

MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
OCT. 27, 2015
ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

With President Paul Fletcher presiding, the meeting of the board of directors of the Society of Professional Journalists was called to order at 1:10 p.m. ET on Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2015, via Zoom conference service.

In addition to Fletcher the following were present: President-Elect Lynn Walsh; Secretary Treasurer Rebecca Baker; Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs Sue Kopen Katcef; At Large Directors Bill McCloskey and Alex Tarquinio; Campus Adviser At Large Mike Reilley; Student Representatives Monica Dattage and Kate Hiller; Regional Directors Andy Schotz, Michael Koretzky, Patti Newberry Gallagher, Debra Givens, Joe Radske, Tom Johnson, Ethan Chung, Matt Hall and Amanda Womac.

Staff members present for the meeting were Executive Director Joe Skeel, Membership Strategist Tara Puckey and Communications Strategist Jennifer Royer.

The primary purpose of the call was to discuss:

- Region 1 Director appointment.
- Proposed gaming journalism award.
- Practice for future ACEJMC appointments.

Fletcher shared with the group that he and Skeel have been working to create a strategic planning session.

Fletcher shared that community elections are being held the next two weeks.

Fletcher asked to go into executive session to provide an update on personnel matters.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Tarquinio, the board voted to go into executive session at 1:18 p.m.

Upon proper motion by Schotz and second by Tarquinio, the board voted to exit executive session at 1:22 p.m.

REGION 1 DIRECTOR

The board considered six candidates in appointing a new Region 1 Director. The position was vacated by Rebecca Baker after she won Secretary Treasurer in the most recent election.

McCloskey noted that Jane Primerano was the only candidate with chapter experience, which he considered critical to the position.

Baker shared that Jane also had experience with regional conferences, and help reinvigorate the New Jersey Chapter. She also shared that Jane had served as deputy regional director.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Schotz, Jane Primerano was selected to fill the position of Region 1 director.

ACEJMC APPOINTMENT

Fletcher proposed a policy (Appendix A) to help guide SPJ in appointing future members of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

Upon proper motion by McCloskey and second by Schotz, the board voted to accept the proposal, adding clarification that dues are council dues, not SPJ dues. Walsh voted no.

Fletcher asked the board to ratify his appointment of Sonny Albarado.

Upon proper motion by Hall and second by Baker, the board voted to ratify Fletcher's appointment of Albarado as the ACEJMC representative.

GAMING JOURNALISM CONTEST

Koretzky proposed SPJ launch a contest aimed at gaming journalism (Appendix B). The proposal would be a one-year trial.

Baker shared concerns about continuing to engage this community. She shared that two panels on gaming journalism at SXSW were cancelled due to threats of violence.

Kopen Katcef questioned why SPJ should embark on a niche contest. She asked where we might draw the line. She shared concerns about the workload.

Koretzky replied that he hoped there would be more niche contests, as that is the direction of journalism in journalism. He said this could eventually be something managed by communities.

In response to Baker, Koretzky said one of the reasons to engage now is because it is a controversial issue. He said ethics is one way to help tamp controversy.

He said for a one-year experiment, he thinks it's worth the risk.

Walsh agreed with Koretzky, saying she hopes it leads to more niche contests. She hopes to expand that, and reach communities that SPJ isn't currently reaching.

Kopen Katcef asked why they couldn't enter the SDX Awards.

Koretzky replied that they likely wouldn't be able to compete, "news on gaming journalism can't compete with news about ISIS."

Baker shared she is opposed to having no entry fee. Everyone should have some skin in the game, she said.

Conversation continued about the risks, rewards, benefits and concerns about the contest.

Upon proper motion by Schotz and second by Tarquinio, the board voted to accept Koretzky's proposal. Kopen Katcef and Baker voted no.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon proper motion and second, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2015.

APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM

To: SPJ Board of Directors
From: Paul Fletcher
Re: ACEJMC seat
Date: 10/20/15

Colleagues –

This memo will provide additional information about the SPJ seat on the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).

Steve Geimann held this seat for 19 years but with his transfer to London, he relinquished his position.

The Orlando convention passed a resolution requiring SPJ's continued active involvement in ACEJMC and our continued support of a rep, including payment of the annual membership fee and the rep's travel expenses to council meetings.

As I mentioned in an email last month, I appointed Sonny Albarado to serve as our rep.

The current process for naming and approving a rep is not clear.

I think we should establish a formal system for selecting the SPJ ACEJMC rep. Based on conversations with Steve and what history I have, I propose the following:

1. The SPJ position on the ACEJMC is a presidential appointment, subject to board ratification.
2. The SPJ rep will serve for a term of three years.
3. The SPJ rep should be a working journalist.
4. The SPJ rep will submit reports to the board, detailing his/her activity, for the spring and fall board meeting packets.
5. SPJ will continue to pay the annual membership fee and the rep's travel expenses to council meetings.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, or if this proposal is missing something. If it all looks OK, I will be happy to hear a motion at our upcoming board phone call to approve this process. Thanks.

APPENDIX B

SPJ KUNKEL AWARDS 2015

Submitted by: Region 3 director Michael Koretzky

Board action requested

Approve an SPJ micro-awards program for excellence in video game journalism, directing staff to assist and allocating no more than \$500 for award certificates/plaques.

Summary

With the success of [SPJ AirPlay](#) on Aug. 15, all “sides” in the GamerGate debate expressed interest in improving the quality of journalism covering their industry – which is bigger than Hollywood. Currently, no such journalism awards exist, and only SPJ seems to possess the credibility and goodwill to make it happen.

Footprint

This new program will mimic the [New America](#) award program in size and scope. Awards Committee chair Andy Schotz and awards coordinator Abbi Martzall say this new program will add little to no work to the existing awards infrastructure.

Cost

Less than \$1,500. Abbi says contest software requires 2-3 hours of vendor time (\$300-\$500), SSL certificate (\$179.98), and three months of hosting (\$300). Award certificates/plaques will cost under \$500 for all five categories.

Possible impacts

- **Make inroads into a new community.** SPJ’s Code of Ethics made new fans with SPJ AirPlay. Those folks wouldn’t have known the Code existed. Now we can keep that going and growing.
- **R&D for more.** If this program works, we’ll learn lessons and find efficiencies that will make the concept easily transportable to other niches. This is one way SPJ can retain its relevance in a fractured media landscape.

Program details

See next three pages. Still subject to change some based on the vagaries of life. But you get the idea. Bottom line: This award is intended to teach readers as well as reward journalists.

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Excellence in News Reporting

One story, or up to three stories on a single topic. News can be *breaking* (reporting on something that just happened), *in-depth* (studying a topic by surveying all sides), or *investigative* (digging into a topic by uncovering previously unknown facts). No one kind is considered superior by the judges.

Excellence in Feature Writing

One story, or up to three stories on a single topic. A feature can be a *profile* (an in-depth look at one person), a *Q&A* (a verbatim interview with one person), or a *color piece* (a descriptive put-you-there story).



Kunkel Awards for video game journalism

Bill Kunkel "helped invent video game journalism," The New York Times declared in Kunkel's 2011 obituary. Therefore, SPJ honors journalism's past to improve its future.

Call for entries: Until the awards are established, nominations will be made by people's choice. The gaming community is active online, and we expect vetting to occur there.

Entry fee: None until the award is established.

Judging: Judges will be SPJ pro journalists with no gaming background. This isn't a negative. It's a plus.

Categories: Best news reporting, best feature writing (includes profiles), best news stream (online broadcast), best feature stream, and best photo/illustration/infographic.

Criteria: Accuracy, balance, clarity, verve, and adherence to the SPJ Code of Ethics.

Deadlines: Nominations announced in December, open Jan. 1, close Feb. 1. Judging ends March 1. Winners announced mid-March.

Contest director: Michael Koretzky

Excellence in News Video/Streaming

One recording of no more than one hour. See description above. Can be edited down from a longer stream. As with written submissions, judges expect *multi-sourcing* (see judging criteria).

Excellence in Feature Video/Streaming

One recording of no more than one hour. See description above. Can be edited down from a longer stream. As with written submissions, judges expect *multi-sourcing* (see judging criteria).

Excellence in Photography/Illustration/Infographic

One photo, original illustration, or infographic. Visuals are a crucial part of journalism. Submissions should stand alone as visual elements but also complement any text surrounding them. Submit with any supporting text and as a separate file, so judges can focus on both elements.

CRITERIA DESCRIPTIONS

Accuracy

Don't trust, verify. This covers everything from spelling names correctly to ensuring all claims are indeed facts – and if you can't verify those facts, admitting as much to your readers, so they can draw their own conclusions.

Balance

Give all sides their say. It's called *multi-sourcing*. No award-winning report has just one source. Talking to all sides doesn't mean giving them all equal space. It simply means giving them all a fair chance to explain their positions.

Clarity

Explaining isn't easy. The hardest part of journalism (or anything) is describing complex or technical concepts in plain English. That means no jargon readers won't grasp. It also means weaving background into the story without bogging it down.

Verve

Journalism isn't supposed to be boring. You can be accurate, balanced, and clear -- and no one will read or listen if you're dull and stuffy. You need a conversational or even witty writing/speaking style to hold your audience's attention.

SPJ Code of Ethics

Last on the list is first for the judges. If you can't apply the principles of the [Code of Ethics](#) that all good journalists do – hell, even the slimeballs who ignore it *know* about it – then nothing else above matters.