

2005 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF
THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

Fort Garry Hotel
Sunday, May 15, 2005

In attendance:

David McKie	Karen Pauls	Maria McClintock
Ron Friesen	Charles Bury	David Wiwchar
Hugo Rodrigues	Marc St. Aubain	Brook Jones
Paul Schneidereit	Datejie Green	Jennifer Fowler
Saleem Khan	Dallas Balance	Mary Agnes Welch
Michelle MacAfee	Philip Greisel	Rita Deverell
Gord Leathers	Magdalena Konieczna	Nancy Renwick
John Dickins (recording secretary)		Rob Cribb
Mike Gordon		

Call to order – 2:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Moved: Maria McClintock, second Brook Jones - passed

Approval of Minutes of 2004 AGM – Moved: Michelle MacAfee, second, Jennifer Fowler – No discussion, errors/omissions – passed

Business Arising: None

Presidents' report – Moved to receive: Maria McClintock, second: Hugo Rodrigues

President's report, Winnipeg AGM, May 15, 2005

The last year has been one of challenges, frustrations and significant accomplishments for the CAJ, on a number of levels. Thanks to the efforts of Jennifer Fowler and the membership committee membership has increased to around 1400 members. A number of initiatives have also been launched to improve communications between the board and its members. More work is being done on the website to ensure it's continually updated, and a newsletter for CAJ members is being revived.

2005 saw a new record in the number of entries in the CAJ's awards for investigative journalism. Michelle MacAfee has done a great job over the past few years expanding our categories to try to better reflect the types of journalism being practiced across Canada.

Professional development has gone exceedingly well. The October 2004 Charlottetown writers' symposium organized by Wayne Thibodeau and his team was a huge success and this 2005 Winnipeg conference has been an excellent event. A lot of hard work and planning went into the weekend and special thanks are in order to Ron Friesen, John Webb, Mary-Agnes Welch and Michelle MacAfee who have made this weekend the success that it has been.

Turning to advocacy, the past year has been extremely busy. Advocacy committee chair Robert Cribb of the Toronto Star, once again testified in government hearings and coordinated our involvement in court cases to speak out to protect journalists' vital interests. He and other board members were involved in the CAJ speaking out forcefully on a number of issues over the past year, including:

- Applauding a Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling that a secrecy order for a warrant used in a 2004 police raid on the office and home of Ottawa Citizen reporter Juliet O'Neill violated constitutionally guaranteed press freedom rights.
- Defending a Hamilton Spectator reporter who refused to divulge information to an Ontario court that could reveal the identity of a confidential source. The CAJ also criticized the judge's remarks about journalism in finding Ken Peters in contempt of court.
- Condemning an outrageous police sting by Edmonton officers aimed at a journalist who had written negative commentary about the force. The CAJ called for a public inquiry into what happened and why.
- Calling on Charlottetown's city council to stop interfering in the public's right to know by more fully opening committee meetings to citizens and the media.
- Urging CanWest News Service to drop use of a controversial contract for independent journalists that the CAJ considers a potential threat to the quality of Canadian journalism.
- Joining with Quebec legislators, journalists and journalism federations in calling for the federal cabinet to undertake a complete review of the CRTC decision allowing Corus Entertainment to gut the news department of French-Canada's main private radio chain.
- Renewing a call for the federal government to demand Iran allow an independent inquiry into the 2003 murder of 54-year-old Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who died while in Iranian custody in the summer of 2003.

Finally, the CAJ spent a great deal of time this past year on the issue of ethics and issuing statements critical of individual journalists. As most people know, the CAJ made a controversial decision in March of 2004 to issue a press release critical of an individual journalist. Discussions in the wake of that release led to the formation of an ad-hoc committee to look at the issues and consider comments solicited from our members. That committee filed an initial report with the board in September, recommending the formation of an ethics advisory committee. The board accepted that report and asked the same ad-hoc group to flesh out a suggested mandate for such a committee. The final report of the ad-hoc committee was recently received. It has been placed on our web site, circulated to all members and is being discussed at this conference. The board plans to

consider all these submissions at its next meeting, in hopes of moving forward to form such a committee in 2005. We believe this committee, which has counterparts in other journalistic organizations like the SPJ in the U.S., represents an important step forward for this organization.

This past February, the CAJ also issued a clarification of its original statement of March, 2004. The February release was, in essence, an acknowledgement, and apology for, mistakes that were made in the issuing of the original release. It was not, as some had sought, a full retraction. Although not all members may be satisfied with that decision, it is the feeling of a strong majority on the board that most CAJ members want to move on from the, at times, acrimonious debate over this issue.

In summary, I'd like to thank the members of the board, chapters, caucuses and many CAJ volunteers who have done so much work in the name of the love of their craft over the last year. I hope this report gives some sense of the breadth of those efforts. It is truly astounding what the CAJ, with one full-time staff, the hardworking, ubiquitous executive director, John Dickins, is able to accomplish, due in large part to the many, many hours of unpaid work done by our volunteers. It is, of course, an understatement to say that John helps quite a bit too, both as a staffer and a volunteer during what are supposed to be his off hours.

Moved acceptance of president's report: Michelle MacAfee, second: Ron Friesen

Saleem Khan stepped out of chair role to catch a flight – Charles Bury resumed chairing

Moved to receive Treasurer's Report: Moved adoption: Marc St. Aubain, second Jennifer Fowler – **Passed**.

Financial outlook is very solid- in a surplus of \$40,000 which is with payables and receivables. Our cash position is around \$29,000 which is strictly cash. Cash flow remains an issue at all times and we are always looking for more ways to save monies. The board has been very vigilant in terms of saving money relative to travel. Conference organizers have really helped us with finances too. We are in a good position for a number of reasons. Awards have brought in more monies. Operations loses, but it's offset by revenues from conferences and awards. It makes up for the shortfalls on the operations side. We've reduced the number of Media magazine issues from four to three issues and reduced some of the frills offered at conferences. The organizers have been better at accounting for meals not eaten to help us save monies. As for 2005 if we continue on our present course, we will remain in a surplus position. Anything can throw this off. One bad conference can throw the CAJ into debt which is why surpluses are important. Questions were taken from the floor.

Approval financial statements – No discussion required. Moved: Paul Schneiderei, Seconded Hugo Rodrigues **Passed**

Moved appointment of Alan Gutman, Chartered Accountant to continue as our accountant – Maria McClintock, Seconded David McKie. **Passed.**

Ratification of CAJ Board meeting motions – Only necessary if there are bylaw changes and therefore doesn't need to be included on the agenda.

Returning officer's Report:

Had an extraordinary election – 100 people voted, many by proxy. It was a paperwork exercise.

National Director Elections:

Jennifer Fowler 88 votes

Michelle MacAfee – 83 votes. These two will be in two-year terms

Hugo Rodrigues – 39 votes – This gives Hugo Rodrigues the one year term

Greg Locke was 21 votes. – No seat.

Moved adoption of returning officer's report and destroy the ballots – Moved by Brook Jones, seconded by Maria Cook.

Paul Schneidereit congratulated the winners.

New Business:

Hugo Rodrigues tabled a motion from the floor:

To retract all statements on the subject of Stevie Cameron and apologize to her. – **Moved** Greg Locke (via Hugo Rodrigues) (Proxy) and seconded by Brook Jones.

Hugo Rodrigues was asked to table this motion because of discussion from members and non-members. Aim in tabling this motion is so that those who couldn't comment before, or vote can have that opportunity at the AGM. Hugo Rodrigues stated he had a number of proxies. The feeling Hugo Rodrigues got this weekend, along with those who wanted the motion tabled is that regardless of the outcome, the membership will have had an opportunity to speak and will be willing to move on once this has been decided.

David Wiwchar spoke against the issue – What happened happened, and the CAJ should just move on and not fuel the fire any more. Marc St. Aubain also supported what David Wiwchar said. The timeliness is important. So many months have gone by, not sure what it would accomplish now. Michelle MacAfee took offence to the criticism that we don't listen and refuse to take action. Board has heard its members, has apologized for the word denounce and has started taking steps to avoid something like this again in the future. It was also pointed out that the board was thorough, went through all the court documents, unlike what was suggested on the list-serv. Board has tried to address it with

Ms. Cameron not just once, but many times. It was felt that this whole thing became way too personal.

Paul Schneidereit was asked what the board's statement is on this issue. Paul responded that in our February statement, in consultation with legal counsel, CAJ made its final statement on the issue which is that CAJ board regretted not contacting Ms. Cameron and regretted the word denounce, but there was no retraction, and the board stands behind its statement of principles.

Vote taken on the motion: Ayes(0) nays(14) persons present
Proxies Ayes (18) nays (50)

Motion defeated 64 to 18.

David Wiwchar suggested that this motion could have come out sooner. He was querying where it came from. It was noted that this motion came out of a discussion by many on the list. Hugo Rodrigues added context: Because the discussion was not ending on the list about a week ago, reading through all the discussion and much coming from non-members Hugo posted to list that if this was to ever come to a vote now was the time to do it. Hugo Rodrigues asked that those who felt strongly could vote on it today by placing proxy votes. Since getting to the hotel he's received a few proxies by fax. Jennifer Fowler wants people to know that people shouldn't feel that the listserv is the only way to communicate with the board. There was no method by which we could tell people that this motion was coming up because this motion was not presented early enough. We as a board communicated to people as best we could about the AGM and gave people a lot of information about it. This was not a board motion therefore it came from the floor. This was a motion not for the board to bring up to the AGM, it was up to those who wished the motion presented.

New Business:

Rob Cribb asked to make a motion on behalf of Fred Vallance-Jones

Move that the CAJ create a second list-serv restricted to members: Moved by Fred Vallance-Jones, seconded by Michelle MacAfee.

Discussion – Current list dominated by non-members, level of debate has deteriorated, a restricted list would have higher level of debate, even if smaller traffic. Many have probably left the list. Rob Cribb mentioned that there had been a motion some time ago to restrict current list to member but it was problematic. This motion is seen as a compromise. Can restrict current list to just members or set up a new list. Maria McClintock questioned how practical it is to have two lists. The spirit of the list serv is to encourage people, give them exposure to the CAJ and with the hope that one day they would join. Don't know any other professional organization that allows a free service for just anybody. But why should we do this given that it has not brought in the members, as our members are a minority. Maria McClintock in favor of restricting the current list.

John Dickins suggested that there's an expense in having the listserv and is the CAJ to pay for two lists? Charles Bury suggested that to go to two lists we would need more moderators. Charles wondered if there isn't a place for non-members to belong but only one place for users. The majority of list-servers are not CAJ members. The motion is straight forward, should a new list be created for members only. Hugo questioned process - The idea of a new list has financial implications therefore suggested that an amendment should be made regarding the financial aspect.

Friendly amendment made and accepted: Recommend that board consider the financial and membership implications of starting a second list for members only. – **Adopted.**

Marc Aubain suggested transplanting the current list to an MSN group that is free. Charles Bury noted there is an educators, freelancers, women in media list serv too.

More new business – none

Adjournment – Moved: Michelle MacAfee, seconded: Hugo Rodrigues