

Region 4 Board Meeting
January 18, 2013
Pokagon State Park, Nature Center

In Attendance: Becky Parkin, Jason Neumann, Nora Sindelar, Marquita Manley, Jill Vance, Tim Krynak, Maureen Stine, Amy Gregg, Jenn Wright, Renell Simrau, Jennifer McDowell, Julie Champion, Dorothy McLeer, Lynnanne Fager

News from the National Office (Tim Krynak)

- The search for a new director is in progress. There are 10 qualified candidates who have applied. Interviews will be in February and they expect to make an offer in March.
- Strong push for utilization of social media
- National website has been down due to a malware attack. A new website design is almost complete, so the website will probably remain disabled until the new design is ready.
- National is still operating off a line of credit. We owed \$200,000 last year that was fully paid off in December. Overall, the debt level has been decreasing each year.
- We still owe \$300,000 on the building, with a balloon payment going into effect in 2015. Our options are to pay off the debt in full, refinance, or sell the building before 2015. The building has appraised for over \$1 million.
- The 2013 International Conference will be in Sweden.
- IMIS software is almost ready to debut.
- New bylaws have been passed with alter the format of the Board (including Regional representation). There is no longer a Region/Section Council; a task force is working on a plan to ensure that these entities will continue to advise the Board.
- Regions and Sections are being encouraged to look at cross-training opportunities for their members (partnerships with other Regions/Sections).
- The 2012 NIW was very small, only about 550 attendees. The format for future NIWs is being shortened by one day (mobile workshops will become a pre-conference option) to encourage better NIW attendance.

RIWs (Jenn Wright)

- 2013 in Perth, Ontario
 - o Only 31 people are currently registered.
 - o \$6000 worth in sponsorship money will cover all auxiliary costs beyond individual registration fees.
 - o Early registration deadline is being extended to January 24.
 - o Only 15 people are currently registered for the bus. Even if the minimum of 25 take the bus, Region 4 will still have to subsidize the cost to the tune of \$1500.
 - o There was a consensus among the group that the workshop should go on – even if we take a financial loss.
- 2014 in Detroit, Michigan
 - o Chairs are Dorothy McLeer and Kevin Arnold
 - o They are still working to nail down a hotel site.
 - o Theme will be “A Watershed Event.”
 - o There will be a strong focus on cultural/historical interpretation.
- 2015 in Indiana: Jenn is looking a workshop chair.
- 2016 in Ohio: Rich Niccum may be interested in chairing.
- 2017 in Ontario

- 2018 in Michigan: We will be looking for a site in the upper peninsula.

Budget Review and Discussion (Entire Group)

- Dorothy explained that the 2014 workshop will likely be a bit pricier than normal. She suggested adjusting the amount of the RIW grants to ensure that they will cover the entire registration for the winners. The group approved of this, and decided it would be a good idea to review the individual award amounts each year based on the upcoming RIW (keep the total amount of money that is awarded the same, but may divide it up amongst less or more people)
 - o MOTION (Jenn): Change the 2014 RIW Grants from six \$250 grants to five \$300 grants. SECONDED (Jill). APPROVED (Tim, Jenn, Jill)
- There was a discussion about looking into the possibility of offering web-based training sessions to our members. Jason will check with the National Office to see if they already have webinar software that we can use. If not, a service like Go To Meeting may be an option (\$49/month).
- Everyone agreed that we need to get our interpretive workshop booklets into a digital format for ease of future printing; they currently exist as hard copies only. Jill is checking with Jules Erwin to see if she will volunteer to do the necessary graphic design work. Marquita noted that our most popular titles are out of stock, and the less popular titles aren't moving; she plans to offer a special deal in 2014 to try to liquidate the existing stock. We also need to get these booklets listed for sale on the main NAI website store.
- Future RIW committees are encouraged to find local advertisers to buy space in their RIW booklet (the version that is printed for distribution at the conference). Tim will look into a recommended pricing structure for these ads.
- A vote by the Executive Committee on the budget was delayed so that Susie Edwards (Treasurer) has the opportunity to view the revised numbers.

Archives Committee (Renell Simrau)

- Another box of stuff has been received from Carl Cassavechia.
- Keep sending stuff in to be archived! Photos are particularly sought after.
- Renell is exploring the possibility of increasing the online searchability of items in the archive.

Awards Committee (Nora Sindelar)

- There are 9 award categories. Deadline for nominations was at the end of November. The committee received 10 nominations. There were no nominations in 3 of the categories.
- Nora will get the list of past award winners added to the website.
- Pete Stobie will run the awards ceremony at the RIW in Perth.

Interpretive Project Grants Committee (Jennifer McDowell)

- Applications are now due by August 1 to ensure that awards are distributed before the end of the calendar year.
- In 2012, two grant applications were awarded in full and two were awarded in part.
- The committee is now issuing press releases to recognize the winners.
- Jeanette Henderson has withdrawn from the committee.
- They are looking for a new committee member from Indiana.
- Jennifer has some re-writes to make on the application text.
- Applications for 2013 grants will be available beginning March 1.

Membership Committee (Becky Parkin)

- 4 complimentary memberships were awarded in 2012.

- Becky questioned whether we should continue to award complimentary memberships on a first-come first-served basis, or if it should become a more competitive process. It was decided that nominations should be accompanied by a paragraph explaining why the nominee is deserving of a complimentary membership.
- The committee may move the deadline for complimentary membership nominations to later in the year (summer as opposed to March).
- One of the committee members encouraged the recognition of NAI members who are volunteers in the field of interpretation (rather than paid staff).

Communications Committee (Lynnanne Fager)

- From now on the newsletter will be formatted for Constant Contact only. A PDF will be generated from that email for posting on the website, rather than formatting a separate version just for the web (which took an extra 2 days of work).

Scholarships and Grants Committee (Maureen Stine)

- They are revisiting the rubrics for applications. A “tie-breaker” question, “Have you received an grant in the past to attend an RIW?,” may be added to the application.
- To help eliminate some people’s concern that the awards are a “popularity contest,” the committee chair has begun removing names from the applications before they are forwarded on to the judges for review.
- RIW grants were awarded to six people this year.

Student Involvement Committee (Amy Gregg)

- They are trying to encourage more students to get involved, particularly at the RIWs.
- \$100 stipends are available for students who present at an RIW. Even so, it has been a struggle to find students who are willing and able to present. One student is scheduled to present at the RIW in Perth.
- The committee will consider holding a sort of mini workshop at the end of a semester to bring students together to make presentations.

Training Committee (Jason Neumann)

- Jason will be investigating alternative ways to offer training to our members.
- The committee will look into the possibility of finding sponsors to offset the cost of trainings.
- They will explore how presentations by members at interpretive sites might be made available online for other members to watch.

Ways and Means Committee (Marquita Manley)

- Marquita is stepping down from the chair position but will remain on the committee. A replacement chair will need to be found. Marquita suggests that the new chair be someone who can bring new ways of thinking and an awareness of technology options to the committee.
- Interpretive booklets (select titles), the music CD, pens, and t-shirts are still in stock.
- The terms of most committee members expired at the end of 2012, so this committee will need to be repopulated with new people.
- Sales of the music CD have already recovered our monetary investment in producing it.
- Interpretative booklets are still selling to Acorn Naturalist.
- We need to consider adding items for sale that have a broader interest value (both outside of our Region and outside of NAI).
- We desperately need to get our items listed for sale in NAI’s online store.

Volunteer Chair: Not present, no report.

Strategic Planning Committee (Julie Champion)

- A new, stream-lined strategic plan was completed yesterday under the guidance of Vicki Basman (thanks, Vicki!).
- When Tim's term as Executive Director is up at the end of this year, he will be taking over for Julie Champion as the chair of this committee.
- Jill will send the strategic plan to Rich Niccum to post on the website.

2013 Board Conference Calls

- Tuesday, April 23 at 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 23 at 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 22 at 1:00 p.m.

2014 Board Meeting

- Date will probably be January 16-17 or January 23-24. The decision will be up to the whomever is elected as the new Executive Director.