

**Minutes of the Spring General Meeting
of the Illinois News Broadcasters Association
April 25, 2009 I-Hotel Champaign, Illinois**

12:29pm Called to order by President Jim Gee

Motion to approve minutes of Fall 2008 General Meeting – made by Bob Roberts, seconded by Melissa Hahn – Motion approved

OFFICER REPORTS:

President Jim Gee:

Website redesign has been major focus – sample of new site displayed on screens
Will not be able to partner with IBA in the Fall – no funding from them
Has been writing letters for FOIA/OMA issues at the behest of Bob Roberts

Vice President Melissa Hahn:

Dates booked for next conventions – Fall 2009 (Peoria) October 2-4, at the Ramada Inn.
Spring 2010 (Oak Brook) April 16-18, 2010, at the Oak Brook Hills Marriott Resort
Fall 2010 (Bloomington) October 1-3, 2010, at the Parke Hotel

Tom Rogers on Champaign convention – registration is 151, 24 people have signed up for tape critiques for the afternoon. He encourages attendees to come to him with suggestions, problems, concerns.

Gee encourages members, including students, to volunteer for convention committees

Treasurer Jennifer Fuller:

Good report on bank balances – right about where we were last year

Executive Secretary Rich Egger:

Membership is at 258 – 70 radio, 34 television, 15 teachers, 1 wire service, 121 student members, 19 associates

Recording Secretary Laura Trendle Polus:

Requests articles, photos and ideas for the tuneIN

Past President Michelle Eccles: (not present)

Motion to approve Officer Reports – made by Will Stevenson, seconded by Tom Rogers – motion approved

Foundation – H Wayne Wilson:

Assets are down 17.9% -- fortunately that has not affected income too much.
Scholarship amount was raised to \$1300 this year – will probably have \$1500 next year

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

FOI/OMA – Bob Roberts:

A group of journalists and attorney Don Craven have been meeting and working on re-writing Illinois' FOIA. The current House Bill reflects this work. The bill has 45 sponsors – but is currently parked in Rules Committee – Roberts says, once the rewrite is done, INBA will notify members by e-mail with an analysis and proposed action. He says members will be urged to weigh in, to do stories on the bill, to talk to local lawmakers and to find out what it will mean locally. The current version has 57 types of exemptions; Roberts says that's not good. He also points out that we have an opening right now to urge lawmakers to support more open government, at a time when they are eager to distance themselves from Blagojevich. Gee reminds that we are all members of the FOIA committee – Roberts needs our help to take note of possible violations and to report them, even though it may not be what we like to do or think our role is.

Legislation – Sean Crawford

Everything that was potentially problematic has been turned back for this session

Honors and Awards – Dara Brockmeyer:

About 20 applicants for this year's scholarships; seven were interviewed last night – checks will be presented to 4 winners tonight, along with \$50 stipend to other finalists.

SINBA Awards – Laura Gibbs: (not present)

Contest had 103 entries from six schools. The entries were judged by former INBA members now working out of state.

INBA Directory – Tom Rogers:

New directories are in convention goodie bags – copies are available to non-members for \$25. Directory will be included in electronic form on redesigned website.

Motion to approve committee reports – made by Brian O'Keefe, seconded by Bob Roberts -- Motion approved

OLD BUSINESS

Gee brings up several issues that impact each other. One is the issue of funding conventions, which arose with our Fall 2008 (Carbondale) convention, because an organization wanted to give us a substantial amount of money.

Funding conventions is a concern at a time when there are fewer broadcasters in the industry, doing more work.

Another issue is membership, specifically the decline in professional membership. Gee calls on Egger to recap the current state of membership: 128 voting members, 121 student members. Egger says that while it's good to have so many student members, he is concerned we're on the verge of becoming a student group rather than a professional development group.

Gee says we need to do a better job of recruiting – we have a number of markets with little or no membership. We also need to consider accepting members who are journalists online – entirely, or newspaper reporters who are now using some of the same tools (audio, video) that broadcasters do.

Gee says this is also a problem for the students, because they come here to meet and interact with professionals.

Another issue related to membership is that this is a time when we have an urgent need to be a watchdog for our industry, and without strong membership, that is harder to do.

Gee point to the members only portion of the new website – it will highlight the benefits of membership. Members will get an e-mail prompt to set up and use the account.

Steve Scott question whether existing Forum passwords will carry over – Gee says no, it will have to be a new password.

The site will be run by a new content management system, which will allow individual members to update content and split the responsibility. For example, convention pages will be within the site – not on separate or external sites.

This should also allow an opportunity to improve committee work - - perhaps through a special discussion/Forum area that allows online meetings.

Gee thanks Blake Wood for his work on the website.

Gee says we need help with several committees, especially MEMBERSHIP and FINANCIAL. He explains that the mission of the Membership Committee is to address how to make the experience better for existing members, how to make the organization more inclusive, and how to retain student members after they graduate.

Julie Root volunteers to chair this committee. Others volunteering are Melissa Hahn, Will Stevenson, Jennifer Fuller, Rick Koshko and Rachel from SIU (need last name)

The mission of the Financial Committee is to look at our funding structure, how we spend money and how we raise it, to consider an on-going mechanism for financial support for conventions, including ethical issues related to that support and a centralization of convention funding efforts.

Those volunteering for this committee: Jennifer Fuller, Tom Rogers, Barbara Harrington, and there should be a member of the Foundation Board on it as well.

Scholarship Auction (needs chair)

Blake Wood agrees to take this on; Dave Dahl offers to help

NEW BUSINESS

Roberts explains changes being considered in the media credentialing process for the Chicago Police Department. The last version was done in 1992. The CPD rep wants to create a color-coding system to differentiate media. Roberts asks for reaction.

Colleen Reynolds likes it – believes it would keep bloggers and voyeurs out, anyone who doesn't have the legitimate purpose of newsgathering.

Hahn says she could support a modified caste system, but doesn't see a need to separate professional journalists (print, radio, TV) from each other.

Roberts is concerned this leans toward licensing, which the INBA has always opposed, due to concerns about who sets criteria and who gets to approve and deny licenses. Michelle Mantel says it's already hard to talk to PIOs, worries this will set more barriers. Steve Scott is concerned about lowering some forms of media – an online writer could point out that they have more clicks/views than some of the so-called legitimate media. Jay Pearce also sees problems in defining real journalists. Dahl also wonders how to separate who's "responsible" from who's not. Janice Collins sees differences in the agendas and objectives of journalists/bloggers. She says there's already a caste system to some extent, depending on what media you work for. She sees the big difference being our Code of Ethics – and the consequences that we face. She says it is possible to make a distinction between citizen journalists and professional journalists. Gee asks for a motion:

Motion asking Bob Roberts to relay to the Chicago Police Department's Public Affairs Officer that we are not in favor of a color-coded system – made by Michelle Mantel, seconded by Jay Pearce.

Discussion: Collins asks if we can find out how this is going to be used before we come to a conclusion. Boomer asks whether this came about from credentials requests coming from citizen journalists – is this happening? Fuller asks whether we should amend the motion to indicate that INBA would like to be part of the process of rewriting.

Vote on the motion – majority in favor, 3 opposed – Motion is approved.

Gee says we need to consider changing the by-laws in two ways:

Currently our by-laws do not explicitly extend membership to people who work primarily in online platforms. Gee says this does not require action right now, but we are moving in this direction. We would like to reach out to online journalists for two reasons – we think that most of us will be online journalists pretty soon if we're not already; and there are online journalists who are doing broadcast-like stuff.

Rachel from SIU says we need to open our doors as wide as possible in order to survive. Slatko Filipovic asks whether our membership is already open to newspaper journalists. Gee answers no.

Gee clarifies procedure – any change in the by-laws has to be approved by the board first, which could happen at the Summer Board Meeting – then the notice has to be published 30 days prior to the General Membership meeting -- then it could be voted on in the Fall. Ken Keller asks what is IPA's take on this? Is it possible that they're moving the same way and we might be intertwined? George Garies clarifies that IPA is an organization for newspapers, not individuals, so it's not an equal comparison.

Frank Imhoff notes that RTNDA is changing name to RTDNA and rolling out a new brand.

Roberts says if journalists are using the tools of the trade, he doesn't care what medium they come from.

Brian O'Keefe says the time has come to rename the organization – suggests the Illinois Association of Electronic Journalists. IAEJ? IADEJ?

Gee says we will put a survey on this topic in the next tuneIN.

Gee brings up a last item – the possibility of moving the Annual Meeting from Fall to Spring, which also means moving the elections. There will be no action on this today, but he expects it will be coming in the future.

Motion to adjourn – made by Jennifer Fuller, seconded by Melissa Hahn – Motion approved

1:43pm Meeting adjourned