**American Forensics Association Business Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 18, 2015, 4:00 – 7:00 pm**

**Lambada B, Rio Conference Center**

**Las Vegas, NV**

Meeting called to order at 4:01 PM p.m. by Mike Janas.

MJ: Welcome. Most of the discussions will come out of the committees.

It is an interesting time of forensics in the US. It’s hard to know where we are headed, but when you look at pieces together it looks brighter. We have some pieces to make it brighter.

Harry Weger from *Argumentation & Advocacy* to give a report.

HW: Greetings, I submitted a report earlier in the day. 146 manuscripts, but does not include those in the special issue. Twenty-three essays have been published. Two essays were invited responses (not included), 6 of those were rejected not a fit for the journal. 66 “revise and resubmit;” a 17% acceptance rate and 27% rejection rate. Issue number 1 has gone to the printer; the fall issue will be out in December. Winter issue will have a special forum on debate and forensics. There will be an anniversary issue on visual argumentation. I’ve filled mine [my journals] but still I am still accepting and sending [manuscripts] for review. Once we have the new editor, I will stay on for the ones still under review.

MJ: Any questions?

Stephen Croucher: Publications committee:

We met today. We have 3 items on the agenda. Editorial report from *Argumentation & Advocacy*; a new call for it, we received 1 applicant. We looked it over and have a good applicant Catherine L. Langford from *Texas. Comm Law Review* who comes highly recommended. It is the recommendation of the committee that she be supported by AFA to take over *Argumentation & Advocacy*.

MJ: I’m going to talk to her tomorrow to offer her the opportunity to become the next editor.

SC: There is a potential move to Taylor & Francis Routledge. We strongly support the idea. Harry and I can field questions for *Argumentation & Advocacy*. It is advantageous for the journal and financially critical to AFA.

MJ: Big news, I suppose, is the movement to T&F along the lines of other NCA journals. Rarely do we go to it directly; you may go to it through Ebsco. In the past, we have published it [our journal] on our own. This journal has been an independent thing that AFA came up with and invested time in. It has been labor extensive. Members created . . . the submission and the marketing is due to people in the association. It produces a nice journal but not a wide reach. We are interested in T&F for couple of reasons:

1. It is easier for persons to edit (otherwise, it is like the cowboy wild west) labor intensive and costly. This move relieves us of the cost. It is predictable to predict to cost. We don't have a good system for disciplining people. Trust me, T&F are good at it and they take care of the liability. It is a T&F process; not damage to our legal budget. Our hope rest in the former debaters and IEers. Our independent goes down but we get a better product and release forms in liability. Any questions, thoughts?

That went way better than I thought. They do promise us editorial independence.

1. Jim will talk about the budget.

Jim Pratt: I will start with T & F thing. One document is the analysis of the offer. I embedded some comments within the text. The documents are still marked confidential. Please do not share outside the association. I looked at final implications; such as what costs /income we will lose and so forth. I will start at the top: they assume all risk and responsibility for to print issues – we lose the incomes items for subscription agencies. We lose $7,424, but offset by the expense item of the publication which comes to $23,204 – they assume entire cost of the production. They include the cost of distribution and fulfillment. If they don’t get their issue they fulfill and request. However, Jan 1st is the middle of our journal year. We will publish through 53.2 and they will take over with 53 number 2. When you see the budget, I propose all the expense and income basis for the first half of the year. This assumes 400 individual members – they [T&F] will provide the print issue and online access without charging us (and cost is included in production cost). Here is the part that is tricky. I’m not sure I can pin down. It will market the journal at a higher rate of $326 per year. The cost they propose is not that far out of line, we have been selling it for $85. They will take our list that is 200 subscribers and approach them to re-subscribe at a higher amount, and solicit their cohort and libraries of the world. It will then hopefully make the journal available throughout the world. It will be better for you professionally and better for the prestige of organization; and money, I hope, though there are not enough figures to project it. It will receive a 23% once it reaches $30,000 Dollars. They propose a threshold. If reached and succeeded, they will pay beyond the threshold. If not, it’s there’s no problem. It is a win-win for us. We would fund, customize and implement the peer review system at their expense. We [currently] provide $7,000 in support on an annual basis. That is good because we do not provide that support [in editing, currently] but eliminate the $1500 we gave last year. The math comes down to a positive number 173 and 93 cents. Better than what we have now. I think it is a good deal finance.

Current finance statement: there are two corrections since I am mathematically challenged – 2nd page, line 89 average issue cost is $5800.

In the other area, I am chronologically challenged, the reception was in Chicago last year; what we have as an accurate estimate.

Bottom line: we overspent in the range of $16,000 due to a slightly declining membership base, and increasing costs for *A&A* and so forth. See membership total on right side. There is a good news/bad news situation worth noting. We have 183 life members which is about half, a good thing, because it means people invested in the organization, on the other hand from a financial standpoint, Al Johnson advised me and said we only get a 7% return, but we didn't get anywhere near that. Because of a membership base that is much smaller, we have not earned as much in memberships. Ballot income is decreasing. Note that royalties are mostly from Ebsco after merger from T&F but the money goes to T&F. We lose the income item. Category of non-income items are dues for the other 8 organizations and we remit it at less than a 3% charge. Expenses include an accountant that charges the same amount and keeps us from jail because of a complex tax situation (we are above $54,000 – with NDT and NIET, we are at $183,000 and we have lots of rigmarole we have to go through. The accountant is worth their weight in gold.) I am in the process of reducing fees. I am kicking and screaming into the 21st century. Postage will go down, if try to do everything by email, similar to printing charges, they are not very high. You pay to print them. I am working with the web guy. The goal is to move the CC [credit card] processing to Paypal. This is much more advantageous than the charge structure of 2.7% for each swipe and put on the smart phone. It is also, as you know, on the website. That is the Paypal function as well, Charges are less than current provider. The mounts for bank charges are less than that amount this time next year. We don't print stationary anymore. I used Delta airline points [to attend the conference]. The President’s office includes last year’s reception which was the most expensive. They charged a lot of money. This year is comparable and significantly less costly and less expensive than Chicago. National support for tournament remains. The directory only costs us $300 per year. I update it with new membership and renewals. If you don't know how to get on, send me an email, and I will tell you the secrets. Other organizations haven't been asking for it [their money in the account].

On line 140 - 141, 142, and 143, are specifically AFA resources. Looking at it, we have around $18,000 in the bank right now. We are not broke but we can’t keep going like this. I think that is all I have to say. Any questions about the financial report?

ML: Does AFA have insurance for the directors?

JP: No. We have talked about it, [but not available]. Other questions.

JP: The proposed budget is a balanced document. T&F is not included in this. It is a conservative document. As money comes in, it will be even better. The membership estimate is at the same level. Ballot income is a little more, interest is what we have been getting. Royalties and permission are half of what we are paying for the first half of the year. The executive budget is pretty significant. *A&A* have budgeted for half of year before T&F takes over. The other expenses are normal ones, $27,000 - unbudgeted reserve of $75. Any questions?

Approve for acceptance.

James Dimock: Approve.

Ben Voth: Second.

MJ: All in favor.

MJ: By acclamation.

[QUESTION regarding amount for journal]

$21,000 US dollars (or 30 subscriptions)

Croucher: not that unexpected.

Ben Voth: Talk and make a proposal.

BV: Jim stole my thunder. I want to make a motion for Larry Schnoor to take limited funds and play at the poker table. We are joking. We want to repeat and recommend both the past budget and future one. I agree to create a letter directed at lifetime members –membership is a really good deal. If you go 10 years in the organization we want to invite you to make a contribution and to increase donations for AFA. We are also going to send a letter to general members to print out benefits of AFA members. We want increasing, not declining memberships. We passed a motion to increase for the coming year – past budget can be compared (6-12 lines on fin statement) what we recommend is 1 year: $85; 2 year: $150; dues for lifetime: $750; dues for institutions: $76.50 to 100; dues for students: $25. It was approved unanimously for July 1st for those to renew before July 1st. We are asking for a motion for approval from membership and to stay current with general and professional charges. We also reviewed the T&F proposal and voted unanimously to endorse it. I guess the only business is to agree to the fee increases so we offer it to a motion.

LS: Second

All in Favor?

SC: Opposed

BV: Thanks to the other folks.

MJ: Best financial committee in a decade. Next we’ll hear from G. Stables

Conference is messed up and see that your name is not in there and this has been a terrible awful affair.

GS: Start with thanks to anyone who does the convention planning. I have been involved for the last year through NCA. Their approach is a process that begin in April/May. To frame the issue, I will read from an email. The affiliate expired. The arrangement no longer stipulates the space needs. We reserved a nominal fee for 3 hours, and meetings are not included in the convention program. NCA agreement – is standard protocol (through 2019). As the size of conference has grown, it is hard to plan for all the components. We have obligations. A link to website disseminates 2 a year and provides information and ensures parties. We are registered for the convention. What you will find but what I’ve reviewed. There are no obligations about the hotel. Our discussion about the $1200 cost is to move next year to a model done in the past. We intend to adhere to 3 obligations, accept AFA panels and actively to stay at a hotel block we will negotiate. We have explored Experienet. Our liaison is a former IE competitor, and their business model is to work with the hotels within budget. Hotels cannot increase our room cost; a conference planner will set the level lower than the NCA rate, and make the space available for free. We need 6 meeting blocks, but most accommodations can be provided. Smaller properties have the meeting space. This is our interest in looking forward; it will give flexibility with the Wed schedule, given the meeting for NIET. We hope to begin at 1 pm and then have an abbreviated schedule and roll into secondary slots, but could start the reception at same time [as in the past]. We don’t need the additional time. So the plan is to move away from Wed. As we heard, we cannot schedule within programming environment so we cannot guarantee that they won’t conflict until after the schedules are released. The last part; our interest is to have the conversation on how to adhere to NCA and still have folks staying at a different hotel. We welcome the conversation. We focus the cheaper rates and comps back to the organization. We want to show we have a number of members as a baseline to say: we have a different block and an even greater affiliate; it can be a good negotiation but I am happy to have that conversation. There is no specific proposal but a license to begin to negotiate and make it available to members.

MJ: Increased benefits to membership; lower cost to pay in the hotel.

SH: It was unexpected; a complete bait and switch. Do it now, don’t read it.

GS: Boiler plate – every affiliate given the same contract. The difficulty of the system is that obligations on Wednesday are not part of the conference. Scott says there may be value to express our displeasure.

LS: is there a stipulation that will hurt us?

GS: We set the level low and then the hotel says, here is your window. I’m optimistic we can come in to save roughly $30 a night, but we will still set it conservatively.

MJ: Questions; no motion required. Thoughts desire to express?

A dance break here.

Star Muir with us: debate coach running for 2nd VP for NCA

Star Mui: 60-90 seconds – related to platform; some of you know me. 17 years of coaching in the activity. I’ve been a parliamentarian and my concern is about NCA: they don't create a community here 1. I’m unsatisfied with panels, short presentations and not much comes out of it. I am interested in deepening the conversation (like MLA) could be a more significant/engaging discussion. The other thing: I have about 50 business meetings; it’s an elevator speech at every floor and so, to give transparency, I want to see what effects there are. NCA not clear about what it does and why it does it. Can I say it will all be resolved? My ethos is to prepare openly and fairly about affiliate relationships. The toughest thing I ever did – a member of a third team manufactured a backgrounder from the Heritage Foundation. I wrote a letter to every member of the debate community to be clear about [the failure of ] ethical standards – a tough letter to write. The students came back and asked for a reference. And we had a really long discussion of it. I wrote him a reference, and now he is lawyer and married and doing fine. I don’t have much else to say: I will bring a positive perception to forensics. Debate was the single most educational experience of my life, it should count for something. You should know that I wouldn’t be here without the people in this room. I would be a different person. So I am proud to run for it though not proud of what NCA has done. I thank you for support that you can give. I have a handout and you can take bundles. I am interested in language and play and entice you to look at it. What do other associations do? For example, the American History Association has hundreds of organizations interspersed throughout the schedule. Feel free to look at it [the handout] there are some bylaw commentary and some interesting things in handout. If you have other pet peeves [toward the NCA], I am willing to listen.

MJ: We have a few relatively quick reports. First, the professional development and practices committee:

Randy Cox, acting chair: our website is missing the award winners. We will see if we can get them back on there for records checking. Book keeping has become more difficult. As the committee has reconstituted. we have not had an NDT committee member considered for the award. We acknowledge the distinguished service to the NIET, serving judge assignments, extemporaneous committee, serving in the AFA professional committees. In addition to representing the organization, he is the western Rep and the representative of District 9. This year’s recipient from Lonestar College, David Gaer. Congratulations – we figured it was probably better you didn’t give it to yourself.

James Dimock (The Research Committee):

The research committee is tasked with promoting, supporting, and recognizing excellence in research in the fields of argumentation and forensics.  To that end, the Research Committee research of four agendas.

(1)  The Brockreide Research Grant is offered every odd numbered year. This year the grant was awarded to me, James Dimock, (Minnesota State University, Mankato) proposal “Advocacy and Identity in the Developing World” in the amount of $1,000.00. I could not endorse it more. It allows Dan Cronin Mills and I to study whether there are opportunities to build peace and social justice advocacy.

(2)  Less awkward, is the Dissertation/Thesis Award, given every year. According to the advisor, the thesis is academic excellence. This year’s award recognizes an outstanding dissertation or thesis in argumentation or forensics. This year’s award recognizes Christ Outzen’s (Truman State) Master of Fine Arts Thesis *It’s Not About You: Exploring Liminal Experiences of Graduate Forensic Coaches*.

(3)  The Larry Schnoor Award for Excellence in Forensics Research is an annual award. This year the award recognizes Adam Key (Texas A & M University) for his Master of Fine Arts Thesis *Going Public*. It not only probes the practice of debate organization but also provides innovative approaches.

(4)  The Rohrer Memorial Award recognizes outstanding research in argumentation and forensics. This year the Rohrer was awarded to Dr. Ben Voth (Southern Methodist University) for his book *The Rhetoric of Genocide: Death as Text*. It pertains to the most pressing of issue and an undisputed moral imperative. A wonderful work and encourage you to check it out.

If you have something for us to review, we will do it. You may have advised a thesis and that will be eligible to next year’s award. Anything that will increase the submission of manuscripts would be wonderful.

MJ: Congrats, James, Chris, Adam and Ben

Wade Hescht: Development & Practices Committee:

I don’t know why I insist to come early with Ken [Young]. Happy to announce that we are not aware of any instances that come up. Happy to report no report.

Report form NIET and board of trustees [Peter Prober]:

We hosted the NIET at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, OR in April 2015. Not a single hired judge did not show up, I would like to tribute that to Joe Gantt; Joe’s work was exemplary. He to inspires work with hired judge pools.

Western Kentucky University won the team sweepstakes award, and the City College of San Francisco won the Team Community College Sweepstakes Award.

There are amazing opportunities in Gainsville FL [site of the next NIET]. Yes, the third time in 20 years that Kellie Roberts is hosting and making the tournament affordable. In 2018, we will select a host at this NCA Convention. In 2019, the host will be the University of Alabama. Thanks to the organization overall and the support – which means more than you can know – Karen Morris was re-elected [secretary], we would not have updated bylaws without her. For some stupid reason, I was reelected in my 5th year. It’s nothing but pleasure to serve with all officers. This is also the 21st time with Larry Schnoor who guides us. I am happy to answer any questions.

MJ: The last committee is NDT committee and board of trustees. The results will come in and we will know winners and NDT stuff.

GS: It will happen again and the next year.

MJ: That does it for committee meetings. Any new business?

With that, this concludes the meeting (5:05 pm) We had to pay this year and we have candy left. Thanks.

MJ: Motion to adjourn the meeting.

SC: Move to adjourn.

Second.

All in favor?

I.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.