



Text of an email letter sent to each member-or-contact 4/8/2016

The officers and trustees of our association-foundation continue to wrestle with how best to sustain the organization's missions and identity, in times of great change in media work and stress on its people.

Those changes have greatly reduced options for how volunteers can sustain programming other than the Minority Writers Seminar, which is endowed and is continuing apace, and our web presence.

During an April 7 telephone conference call meeting, the board had a vigorous and constructive discussion of four proposals by three organizations for management or merger. We did not intend to make a decision, except to propose further questions for negotiation.

In short, the proposals are:

ASNE merger: The American Society of News Editors would accept all current AOJ members; commit to continue the Minority Writers Seminar for the life of the endowment; continue State Department briefings for review in 5 years; seat an AOJ representative on the ASNE board 2 years and then encourage running for election. Dues are \$95 a year in 2017. ASNE conducts several programs for leaders and future leaders in journalism. HQ is on campus at Columbia, Missouri.

SPJ merger: The Society of Professional Journalists would accept all current AOJ members as members; place the MWS endowment in a restricted SDX Foundation account to continue MWS for the life of the endowment; State Department and other programs as proposed and organized by an AOJ "community of interest" board would use AOJ's unrestricted funds paid out from SDX-F. Dues are \$75 for most members. Big-tent SPJ advocates for journalism in numerous ways. HQ in Indianapolis.

Poynter management-plus: The Poynter Institute for Media Studies would extend our 18-month management services contract beyond June to allow for orderly transitions and would negotiate taking on a larger role. AOJ would have to remain a functioning 501c3 corporation; our dues are now \$75 for most members. We already have agreement for MWS to be held at Poynter again this year. Poynter conducts extensive educational programs for journalists. HQ St. Petersburg, Florida.

SPJ management: SPJ also offered association-management services such as it already provides for two journalism groups, at \$45 an hour. AOJ would have to remain a functioning 501c3 corporation and arrange programming.

The industry changes limiting our volunteer activities and the huge time demands of organizing Symposium had led the board Jan. 12 to decide to forgo, for now, planning a conference this year.

Both ASNE and SPJ stated ways AOJ members could attend their fall conventions at discount, and offered differing ways for us to generate some opinion-specific programming there.

We expect to converse again before acting at the May 15 meeting in Washington DC.

Please contact AOJ President David D. Haynes with comments or questions:

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