

SPJ minutes – April 11, 2024, via Zoom

In attendance: Marty Fischhoff, Kelley Root, Rob Davidek, Beth Konrad, Tracy Wolf, Mark Lee, Walter Middlebrook, Mary Zatina, Nicole Avery Nichols, Annalise Frank, Vince McCraw, Christine Ferretti, Administrator Marcia Hart

Absent: Ro Coppola, Jeff Payne, Kat Stafford, Monica Williams, Peg McNichol

Marty Fischhoff called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

President's Report – Marty Fischhoff

- The Wallace House Center for Journalists at the University of Michigan has asked us to help invite reporters covering the 2024 elections to a free safety training session at U-M on May 29. It is being offered in partnership with the International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) and the Reporters Committee for the Freedom of the Press (RCFP). It is part of the IWMF's Newsroom Safety Across America initiative and is open to journalists across Southeast Michigan. Marty will be supplying additional information shortly.
- Mary Zatina asked if there was a way to advance our chapter at the Michigan Policy Conference.

Mark Lee made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes. The motion was seconded and approved by all.

Programming committee update – Tracy Wolf

- The Region 4-5 Conference starts tomorrow with a welcome reception. Tracy reported that approximately 40 people have registered. Tracy has organized panels on sports and food, which will be moderated by Wayne State's Perry Farrell and Marty, respectively. Walter Middlebrook Tracy and Marty will be attending the conference. Walter and Marty will be serving as Resume Doctors to help students at the conference improve their application materials.
- The Collaborative Journalism Summit takes place on May 10-11 at Wayne State University. As a partner to the conference, SPJ Detroit members can attend for free, but there are only a few spaces available. Those interested should register soon. The receptions on Wednesday and Thursday are sold out. Detroit Public TV will be livestreaming many of the sessions.

FOIA Committee – Beth Konrad

- Beth Konrad said that legislation to expand FOIA proposed by State Senators Ed McBroom and Jeremy Moss has been voted out of committee but has not been taken up by the full Senate. There no longer seems to be any urgency in passing the legislation. Rob Davidek asked how the chapter might advocate for its passage. Beth suggested we might want to collaborate with the MPA and MAB on a public statement. She will check with Lisa McGraw of MPA.

Contest – Walter Middlebrook

- Marty said that he is hoping to finalize the judging for Journalist and Young Journalist of the Year by early next week.
- Marcia Hart has downloaded the EIJ judging results and will have a report ready to distribute soon.

Scholarships – Kelley Root

- Kelley reported that she met with fellow committee members, Walter Middlebrook and Annalise Frank, to select two students, from six very strong applications, to receive the chapter's annual scholarships:

- Riley Hodder, a junior at the University of Michigan who works as an editor at the Michigan Daily. She interned last year at Bridge Michigan, focusing on health coverage.
- Masha Smahliuk, a Ukraine native and sophomore at Central Michigan University. Masha is a news editor at CMU Life and is active in SPJ. She was a Michigan Press Association fellow in 2023.
- Each will receive a scholarship of \$2,000.

Banquet – Tracy Wolf

- Tracy said the idea of holding a drawing is receiving a positive response. We could consider offering gift baskets, gift certificates, sporting tickets, shows, restaurants, hotels, bars, wine baskets, etc. We can offer to list/thank the donors on the back of the program and during the banquet. Board members are urged to reach out to potential donors of items for this purpose. We should announce/promote the drawing to make attendees aware of this opportunity, perhaps teasing a few items. Marty has received a donation of a \$200 gift certificate from Sava Lecjac, who has three restaurants in Ann Arbor.
- Marty will not be able to attend the banquet this year, as he has been asked to participate in a panel of the annual PBS Conference. Kelley has agreed to take his place. She requested a run of program.
- Marty will contact Jerome Vaughn and Kim Heron to let them know of planned changes and thank them for their past service. We would recognize them at the banquet and present them with a plaque or certificate as a token of our appreciation.
- Walter suggested that the chapter make a note in the program of the passing of Jack Harned, who, along with his wife Eileen, provided many years of invaluable assistance to the board. A President's Award might be in order. Marcia will reach out to Eileen to invite her to the banquet and to request a photo and bio.

Membership – Rob Davidek

- Rob Davidek is sending out membership letters.
- Kelley mentioned that she was surprised to find that her membership auto-renewed this year. Rob will look into that.
- National now has a QR code that we could use at the banquet to sign attendees up for membership.

Financial – Walter Middlebrook

- Walter reported that we are experiencing some issues with Citizens Bank, so we don't have a current checking account balance this month. However, the scholarship account should be about \$3,277.98, E*Trade is \$12,268.45 and PayPal is \$1,219.71.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and approved by all. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:07 a.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 8, at 11 at 8 a.m. It is on Wednesday instead of Thursday to avoid a conflict with the Collaborative Journalism Summit.

Committee Assignments (chairs in bold text)

- Programs: **Tracy Wolf**, Katrease Stafford, Walter Middlebrook, Beth Konrad, Ro Coppola, Mark Lee, Monica Williams

- Membership Outreach: **Rob Davidek**, Marty Fischhoff, Walter Middlebrook
 - Communication Committee: **Kelley Root**, Rob Davidek
 - FOIA: **Beth Konrad**, Ro Coppola, Kelley Root, Mary Zatina, Peggy McNichol
 - Banquet: **Tracy Wolf**, Marcia Hart, Monica Williams
 - Campus Outreach: **Beth Konrad**, Kelley Root
 - Finance/Fundraising: **Walter Middlebrook**, Marty Fischhoff
 - Bylaws and elections (nominating committee): **Walter Middlebrook**, Beth Konrad, Marty Fischhoff
 - Contest: **Walter Middlebrook**
 - Scholarship: **Kelley Root**, Beth Konrad, Annalise Frank
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