

**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB  
March 19, 2007  
Sylvia Smith, Secretary**

Chairwoman Maureen Groppe called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Present were President Jerry Zremski, Vice President John Donnelly, Secretary Sylvia Smith, Treasurer Donna Leinwand, Membership secretary Mark Hamrick and Governors Joe Anselmo, Alan Bjerga, John Gallagher, Keith Hill, Gayela Bynum, Lou Priebe, Theresa Werner and Dipka Bhambhani and former president Jonathan Salant. Also, General Manager John Bloom.

The board immediately moved into executive session to interview a finalist for the general membership position. Open session was resumed at 7:25 p.m.

**Smith moved and the board approved the minutes of the Feb. 27 meeting.**

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**Hamrick moved and the board approved the applications of the following 22 people:**

ACTIVE: Cheryl Buchta, associate editor, McGraw-Hill Platts; Anne Cook, editor, FDA News; Chitra Ragavan, correspondent, U.S. News & World Report.

ACTIVE UNDER 35: Jessica Marron, associate editor, McGraw-Hill Platts.

ACTIVE UNDER 30: Joseph Enoch, reporter, ConsumerAffairs.com; Milena Yordanova, associate editor, McGraw-Hill Platts.

ACTIVE NON-RESIDENT: Linda Bauer, The Woodlands, Texas, freelance author; Harry Kirsbaum, Birmingham, Mich., freelance columnist; Ken Kolbe, Grand Rapids, Mich., assistant general manager, Grand Valley State University/WGUU.

ACTIVE RE-INSTATEMENT: Liz Halloran, senior editor, U.S. News & World Report; Bill Kovach, chairman, Committee of Concerned Journalists, University of Missouri; Erica Werner, reporter, Associated Press.

ACTIVE UNDER 30 RE-INSTATEMENT: John P. Gramlich, news producer, The Baltimore Sun.

AFFILIATE: Meredith Hindley, senior writer, National Endowment for the Humanities; Tom Squitieri, senior media adviser, Dittus Communications.

AFFILIATE UNDER 35: Iftikhar Hussain, broadcaster, Voice of America.

AFFILIATE NON-RESIDENT: Stephen Horn, London, England, executive producer, Local Government Channel; G. Jefferson Price III, Glyndon, Md., retired reporter.

AFFILIATE NON-RESIDENT REINSTATEMENT: Scott Stanley Jr., Williamsburg, Va., retired editor.

STUDENT NON-RESIDENT: Katerina Nikolova, San Francisco, undergraduate, City College of San Francisco.

ASSOCIATE: Sheila Ward, manager of external relations, American Society of International Law.

ASSOCIATE REINSTATEMENT: Daniel Selnick, vice president of public policy services, Business Wire.

**Hamrick moved and the board approved retired dues status for 3 members and a dues waiver for 1 member.**

Hamrick reported that the new member reception was well attended. He also asked board members to each propose 5 candidates for membership and forward those names to Sarah Driggs. He said initiation fees will be waived in April. Hamrick also said the list of members who did not renew their memberships was winnowed from 430 to 330. Zremski said that, next year, the board should receive the list sooner in the year so members can do a more aggressive outreach. He said he hopes that will be the case for the June dues statements. Hamrick said the Membership Committee wants additional guidance on how to handle blogger applicants. He said some people are refusing to pay their 2<sup>nd</sup> Century Fund assessment and that some outreach may be needed.

**BOARD AND LIAISON REPORTS**

International Correspondents – Scheduled an embassy night for May 2.

Book and Author – Bob Deans was a success; Cal Ripken book signing is in conjunction with a luncheon.

5K – Needs ideas for the silent auction. The race raised \$30,000 last year. The 2007 date is Sept. 8.

Free Press – Approved statements on opening the Supreme Court to cameras, supporting open government legislation and commenting on the CIA's proposed changes to FOIA.

Broadcast task force – XM asked that the NPC expand its offerings. But unless the Club can recover some of its costs, that won't happen. The first show from the NPC was moved to an 11 pm time slot.

New media – Is making an effort to have the show available as an iTunes download; is working on an on-line source book.

Events – Movie night is April 5; April 13 is a reading of Rachel Bail's new play; a blues band will play April 26. The picnic will be early fall.

Professional development – March 26 program with Poynter on essential writing tools; a panel is scheduled on making the transition from journalism to PR.

Travel – No one has signed up for Vancouver or the French barge trips; India is scheduled for fall; Japan is attracting travelers.

Photo – Hosting a panel on approaches to photography on April 16.

Young members – Planning panels on magazines, travel writing; scheduled a Breakfast of Champions with John Biskupic and Bill Plante. The mentor program is working a database to use for future matches.

Communications and marketing – Scheduled a seminar on how to deal with PR people.

Newsmakers – Working on a panel on the media and public trust in conjunction with the Wilson Center.

Fourth Estate Award – Meets April 5.

Speakers – Upcoming: Cal Ripken, Lou Dobbs, Alberto Gonzales.

Scholarship – 111 applications; 2 finalists to be chosen for presentation to the board.

House – is making sure the ethics rules are posted on the web site. House tour is June 9.

**Salant moved and the board approved a motion to create a three-member committee comprised of the chair of the New Media Committee, its board liaison and its staff liaison to decide the priorities for making changes to the NPC web site.**

The board moved into executive session to interview a finalist for the general manager position and resumed open session when that was completed.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Leinwand said catering and the broadcast center are strong but the loss of 300-plus members is problematic. She said it appears that the dues writeoff will be about \$125,000. She said the financial implication of membership loss includes loss of income for the Library. She said the Budget Committee discussed approaches Bloom has made, including across-the-board cuts in department accounts and no staff raises at least in the first quarter. She said the board should also adopt cuts. **Leinwand moved and the board approved a 10% cut in all committee budgets, which would reduce expenses by \$25,000.**

She also suggested charging for book raps, which came out of a discussion on member use vs. non-member Club use. **Leinwand moved (and later withdrew) a motion to charge non-members to attend book raps and ask the Book and Author Committee to set a fair price.** The committee will be asked to discuss the idea.

Leinwand also asked liaisons to encourage committees to make more use of the 14<sup>th</sup> floor for events that can be held there. She said Saturday sales since the task force started are up only when there is a special event. She said those who support Saturday openings have to be more aggressive in drumming up attendance. Zremski asked for a comparison of 2006 and 2007 sales. Leinwand said through Feb 28, the average Saturday sales this year were \$1,104; the average in 2006 was \$389. She noted that what the board called for was a 50% reduction in the losses posted by Saturday hours. Hamrick said the board should be mindful that scheduling events for Saturday that would normally have been conducted during the week (a regular committee meeting, for instance) merely cannibalizes weekday business and does not generate new business.

Leinwand said Club Essentials is still working to resolve the credit card issue, which is holding up the launching of the on-line house account management process.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Bloom said he is working with the attorneys to get the trademark issue completed and that he filed the last document. When completed, the trademark will not need to be renewed for 10 years.

He said the NPC has taken over the feeds and webcasting formerly done by ConnectLive. He said staff is working to develop a pay-per-view system for what is webcast (such as luncheons and newsmakers) that would be available to non-members.

Bloom showed the board members prototypes of logos and medallions for the centennial. The designs are being done by John Rupert, who produced the 9/11 poster and awards plaques. He said the Archives is working on a 2008 calendar featuring moments in NPC history. In addition, the centennial committee is looking at bookmarks, a poster with front pages from each decade of the Club's history and other items. He said the committee will make final selections and that the need to be finished in September in order to be ready for the book fair. Bloom said Rupert would be paid for his work. Bynum said if some material is ready by early September, it could be sold at the 5K.

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Zremski said he went to the Washington Press Club Foundation board meeting and had a productive discussion. He said the Library is going to kick off the NPC at 100 fundraising campaign with an event featuring Bob Scheiffer and his honkytonk band.

## NEW BUSINESS

Zremski said a “healthy dining” ad in the blue box on the web page was not a good use of that space and that he spoke to Tom Glad and suggested replacing it with the NPC at 100. Glad said it was too complicated. Zremski said there should be a clear delineation between ads and content. Hamrick said he would like to know the pricing of ads on the web page. Zremski said he will have the New Media Committee look at it.

Zremski said it is likely that the survey of Club members (as part of the futures task force work) will cost less than expected -- \$8,000 for the survey only; \$12,000 if focus groups are added. Bynum said the budget situation might call for no survey at all until things improve. Zremski said Bloom said the Club needs to get a handle on membership issues, so the survey could be vital. In response to a question, Zremski said the focus groups might produce more detail than a survey and therefore be more useful. He said the survey would be of NPC members, Washington journalists who are not members and national journalists. Focus groups would be members only. Groppe said a concern is how to get people to participate in focus groups. Zremski said that since the cost with focus groups is within the budgeted amount for the survey, he got the sense that the board supports that approach.

Gallagher said the renovation of the Fourth Estate (originally planned for this year) has been put off till August 2008.

**Hill proposed and the board approved the following resolution written by Leinwand: Whereas Alison Bethel has served with distinction on the NPC Board of Governors and has contributed tirelessly to the recruitment and retention of new members, the Board of Governors commends her for her long service to the Club and wishes her well in her new endeavor.**

The next meeting is April 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.