

## **MEETING OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

**Feb. 23, 2009**

**Myron Belkind, Secretary**

Chair Jennifer Sergent called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were President Donna Leinwand, Vice President Alan Bjerga, Secretary Myron Belkind, Treasurer Keith Hill, Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, Governors Dipka Bhambhani, Jessica Brady, Shawn Bullard, John Donnelly, Jennifer Sergent, Mike Soraghan, Theresa Werner, and former president Sylvia Smith. Also General Manager Bill McCarren and Director of Membership Sarahanne Driggs. Absent were Vice Chair John Donnelly and Governor John Hughes.

Sergent moved and the Board approved the minutes of the January 16 meeting.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

On the recommendation of the Membership Secretary, the Board approved the application of 36 members (see attached list at end of Minutes), retired status for 63 members and a six-month dues waiver for 1 member. Hamrick said the high number of members switching to retired status was due to the Board's action in 2008 eliminating the previous 10-year membership requirement for retired status as a way of retaining existing members as well as attracting more retirees to membership.

### **ERIC J. FRIEDHEIM NATIONAL LIBRARY BOARD**

On a motion by Leinwand and seconded by Soraghan, the Board appointed Alan Bjerga to be a member of the board of the Eric J. Friedheim National Journalism Library. Other members of the Library Board are Rick Dunham, Sylvia Smith, Donna Leinwand, Tony Culley-Foster, Ed Lewis, Bill Hickman, Jerry Zremski, Ann McFeatters, and Dena Bunis.

### **THE WIRE**

Former President Sylvia Smith urged everyone to make "great use" of the four-times weekly NPC Wire for distributing news and announcements about Club activities. Smith, who has volunteered to continue to oversee the editing of the Club's online newsletter that she initiated during her presidency, said the Wire had become a handy tool for publicizing Club activities and that attendance and reservations had consistently gone up for luncheons and other events immediately after they were publicized on the Wire. She urged Board members to designate someone on each of the committees for which they are Board Liaison to contribute news items to the Wire. She also gave writing tips for the Wire: write articles as news stories, not flyers; freshen up the original articles when sending out reminders; write the stories as the text of emails, not as attachments (although photos can be submitted as attachments); and keep in mind the deadlines: "noonish" for the Monday afternoon Wire, and 9am for the morning Wire on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (although sending in the stories the evening before publication is preferred). All news and photo submissions should be sent to [wire@press.org](mailto:wire@press.org). Sergent told the Board that "New and Noteworthy" articles from the Wire would soon be archived on the NPC Web site.

## **BOARD AND COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS**

**Photography and International Correspondents:** Planning to co-sponsor a photo exhibit 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:** A new annual exhibition featuring photographs taken by children and grandchildren of Press Club members will be held in the Lobby from Dec. 7 -18 and will coincide with the annual children’s party on Saturday, Dec. 12 as well as the Photography Committee’s annual Christmas Lunch on Wednesday, December 16. The new exhibit has been planned to encourage photographic journalism and art among the youth of today and to give children a link of their own to the NPC at a young age. Gerald Martineau, a Washington Post staff photographer, will make a presentation on photojournalism at the committee’s Feb. 25 meeting. Committee member Linda Strating is offering to arrange special photographic tours of the National Cathedral with one of her docent colleagues.

**International Correspondents:** There will be a South African Embassy Night on March 12 arranged through Nadira Bayat, the embassy’s public diplomacy counselor who is a new member of the Club. A professional event featuring a panel discussion focusing on the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iranian revolution and the June 12 presidential elections is being planned for May.

**Communications and Marketing:** The committee is planning as many as six events this year aimed at “bridging the gap” between reporters and public relations professionals. A committee task force is brainstorming on particular possible programs. A committee panel also is discussing resurrecting a half-day program from two years ago aimed at helping public relations members work better with reporters.

**5K:** A planning meeting has been scheduled for early March prior to the next Board meeting. The committee needs to recruit a group of active volunteers to help plan this year’s race, which will most likely be Saturday, Sept. 12. Committee chair Jessica Brady and board liaison Shawn Bullard met with Melinda Cooke this month to discuss the year ahead. Melinda stressed the need to secure sponsors, recruit teams and collect silent auction items. Jessica and Sylvia Smith also discussed recruiting honorary co-chairs to the committee, who could help with donations and promotions. The committee asks board members to help recruit members to join the 5k committee, and Jessica encourages anyone to contact her directly with ideas for the 2009 race.

**Newsmakers:** There were two Newsmakers in January and four scheduled for February. A Newsmaker on Feb. 24 will discuss the “State of Conservatism.”

**Publications:** The Record will continue to be published on a monthly basis, with the last issue in June, following the success of the online NPC Wire.

**Freedom of the Press:** The committee met Feb. 6 and mapped out plans and principles for the year ahead. The meeting included committee co-chairs John Donnelly of CQ and Rachel Smolkin of USA Today, plus the chair of the Press Freedom Committee's new Training Subcommittee, Cori Zarek. The others in attendance were Rem Rieder of American Journalism Review and Pete Weitzel, formerly of the Miami Herald and the Committee of Journalists for Open Government. Looking ahead, the Press Freedom Committee is joining with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press in holding a series of classes at the NPC aimed at giving reporters a better understanding of several legal issues that affect journalists. Issues include using the Freedom of Information Act, getting access to court documents, public access to emails and text messages and protecting confidential sources. The classes are expected to begin during Sunshine Week in mid-March and to occur about once a month.

Earlier this month, the Press Freedom Committee helped President Leinwand write a letter protesting the plan by former Obama campaign manager David Plouffe to speak off the record at an otherwise open news event on Feb. 12 in the ballroom. The Club hosted but did not cosponsor the event. Nonetheless, the president and the committee felt this ban on press coverage could not be silently tolerated. Washington Post columnist Dana Milbank's column quoted Donna's opposition: "If Mr. Plouffe wants to keep secrets Mr. Plouffe should stay at home."

Plouffe, who has been on the speaking circuit promoting his forthcoming book, "The Audacity to Win", was the keynote speaker on Feb. 12 at a public policy luncheon sponsored by Georgetown University and Politico. Every event at the two-day program had been promoted as open to media coverage, but Georgetown on Wednesday told media representatives that Plouffe's speech would be off the record.

Besides Leinwand's letter, other news organizations protested the ban. Politico editor John Harris stepped down as moderator of the speech. Washington Post columnist Dana Milbank, who stood outside the NPC ballroom wearing a hand-lettered sandwich board that said "what the Plouffe?", handed out reporter's notebooks to conference attendees so they could report on the speech for The Washington Post.

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

Feb. 11, 6 p.m. -- Helen Fisher, *Why Him? Why Her*

Feb. 13, 5 p.m. -- Sen. George McGovern, *Abraham Lincoln*

April 7, 6:30 p.m. -- Paul Dickson, *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary*, and Allen Barra, *Yogi Berra: Eternal Yankee*

May 4, 6:30 p.m. -- Bill Moyers, *Moyers on Democracy*

June 3, 6:30 p.m. -- Michael Connelly, *The Scarecrow*

June 16, 6:30 p.m. -- David Ignatius, *The Increment*

**History Committee:** The committee is trying increase its membership. More oral histories are planned, especially of Silver Owls.

**Events:** The committee on Feb. 11 hosted its first business breakfast with Washington Post columnist Steven Pearlstein. The plan is to make this a monthly series. Suggestions are appreciated. Send them to Frederica Dunn, the committee chair. The committee is also doing a trip to a couple Bald Eagle refuges in Virginia in March -- new vice chair Christine dell'Amore is putting that together. Also looking at doing events with the Motion Picture Association of America, possibly a political film series. And monthly dinner-and-a-movie continues.

**Speakers:** The four lunches held since Jan. 16, when the new Board year began, all attracted large numbers, including those for Dolly Parton and Ben Bernanke, which were sold out with nearly 300 in attendance; FedEx CEO Fred Smith, 234 attendees, and Sen. Mitch McConnell, the Republic Senate leader, 124. Upcoming lunches are Vivian Schiller, CEO of NPR, March 2; Marti Ahtisaari, 2008 Nobel Peace Prize Winner, and Douglas Shulman, IRS Commissioner, April 13.

**Broadcast:** The committee is due to meet March 4 under its new chair, Ken Mellgren, to review 2009 goals and objectives, to consider additional broadcast teams and plan a possible exhibit on "Tools of Trade."

**Travel:** Trips are planned to Iceland Feb. 26-March 2, Costa Rica April 22-30, Baltic Cruise July 12-22, Adriatic Cruise Aug. 2-9, Malta and Tunisia Nov. 11-22, and Madrid, Moscow or Paris for Martin Luther King's birthday weekend, Jan. 13-18 2010.. A trip also is planned to Harper's Ferry in cooperation with the Civil War Trust at a date to be announced.

**Freelancers:** The committee is having a breakfast meeting on Tuesday, March 3.

**Professional Development:** The committee has scheduled a special tour and information session in the Senate Press Gallery on Feb. 27 on how to cover the Senate. Other upcoming events:

March 16, Maximizing Your Source Lunch (business eating etiquette)

March 31, Power Networking

Still in the Planning Stages:

TV Training

Online Video Podcasting

Advanced Onjloine Social Networking (advanced Face book, B logging and Twitter)

**Awards:** Former president Larry Lipman is the new chair of the committee, succeeding Mark Schoeff, who is now chair of Newsmakers.

**TREASURER'S REPORT (from the report to Members circulated In The Wire**

**Feb. 25)**

Thanks in part to strong revenue from presidential Inaugural balls and other related events, the National Press Club recorded its best ever January in its 101-year-old history, with revenues of \$1.173 million and a profit of \$176,397.

In presenting the January financial results to the Board of Governors at its meeting on Feb. 23, Treasurer Keith Hill said that the Inaugural events held at the Club brought in \$280,000 in revenue during the month and were an important factor in the strong overall performance.

Despite the record results for January, both President Donna Leinwand and Treasurer Hill cautioned that in the present economic situation there are still difficult operating months ahead, including February, when a small operating loss may occur, and July and August, which often have downturns.

Both the revenue and profit figures for the month were ahead of budget for this year and also compared favorably with the performance in January 2008, when there was a profit of only \$2,187. The budgeted profit for January 2009 was \$11,335.

In effect, the Club made 28 percent of its total budgeted profits of \$626,788 for 2009 in the first month of the year---and put the Club on target to reach its goal of having \$1 million in reserves by July 1.

Looking ahead, there is strong demand for catering services at the Club, with some bookings already made for 2011.

### **BOARD PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE LATE VERA GLASER**

General Manager Bill McCarren reported that the Club had been notified that Vera Glaser, a long-time Club member and former president of the Washington Press Club, formerly the Women's National Press Club, had left the NPC an estimated \$1,000 in her will. She died Nov. 26 at age 92.

The Board adopted a motion that was proposed by President Leinwand and seconded by Vice President Bjerga "recognizing Vera Glaser for her contribution to the Club and expressing our heartfelt experience for her years of service to the Club, especially on the Speakers Committee."

Vera Glaser had served as the Washington bureau chief for the former North American Newspaper Alliance and had been the national correspondent and syndicated columnist for the Knight Ridder newspaper chain. Her questioning of President Nixon at a February 1969 news conference about the fact that only three women were named in his first 200 presidential appointments led to creation of a systematic program to recruit women into federal executive positions.

### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

The general manager said that the successful opening of the Fourth Estate Restaurant for a Valentine's Dinner on Saturday, Feb. 14, with actual diners of 82 that resulted in a small profit, "showed that we can have a good crowd" on a Saturday night. The Board discussed ways of having the Fourth Estate opened regularly on Saturday as a way of generating more business from Club members and through the Open Table Reservations in which the restaurant participates. The Board requested the general manager to come up with a detailed proposal related to using the Fourth Estate to generate more revenue on Saturdays, with the anticipation that the Board could consider and possibly vote on the plan at its next meeting on March 16.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

President Leinwand said that she was pleased with several developments since her presidency began on Jan.16, as follows:

---That the Speakers' Committee was concentrating on organizing luncheons that would have large draws and pointed to the success of the four lunches held since January 16 for Dolly Parton (sold out), Ben Bernanke (sold out), FedEx CEO Fred Smith (234 attendees) and Republic Senator leader Mitch McConnell (124).

--That the Saturday night opening of the Fourth Estate Restaurant for Valentine's Dinner had been a success, as outlined in the General Manager's Report, and that as a result she would explore the possibility of having the Fourth Estate opened on Saturdays.

--That efforts would be made to expand the network of photographers who would cover Club events to include more services for members who would be able to download pictures taken of them at luncheons or other functions. She pointed to the success of having more than 50 members' photos with Dolly Parton downloaded within three hours of the luncheon finishing.

The Board felt the issue of expanding the network of photographers and offering more services to Members to enable them to download photos from events was important enough to warrant a "sense of the Board resolution" that was adopted unanimously concurring with the president's photography plans.

## **SUCCESSFUL JURNOPALOOZA**

Vice President Bjerga briefed the Board on lessons that the Club could learn from the success of the Jan. 9 charity extravaganza that featured a Battle of Bands (all comprised of journalists and other members of the media) at the National Press Club that raised more than \$13,000 for The Committee to Protect Journalists. Nearly 500 persons attended including outgoing CIA Director Michael Hayden. Bjerga said promoting the event through online networks, taking online reservations and advance payments for ticket sales online and working with other professional organizations such as the CPJ were techniques the Club should consider using in the future.

## **NEXT MEETING SET FOR MARCH 16**

The meeting of Feb. 23 was adjourned at 8:35pm.

## **NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS APPROVED**

The Board also approved by the application of 36 new members:

**Active**

Maria Alvarez - ANSA Italian News Agency, Background News Research; Sean P. Carr - A.M. Best - Best Wire/Best Week, Sr. Associate Editor; Chin Hon Chua - Singapore Press/The Straits Times, U.S Bureau Chief; Kelley Doolan - McGraw-Hill/Platts, Reporter; Louis Dubose - Washington Spectator, Editor; Yoshiki Kishida - Jiji Press, Bureau Chief; Bill Murphy, Jr. - Self-Employed, Author; Ryu Ohsumi - Nikkei Washington Bureau, Chief Correspondent; Michael Riley - The Denver Post, Washington Correspondent; Craig Torres – Bloomberg, Federal Reporter; Il Hee Won - Seoul Broadcasting System, President; Tabassum Zakaria – Reuters, Correspondent

**Active Non-Resident**

Hazel Feigenblatt, San Jose, Costa Rica - La Nacion, Grupo Nacion Costa Rica, Investigative Reporter

**Active Non-Resident Reinstatement**

Nathalie Mattheiem, New York, NY - Twenty Five Media/Americana, Writer/U.S. Correspondent

**Active Under 35**

Jenny Johnson - Inside Washington Publishers, Managing Editor

**Active Under 30**

Rachel Feintzeig - Dow Jones & Co., Reporter; Kelly Danielka Peirson - Sirius XM Satellite Radio, Reporter

**Affiliate**

Chris Dancy - Aircraft Owners & Pilots Assn., Media Relations Director; Brian P. Hale - Federal Bureau of Investigation, Public Affairs Specialist; Tim Irwin - U.N. Refugee Agency, Sr. Communications Officer; Konstantin Preobrazhensky - Nasha Stana (Our Country) Newspaper, Freelance

**Affiliate Under 35**

Zachery S. Posner - National Public Radio, Director, IT Operations; Ourania Dionysiou - Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus, Press Attache

**Affiliate Non-Resident Over 65 Reinstatement**

Bruce Brough, Watsonville, CA - Brough Communications & Grey Zone, Retired - V.P. Public Relations; Edmund Pinto, Berlin, MD - Aviation Week, Retired Editor

**Affiliate Non-Resident Over 65**

Conway B. Jones, Oakland, CA - Post Newspaper Group, Photojournalist

**Associate**

Red Cavaney – ConocoPhillips, S.V.P., Government, Communications & Public Affairs;  
David D. Martino - BGR Public Relations, Vice President

**Associate Reinstatement**

John D. Morrocco – Boeing, Director of Communications

**Associate Non-Resident**

Arline Jolles Lotman, Philadelphia, PA - Law Offices of Arline Jolles  
Lotman/Georgetown University, Attorney, Adjunct Professor; Marjorie A. Meyers,  
Bergenfield, NJ - Volvo Group, North America, Director, Corporate and Online  
Communications

**Associate Non-Resident Reinstatement**

George Atkins, Columbus, GA - Health Reform Strategies, Principal

**Associate Under 35**

Chris P. Knight - A.C.E.E.E., Research Assistant; James Norton - General Dynamics  
Corporation, Director, Government Relations for Homeland Security

**Student**

Anthony Marena - George Washington University – Student, Washington D.C.  
Metroblog

**Student Non-Resident**

Cindy Von Quednow - Cal State University Northridge, Student