

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB BOARD OF GOVERNORS
July 20, 2009
Myron Belkind, Secretary

Vice Chair John Donnelly called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. Present were President Donna Leinwand, Vice President Alan Bjerga, Secretary Myron Belkind, Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, Governors Jessica Brady, Shawn Bullard, Gayela Bynum, John Donnelly, John Hughes, Jennifer Sergent, Mike Soraghan, Theresa Werner and former president Sylvia Smith (ex-officio). Also General Manager Bill McCarren and Director of Membership Sarahanne Driggs. Absent were Treasurer Keith Hill and Dipka Bhambhani.

Belkind moved and the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the June 22 meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

On the recommendation of Membership Secretary Mark Hamrick, the Board unanimously approved the application of 32 members (see list at end of Minutes), retired status for 5 members and a six-month dues waiver for 3 members. The number of new members so far this year is 265, compared to 243 for the same period last year. Total members as of the Membership Report to the July Board meeting were 3,492 compared to 3,536 last year.

TREASURER'S REPORT: CLUB REACHES \$1 MILLION RESERVE TARGET WITH STRONG JUNE PERFORMANCES

Propelled by the best-ever month for revenue and continuing strong profits, the Club met its July 1 target of having \$1 million in reserves as it readies for the traditional loss-generating period in July and August.

The financial report made to the Board of Governors by John Hughes on behalf of Treasurer Keith Hill showed that profits for the first six months of 2009 were up 33 percent over last year: a little more than \$1 million compared to \$777,000 in 2008.

The record June revenue was \$1.35 million, coupled with profits of \$270,000 for the month.

General Manager Bill McCarren attributed the favorable results to a combination of cost controls and a good performance in every sector with food, room rental and membership all above budget targets.

Key factors contributing to the strong showing were more booking of events in the Fourth Estate Restaurant, the Broadcast Studio and the new Library Room and busier than normal weekends and evenings at the Club.

McCarren advised the Board the increased reserves resulting from the increased profitability from the first half of the year will be needed this summer to offset anticipated substantial losses in July and August. But he said efforts were being made to reduce the losses from previous years.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna expressed appreciation to everyone who was working hard to ensure the success of this year's 5K race, which is an important fundraiser for the Club's scholarship projects.

Leinwand spoke of the need to increase fundraising for The Eric Friedheim National Journalism Library, which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides a broad range of programs and services to reporters, freelancers and researchers to encourage and support a global free press. She asked Board members to provide the names of potential donors to the library.

Leinwand also thanked General Manager Bill McCarren and archivist Marlene Justsen for working with CBS to provide archival material about Walter Cronkite's life for a tribute prepared by CBS that gave a credit to the NPC at the end of the program.

FREEDOM OF PRESS AWARDS APPROVED

On the recommendation of the NPC Freedom of the Press Committee, the Board of Governors unanimously approved through an e-mail vote the following two awards to be given at the annual NPC Journalism Awards Dinner on August 3:

2009 John Aubuchon Freedom of the Press Award

The National Press Club Press Freedom Committee recommends that the 2009 John Aubuchon Freedom of the Press Award go to David Rohde of the New York Times. The Taliban kidnapped Mr. Rohde, his driver and a local reporter last November while Rohde was in Afghanistan working on a book about the history of U.S. involvement there. Mr. Rohde was held captive for seven months until June, when he and the local reporter escaped by scaling the wall of a compound in Pakistan. Mr. Rohde displayed extraordinary courage not only in bravely escaping but also in doggedly reporting about Afghanistan under perilous conditions. He was part of a team of Times reporters that won a Pulitzer this spring for their coverage of Afghanistan and Pakistan last year.

Mr. Rohde's trouble in Afghanistan echoed some of his earlier experiences. He had won a Pulitzer in 1996 for documenting the slaughter of Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica. At the time, he was captured by Serbs while searching for evidence of mass graves.

Mr. Rohde represents the many reporters who dig for truth in the face of personal jeopardy--whether from a stray bullet in a war zone or from imprisonment by a dictator. And while Mr. Rohde escaped the Taliban, his plight reminds us of the many journalists who remain in captivity-- from Iran to North Korea to China--for the "crime" of doing their jobs. Because of the courage displayed by Mr. Rohde and other reporters, press freedom is kept alive around the world despite determined efforts to squelch it.

2009 John Aubuchon Freedom of the Press Award: International Recipient

The Press Freedom Committee recommends that the international recipient of the 2009 John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award be the late Lasantha Wickramatunga, who was the editor of the Sunday Leader in Sri Lanka until last January, when gunmen on motorcycles assassinated him in his car on the way to work.

The Sunday Leader was a hard-hitting paper that did investigations of the Sri Lankan government, including its prosecution of a war against Tamil separatists. Wickramatunga, who was 52, had been attacked before, and he knew that he would be killed for exposing the truth. He predicted it in an essay that he instructed should be made public only upon his death.

Steve Coll of the New Yorker magazine published the essay online on January 12 of this year under the headline, "Letter from the Grave."

"When finally I am killed, it will be the government that kills me," wrote Wickramatunga.

The essay is he a riveting statement of the value of journalism.

"No other profession calls on its practitioners to lay down their lives for their art save the armed forces and, in Sri Lanka, journalism," he wrote. "I hope my assassination will be seen not as a defeat of freedom but an inspiration for those who survive to step up their efforts."

In the hope that Wickramatunga's life and death will be an inspiration for all of us to do just that, to increase our efforts to defend press freedom everywhere, the National Press Club commends his work and his message with this award.

COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Awards Committee: Awards Chair Larry Lipman thinks the Board ought to look into changing the eligibility rules for the contest. Changes in journalism mean that we are excluding a lot of new journalistic enterprises that are part of non-profits. Among them: the AARP Bulletin, which turns out daily and monthly news stories on the web and in print. Larry now works there himself. It features articles by established journalists including former NPC Presidents Tammy Lytle and Gil Klein.

Another such enterprise is the recent Health News product of the Kaiser Family Foundation. They have Laurie McGinley (formerly with the Wall Street Journal) and Mary Agnes Carey (formerly with CQ), who Larry says are among the best in the business of health reporting. But their work would not qualify under current the current eligibility rules.

Larry will be writing a memo on this and expects to attend the September board meeting to discuss the issue.

Travel Committee: The committee has set its MLK day trip next year for Madrid. February will be Cartagena, Colombia.

The Travel Committee is focusing on shorter trips because of the economy. People aren't as interested in the longer, more expensive trips.

Which seems to be why there was so much interest in the Civil War Trust trip to Harpers Ferry trip last weekend, July 18. The trip is free to club members, or at least the first 50. Eighty people signed up for the 50 seats that were available, so 30 people were unable to go. They had never experienced that much overflow in the past.

Travel Chair Pat Schoeni said that when they realized how many people wanted to go, the committee asked the Trust to bump up to a 50-seat bus instead of 40-seat. They also called the first 50 people to double-check that they really intended to go.

There were some who asked that the club get another bus, but that was deemed unworkable, because the trip is done as an exchange with the Trust and the agreement going in is that they take one busload and provide lunch. The trust provides the trip in exchange for getting a room for their annual press conference.

Photography Committee: Janet Philips, the White House archivist, will be the guest speaker at the next meeting of the committee on July 22. The deadline for submitting photos to the 10th Annual Members' Photo Exhibit is Aug. 5.

International Committee: The following events are planned:

--July 28: A program with the International Center for Journalists on the difficulties Mexican journalists are facing in their country.

--September, date to be determined: The committee is looking to have an event in September to screen the film, "Pray the Devil Back to Hell", about the successful struggle of Liberian women to end the civil war in their country. It is hoped that Abigail Disney, the film's producer, and Gini Reticker, will be able to attend the event and introduce the film and do a Q&A afterwards.

--Sept. 4: Book launch and discussion on "Journalism's Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting" by John Maxwell Hamilton, dean of Louisiana State University'sanship School of Mass Communication.

Oct. 3: Day trip to Amish Country in Lancaster, Pa.

Communications and Marketing Committee: As part of its "Connections" Program, the Houston Chronicle's Rick Dunham will make a presentation on "Expanding Readership with Social Media" on July 28.

5K: The committee is in the final stages of planning for the 5K Race on Sept. 12. We really need everyone to double down to secure both sponsors and attractive auction events. The committee is also look for volunteers for the race.

Events Committee: The events committee just completed six Biz Breakfasts with well-known speakers on economics and the current state of affairs. The June speaker was Robert Wiedemer who wrote "America's Bubble Economy", the first book to predict Phase I of the Bubblequake (popping of the housing & stock market bubbles). A successful tour of the National Portrait Gallery on July 23 was sold out, and a tour of the Air & Space museum was arranged. The committee started its first-ever summer film series on July 20. For future events, we have a wine trip planned for October, a digital Media panel planned for September and a Halloween party planned with the Young Members Committee.

Young Members' Committee:

Update for YMs:

- 1) Community Service - currently working on logistics to make a quarterly Service project for the entire Club as led by YMs.
- 2) Next Meeting - formal meeting held for September - mid August. We will have a special events meeting with Events Committee to coordinate Fall plans (see #3)
- 3) Planning for Fall: events to include, Environmental Journalism Symposium, late fall; Halloween Gala now scheduled in main ballroom for Friday, Oct. 30
- 4) Currently fostering partnerships with: National Journalism Center to mentor and recruit Student Members, Organization of American States (approached us about doing future of young journalists in Latin and South America event), Young Professionals in Foreign Policy, Southeast Asian Journalists Association, and American News Women's Club.

History Committee: The committee is planning an event to honor the life of Walter Cronkite and his contributions to the journalism profession, hopefully in September.

Professional Development Committee:

Upcoming programs:

July 28: A course on Basic Video Editing for the Web.

Aug. 12: A program on "Make Your Book a Reality," the second session of the committee's how-to-series on turning your beat or other expertise into a best seller.

Membership Committee: A "Bring A Friend" membership recruitment reception for members and guests on Sept. 10.

Saturday Books & Brunch: The next Books & Brunch will be on Saturday, July 25, featuring a discussion of *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court* by Jeffrey Toobin, a staff writer at The New Yorker magazine and a senior legal analyst for CNN.

Speakers Committee:

Upcoming luncheon speakers:

July 21: Gail McGovern, President and CEO, The Red Cross

July 24: Rep. John Conyers, Chair, House Judiciary Committee

July 27: Rep. Barney Frank, Chair, House Financial Services Committee

July 29: Sen. John Kerry, Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Aug. 24: Nick Jonas, singer/songwriter and member of the Jonas Brothers, who will speak on “The Fight Against Juvenile Diabetes”

Book and Author Committee:

Upcoming events”

July 8: Sen. John DeMint, *Saving Freedom: We can Stop America’s Slide into Socialism*

July 9: Burt Solomon, *FDR v. The Constitution*

Aug. 5: Donna Andrews, *Swan for the Money*

OLD BUSINESS: BOARD AUTHORIZES \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIP FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

The Board unanimously adopted the following motion by Sylvia Smith authorizing a scholarship for a high school senior who intends to become a journalist and who will bring diversity to U.S. journalism. The motion included a friendly amendment by President Leinwand to set the amount of the scholarship at \$2,500.

The full text of the motion:

The NPC authorize a scholarship for a high school senior who intends to become a journalist and who will bring diversity to US journalism.

The scholarship consists of a \$2,000 one-year scholarship, which can be renewed for up to three years at \$2,500 per year. The first-year scholarship includes an additional \$500 book stipend to be called the Ellen Masin Persina Scholarship. The Persina Scholarship shall be awarded to the recipient of the NPC Scholarship; thus, the total amount of the first-year award is \$2,500.

The name of the scholarship is the National Press Club Scholarship for Journalism Diversity, and its intended recipient is a person who will bring diversity to American journalism.

Applicants must submit a 500-word essay explaining how s/he would add diversity to US journalism, a high school transcript, three references, up to five samples of the student’s journalism work and a brief description of how the student has pursued journalism in high school. The student may discuss financial need or any special circumstances that would assist the Scholarship Committee in selecting nominees.

The Scholarship Committee will review applicants and recommend a nominee to the NPC Board of Governors.

To receive a renewal, the student must submit a transcript accompanied by a letter explaining how s/he worked the previous academic year to prepare for a career in journalism and what s/he intends to do in the upcoming year. The material will be reviewed by the chair of Scholarship Committee and Board of Governors liaison to the Scholarship Committee; they will submit a recommendation to the board for final approval. The Scholarship Committee will inform the student as to the submission deadline.

Renewals may be granted in 3 of 4 of the years following the student's initial receipt of the NPC Scholarship, for a maximum of \$10,000.

The board of the Eric Friedheim National Journalism Library shall be consulted about the NPC board's intention.

This terms of this motion is effective with the 2010 scholarship.

NPC Annual Elections Dec. 11, 2009

Secretary Belkind said he would have ready for the Board's meeting in September a report on the procedures and timetable for the annual NPC Elections, to be held on Dec. 11, 2009. The report would include a recommendation for facilitating the obtaining of absentee ballots. Therefore, he said there was no need for the Board to meet in August to consider election procedures.

Next BOG Meeting Sept. 21

The Board unanimously approved scheduling the next meeting of the BOG for Monday, Sept. 21, 2009.

The July 20 meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS APPROVED

Active:

Keiichi Homma - Yomiuri Shimbun, Journalist; Carrie Lynn Mitchell - Federal News Service, Vice President of Operations; Kelly Nuxoll - Freelance, Contributing Writer; Reiko Kamata Robertson - Freelance, Journalist; Martin Sieff - Middle East Times, Columnist & Editorial Board Member; Tejinder Singh - Freelance, Journalist; Emily Walker - MedPage Today, Washington Correspondent; Jinglu Xu - New Tang Dynasty Television, Reporter

Active Reinstate:

Lourdes B. Fernandez - BNA, Sr. Editor

Active Non-Resident:

Lin Gensing-Pophal, Chippewa Falls, WI - Freelance, Writer; Peggy Kuhr, Missoula, MT - The University of Montana, Dean, School of Journalism; Evelyn Nieves, San Francisco, CA - The Associated Press, Reporter, San Francisco Bureau; Rita Watson, Providence, RI - GreenLegals.com/The Providence Journal/ Examiner.com, Syndicated Blogger/Freelance Writer

Active Non-Resident Reinstate:

Tobin Beck, Seward, NE - Concordia University Nebraska, Associate Professor, Journalism & Global Issues

Active Under 35:

Delphine Schrank - Freelance, Reporter, Foreign Correspondent

Active Under 30:

Lindsey Morgan Roberts - Freelance, Writer

Affiliate:

Robert Scott Bolitho - Embassy of Australia, First Secretary - Public Affairs

Affiliate Non-Resident:

Barbara Ady, Palm Springs, CA - The Desert Sun (Gannett), Guest Reporter/Consultant; Eric Green, Mount Kisco, NY - ELG Consulting, Consulting Editor

Affiliate Under 35:

Michael Coren - Climate Focus, Forestry & Carbon Market Specialist

Associate:

Joff Masukawa - Shire plc, Sr. Director, Government Relations/Public Policy; Su-Lin Cheng Nichols - Newspaper Association of America, Sr. Vice President, Communications

Associate Reinstatement:

Jack Dolan - American Council of Life Insurers, V.P. Media Relations

Associate Non-Resident:

George Harrison Gilliam, Charlottesville, VA - Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, Assistant Director for Public Programs; D.H. Kerby, Philadelphia, PA - Poet/Freelance; Craig Andrew Pirtle, Falmouth, VA - Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, Financial Advisor

Associate Under 35:

Natasha Altamirano - Tax Foundation, Manager of Media Relations; Sara Dabney Tisdale - Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life, Assistant Editor

Building Tenant:

Corinna Gilfillan - Global Witness, Head of U.S. Office; Joseph Henchman - Tax Foundation, Tax Counsel, Director of State Projects; Kail Merritt Padgitt - Tax Foundation, Economist

Student:

Sean Honick - American University, Student