

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING JAN. 13, 2006

Vice President Jerry Zremski and Secretary Sylvia Smith

NPC President Rick Dunham gaveled the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. with approximately 90 members in attendance.

Dunham said the priorities he had laid out for 2005 were to make the National Press Club indispensable for journalism training and discussion of journalism issues, to upgrade the Club's technology and to offer a wide variety of programs for members. He said those goals were accomplished along with an unanticipated achievement: creation of a new state-of-the-art digital broadcast center and a climate-controlled archives.

Dunham noted several milestones of the year, including an emphasis on members-only events, a series of programs by the new Journalism Training Committee and the 5K run/walk that more than \$70,000 for the scholarship fund.

He said he was disappointed that National Public Radio unilaterally decided to end a two-decade-old agreement to broadcast every Press Club luncheon and more progress has not been made with technological changes in the Club.

Dunham thanked staff members, board members and Club members for their hard work and turned the presidential gavel over to Jonathan Salant.

Salant thanked Dunham and told the audience that he would remain active as president of the Library board and co-chairman of the 5K.

Salant told the membership:

"I plan to borrow something from all of my immediate predecessors. From Tammy Lytle, the President's Club to recruit new members. From Rick Dunham, an emphasis on professional development, including the mentor program. From Sheila Cherry, the recognition that our primary responsibility is to serve our members. From John Aubuchon, a commitment to press freedom. And from Dick Ryan, a pledge to keep the popcorn machine."

He said his top goal will be to add an editorial component to the NPC web site.

"I have formed a New Media Committee, headed by Steve O'Hearn, to accomplish this. I'd like to make the site a resource for reporters, with story ideas, phone numbers, sources and other tips, all on the members-only site. For non-resident members, this could save hours of trying to find the right contact in Washington."

Salant said the Club is preparing to start online bill payment for members, and he will ask the membership department to revise the bill form to include an area for members to indicate their beats or areas of interest so members could be alerted to an event of interest.

He said the Journalism Training Committee will be renamed the Professional Development Committee to encompass active and associate/affiliate members. He said Mondays will be Professional Development Days at the Club, the way Thursdays are for pub quizzes and Fridays are for tacos.

Salant said he is a strong advocate of offering our space to other journalism organizations to put on co-branded programs.

He said he and Zremski will spend one Friday a month at the members' table in the Reliable Source.

Salant also invited Club members to request seating at the head table of a luncheon or to participate as a panelist in a program.

Zremski provide a report on the Club finances, including:

- Through the first 11 months of 2005, the Club reported a net profit of \$46,569, and Club Manager John Bloom said the Club will end up in the black for the full year. Final figures will fall slightly short of our budget projections, largely because of unanticipated costs. Most notably, taxes and utility costs have increased at double-digit rates.
- Club's labor contract remains unsettled.
- Catering bookings are strong through the first part of the year.
- Initial indications are that the \$2.5 million Broadcast Operations will be a success. Under the budget that the Board of Governors approved last month, the facility is projected to produce \$1.1 million in income and a net cash flow of \$317,361.

In other business:

- Douglas Turner inquired about the union pickets on the sidewalk outside the National Press Building, and asked Dunham about the union complaints that the Club's contractors were using illegal immigrants as part of the work force building the Broadcast Operations Center. In response, Dunham noted that the union in question was hiring homeless people as part of its protests.
- A member complained that an increasing number of non-members were using Club facilities. Dunham later noted that the possible installation of smart-card technology would help restrict Club events to members only.
- David Anderson asked the affiliate and associate members to stand, and noted their contributions to the Club. He said he hoped Salant and the Board of Governors would take note of their contributions and consider the will of the majority of active members who have voted to give the affiliate/associate members of the Board of Governors the right to a vote.
- Jerry Brazda implored the board to consider banning smoking in the Truman Lounge, saying smoking had been allowed there because of a unilateral decision by a past Club president. House Committee Chairman Arlen Withers noted that the decision was not unilateral, and that the Board of Governors had been involved. Withers also noted that the proposed D.C. smoking ban would prohibit smoking in the Club.
- Former President Allan Cromley praised Dunham as one of the Club's best presidents since 1968.
- Julian Josephson suggested the Club boost its science-related programs, perhaps in partnership with National Association of Science Writers.

Salant adjourned the meeting at approximately 1:10 p.m.

The next general membership meeting is Friday, May 5, 2006.