

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB**

May 7, 2010

Myron Belkind, NPC Secretary

The Club's Spring General Membership Meeting was called to order by President Alan Bjerga at 12:15 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Membership Meeting of Jan. 15, 2010 were approved.

Membership Report

Membership Secretary Angela Greiling Keane said of the 115 new or reinstated members so far this year, Young Members were the largest category, at 42 percent. And the membership loss this year is the lowest since at least 2002. As of April, there were 3,436 members, compared to 3,573 a year ago.

She said that the Club surveys those who have dropped their membership, and the biggest single reason given was related to job losses.

She said that Vice President Mark Hamrick's Membership Retention Task Force, formed at the start of 2010, will submit a report later in the year.

She also said, in response to a question, that new membership applications go through a three-tiered approval process starting with the membership department that makes the initial review, followed by the Membership Committee and then the Board of Governors.

Treasurer's Report

To the applause of 40 members who attended the spring General Membership Meeting on May 7, Treasurer Keith Hill reported strong financial results for the first four months of the year, with the Club on target to produce \$800,000 in profits for the second quarter, double the profits for the first quarter.

He said that short- and long-term debt are at their lowest levels since 2005 and that the Club is expected to reach---“if not exceed”--the Board-mandated reserve level of \$1million by the end of September.

Hill added that while July and August are expected to have their traditional losses during the slower summer period, “we should expect these losses to be less than last year.”

“That’s a fantastic treasurer’s report, so how about a round of applause?” asked Robert Weiner. Amid the applause, Hill paid tribute to cost-saving measures implemented by Executive Director Bill McCarren during 2009 for which the full benefit will be received in 2010.

President’s Report

“It’s nice to be in an environment where you are getting good news,” said President Alan Bjerga as he took the floor to deliver his report and thanked members and staff for making the Club “such an exciting place.”

“The National Press Club is not just a business, but it certainly makes it easier when you have money,” he said.

Reviewing the first four months of his presidency, Bjerga said that the Club lost money in February owing to cancellations of catered events as a result to the Blizzard of 2010, but he said “we were still able to make a difference in fulfilling the Club’s motto of being the world’s leading professional organization for journalists.”

He cited as an example of how despite the blizzard in a week when the U.S. government was closed, the Club opened to keep a professional commitment for a Speakers press conference by Haiti Ambassador Raymond Joseph to give an assessment of how his country was coping a month after the devastating earthquake struck his nation on Jan. 12.

He said that while only five journalists showed up, including from the Financial Times and the Economist, there were four camera crews representing ABC, CNN, Voice of America and C-SPAN.

“We showed that we made a difference that day.”

Similarly, he said the Club had a major impact when \$500,000 in prosthetics was donated during Haiti Night, organized by the International Correspondents' Committee on March 25, an event featured on Brian Williams' NBC Nightly News. "The contributor decided that the National Press Club was the best place to make the contribution," said Bjerga.

Bjerga also said numerous committees had been very active, including the Speakers Committee, which so far had seven Cabinet-level luncheon speakers; the Photography Committee, the Communications and Marketing Committee, Newsmakers, Professional Development, which is organizing a Journalists' Boot Camp on May 15, Freedom of the Press, Young Members, Events and the History and Heritage Committee.

He noted that on Thursday night, May 6, the Young Members Committee organized two popular events, and the U.K. Election Results Viewing Party in the Bloomberg Room had more attendees than those at his favorite Karaoke Night in the Truman Lounge. "I don't understand this younger generation," Bjerga said jokingly.

Bjerga thanked the numerous past NPC presidents who continue to contribute service to the Club including four who were present for the GMM: Donna Leinwand, Jonathan Salant, Rick Dunham and Larry Lipman.

And he expressed appreciation to the Club's staff.

Typical of the dedicated staff, Bjerga said, was Saul Molina, a member of the restaurant staff for 20 years who died recently after an accident while en route home.

The GMM observed a minute's silence in memory of Molina.

Q&A Highlights:

Throughout the 50-minute meeting, Bjerga fielded questions as different issues came up, including during a final session spanning old and new business. Here are highlights:

Speakers Luncheon Format: Llewellyn King suggested that the head table be round rather than the current long, rectangular shape so that more members could interact with the guests of honor during lunch.

Bjerga said the long table format was based on tradition and other factors but that members could meet the guests at the VIP receptions preceding the lunch and added that speakers are being required to come early to attend the receptions. Bjerga also said that the format for asking questions sent up from the audience or by e-mail enabled him to pull together similar questions and present them in a manner whereby he could in effect be the interviewer and ask follow-up questions as needed. He also confirmed, in response to a question, that alcoholic drinks could be ordered at both the lunch and the VIP receptions.

Reliable Source: Ric Hedlund asked when the Reliable Source Restaurant and Bar would be reopened for Saturday brunch, which is now served in the Fourth Estate Restaurant as part of the all-day Saturday operations initiated a year ago. Bjerga said that while brunch revenue in the Fourth Estate in the first quarter of 2010 was down slightly compared to the Reliable Source for the first quarter of 2009, the Club had gained financial resources overall, with increased revenue including having the opportunity to have more catered events such as weddings and Bar Mitzvahs and increased revenue from having the Fourth Estate opened for dinner on Saturdays.

Wireless: Karrye Braxton enquired about having further enhancements to the Club's Wireless capability including the Truman Lounge. Executive McCarren said that he and Sam Hurd would be happy to consider requests for further improvements.

Hand-held microphone for Newsmakers: Tejinder Singh, chair of the Newsmakers Committee, said that he had received complaints from outside Washington that there is difficulty hearing questions on the live webcasts because there was not a microphone that could be used for those in the audience. Bjerga said he felt this issue could be easily resolved.

The NPC's Eric Friedheim Library: Carol Morgan enquired about having more magazines that would be better displayed. Julie Schoo, the library director, said there were space considerations but she would look into the issue and asked Ms. Morgan to discuss any suggestions with her.

The date for the next General Membership Meeting was set for Friday, Oct. 8.

The May 7, 2010 General Membership Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.