

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

**March 22, 2010**

**Myron Belkind, Secretary**

Board Chair Theresa Werner called the meeting to order at 6:38pm. Present were President Alan Bjerga, Secretary Myron Belkind, Treasurer Keith Hill, Membership Secretary Angela Greiling Keane, Governors Shawn Bullard, Mark Wjono, Jennifer Sergent, Theresa Werner, John Hughes, Rodrigo Valderrama, and Ed Barks. Not attending: Mark Hamrick, Mike Soraghan, John Donnelly, Jessica Brady and Donna Leinwand (ex-officio). Staff present: Executive Director Bill McCarren, Director of Membership Sarahanne Driggs

The Minutes from the Feb. 22, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved.

### **Membership Report**

On the recommendation of Membership Secretary Angela Greiling Keane, the Board unanimously approved the application of 40 members (see list at end of Minutes), retired status for 8 members and a six-month hardship dues waiver for 7 members. The number of new members so far this year is 92, compared to 152 for the same period last year. Total members as of the Membership Report to the March Board meeting were 3,441, compared to 3,662 last year.

### **State of the Press Club Monthly Report: March 2010**

#### **Club Ahead of Budget on Profits Despite Blizzard-related February Loss**

Despite the National Press Club losing money in February for the first time since last August as a result of the impact of the Blizzard of 2010, the Club still is 33 percent ahead of budget on profits so far this year thanks to a program of cost controls initiated over the last year. For the first two months of the year, the Club's profits were a little over \$100,000, compared to budgeted profits of \$75,000 for the period.

The Club's financial report showed a loss of \$45,000 in February, which reflected cancellations of about \$85,000 in business booked through the catering department during the blizzard. Of that amount, \$50,000 is expected to be rebooked in the coming months, starting in March.

"There is at least one bright spot in the February performance and that can be found in the total cost figures," Executive Director Bill McCarren said in his monthly report. Total costs in February were \$793,000, well below the normal level of costs, even during the traditionally slow summer months of last July and August.

While McCarren said that some of the costs were lower because of corresponding lower revenue, he felt that with the cost controls now in place, “we have a real chance to dramatically reduce one of our major problems in the business – the massive losses in the summer. I did not like much about February, but I do like our cost-to-revenue ratio. This is very encouraging. We will track this in future months.”

McCarren said the lower costs were achieved through an accumulation of factors including a new vendor contract for the food and beverage department, a new management team taking new approaches, owning the Club’s audio visual equipment instead of renting it and a new bonus and compensation formula for the professional staff that is based on profits instead of revenue.

Treasurer Keith Hill said that the Club is expected to make a strong profit in March and that April, May and June “all look strong at this point.”

In his report to the Board, President Alan Bjerga said the Club is at “a fortunate moment” because of decisions made regarding ensuring the fiscal soundness of the NPC.

“It is nice to be in a mode of growth and managing success rather than managing crises,” said Bjerga.

He also said there is a need for the Club to be transitioning to become more “aggressive in fundraising” to benefit the Eric Friedheim Library in support of its professional development programs.

### **Appeal to NPC and Friedheim Library Boards for 100 percent donor support**

President Bjerga urged every Board of Governor member to make a contribution to the Library, which he said would facilitate the process of obtaining grants from some organizations that want to know the level of support a non-profit, such as the Friedheim Library, receives from its governing bodies. The important criterion is not the dollar amount of a specific contribution but rather the percentage of participation on a Board. Bjerga’s appeal applied to both the NPC and the Eric Friedheim Boards.

### **Ethics Process Discussed**

The Board discussed ways to improve procedures for improving the process for dealing with complaints about members’ behavior. A consensus emerged that rather than adding another committee or level of bureaucracy to deal with this issue, that ways should be considered for having the existing Ethics Committee respond to the various suggestions made to improve the process for dealing with complaints. The Board asked the current Ethics Committee to consider the points raised in the discussion and to report back at the Board’s next meeting. Separately, President Bjerga asked the appropriate staff to contact past Ethics Committee chairs to ensure the Club had in its archives an accurate record of previous ethics’ issues and disciplinary action taken during their tenures.

## **Committee Liaison Reports**

### **Book Fair:**

Invitations have been extended to Madeleine Albright and Mika Brzezinski to act as honorary co-chairs for this year's Book Fair. Both were delighted to be asked. Due to her schedule, Madeleine Albright has not yet confirmed. Mika Brzezinski has confirmed and will be happy to act as an honorary co-chair or honorary chairwoman, if Madeleine Albright is unavailable. We hope to finalize in the next few weeks.

The committee will again be partnering with the SEED School this year to help them furnish books for their Maryland Library, including special needs books.

The committee has identified 226 significant authors to invite. Names have been divided among committee members for contacting publishers and inviting authors. Members will continue to collect big name authors to secure 95+ for the Book Fair, with an eye toward a balance of authors in each genre category. A special effort is being made to include authors and topics to assist journalists with job and industry changes as well as the usual politics and current affairs, history, food, biography, memoir, children's, business, adult fiction, mystery, sports and lifestyle.

Committee members are currently in process of developing and finalizing the Book Fair application, news release, author invitation letter, sponsorship letter, sponsor contact list, sponsorship packet, and save the date flyer.

### **Communications and Marketing:**

**Public Relations Mentors needed:** Rod Kuckro addressed the Communications and Marketing Committee's March 16 meeting and indicated he is in need of applications from public relations professionals to serve as mentors. Applications are due by April 15. Rod then reviewed the pool of mentors with the requests and makes the matches. Commitment for this round is six months, with matches completed by May 1.

**Increase diners at the Fourth Estate Restaurant:** Chef Susan Delbert asked for marketing ideas to increase evening dining at the Fourth Estate restaurant. The goal is getting 20 diners each night the restaurant is open. We want to increase word of mouth that this restaurant has excellent food and is open to the public. Most still think a Club member has to bring the guests, but the public is welcome. The committee is searching its contacts in the media as well as among bloggers, foodies, calendar of events listings where we should pitch, etc.

***The Wire* articles needed:** *The Wire* is looking for committee members to write stories. One idea was to have a committee member serve as the 'assignment editor' to come up with a list of ideas and then other committee members can volunteer to write over the year. Promoting the Fourth Estate could definitely be one.

**Promote the NPC Radio show:** The NPC radio show will be airing on local NPR station

WAMU 88.5 and we want other stations across the country to follow suit. Committee members will reach out to their contacts at local NPR stations.

Committee members are also on the alert for media sponsors for the 5K race being held in June to raise scholarship funds.

**Book and Author:** Lynne Olson will discuss her new book, *Citizens of London: The Americans Who Stood with Britain in its Darkest, Finest Hour*, on March 23.

**Awards Committee:**

The deadline for entries is April 1.

**Broadcast Committee:**

Committee Chair Ken Mellgren reports that the Broadcast Committee continues to explore ways in which it can improve the audio quality of our weekly radio programs. We met with BOC personnel earlier this week and have asked our lead producer, Phil Chordas to meet with the Club's A/V department. One of Alan Bjerga's suggestions was that we consider offering programs outside of our usual categories and we are doing just that by recording the April 8 Comedy Night by applying somewhat greater audio resources than usual. Committee members also continue to work with other NPC committees to assist them whenever possible.

**Freedom of the Press Committee:**

- Press release opposing libel tourism to go out March 24.
- Press release applauding Senate efforts to improve FOIA went out March 19
- Forum on FOIA featuring Bloomberg Editor in Chief Matt Winkler and Lucy Dalglish, head of Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, has been scheduled for May 11.

**Professional Development Committee**

The professional affairs committee is pulling together the annual Journalists Boot Camp, scheduled for May 15. The all-day event will feature three tracks: conversion, with breakout sessions on social networking, using twitter in reporting and multimedia; the business of journalism, with sessions showcasing health insurance, legal advice and other services offered by the club to further careers; and an introduction to freelancing, with sessions on power reporting, blogging, networking, etc. We're also going to host a social networking evening at the club and a panel discussion on "How to Cover the Pentagon and the Defense Industry" for April 21. Committee is also working on an FOI Access Across America tour event with Society of Professional Journalists.

**Photography Committee:**

Noel St. John, the NPC's new Photo Coordinator will talk about "Capturing the Moment: Tips for Taking Better Photos at the NPC," at the next committee meeting on March 31. Noel will illustrate several photo techniques, such as when and how to use flash indoors, by showing a sampling of photos taken by the NPC volunteer photographers. There will be a "Photos and Tacos Night" on Friday, April 23, which the committee is organizing in response to requests from non-Photo Committee NPC members, who

would like one-on-one camera and photo assistance. The event will follow the Club's Taco Night policy, which continues to be free tacos for NPC members and for a guest, if he or she buys a drink.

**Newsmakers:** There have been 7 Newsmakers in March, bringing the total so far this year to 23.

**International Correspondents' Committee:**

Two upcoming events:

--Haitian Ambassador Raymond Joseph and his wife will be the featured speakers at an event focusing on "Haiti: Past, Present and Future" on March 25 in the Ballroom.

--On April 21, the widow of the 2009 recipient of the NPC Freedom of the Press Award for an international journalist will receive the honor on behalf of her late husband at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 21, in the Holeman Lounge. Sonali Samarasinghe will accept the award on behalf of Lasantha Wickramatunga, a Sri Lankan journalist who was murdered in January 2009.

**History & Heritage Committee:**

The History & Heritage Committee is organizing its members into several subcommittees for several upcoming events:

-- Building rededication -- May 19 -- Don Larrabee with help from Art Wiese

-- Merger of WPC and NPC (may slip to July): David Hess with help by Elizabeth Smith Brownstein

-- Outreach to young members: Gil Klein with help by Bill Hickman

-- Daniel Ellsberg and Pentagon papers: Tom Connors

--Display cases: Amy Henderson (Smithsonian)

-- Kennedy-Nixon debate: Larry Quinn and Ken Mellgren

-- Short history features for the Wire: perhaps Bill and Lorna

-- Publicist for H&H: Susan Hahn

-- Oral Histories -- Bill Hickman and Larry Quinn

**Travel Committee:**

The Travel Committee Reception for members will be at 7:00 p.m. Thursday, April 22. The trip to Turkey in May is sold out!

**House and Bar Committee:**

Following are highlights of the committee's March 1 meeting:

--Committee members reviewed NPC's House Rules. After discussion, it was decided to retain them as written and to display them more prominently throughout the Club.

--Club security measures should be a recurring discussion topic in our House meetings.

--Chicago Sun-Times' Washington Bureau Chief Lynn Sweet has provided an offset plate commemorating President Obama's election. The Washington Post Springfield Plant Assistant Manager Roddy MacPherson has produced an offset plate. It will be framed and hung with an appropriate unveiling ceremony.

--There was a suggestion that the Fitness Room shower heads be replaced. Management agreed to do this.

--The distance-between-treadmills issue has been resolved, but Karrye Braxton suggested that the treadmills continue to be a reasonable distance away from the ellipticals, for access.

**Young Members Committee:** Plans are being made for a series of seminars on press freedom issues.

**Events Committee:**

The committee is planning events that would feature the renowned musician and lecturer, Kanniks Kannikeswaran, on Indo-Celtic music; an April movie night; and a forum on Religion in the Press.

**Speakers Committee:** Upcoming speakers:

April 5: Douglas Shulman, Commissioner, Internal Revenue Service

April 12: Dennis Quaid, actor

April 15: Janet Napolitano, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

April 19: Rep. Sander M. Levin, Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee

April 30: Tim Kaine, Chair, Democratic National Committee

**Fourth Estate Awards Dinner:**

CBS Correspondent Bob Schieffer will be honored on Friday, Oct. 15.

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The next meeting of the Board was scheduled for April 19, 2010.

The Board adjourned at 9:45 pm.

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**New Member Applications Approved**

**Active**

Shibbir Ahmed - Khabor USA, Inc., Editor; Christopher Chambers - Georgetown University, Professor of Journalism, Cultural Media Studies; Gerald Karey - McGraw-Hill/Platts, Sr. Managing Editor; Denise Li - Georgetown University, Associate Dean, Master of Professional Studies in Journalism; Rui Sasaki - The Sankei Shimbun, Bureau Chief

**Active Reinstatement**

Kimberly Maria Chipman - Bloomberg, LP, Reporter; John Sodergreen - Scudder Publishing, Editor-in-Chief

**Active 65+**

Connie Lawn - Audio-Video News, President/Chief Correspondent

**Active Non-Resident**

Alexander Hitchen, New York, NY - American Media, Inc., Sr. Reporter; Dandy Koswaraputra, Bogor, Indonesia - Aljazeera Network, Producer; Scott McCleskey, New York, NY - Complinet, Managing Editor, North America; Erik Stephen Meltzer, New York, NY - New Tang Dynasty TV/WBFF, Fox 45 Baltimore, Producer/Photojournalist; Prune Perromat, New York, NY - Freelance Journalist; Denis Serikov, New York, NY - External Economic Relations Magazine, U.S. Deputy Editor/Columnist; Mian Shahbaz,

El Sorbrante, CA - Pakistan Times USA, Editor-in-Chief (USA)

**Active Under 35**

Eileen Sullivan - Associated Press, Reporter

**Provisional Under 35**

Benjamin N. Dooley - Kyodo News, Assistant Correspondent

**Active Under 30**

Justin Duckham - Talk Radio News Service, Correspondent; Nick Schwellenbach - Center for Public Integrity, Staff Writer; Shawna Thomas - NBC News, Producer - Capitol Hill

**Provisional Under 30**

Michelle Payne - The Motley Fool, Editor

**Affiliate**

Anne J. Veigle - U.S. Telecom, Vice President, Media Affairs

**Affiliate Non-Resident**

Theresa Grant, Des Plaines, IL - American Health Information Management Association, Media Relations Manager; Martha LaGuardia Kotite, Niceville, FL - U.S. Coast Guard, Press Secretary for the Commandant; Daniel David McGinn, Jordanstown, No. Ireland - University of Ulster, Director, Media and Corporate Relations

**Associate**

Carlos Calderone - Organization of American States Employees Federal Credit Union, President/CEO; Carla M. Decker - District Government Employees Federal Credit Union, CEO; John Heinze - John Adams Associates, Sr. Vice President; Jeff Mascott - Adfero Group, Managing Partner; Constance E. Sorrentino - U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Chief, Division of International Labor Comparisons

**Associate 65+**

Larry Pressler - United States Senate, Retired Senator, South Dakota

**Associate Non-Resident**

Mark L. Croatti, Annapolis, MD - United States Naval Academy/Annapolis Magazine, Instructor, American Government/Politics Reporter; Bishop L. J. Guillory, Beverly Hills, CA - KNET 95.7 FM, 1450 AM/Ombudsman International Inc., Talk Show Host/Ombudsman General; Christopher A. Murray, Mt. Airy, MD -Murray Financial Group, Inc./AM 930 WFMD, President/Producer & Host

**Associate Under 35**

Michael Aguilar - Macfadden/U.S.A.I.D., Recruiter/Project Associate; Sery Elizabeth Kim - NBC Washington (Around Town)/Congressman Burgess, Freelance Writer/Attorney; Paloma Garcia-Lopez - Posse Foundation, D.C. Director; Michael Stanat - SIS International Research, Marketing Manager; H. Catherine Woody - Conference of State Bank Supervisors, Director, Public Relations for Policy