Freedom of the Press Committee: President Leinwand issued the following statement condemning the terrorist attack on the Peshawar Press Club, killing a guard, the Club's accountant and a bystander and wounding at least 20 others. The Club in the northwest Paskistan city had received a series of threats in the month leading up to the suicide attack. □ □ "The targeting of journalists who strive merely to report the truth to the public is unacceptable," Leinwand said.

"We grieve along with Pakistani journalists for the lives lost. We know that our colleagues in Pakistan will continue to uphold the best principles of our profession even in the face of threats and violence. We commend them for their commitment to journalism," she said.

History Committee: The committee is working on a whopping 17 interviews, so far, for 2010. Most are Owls and past presidents. In addition, we're working to get David Broder on camera, again. Also, Mark Wojno has talked with Ryan Howell and Marlene Justsen about creating a more detailed History Committee page for the NPC Web site once the NPC site has been redesigned. His vision for the NPC History page includes a section of brief, two-minute excerpts of our digitized oral history interviews (both video and audio), as well as photos/documents/NPC artwork easily viewable with the click of the mouse. In addition, the site would afford the archivist to showcase virtual displays of certain events/themes in the Club's history that coincide with a milestone or anniversary. At this time, Ryan thinks it's doable and that there's no issue regarding bandwidth.

Also, the committee is planning to hold an afternoon event in the three conference rooms near the Fourth Estate the day of the Spring Hoot in which we open up our archives and display some of our "hidden gems" (documents, photos, artwork) as well as a couple of oral history interviews. The purpose of this "open house" event is to raise money to transcribe our oral histories. We're in the process of ironing out the details about the format of the program and what items we'll showcase. No date has been scheduled yet because the Spring Hoot has yet to be scheduled.

Events Committee: An event featuring food and wine from Georgia, in Eastern Europe, is being planned for early in 2010.

Book & Author: Plans for Denise Austin's January 5 book launch are going very well. Melissa Charbonneau and Julie Schoo have been doing a lot of work, and it's coming

together nicely. Denise Austin has volunteered to be pay for the reception that will launch her new book, "Denise's Daily Dozen: The Easy, Every Day Program to Lose Up To 12 Pounds in 2 Weeks."

Mika Bzrezinski will appear with Joe Scarborough at a book event in the ballroom on Jan. 12 to discuss her new book *All Things at Once*.

March 3rd is the Luncheon Newsmaker featuring Mitt Romney and his book, *No Apology: The Case for American Greatness*. April is the Roxana Saberi event, with her book, *Between Two Worlds: My Life and Captivity in Iran*.

Books & Brunch: Evelyn Waugh's "Scoop", the classic satire about journalism, has been rescheduled for noon, Saturday, Jan. 16, because of the snow storm that forced cancellation of the event on Dec. 19.

Communications and Marketing: Newly elected Board member Edward Barks briefed the Board on the innovations the committee launched in 2009 and its success in involving more members on the committee.

Speakers Committee: Upcoming speakers:

Jan. 11: Richard Trumka, president, AFL-CIO

March 5: The Honorable Mitt Romney, former governor of Massachusetts

April 12: Dennis Quaid, actor, who will discuss the prevention of potentially deadline medical errors

Freelance: Three "pitch jams" are scheduled for January and February including editors from Washingtonian and NPR. One of the committee members is starting to compile a directory of writers and their specialties to make it easier for people looking for freelancers in their area.

New Business: 2009 Board Elections

Secretary Belkind said that there had been a welcome response to the change this year to enable members to request an absentee ballot by e-mail or a phone call to the membership department which then mailed a ballot directly to the requesting members at their home addresses. This saved valuable time especially for non-residents for who previously had to mail in requests for absentee ballots. Belkind said the change was particularly noted in the two races for Affiliate/Associate seats, where there were 46 absentee ballots, about three times more than in 2008. Overall, 219 members voted in 2009 for all races compared to 209 in 2008. He said he felt that one way to increase the turnout would be for a system on on-line voting to be developed.

Belkind 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 in January 2010. A total of 126 votes were cast, of which 28 were absentee.

For President: Alan Bjerga 111 votes; write-in candidate(s), 5 votes.

For Vice President: Mark Hamrick, 116 votes; write-in candidate(s), 4 votes.

For Secretary: Myron Belkind, 119 votes; write-in candidate(s), 2 votes.

For Treasurer: Keith M. Hill, 112 votes; write-in candidate(s), 2 votes.

For Membership Secretary: Angela Greiling Keane, 115 votes; write-in candidate(s), 1 vote.

For Board of Governors (Three-Year terms): Dee Bhambhani, 52 votes; John Donnelly, 101 votes; Theresa Werner, 102 votes; Marc Wojno, 97 votes; write-in candidate(s) 1 vote.

For the seats for the Affiliates/Associates, a total of 93 votes were cast, of which 46 were absentee.

For Board of Governors (Two-Year term): Arthur M. Schwartzstein, 26 votes; Rodrigo Valderrama, 63 votes; write-in candidate(s) 0 votes. (Three-Year term): Edward J. Barks, 81 votes; write-in candidates(s), 4 votes.

Belkind thanked Sarahanne Driggs and Jane Middleton of the Membership Department for their assistance in this year's elections, including the arrangements for facilitating requests for absentee ballots and continuing on through polling day on Dec. 11. Newly elected Governors Edward Barks and Rodrigo Valderrama expressed his appreciation to the Secretary and the Membership Department for their efforts in this year's poll.

2010 Budget Approved

Seeking to build on this year's favorable financial results, the Board of Governors unanimously approved on Tuesday night a 2010 budget that aims to achieve a profit of \$1.43 million, 40 percent more than in 2009.

General Manager Bill McCarren told the Board in his monthly report that the Club should have its "best year ever" financially in 2009, with profits expected to reach \$1 million against budgeted profits of a little more than \$600,000.

The anticipated strong financial results for 2009 followed a consistent pattern of holding down costs, which through November totaled \$10.9 million, \$2 million less than had been budgeted.

2010 Holidays

The Board approved the list of proposed 2010 holidays, when the Club would be closed, with the proviso that the General Manager try to arrange with the union for the Club to be closed on Monday, Dec. 27, instead of Friday, Dec. 31, so that the Club could again plan appropriate events on New Year's Eve.

President's Report

In her final report to the Board, President Donna Leinwand thanked the governors and officers for their "hard work and support" during the year. The Board applauded her for her leadership. Earlier in the day, Leinwand addressed committee chairs and thanked them for all their efforts in arranging outstanding programs.

Leinwand also proposed the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted, commending Jennifer Sergent:

"Be it resolved that Jennifer Sergent, having served honorably as chair of the Board of Governors for one year, is commended for her incredible organization, unfailing efficiency, hard work on behalf of the Club and its members and her robust sense of humor in managing the affairs of the Board of Governors."

Old Business: Discussion on Moving Dates for Fundraiser Events

The Board had a discussion led by Alan Bjerga on the three key fundraising events that benefit the NPC Eric Friedheim Library—the 5K race, the Fourth Estate Award and the Book Fair--- to determine whether any of the traditional timings during the year should be changed (i.e., at present the 5K and the Fourth Estate Award are both held in November) and how best these events can be organized to maximize the fund-raising efforts bearing in mind their costs including staff time. The dates are set by the Library Board. It was agreed to continue the discussion at the Board's meeting in February when input would have been received from the newly elected Governors. Bjerga said he would distribute to everyone the comments already received from the present Governors.

The Board went into executive session again and returned to open session.

The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for Jan. 15, 2010, immediately following the Annual General Meeting.

The Board adjourned at 9:23 pm.

New Member Applications Approved

Active:

Larry Moffi, Army Magazine, Managing Editor; Jane Sasseen, BusinessWeek, Washington Bureau Chief; Carol Wolf, Bloomberg, Reporter

Active Non-Resident:

Jeremiah A. Hall, San Francisco, Freelance Writer; Justin McLachlan, San Diego, Freelance Writer/Reporter; Reiko Narita, Honolulu, Sakuranohana Shuppan, Inc., Chief Editor

Active Under 35:

Amanda Becker, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Managing Editor; Darrell D. Dela Rosa, CQ Press, Assistant Editor; Herman Wang, McGraw-Hill/Platts, Associate Editor

Active Under 30:

Wilson P. Dizard, IV, Freelance Writer, Blogger; Andrew Feinberg, Broadband Census News LLC, Deputy Editor; Meghan Gordon, Platts, Associate Editor, Reporter; Laura Norton, Freelance Journalist; Tara Palmeri, Washington Examiner, Columnist, Yeas & Nays; Stephanie Woodrow, Main Justice, Web Editor

Affiliate:

Teresa Buerkle, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Information Officer, Media Relations; Jennie Chen, Canadian Embassy, Media Counselor; Hani Nasser, Canadian Embassy, Media Counselor

Affiliate Reinstate:

Jeffrey B. Levine, National Institute on Drug Abuse, Press Officer

Affiliate Under 35

Jacqueline Lawandowski, Committee of Concerned Journalists, Director Support; Isabel Morales, Con Ciencia News, Assistant Editor, Writer

Associate:

Peter C. Craig, Freelance, The Nature Conservancy, Copy Editing, Proofreading; Nettie Johnson, Lockheed Martin Corp., VP, Worldwide Media Relations; Mark Krikorian, Center for Immigration Studies, Executive Director

Associate 65+

Charles Rahn, Metzman & Associates, Marketing

Associate Non-Resident:

Joseph Finder, Boston, Lamos Enterprises, Self-employed Writer; Evelyn Higgins, Gainesville, GA, WBCX, Health News Broadcaster/Physician; Sheeba B. Oriko, Vancouver, WA, Aviva Water, Consulting/Freelance and Founder/Writer, Columbian Newspaper

Associate Under 35:

Emily Diamond-Falk, Save Darfur Coalition, Media Relations Manager

Student:

Manuel Nicolas Cabrera-Montiel, Universidad de Salamanca, PhD Candidate, Journalism & Mass Communication; Joel Davidson, George Washington University, Student; Anthony Shop, George Washington University, Student

Student Non-Resident Reinstatement: Carrie Sheffield, Harvard University, The Washington Times, Student, Boston Correspondent