

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – MAY 9, 2004

### CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS – VANCOUVER

*Call to order made at 2:05 p.m.*

Present:

Stephen Ward, Anne Ying Der, Greg McIntyre, Monte Stewart, Stanley Tromp, Linda Yu (Recording sec.), Deborah Jones, Michelle MacAfee, Charles Bury, Ian Bailey, David McKie, Saleem Khan (Chair), Wendy Cox, Deborah Campbell, Paul Schneiderei, Robert Matas, Erica Johnson, John Dickins, Clive Court, Trudi Beutel, Julian Sher, Jennifer Fowler.

1. Motion to call to order - Moved by Erica Johnson; seconded by Michelle MacAfee PASSED
2. Motion to approve agenda – Moved by Erica Johnson; seconded by Steven Ward. No amendments made. PASSED
3. Old Business/Business arising from the Minutes: Nothing noted.

Acceptance moved by Michelle MacAfee; seconded by David McKie PASSED

4. Motion to receive the President's report – Moved by Trudi Beutel; seconded by Jennifer Fowler. PASSED

CAJ President presented his report to the AGM. Noted that the past year has been an eventful one. The CAJ spoke out forcefully after the murder of Zahra Kazemi and called on the Canadian government to demand justice by the Iranian government. What followed was a U.N. resolution, sponsored by Canada, rebuking Iran for its human rights records.

Condemned a raid by the RCMP on the home of Ottawa Citizen reporter Juliet O'Neill. The government stated a few days later that it would be reviewing the act under which the raid took place.

Also condemned the admission by police that they had impersonated journalists at the Ipperwash standoff. These actions undermined the credibility of real journalists, making it potentially more difficult and dangerous for real journalists to do their jobs.

The CAJ also, in January, welcomed a ruling by the Ontario Superior Court on the National Post case involving Andrew Mcintosh and confidential documents he received in the Grand Mere Hotel loan scandal involving former Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

The CAJ made a controversial decision to censure the actions of a high profile journalist for giving information to police to aid their investigation of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Paul Schneiderei acknowledged that there has been much discussion about this press release both for and against and it has been made clear that the CAJ needs to have a policy in place about criticizing fellow journalists, when and how to do it. A CAJ committee will be looking into this process and report

back to the CAJ board. Notification of the action to be taken by the board will be disseminated through the CAJ list and website.

Paul Schneidereit also informed those present that the new online registration form on the CAJ website, which can be used for both memberships and conferences has been very popular. That along with a winter membership drive aimed at non-members has increased the general numbers although firm numbers won't be available until June.

The next NWS will take place in Charlottetown in October. 2003 saw a very successful NWS hosted in Saskatoon.

Paul Schneidereit ended his report with a special thanks to everybody for their help in what has been an incredibly busy year.

Discussion arising from the president's report: Some felt that members should have a part in discussion when a controversial press release is to be issued i.e. Stevie Cameron. It was also noted that it is important for the CAJ to take a position on such an important issue in journalism. The concern noted was about the press release that Stevie Cameron was mentioned in. While some noted that participation from members is a good idea when drafting a press release of this nature, it is difficult to facilitate. But it was also noted that an elected board does not ultimately have to consult with members on a position that the CAJ decides to take. It was questioned why there was an expectation that the board consult members on one specific issue (i.e. Stevie Cameron) but not on any of the other issues. It was recommended that the CAJ needs to develop a policy/code of conduct about what behaviour is to be expected so that journalists know why they're being denounced.

It was pointed out that more discussion is needed on this issue and that the rest of the discussion can be deferred to new business. No objections noted.

6. Treasurer's Report: Motion to receive moved by Jennifer Fowler; seconded by Michelle MacAfee. With a new treasurer just coming into the position John Dickins presented the 2003 financial statements.

John Dickins stated that the CAJ is in pretty good shape, fiscally and the record keeping has been found to be in order and according to generally held accounting principles.

Cash and assets of the CAJ amounted to \$41,000 and minus expenses and accounts payable the net surplus for 2003 is around \$32,000. There were some cuts made to the budget a couple of years ago when difficulty in fundraising was anticipated. These cuts have helped to ensure that the CAJ keeps afloat financially. Board meeting reimbursements were reduced as was the number of speakers flown into conferences. Printing costs were also reduced as was one issue of Media magazine. John Dickins stated that while the financial statements show a good balance vigilance is still necessary in order that the CAJ does not have to take from the reserves in order to continue operating.

The operations side, which is the running of the office, is running a deficit and does so every year. This is why conference and NWS surpluses are so important.

7. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report – Moved by Erica Johnson; seconded by Julian Sher. PASSED

8. Approval of Auditor – Moved that the CAJ re-appoint Alan Gutman, Chartered Accountant as the CAJ's accounting firm. Moved by Deborah Jones; seconded by Jennifer Fowler. PASSED

9. Approval of Returning Officer's Report and election:

Charles Bury, CAJ Returning Officer, reported that the election process was held for the CAJ board of directors and all nominations have been received and that the names nominated have been acclaimed.

Paul Schneiderei – National Director (2-yr term)

Jennifer Fowler – National Director (1- yr term)

Trudi Beutel – National Director (2- yr term)

Acceptance moved by: Stephen Ward; seconded by Erica Johnson PASSED

10. New Business:

Charles Bury requested that the CAJ be permitted the option of sending out the notice and agenda for the AGM's via e-mail rather than 'snail mail'. The argument is that it is more efficient, reaches the same number of members as does 'snail mail' and that it is cost effective. No objections noted.

Julian Sher questioned whether the CAJ could team up with Carleton University in producing Media magazine, similar to Ryerson University. David McKie, who also sessional lectures at Carleton pointed out that Carleton says it is stretched financially. The other difficulty mentioned was one of cash/production. Even if funding were available the logistics involved could be extremely problematic.

Stephen Ward introduced the draft Code of Ethics paper that was worked on by a CAJ committee consisting of Robert Cribb, Leslie Peck, Julian Sher, and Stephen Ward. Stephen Ward stated that the policy would help CAJ officers when they speak out publicly so that they have some sort of standard practice to refer to – emphasizing that it is better to have something to refer to then nothing at all. Suggestions, changes or additions were asked for. None received.

Motion that the CAJ accept the Code of Ethics for Investigative Journalism – Moved by Stephen Ward; seconded by Charles Bury. PASSED.

Stanley Tromp put forward a motion to form a caucus on open government. No objections noted and it was pointed out that a motion is not necessary in order to form a caucus.

Charles Bury also noted that another caucus has been formed. The aboriginal caucus was formed during the CAJ conference weekend and Charles Bury welcomes anyone who would like to involve themselves in this caucus.

Discussion about the Stevie Cameron press release resumed. Concern was noted about the harsh condemnation of Stevie Cameron, and sympathies for her were expressed. It was noted that the issue was less cut and dried than the CAJ might have realized. CAJ president Paul Schneidereit explained that the reality of the situation was that it was a high-profile case, that it was important for the CAJ to take some sort of stance on the issue and not to indulge too far into the debate – further stated the importance of looking at a CAJ policy that can be referred to in the future. It was admitted that perhaps the wording came out harshly but the principle stated was important.

Another member pointed out that the CAJ can not afford to be seen as a policing agency and that individuals should not be condemned, only actions should be, which was the intent of the press release in question.

Paul Schneidereit reaffirmed the CAJ's commitment to looking at a policy to be used to govern the CAJ in criticizing other journalists, when and how to do it, and that members will be made aware of this the discussion.

11. Motion to adjourn – Moved by Charles Bury; seconded by Julian Sher

PASSED.

Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.