

# SPJ Georgia Pro Chapter

## Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, Jan. 23, 8-9 p.m. via conference call

**Attending:** Haisten Willis, Mark Woolsey, Danielle Douez, Lou Phelps, David Armstrong, Toni Stauffer, Ellen Eldridge, Larry Johnson.

**Absent:** Julius Suber

**Also Attending:** Sharon Dunten, Asst. Director Region 3

### Old Business:

- Approval of November 2017 minutes. No amendments. Approved unanimously.  
NOTE: December Board Meeting was cancelled due to Atlanta snow storm, causing lack of quorum of Board members.

### New Business:

- **Treasurer's Report:** Presented by Haisten Willis, President, and Danielle Douez, Treasurer. Willis reported that he and Douez have been added to the SPJ Georgia bank account; and 2017 president Ellen Eldridge and treasurer Dan Whisenhunt have been removed. Douez reported the current balance is: \$ 2,907.00, after spending \$450.00 on the photojournalism event this month, which will be reimbursed by National. Also spent \$30.00 to renew web domain; and made \$65.00 at the photo event. No membership dues check has been received yet for January.
- **Financial Audit:** The SPJ Georgia Pro Chapter annual audit has been completed, and signed off by Haisten Willis. Mark Woolsey, Danielle Douez and member Adina Solomon also served on the Audit Committee appointed by Willis, and all signed off on the audit.
- **Freelance Committee Report:** The chapter received a \$500 grant from National, supported by Region 3 President Michael Koretsky, to hold the photojournalism workshop held Jan. 18 at Indigo Yoga. The Chapter will be reimbursed for its actual expenditures of \$450. There were 16 RSVP's and all 16 showed up, according to Willis, who reported it was "a great event." Speaker was Kevin Liles. The event was spearheaded by Adina Solomon. Member Kimeko McCoy live tweeted the event. "We need to strongly consider doing a program targeted to photojournalists every year," added Mark Woolsey, who also attended.
  - The Freelance Committee will meet and hold a lunch gathering 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m. at Cafe Pharr in Vinings, GA. on Sat. Jan. 27. The freelance committee will meet prior to the lunch and networking with members.
  - Early planning is already underway for the 2018 Freelance Job Fair, scheduled for May. 5. Willis reported that the committee is working on a venue and budget.

- **Social Media Committee:** A new Social Media Committee has been created by President Willis. Member Robin Sherman is overseeing the chapter's LinkedIn platform; Bobby Rodrigo is handling Facebook; and Kimeko McCoy, is overseeing the Chapter's Twitter feed. The committee met on Friday, Jan. 5 via conference call with Mark Woolley, who is over Communications, and is working to set up future meeting dates. The Board agreed by Consensus to support the recommendation of Woolsey, Vice President, that the LinkedIn platform should be "open," not closed to only paid members.
- **Diversity Committee:** Board Member Larry Johnson will chair this committee and plan for an event, potentially in late summer or early fall. Under consideration is another edition of the chapter's 2017's Media and the Muslim Community event or an Immigration panel event, similar to the one held in 2016. He believes the latter is very timely. Focus would be on sources of information, and skills for working reporters on how to approach these issues, including insuring balanced reporting.
- **Bylaws Committee:** Jay Suber will chair and work with one or two others to review and update existing Bylaws, if needed. No bylaw changes are currently before the Board.
- **Student Development Committee:** Board Member David Armstrong has been named the Chair, and will work to bridge his roles with KSU and Georgia News Lab to get students involved with SPJ. Student Board Member Toni Stauffer will help on this committee, as well. They are working on ideas on how to move forward, and have made some progress already. "There is very little in the way of campus activity at this point," Armstrong said he has found. According to SPJ National, there are only three active campus chapters in Georgia: at UGA, Kennesaw State and Georgia Southern, "so there are very few faculty advisors to go through." They are going to reach out to ONA and NABJ, as well, "to get our chapter's activities and events on their radar," he added. Toni will be attending the College Media Association convention later this year, and will look for outreach opportunities there. Their goals include to 'get on the radar,' of students that there is a professional SPJ Chapter in Georgia, with the hope that they will engage after they graduate and begin their professional journalism career. There is a Student Chapter Network that is part of SPJ Florida, which Armstrong is going to contact for ideas. He reported that when a student joins the student chapter at their college or university, the cost is \$37.50 a year. And, universities also set their requirements to have a Student Chapter on the campus, "which SPJ can help the students with working through," added Sharon Duntun. "SPJ Region 3 is trying to ease those issues." Some of the student chapters have a Facebook page. The Board suggested the Committee begin by contacting all of the Student Advisors of each school's newspapers, hoping to get them to join our Chapter, engage in this student effort, along with outreach to Internship Advisors at all journalism programs in the state. Mark Woolsey suggested that they particularly reach out to Georgia Southern student chapter president and advisor, as there is no paid member of our chapter from that campus.
- **Membership Committee:** Ellen Eldridge has volunteered to continue managing the mailing lists via Mailchimp and to take responsibility for newsletter distribution, but would be glad to have someone else take over the database work. She will report to the board at regular meetings about engagement and growth from email marketing efforts.

Mark Woolsey said that he is looking for a Membership Committee Chair, and his initial goal is to create a cohesive membership campaign approach, with organized follow-up with prospective members. Phelps mentioned that National offers extensive training on how to build membership, letters than can be used, and information on how other chapters have been successful.

- **Potential Board Calendar:** Willis made a motion to approve the proposed Calendar of Board meeting dates for 2018; Ellen Eldridge seconded the motion. It carried unanimously. The schedule is a combination of conference calls and in-person meetings. The next Board meeting is set for Saturday, Feb. 10, noon to 1 p.m. in Atlanta. The rest of the year's meetings are as follows:

Conference call meeting Thursday, March 8, 8-9 p.m.

In-person meeting Saturday, April 14, noon-1 p.m. at Alon's Bakery in Dunwoody

Conference call meeting Thursday, May 10, 8-9 p.m.

Conference call meeting Thursday, June 14, 8-9 p.m.

In-person meeting Saturday, July 14, noon-1 p.m. at Alon's Bakery in Dunwoody

Conference call meeting Thursday, Aug. 9, 8-9 p.m.

Conference call meeting Thursday, Sept. 6, 8-9 p.m.

In-person meeting Saturday, Oct. 13, noon-1 p.m. at Alon's Bakery in Dunwoody

Conference call meeting Thursday, Nov. 8, 8-9 p.m.

Annual meeting, Sat. Dec. 8, date and time TBD

- **Presentation and Discussion on TOP IDEAS** from Board Members. In December, President Willis asked each Board member to send him their top two ideas for 2018 for chapter events programming, and other ideas that they believe should be prioritized in 2018 to enhance the Chapter. The ideas will be discussed at the February Board Meeting to determine what can be achieved, and any budget implications. Ideas received to date include:

1. Streamlining all channels, email addresses and organize all of the Chapter's different accounts.

By Haisten Willis

2. Create Press Release templates for a professional methodology when the chapter takes a stand on an issue affecting journalists.

By Haisten Willis

3. Work to develop a Prospective Members event, a "relaxed, personal setting networking event."

4. Develop a cohesive membership campaign strategy.

By Mark Woolsey

5. Encourage journalists in Georgia to enter the Green Eye Shade Awards, using the chapter's website and social media channels, and begin research on our chapter potentially launching the "Georgia SPJ Peach State Journalism Awards" in 2019, as a way to: serve members in their career development goals, attract new members, build our brand and raise money. Most SPJ Chapters in the U.S. have an annual journalism awards event. Phelps volunteered to form a committee to work on how the chapter can launch awards.

By Lou Phelps

6. Pursue Corporate Sponsors/Partners to financially support the work of our chapter, and develop a target list of potential sponsors for all events and speakers, following the example of other press organizations.

By Lou Phelps

6. Build out a network of contacts at colleges and universities, focusing on student newspaper Advisors and journalism Faculty at all institutions.

David Armstrong

7. Improve outreach to journalism students in Georgia, to insure that they are aware of: Chapter events they can attend; journalism job fairs around the state; the work of our Chapter ... all with a focus on encouraging the pursuit of a professional journalism career.

By David Armstrong

8. Increase our chapter's participation at college and university career affairs, held at least once a semester, where SPJ could have a table.

By Toni Stauffer

9. Suggested our Chapter mimic a very successful event held by the Colorado chapter: a 'Wikipedia Edit-a-thon' to teach journalists more about how Wikipedia can be used in journalism, as well as create a fun membership event. A specific topic relevant to Georgia would be chosen, she suggested, and participants would begin the process of creating pages. She suggested 'Women in Georgia' as a potential topic. Goals of the event include a networking event for Georgia journalists, and education on issues working journalists face in the digital age. She believes we could find partners from the tech community to co-sponsor, and added that she believes there is an Atlanta regional chapter of Wikipedia Editors.

By Danielle Douez

The Board will be discussing their consensus support for these ideas at the February board meeting. Any additional ideas should be sent to Haisten Willis as soon as possible.

- **Other Business:** *(An opportunity for Board Members to bring information or issues to the attention of the Board.)*

A. Lou Phelps suggested the Board consider adopting a policy that requires approval by at least a majority of the board members whenever the chapter is going to take a public stand on an issue affecting journalists. To be discussed at the Feb. 10 Board Meeting. Haisten Willis asked Phelps to look at how other Chapters approach this.

B. Sharon Dunten reported on the Region 3 2018 Annual Conference, which will be held at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. from 8:00 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. Haisten Willis will be attending to represent the Chapter, and will be a panelist. SPJ Alabama is also looking at holding a Spring Conference in 2019, as journalists in that state move forward in being a recognized state chapter.

- **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. Motion by Willis; seconded by Woolsey. Unanimously agreed.

Respectfully Submitted: Lou Phelps, Secretary