

Asian American Journalists Association
SPRING 2008 ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
March 7-8, 2008
AAJA National Office, San Francisco

MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 2008

PRESENT:

Officers: Jeanne Mariani-Belding, national president; Jam Sardar, national vice president for broadcast; Janet Cho, national vice president for print; Cynthia Wang, national treasurer; Doris Truong, national secretary.

Board members: Abe Kwok, Arizona; Tomoko Hasaka, Asia; Richard Lui, Atlanta; Ameet Sachdev, Chicago; Paul Cheung, Florida; Stanley Lee, Hawaii; Caroline Paras, Los Angeles; Leezel Tanglao, Los Angeles; Frank Witsil, Michigan; Nancy Ngo, Minnesota; Tara Arden-Smith, New England; Bob Der, New York; Cheryl Tan, New York; Denise Nakano, Philadelphia; Jason Lim, Portland; Bobby Calvin, Sacramento; Don Chareunsky, San Diego; Matt Dunn, San Francisco / Bay Area; Ellen Lee, San Francisco / Bay Area; Sharon Chan, Seattle; Athima Chansanchai, Seattle; Suzanne Marta, Texas; Sherri Ly, Washington, D.C.; Lu'isa Mataele, at large.

Staff: Rene Astudillo, executive director; Janice Lee, deputy executive director; Antonio Salas, membership and chapter development manager; Albert Lee, professional programs coordinator; Nao Vang, student programs coordinator; Annabelle Udo, events and fundraising coordinator; Glenn Sugihara, accountant; Karen Sugihara, bookkeeper; Eddie Foronda, Web editor; Epee Rafanan, administrative assistant.

ABSENT: Ellen Sung, North Carolina.

1. Call to Order (Mariani-Belding)

Meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m. Pacific time.

2. Roll Call (Truong)

Roll call was conducted. Quorum was met.

3. Board Responsibilities and Expectations (Sachdev)

An overview is given for the benefit of new advisory members and as a refresher for returning members.

4. President's Report (Mariani-Belding)

- She met with Ken Moritsugu in Bangkok while traveling in Asia.

- She encouraged members to let her know about whether she can speak to owners/managers about diversity in this time of layoffs/buyouts, as she did at the Mercury News.
- She reviewed training opportunities with the New York Times and Gannett.
- Executive Director search update (conference call is scheduled with Astudillo and Sharon Prill on Monday, March 10, to discuss the responsibilities of new ED)
 - Astudillo adds that he has reached out to foundations that have funded AAJA programs to help with money for “executive transitions.”

5. **Treasurer’s Report** (Wang)

- In general, the organization and its investments are in stable financial health.
- AAJA’s conservative stance on the investments is reiterated.
- She encourages chapter contributions to programs such as J Camp, which has added as much as \$13,000.
- She suggests considering local special industries for fundraising.
- She is gathering chapter reports for taxes (seven chapters did not meet the March 1 deadline).
- She would like to know whether the chapter has the same input/output of cash (and what of the reserve is considered excessive); if the chapter were to stop fundraising, would it be able to sustain programming (if there’s so much money that the chapter could self-sustain for more than two years, perhaps consider giving some to National).
 - Mariani-Belding emphasizes investing in substantive programming for members because the money is supposed to be used (maybe consider pairing chapters that have set up successful events with those that have more difficulty); consider it as nurturing the membership – not “spending money.”
 - Tan mentions a multimedia workshop that attracted nonmembers interesting in such training.
- For transition of chapter treasurer: Make sure the underlying ways of working are in place (current signatories updated, etc.).
- G. Sugihara discusses financial statement handout.
 - Question from E. Lee about whether investments are affected by mortgage crisis; Sugihara says no because organization’s investment strategy is conservative.
 - Portfolio growth has increased by more than 40 percent since 1999 (when Astudillo became ED).

6. **Executive Director’s Report** (Astudillo)

- Video editing facilities in the National office
 - 19 applications from members for AT&T training (should be identifying in the next two weeks who will be trained).
 - Grant will help with student projects during convention.
 - Question from Tan about how to get the resources to people who cannot get to HQ; Astudillo says additional grants may be applied for to help with similar programs in other parts of the country.
- Career listings were projected to be \$10,000, but AAJA raised more than \$17,000 in 2007 (a much larger source of revenue than expected).

- Several people raise the point of asking companies for money. If cutbacks are mentioned as a reason for reducing sponsorship, Mariani-Belding suggested asking for personal donations.
- Mariani-Belding asks to be CC'd on reports from board reps to their chapters.
- Wang suggests offering fewer scholarships but at higher amounts, thus attracting better-quality applicants; require membership of recipients; require service to chapter.
- 150 AAJA members have signed up for UNITY as of early March; hoping for 1,000 members at least.
- In seeking individual donations, several people suggest targeting of specific individuals; Tan says New York has been combing programs of other Asian American gatherings for potential funders.
- Diversified investments are keeping AAJA well above the 6 percent goal of return for earnings per year.
- J. Lee provides overview of national programs and a reminder of what staff roles/responsibilities are.
 - Udo has rate sheets for advertising, etc.
 - Foronda requests member news from chapters for posting online.

7. **Call for Nominations** (Truong)

Nominations are accepted for large, medium and small chapter representatives and three at-large seats to the Governing Board. Elected are **Cheryl Tan-New York** (large), **Ameet Sachdev-Chicago** (medium), **Abe Kwok-Arizona** (small) and at large **Sharon Chan-Seattle**, **Don Chareunsky-San Diego** and **Matt Dunn-San Francisco/Bay Area**.

Board buddy assignments

- Tan: New York, Asia, Washington, D.C.
- Sachdev: Chicago, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota,
- Kwok: Arizona, Atlanta, New England, Texas
- Chan: Seattle, Hawaii, Portland
- Chareunsky: San Diego, North Carolina, Philadelphia
- Dunn: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento

8. **Convention Updates**

- **A. UNITY Report** (Astudillo)
 - Alliance partners focusing on encouraging membership to register. Goal is at least 7,000 attendees total. The programming committee has identified workshops, and a sampling is available online. Working on components such as where opening will be, as well as determining major plenaries and possible sessions with the leading presidential candidates. Sachdev says CNN/Time magazine will be hosting a forum for the candidates to deliver speeches Thursday, perhaps including Q&A. More updates after UNITY board meeting in early April. Alliance association staffs will have a retreat. Fundraising will be difficult this year: \$1.6 million raised out of \$2.4 million budgeted for sponsorships.
 - General AAJA programming at UNITY includes J Camp and ELP advanced session, plus AAJA gala. No luncheon, so the program for gala

will be packed. Usual silent auction stuff. Closing parties similar to 2004 with individual events. Not one designated hotel for the associations but AAJA gala and most AAJA events (board meetings, etc.) will be at the Hyatt Regency (115 E. Wacker). Sardar, who's on the programming committee, said the deadline for getting things set with organizers was March 1.

- Four AAJA-specific panels:
 - a. Survivors' Guide to Newsroom Politics
 - b. China Coverage – News Without Fear or Favor
 - c. Following the Money: The Issues in Covering China and India's Economies
 - d. How to Cover Arab Americans
- Wang says LA and SF are coordinating silent auction; Paras and Tanglao will work with chapters for contributions. Bigger-ticket items but fewer overall targeted. Cheryl Diaz-Meyer and Paul Sakuma working on more impactful photographs and possibly retiring perennials to increase their value (bigger images than 8x10). Each chapter is to contribute three things: a travel-related item (key tourist destination for the chapter – hotel and/or air tour package), one or two media organizations provide a lunch with a high-level manager or a historic front page, a sports item or some sort (autographed item or tickets). Arts critics should donate DVDs, CDs, books and other swag to allow lower-level bidders to buy. (Lorene Yue at Crain's to collect items; address coming.) Will be collecting items until early May. E. Lee suggests an online preview of the silent auction items. Tan recommends publicizing the auction during the convention to encourage other groups' members to bid.
- Sachdev says UNITY volunteers can be students or professionals; about 100 needed, maybe more, who will be divided by association (25 or so from AAJA) to help monitor sessions, with registration, shepherding speakers. One-day pass provided to the volunteers. (Contact Sachdev for more details.)
- B. 2009 Boston Convention (Smith)
 - Bulk of chapter update concerns convention. Nonmedia companies (casinos, financial institutions such as Fidelity, John Hancock; might not push as hard on pharmaceuticals) are going to be bulk of the sponsors. Astudillo says he has spoken extensively to co-chair Shirley Leung about acceptable funders. Working with local universities for J Camp (hoping to reduce financial outlay from AAJA to allow money to be diverted toward other parts of the convention). Realizing that the industry is changing, they are considering convention adjustments to cope with possible attendance barriers. Thinking about new things to offer as incentives. Mariani-Belding says to focus on fundraising to help absorb a potential loss and offer a mix of skills-building with other sessions. Tan suggests cross-marketing to other organizations' members because the value of the skills-building is different from other groups. Sachdev says we should better advertise the day registration rate. Ly says that for broadcasters, convention is one of the few times when they can meet-and-greet people for recruiting purposes, so she strongly supports keeping the job fair.

Chan suggests expanding chapter-level stipends to help members get to the convention.

- C. 2010 Los Angeles Convention (Paras)
 - Astudillo visited in October, and the Renaissance Hollywood will be the site. Freeway and Metro access are cited. Attractions and restaurants are nearby. National staff have surveyed board members and the chapter about where people would like to consider for opening ceremony: Paramount Studios, Griffith Observatory, Graumann's Chinese Theater. Also, Getty Center and the Japanese National Museum. All depends on budget. Will be the 20th national convention, so they would like some event at the Japanese museum.
- D. 2011 Convention Bids (Astudillo)
 - Timeline for bidding for the next open convention is reviewed. In three years, it will be the 25th annual convention. Whichever chapter wants to bid needs to submit a bid in July at summer 2008 meeting in Chicago. All guidelines are online. Recommends holding off on the signing of the contract with the host city because of the industry changes (instead of handling in fall '08), and maybe alliance partner conventions will look different than they do now. He recommends choosing host city / chapter this year but choosing the hotel / convention center in '09. It will be the 30th anniversary of AAJA. Cheung recommends that smaller chapters consider a bid because the process involves a lot of help from National and can help strengthen the chapter.

9. National Awards Committee Update (Tan)

Moving away from having a single chapter coordinate the judging. The committee is Tan, Dunn and Chansanchai. Need at least 18 for the final judging. Paras notes that LA received a large number of entries in a recent year. E. Lee says that a lower-profile core of judges could help winnow entries in the early stages.

10. Other Business

- A. Las Vegas Petition to Become a Chapter (Chareunsky)
 - He will meet with them to suggest that the contact people prepare for a presentation in Chicago. Sardar will meet with some of the petitioners at the upcoming RTNDA meeting. Marta suggests that creation of a formal recognition structure for groups that aren't considered chapters (as with students or smaller markets with significant flux in membership). Astudillo discusses issue of "student chapters," which has been a longtime challenge (lots of risks presented, including financial liability and maintenance of the organization's reputation as a professional organization).
- B. \$2 Million Endowment Campaign (Astudillo)
 - In the initial stages, we focused on big media companies, then individual donors through the challenge fund. We have continued outreach to APIs in the community, with limited success (they want to give the charity that's closest to their heart). Need new strategies to raise funds for the entire organization. Sardar recommends having high-profile journalists

sponsor fundraisers (Connie Chung, Lori Matsukawa). Mariani-Belding said to emphasize the mission of the organization and that board members need to be able to speak to what AAJA represents. Chan explains that Seattle's 20-year-old scholarship fund had been raised through usual means (approaching companies), but the importance of individuals should take priority. Seattle structured the ask similarly to college fundraising drive – asking most people for at least \$100 (many people gave \$50 or perhaps more than the minimum). Had one high-dollar donor offer money if the chapter was able to raise twice as much total through other individuals. Need a strong local treasurer. Individual volunteers need to ask friends/family; each person had set a goal. Most nonprofits raise 60 percent of total budget through individual donors; AAJA has 2 percent. Bulk of donors earn less than \$80,000 a year. Mariani-Belding says royalties from "Letters From the Editor" (Bill Woo) go to AAJA.

- C. National Officer Elections (Astudillo)
 - Deadline for filing is March 17. So far, no official interest in being president. Perhaps the Advisory Board would want to set up a policy to offer financial assistance to the president. Cheung suggests donating miles for officer travel.
 - ACTION NEEDED: Ly will research mileage donations to a nonprofit.
- D. Summer Advisory Board Meeting (Truong)
 - July 26 from 9 a.m. to noon, coinciding with chapter presidents' and treasurers' meetings.

11. Committee Assignments

Committees 2006-07

- Executive
- Finance*
- Policy: Issues*
- MediaWatch
- Marketing/Communications
- Membership & Chapter Development*
- National Programs*
- Broadcasters

*required by Strategic Plan

Committees 2008-09

- Executive
- Finance: Chan, Mariani-Belding, Wang
- Policy & Issues: Chansanchai, Ngo, Sachdev, Smith
- MediaWatch: Calvin, Nakano, Tan, Tanglao
- Marketing/Communications: Cheung, Cho, Lim
- Membership & Chapter Development: Dunn, S. Lee, Lui, Ly, Paras, Mataele, Sardar
- National Programs: Chareunsky, Hasaka, Marta, Truong
- NEW – Strategic Planning: Der, Kwok, E. Lee, Witsil

12. **Recess**

Paras moved to recess. Ly seconded. Motion passes.

SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2008

PRESENT:

Officers: Jeanne Mariani-Belding, national president; Jam Sardar, national vice president for broadcast; Janet Cho, national vice president for print; Cynthia Wang, national treasurer; Doris Truong, national secretary.

Board members: Abe Kwok, Arizona; Tomoko Hasaka, Asia; Richard Lui, Atlanta; Ameet Sachdev, Chicago; Paul Cheung, Florida; Stanley Lee, Hawaii; Caroline Paras, Los Angeles; Leezel Tanglao, Los Angeles; Frank Witsil, Michigan; Nancy Ngo, Minnesota; Tara Arden-Smith, New England; Bob Der, New York; Cheryl Tan, New York; Denise Nakano, Philadelphia; Jason Lim, Portland; Bobby Calvin, Sacramento; Don Chareunsky, San Diego; Matt Dunn, San Francisco / Bay Area; Ellen Lee, San Francisco / Bay Area; Sharon Chan, Seattle; Athima Chansanchai, Seattle; Suzanne Marta, Texas; Sherri Ly, Washington, D.C.; Lu'isa Mataele, at large.

Staff: Rene Astudillo, executive director; Janice Lee, deputy executive director; Antonio Salas, membership and chapter development manager.

ABSENT: Ellen Sung, North Carolina.

13. **Call to Order** (Mariani-Belding)

Meeting called to order at 9:17 Pacific time.

14. **Roll Call** (Truong)

Roll call conducted. Quorum was met.

15. **Committee Breakouts**

(Committee chairs are listed first; governing board members are underlined.)

- Finance: Chan, Mariani-Belding, Wang
- Marketing / Communications: Cho, Cheung, Lim
- Policy & Issues: Chansanchai, Ngo, Sachdev, Smith
- MediaWatch: Tan (and board member emerita Maya), Calvin, Nakano, Tanglao
- National Programs: Marta, Chareunsky, Hasaka, Truong
- Membership & Chapter Development: Dunn and Sardar, S. Lee, Lui, Ly, Mataele, Paras
- Strategic Planning: Kwok, Der, E. Lee, Witsil

Finance

- The stalled Endowment Campaign is a main concern, and the committee would like to capitalize on individual giving to leave the endowment in better shape by the end of '08. A campaign to be unveiled at UNITY (tentatively called "One to

One”) is suggested, with the goal of raising at least \$200,000 each year for the next four years. Endowment envelopes are suggested for the gala and silent auction. Board members suggest having stickers to mark donors, posters for donors to sign, jugs to collect loose change and a widget to show progress toward the \$2 million goal. Astudillo reminds us that some elements are already in place, including an online graph charting progress.

- ACTION NEEDED: By March 14, Mariani-Belding wants each chapter to designate a fundraising chair to participate in mandatory training at UNITY.

Marketing

- The committee recommends a streamlined strategy to consolidate marketing of public service offerings (e.g., MediaWatch, media access, J Camp). A regularly updated calendar with each chapter’s events is suggested, too. A style guide will be prepared to show chapters how to properly use the AAJA logo, as well as standardization in the online presence (e.g., Facebook pages). Consistent branding of programs is a goal. Dateline will continue to be published.
- Cheung will be the “digital czar.”

Policy & Issues

- The travel policy for the executive board will be vetted, with the possibility of using mileage programs and hotel stays to help. The committee will consider the necessity of adding language to the bylaws about regularly reviewing dues increases. The language defining who is qualified to be national president will also be reviewed (Mariani-Belding suggests that the concept of separate VPs might need revisiting as well).
- ACTION NEEDED: Chansanchai to check with former chair Maya Blackmun about anything that needs to be considered regularly.

MediaWatch

- The committee seeks to be more proactive than reactive and will be reviewing newsroom policies. MW would like alerts to stories or programs that are particularly *good* (well balanced, treating an issue of sensitivity properly, etc.): mediawatch@aja.org (reaches Tan and someone on staff). Angry Asian Man and other blogs will be added to advisory blasts to expand the committee’s reach.
- ACTION NEEDED: Each chapter needs to designate a representative to be on the listserv.

National Programs

- The committee, required by bylaws, has amorphous duties. Board members suggest finding out whether other affinity groups have signature programs (i.e., ELP) and figure out how to harness those for our members; breaking-news teleconferences are also mentioned, a la SABEW. Astudillo says the committee should focus on the bigger picture. For instance: Should scholarship funds be reallocated to help with stipends for professional skills-building?

Membership

- The committee would like to consider the issue of dues more holistically and make sure members know what they're getting for each dollar. Membership churn is a concern, and ideas are sought for reducing the 40 percent of non-renewals. Suggestions include having dues automatically charged on a credit card and tying the cost of membership to a person's years of experience.
- ACTION NEEDED: Proposal on dues increase to be drafted before summer 2008 meeting, with Governing Board vote in July.

Strategic Planning

- The committee wants to think globally about the organization, making sure AAJA is relevant and remains so five years from now and beyond. There is discussion of regional conventions instead of national conventions (changing technology alters the definition of geography). The committee would like ongoing surveys of members, finding out what they think AAJA is and what the organization can provide. The possibility of a more corporate business model is mentioned. Board members suggest letting associate members nominate someone to sit in on meetings and a different category for nonjournalist members (particularly those who have changed careers) to encourage them to be active in AAJA.

16. **Announcements**

- April 5: East Coast mini-conference at Temple University
- April 26: all-day journalism workshop at University of Houston
- May 8: Bay Area's East-West Eats
- Oct. 17: LA Trivia Bowl (larger venue this year to avoid turning away money)
- Scrabble fundraiser in NY (hoping for Scrabble-off with Philadelphia and D.C., which have also had Scrabble tournaments)
- Seattle and Atlanta (worked with Florida and North Carolina) doing multimedia training
- Wang says 100 percent of the board pledged to AAJA during the spring 2008 meeting.
- ACTION NEEDED: Salas wants headshots of board members.

17. **Adjournment**

Ly motioned to adjourn; Sardar seconded. Meeting adjourned.

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Board members: Sharon Chan, Seattle; Don Chareunsky, San Diego; Matt Dunn, San Francisco; Abe Kwok, Arizona; Ameet Sachdev, Chicago; Cheryl Tan, New York.

Staff: Rene Astudillo, executive director; Janice Lee, deputy executive director; Antonio Salas, membership and chapter development manager.

ABSENT: None.

1. **Call to Order** (Mariani-Belding)

Meeting called to order at 1:38 p.m. Pacific time.

2. **Roll Call** (Truong)

Roll call conducted. Quorum was met.

3. **Approval of Previous Minutes** (Mariani-Belding)

Kwok moved to approve the 2007 Fall Governing Board Minutes as reported, including an amendment about the 2008 budget. Sardar seconded. Motion passes.

4. **New Business**

Several people proposed having the fall 2008 Governing Board meeting in Las Vegas with the target weekend being mid-November or early December. It was mentioned that the location would provide an opportunity for Board to meet with the city's chapter petitioners. The meeting dates will be decided during the summer 2008 meeting.

5. **Executive Session**

Cho moved to enter executive session to discuss the Executive Director search timeline. Wang seconded. Motion passes.

Wang moved to exit executive session. Sardar seconded. Motion passes.

6. **Other New Business**

The Board brainstormed on possible candidates for open positions among the Executive Officers.

7. **Adjournment**

Chan motioned to adjourn. Dunn seconded. Motion passes.

ADDENDUM TO SPRING 2008 AAJA GOVERNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES

1. Online Votes Taken

A. Credit Card Authorization

Astudillo calls for a board resolution authorizing the deputy executive director to apply for AAJA corporate cards to replace accounts opened by him on behalf of AAJA, which he will cancel upon leaving the organization. The credit cards are used to pay for convention bills, travel, office supplies and other authorized expenses.

Truong moved to authorize J. Lee to submit applications and enter into credit card agreements on behalf of AAJA for designated expenses. Sachdev seconded. Motion passes.

B. Project Appleseed Endorsement

Alan Miller, executive director of the Tides Center, requests AAJA's endorsement of Project Appleseed, a program working to educate secondary school students to be savvy information consumers. Active and retired journalists are being encouraged to help in the program. ASNE endorses the Knight Foundation-funded program, and Miller is seeking the backing of the UNITY partners.

Truong moved to endorse the mission of Project Appleseed, whose goals are deemed in keeping with AAJA's organizational objectives. Sachdev seconded. Motion passes.

Update: The program has since been renamed the News Literacy Project.