

MINUTES
SPJ Detroit Chapter Board Retreat
Saturday, Aug. 13, 2011
10 a.m.

Location: The home of Jack Harned.

Present: Colleen Clement, Gina Damron, Cindy Goodaker, Jack Harned, Janet Mendler, Walter Middlebrook, Gloria Olman, Mike Ramsey, David Sachs, Tom Stanton, Ann Zaniewski and administrator Donna Remer.

Absent: W. Kim Heron, Tim Higgins, Jim Schaefer and Jerome Vaughn.

New members

Newly elected board members Gina Damron, Cindy Goodaker and Mike Ramsey were welcomed to the chapter board.

National convention

The national SPJ convention will be held Sept. 25-27 in New Orleans. Clement and Zaniewski agreed to represent the chapter. Ramsey and Vaughn may also be interested in attending. Traditionally, the chapter sends two or three representatives, contributing \$1,000 per person toward costs. Remer indicated that several contested proposals – one-member/one-vote, the Helen Thomas award – will be voted on at the convention. Both issues will be considered at the September chapter meeting. Ben Burns of Wayne State will be invited to offer his insights into the Helen Thomas dispute.

Programming

Ideas for programs dominated discussion, prompted in part by Higgins' email list of possibilities. Clement noted that the chapter's main program is the annual awards banquet. The chapter holds several other events throughout the year. The national organization encourages all chapters to host events related to ethics, diversity and freedom of information. Goodaker and Ramsey said their employers' facilities could possibly be used as event sites. Ramsey suggested seeking financial sponsorship of events from news organizations. Damron liked the idea of hosting social mixers for journalists, similar to those held by *Hour* magazine. Others said brief, 20-minute programs could be part of the social events. Mendler felt it crucial to lock in dates early to maximize publicity and attendance. Goodaker believed it best to have one or two people responsible for each event to ensure follow-through. Proposals related to topics, costs, locations, dates and refreshments will be drawn up for the following events by the individuals listed:

- Social media (including an ethical dimension): Goodaker and Damron.
- On-camera tips for print journalists: Clement and Stanton.
- Open records: Zaniewski.
- Business reporting: Ramsey and Higgins.
- Judicial Jeopardy: Mendler.
- Resume and portfolio critiques for students: Middlebrook.
- Management for managers: Damron.
- How to turn a story into a book (with Jeffrey Zaslow): Ramsey.

Communication

Remer outlined efforts to communicate with members and non-members through email, Facebook and the chapter website. Ramsey felt the website should be the go-to location for those seeking general information about the chapter, including contacts and the awards competition. Facebook or email should be used for more frequent updates, several agreed. Members felt the chapter needs to set criteria for which items can be promoted by the chapter. Goodaker and Stanton agreed to develop a policy proposal for discussion at the September meeting.

BUDGET

Remer provided an overview. Members will consider the budget in detail at the September meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

As of mid-July the chapter had about 86 members – and about as many who had not renewed their memberships over the last three years. Zaniewski said there is a national effort to make calls to those whose memberships have lapsed. Zaniewski, Clement and Olman indicated they would be willing to make local calls. Olman thinks the new programs will help chapter membership efforts.

COMMITTEES

The following committee chairs were appointed, with each chair invited to add members from the ranks of SPJ.

- Scholarship: Sachs.
- Membership: Zaniewski.
- Programs: Ramsey.
- Banquet: Harned.
- Contest: Remer (with Goodaker, Stanton and Clement).
- Campus outreach: Vaughn.
- Finance: Middlebrook (with Olman, Zaniewski and Higgins).
- Communication: Goodaker (with Stanton).
- By laws and elections: Clement.

OFFICERS

The following slate of candidates agreed to serve and will be voted on at the September meeting: Middlebrook as president, Zaniewski as vice-president, Olman as treasurer and Ramsey as secretary.

MEETING DATES

Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month. The next one will be on Sept. 14 at 8:30 a.m. at the Jewish News.

The meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Stanton
Secretary