

IRE Board Minutes
March 27, 2009 – 7:00 p.m. CDT
Columbia, Mo., at Upper Crust Bakery

In attendance: Cheryl Phillips, Alison Young, Lea Thompson, James Grimaldi, Jason Grotto, Stephen C. Miller, Marilyn Thompson, Mc Nelly Torres, Lawan Williams and Phil Williams. **Absent:** Manny Garcia, Lise Olsen and Duff Wilson.

Staff present: Mark Horvit, Jennifer Erickson, IRE Attorney David B. Smallman, former executive director Brant Houston.

1. **Call to Order (Phillips):** Phillips called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m. CDT. Phillips announced that there would be one change in the agenda: the Endowment Committee report would be moved to the Sat., March 28, meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Young made a motion to accept the Feb. 4 and March 11 minutes as submitted. Miller seconded. The motion was approved.
3. **Executive Director's Report (Horvit):** Horvit said that membership is down 15-16% from this time last year; it's become consistent to be in upper 3,000s.

Horvit said the CAR Conference drew approximately 210 attendees; the 2008 CAR Conference in Houston drew 285. He said that feedback from participants was uniformly great and speaks to the ongoing value of the training. Horvit estimated that 80% paid their own way and many took vacation time. He said that staff did a great job of planning events and sessions. Plans are underway for next year's CAR conference; locations under consideration are St. Louis and Atlanta.

Attendance at recent Watchdog workshops has gone up significantly: we had 60 in Wichita; 90 plus at Kent State and 25-30 are preregistered for an upcoming seminar in Salt Lake City. Preregistration for the upcoming ethnic media seminar in New York is at 70. Attendance for the 5-6 day CAR Boot Camps is down a bit, while attendance for the three-day seminars has gone up.

Horvit said the first e-book, a revision of the Crime Stats Beat Book, will hit soon; he hopes to have this available in June at the Baltimore conference.

To date, said Horvit, IRE has raised over \$100,000 for the two 2009 conferences combined. He said there is much potential to raise additional funding. Bloomberg recently approved a \$25,000 sponsorship; this is an increase over last year's sponsorship.

Horvit said that the Center for Public Integrity will feature IRE's Extra!Extra! Web page on their home Web site. This has potential to help expose our organization to more journalists. Another collaboration with potential is the Watchdog Workshop at USC that IRE will conduct in conjunction with Online News Association.

Horvit said plans are in place to bring Korean Press journalists to the Baltimore conference and to Columbia for training.

4. Committee Reports

- a. **Contest (Grimaldi):** Grimaldi reported that the committee decided to give one IRE medal this year, to WWL in New Orleans. He said IRE received 380 entries, which reflects about a 25% decrease from last year's entries. He said there were no categories where the committee didn't give an award.

Young asked if IRE should have an award for rolling investigations. Grimaldi noted that one quarter of the current winners are rolling investigations.

Board members brought up the issue of convergence; should this be a separate category? Grimaldi suggested addressing this in the future if it appears to be necessary.

Board members asked whether the applications should be electronic. Horvit said that SABEW and the Online News Association ask for electronic entries; he said he would discuss further with the Resource Center director.

Grimaldi said that all of the judges were great, came fully prepared and engaged in excellent debate and discussion.

- b. **Member Services (Young):** Young said that the committee did quite a bit of work researching ways to engage, retain and recruit members. She distributed a handout with details. She said the goal is to broaden IRE membership, bring IRE closer to current IRE members and remind them that IRE has much to offer. Young said this is a good committee that is extremely engaged. Houston said a marketing consultant would be helpful with best use of social network sites, etc.
- c. **Conference (P. Williams):** P. Williams said he is encouraged about participant numbers for the Baltimore conference in June. He said the conference will be very relevant to the realities of the day and will offer panels on rolling investigations, quick-turn investigations, investigating the financial mess, multimedia, partnerships that work, etc.

Horvit said that IRE was able to fund very few speakers during the CAR Conference this year; he's planning to uphold similar restrictions for Baltimore. Horvit also stressed that it is important to encourage people to stay in the conference hotel because of IRE's room block. L. Williams suggested that IRE apply for foundation funding for fellowships for lodging, since so many journalists cannot afford this.
- d. **Endowment (L. Thompson):** Report will take place during tomorrow's meeting.
- e. **Development Committee (Grotto):** Grotto said that the Challenge Fund for Journalism grant is the focus. We recently raised about \$10,000 for the fund in memory of longtime IRE member Holly Whisenhunt Stephen. Items underway include compiling lists of family foundations in various regions for review by board and development committee members; reviewing list of past donors who have not donated recently for approach; appealing to board and committee members to identify 5-10 people to approach personally. Grotto encouraged each board member to assist and contact staff with ideas.

Horvit added that the grant is very important to IRE. \$25,000 of the grant will support Web efforts and \$25,000 would go toward new software for membership, development and gift tracking.

5. **New Business:**

. **Report from Counsel (Smallman):**

i. **Arizona Project Movie:** Smallman said that negotiations are ongoing. He and Horvit met with Ed Delaney and Myrta Pulliam and talked through a negotiating strategy with a goal of protecting IRE's intellectual property rights. Smallman said he's hopeful to reach some sort of closure in the next few weeks.

ii. **Fifth Edition of Reporters Handbook:** Smallman said that he is working to retain electronic publication rights and foreign publication rights with the publisher.

a. **Korean Journalist (Horvit):** Horvit said that a Korean journalist was arrested recently because the government didn't like a report he did. Reporters Without Borders is working on this; Horvit wonders if IRE should make a statement. Torres said she would review the materials and make a recommendation to the board at tomorrow's meeting.

b. **Federal Aviation Administration issue (Houston):** Houston said that the FAA may amend its guidelines so that bird strikes would be self-reported by airports; this could affect related data that IRE collects and distributes via the Database Library. Houston recommended that IRE submit a comment on the change. L. Thompson moved that IRE make a comment on the proposed FAA rule that deals with bird strikes and further encourage IRE members to comment as well. P. Williams seconded the motion; all were in favor and the motion passed.

6. **Adjournment:** M. Thompson made a motion to adjourn; Torres seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m. CDT.