

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OCT. 13, 2006
Sylvia A. Smith, Secretary

Vice president Jerry Zremski called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m.
About 30 members were present.

Secretary Sylvia Smith moved and the members approved the May minutes.

Zremski reported that a task force is preparing a strategic plan for the Club. As part of it, he said, the task force hopes to get a handle on the membership decline and a clearer path for the future. He said he welcomes any volunteers to help with the plan.

Zremski said planning for the 2008 centennial is proceeding with the documentary, a party and other activities.

Membership secretary John Donnelly reported there are 3,647 members, including 1,706 active and 767 associate. He said the total is 147 fewer than 2005, representing a 4 percent decline. He said ways to approach the drop include better communication about the benefits of membership to those who are already members, thinking about how to enhance the benefits the Club offers, and what new members – particularly non-residents – can find through the Club. He said one way to communicate this is through the web site.

Donnelly said there are some spots of good news in the membership statistics: The Club is doing a better job of recruitment and retention than four or five years ago. He said initiation fees are waived twice a year, there are targeted recruitment receptions, and the broadcast center helps attract members.

Member Dave Anderson asked why there's an initiation fee and was told that it helps deter people from dropping their memberships and re-joining later. He said that could be accomplished by having a re-instatement fee. Smith said that's the kind of idea the strategic plan would address.

Treasurer Donna Leinwand reported that income is stable and the Club is almost on budget. She said the broadcast center has produced \$533,000 in revenue so far, including \$360,000 in gross profit. She said the board has proposed a \$13.25 dues increase for 2007 for all membership categories,

representing about \$1.10 per month per member. She said the reason for the dues increase is the Club does not have enough money. She said there is a \$2.1 million gap between member dues and membership costs, most of which is made up through catering operations. "But there are only so many rooms and so many days," she said. She was asked about the discontinuation of ads in the membership directory and explained that the board decided it was no longer cost effective and that ad revenue was declining year to year. Former president Rick Dunham said Julie Schoo, the membership director, was spending a lot of time trying to sell ads and could better spend the time developing training events and programs.

NEW BUSINESS

Leinwand moved approval of a \$13.25 per-member dues increase for 2007 as recommended by the Board of Governors. The membership approved the increase with no dissent.

Smith said the Club election was scheduled for Nov. 8.

Dunham (president of the Library Board) said a director of development had been hired to help obtain grants from foundations. He said the board planned to consider a bylaws change to designate a board position for a member of the Silver Owls.

Zremski said the next general membership meeting is Jan. 19, 2007.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1 p.m.