

# December 7, 2018 NINA Minutes

**Present:** Tammie Sloup, John Etheredge, Rick Nagel, Roger Ruthhart, Jim Fuller, Jay Dickerson, Eric Olson, Penny Wiegert, Margarita Mendoza, Tom Parisi

Sloup called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

## REVIEW OF MINUTES

September minutes were reviewed. Motion to approve from Dickerson, second by Wiegert. Unanimously approved.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

There was no Treasurer's Report submitted and Jim Slonoff was not present.

## EXECUTIVE SECRETARY REPORT

Executive Secretary Report was submitted by email by Jason Akst (see attached). Balance in the contest account in the report was discussed. Several options for balancing the accounts by combining categories in small categories to save on awards and trading out judging to save on paying judges were suggested. Ruthhart suggested and it was agreed that Akst and Hendricks (both absent) needed to be part of the discussion since it is the Comm. Department's contest and Hendricks is the administrator. Ruthhart further outlined that the contest has generally been self-supporting. NINA dues are used to fund scholarships and other events/training are also basically self-supporting. (More discussion under Contest Committee Report).

There was also some discussion about Akst's invitation to speak to his writing and editing classes. Nagel suggested maybe Education Committee could come up with a program to schedule someone from the board once a month.

Akst also noted that the fall Open Meetings Act training was a failure and should have been cancelled with 15 people in a room for 300. Ruthhart argued that it wasn't a failure for the 15 who attended and maybe the real failure was in not moving it to a smaller room. Seminars held down the hall from the Northern Star often have around 20 participants (give or take) and work fine in that room. He also noted that the original idea was to have NINA and the NIU Law School invite Lisa Madigan to speak as she was about to leave office... and the program transitioned into the presentation by the Public Access Counselor. That program was of less interest to journalists who deal with Open Meetings daily and perhaps should have been promoted to the general public.

Mendoza suggested a smaller room, serving food (which always attracts journalists) and inviting more people. Olson said that "star power" always draws. Wiegert suggested we go back to members and ask what training would be beneficial.

Ruthhart pointed out that part of the Membership Committee report would be to do a program beneficial to freelancers to help attract that group to NINA. Olson suggested a panel of people who have successfully transitioned out of necessity to explain what they learned along the way.

Motion to accept Executive Secretary's report was made by Dickerson, second by Weigert. Unanimous vote.

Ruthhart then said it was noted in the September minutes that there were still checks to be deposited. He added checks also haven't been deposited from the Awards Ceremony in October because his hasn't cleared. Etheredge said this has been an ongoing problem. Weigert said any time she has to ask for a check for NINA she gets a dirty look from her office because of the problem. It's especially concerning at the end of the year when businesses are trying to close out their books. Ruthhart asked incoming president Fuller to discuss the issue with treasurer Slonoff.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Sloup thanked everyone for their hard work during the year, especially committee chairs. She asked everyone to think about what they wanted to do next year since committee assignments by incoming president Fuller would be made in January. The Rhino was passed to Fuller. Report accepted on motion by Dickerson, second by Fuller and unanimous vote.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **TRAINING COMMITTEE**

Dickerson said we need to brainstorm ideas and ideally get 2 seminars on the schedule for 2019 – Spring and Fall. He promised a more substantive report at the January meeting. Sloup suggested everyone bring 2 ideas to the January meeting. Nagel suggested the committee meet before then and make a recommendation to the board in January.

### **OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

Chairman Nagel said he hoped to get a newsletter out by Dec. 28 that would include Fuller's vision statement for 2019 and a schedule for the year. He would like to train other committee members on how to produce newsletters and post to the website. He said the committee had good success in 2018. Ruthhart suggested it might be better to get the newsletter out before or after the holidays so it doesn't "get lost." Nagel said he didn't want to miss a month. Olson suggested a quick newsletter with just Fuller's message might fulfill that goal.

### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Chairman Etheredge noted that the committee will be asking for funding for high school scholarships at the January meeting. Last year \$1,800 was approved and the committee will request the same for 2019.

### **CONTEST COMMITTEE**

Chairman Ruthhart noted that for 2018 we made several changes in wording to classifications and it will probably take a second year to fully realize the impact and we should probably leave them alone. Rules were also changed to allow the contest coordinator (Hendricks) to combine daily and non-daily categories if there were less than 3 entries, but that didn't happen. Ruthhart reviewed the number of entries by category and noted about a dozen categories (all daily) with 1-2 entries and said awards for those categories are not a contest, they are participation awards. They also impact the number/expense of judges and plaques. Ruthhart also noted that the contest technically is run by the Communication

Department at NIU. We just advise but our advice is generally accepted. Ruthhart said he really didn't want to go too much further into the discussion without Hendricks and Akst present.

He noted that despite lack of entries in some daily categories, Northwest Herald, Lake County News Sun, Aurora Beacon News and Daily Southtown did enter for the first time in several years. Membership efforts may also impact entries in 2019.

Olson wondered if we should just preemptively combine categories. Nagel noted that individual entries were more popular than things like sections. He also questioned whether Sweepstakes Awards were still relevant. There was also brief discussion about possibly breaking categories by newsroom resources or web hits rather than Daily/ Non-Daily, noting some weeklies have a larger staff than some dailies.

Wiegert suggested we feature some of the winning stories and photos in our newsletter... talk to winning writers about how the story came to be, plus we always are looking for art for the newsletter. This would help promote the contest year around and also provide an opportunity for other members to steal ideas.

### **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Chairman Ruthhart reviewed the outline for promotion of NINA which was generally approved. He then noted that the "Potential Membership" list the committee had compiled was 53 properties and 123 mastheads...and there are probably a few more that could be added. He questioned whether we should attack all at once, knowing we can't possibly follow up with all of them, or select some strategically. Fuller suggested we stick with people we know and it was agreed we would first approach former members, the larger groups and others with which board members have a personal connection.

There was brief discussion about whether contact mailing should be sent by USPS or email. It was agreed that today a letter tends to stand out more and get opened while many emails in editors' inboxes get passed over. Wiegert made a motion to approve \$200 for envelopes/postage etc. for Membership Committee to initiate its plan. Olson seconded, approved unanimously.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS:** Roger Ruthhart, Tom Parisi, Margarita Mendoza, Eric Olson and Tammie Sloup were presented as the Class of 2022. The slate was unanimously approved.

**NEW BOARD MEMBER:** Tribune freelancer Gloria Casas was presented by Rick Nagel for election to the board and endorsed by several others who know and have worked with her. Nagel motion seconded by Fuller to elect her to the board, passed unanimously.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** The slate of new officers was presented. Fuller moved from first vice president to president; Mendoza moves up to first vice president and Dan Campana becomes second vice president. Jim Slonoff nominated as treasurer and Tammie Sloup remains on executive committee as past president/member at large. There were no other nominees from the floor. Motion by Nagel, seconded by Etheredge to elect the slate of officers. Unanimously approved.

**2019 MEETING DATES:** Jan. 18, March 15, June 14, Sept. 6, Oct. 24 (awards dinner) and Dec. 6 were approved as board meeting dates for 2019.

**AMEND BYLAWS:** NINA Bylaws provide for 4 standing committees: Training, Program, Outreach and Executive. Membership and Contest are currently ad hoc committees appointed at the will of the president. It was suggested that Training and Education could be combined (or education, which handles scholarships, be a subcommittee), and Membership and Contest be made standing committees. Two-thirds vote of board members present are need to amend bylaws. Ruthhart said that board members not present need to be able to weigh in on the issue before a vote is taken. Nagel suggested the Executive Committee put together an outline and circulate by email before the January meeting. Motion by Olson, seconded by Nagel to table the issue until January.

**NISPSA TOPICS:** Ruthhart said with the board's approval he was willing to again present programs at the convention of the Northern Illinois Student Press Assn Friday, April 12 at College of DuPage (high school journalists and advisors). Fuller will also participate as long as it doesn't conflict with junior college press assn. convention which is also in early April. Ruthhart said he usually does one program on News Literacy and a second program the varies from year to year and he is looking for potential topics. One suggested was "The Assault on Journalism and What We Are Doing About It." Ruthhart said another idea was just to allow students and advisors to ask a professional news people questions they always wanted to ask but couldn't. He encouraged anyone with other ideas to share them with him ASAP.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. on a motion by Olson, seconded by Nagel.

## Executive Secretary report, NINA meeting, Dec. 7, 2018

NINA event: OMA in September

- Despite reasonably widespread publicity and encouragement of NIU students, open meetings event in September should have been cancelled. There were 15 people in an auditorium that seats 300, and 5 of those 15 were the speaker and NINA people. The content was great, but the attendance was an embarrassment.

Need NINA representative(s) for journalism banquet

- Mark your calendars: the annual journalism awards banquet is Friday, April 26, 2019. I'm coordinating the banquet this year for the Dept. All NINA board members + guest are invited to attend free (plus free parking). Each year, the Dept. of Communication awards two small scholarships that have NINA's name on them.
- I have presented the scholarships on behalf of NINA the last couple years, but it would be better if a NINA board member or two would say a couple sentences about what NINA is, does, etc., and then present the award.
- **Alert:** said awards have been funded by the Dept., but I think Dept. is growing increasingly unwilling/unable to pay for these awards (I think \$500 each). Is NINA willing to pay for them or contribute? I need some direction on this by no later than February.

NINA account:

- NINA account balance is 1,556.96. All bills I'm aware of are paid. On Sept. 19, 2018, I deposited 9 checks totaling \$1,614 as 2018 contest fees. I also wrote one check for \$404.00 to the Illinois Press

Association for 2018 contest services. On Oct. 3, 2018, I wrote 13 checks totaling \$1,600 to pay NINA judges.

NINA board always welcome to speak to my classes:

- I would still welcome any NINA board members who would like to speak to my classes, on nearly any topic they choose. Open invitation. Spring classes are:
  - Basic News Writing, 10-10:50 a.m. and 11-11:50 a.m. MWF
  - Basic graphic design, 3-5:40 p.m. M and W
  - News editing, 6-8:40 p.m. T

Dept. of Communication

- We have 101 journalism majors/minors, about 550 COMS majors, and as of early fall, NIU enrollment dropped 4.8 percent over the same period as last year. Minimal recruitment is happening because there's no one and no money to do it. I'm doing some stuff in consultation with Undergraduate Director.
- Still need thoughts and prayers