

## OPW Spring Meeting Minutes 4/23/09

Vivian begins awards ceremony

Announces that there are cards and Viv's business cards on tables to sign up and give name, address and contact info to grow OPW

Mary Jane presents powerpoint of winners

More brochures sent out than before

Only 59 entries this year, down, Mary Jane blames economy

20 first place winners sent on to nationals

winners sent on to NFPW – awards presented in San Antonio in Sept.

MJ hands out certificates and reads judges comments – room crowded so certificates were just passed back

Mary Jane outlines the judge list and details qualifications of each judge

Vivian introduces OPW website ([www.NFPW.org/ohio/](http://www.NFPW.org/ohio/)) – including Marjorie Thomas – and asks membership to send in bios and correct mistakes

Shows NFPW website and pitches the conference – Mary Jane (who is national vice president) chimes in and talks about speakers and the opportunity for professional growth  
Vivian shows video interview of NFPW president (Marcia) who talks about the value of membership and the organization. Gives reasons that organization is still viable and important. Talks about help with writing stories and transitions.

Vivian talks about the membership brochures and mentions that members are members of both OPW and NFPW. Introduces concept of splitting membership.

Vivian plays part of an interview that stresses that good writing is the only way writers can work through the current newspaper crisis.

Paige Palmer (who is 90) is being honored at national for being a 30-year member.  
Vivian plays part of an interview with Paige.

Vivian discusses the new Facebook page and tells everyone how to join the group.

Vivian thanks everyone for coming and then Sandi presents the high school awards.

Treasurer's report:

Dean hands out copies of the report

Front page income and expense – not a full year report, starting with previous June (probably tied to spring meetings in 08).

Income from contest income, meeting registration and dues income

Vivian asks if OPW promotion includes both the brochure and the website. It does. The website is a one-time fee for set-up. Margery is handling updates – there is a charge for this, so it's important to bundle changes to get our money's worth. There are brochures

left and Mary Jane and Vivian both feel that at \$ .25 a piece, they were worth buying, because they will be evergreen for awhile.

The fact that income is down is concerning to Vivian who raises the question of a dues increase. She is for it. Vivian knows that many people are cutting costs, but she thinks we can bring new members in with the value we offer, especially in a time where people are looking for professional development, ideas on jobs and ways to make connections. She thinks the website and the Facebook page will help OPW disseminate information.

Then on to a discussion of the Treasurer position. Dean has done a great job, but he's busy and he has asked for someone else to take over. Vivian sent out a request to the membership and nobody wants to pick up the job. Dean's stuck with it for a while. Vivian cannot find a willing Treasurer and Dean is going to be a CPA soon.

Part of the money that was spent on the convention was \$500 for Vivian's transportation. She has been able to get WKSU to pick up her hotel expenses in the past, but it's been difficult and she cannot afford the money herself. The cost of the travel to San Antonio had actually gone down to \$250. Vivian says WKSU will not pay for transportation – hotel is not really an issue. Mary Jane is going, so she can represent OPW. Vivian will only be staying one night. OPW will pay for the conference fee. Someone suggests several times that Vivian go to WKSU for the travel fee. Mary Jane as a national officer will be busy with other things and it's important for OPW to send at least one officer. There are special workshops planned just for chapter presidents – who will then bring information back to affiliates. Mary Jane thinks that it's a long way to go for one night. Vivian felt that the trip to the convention in Iowa City actually helped the organization a lot and Mary Jane says it's important to have more than one person representing Ohio at the national convention. Beth Deisher puts forth a motion that OPW pays for the president's convention fees and travel and Mary Jane seconds it. Vivian says if WKSU does not pay for the hotel, she will. It may be possible to share rooms. The motion was put to a vote and passes.

Beth pointed out that the bylaws really need to be updated and a committee needs to be formed to bring them up to date and make sure OPW is in compliance with state law. The organization needs a board of trustees to be a legal non-profit. Vivian suggests making the elected officers the trustees, but Dean points out that there's a cost involved with filing that information with the state and if it was going to happen annually, it could get expensive. Dean says that trustees are responsible for the corporate structure and IRS filings, etc. Dean says that OPW actually named trustees. Beth says it happened when the group was incorporated in 1989 and it was not filed in '96 and the corporation lapsed. It was discovered in 2006 when Beth was president. When the error was discovered and they quickly came up with a list for Dean that was voted on at the following meeting. The three trustees are Beth, Dean and Mary Jane. The word trustees does not appear in the bylaws. We need to understand how non-profits need to be structured to be in compliance with the Ohio Secretary of State's office. It is planned that during the next election in spring, trustees will be elected as well as officers. Beth agrees to chair a bylaws committee. She says she will solicit two people to help. There is a rule in the bylaws that

college students can't participate in the general contest and Dean would like that change. Beth says the bylaws are out of sync and haven't been updated for 15 years. 1991 was the last time there was a change.

Eddie passed on the scrapbooks (she left early because Vivian's voice was too low). Eddie said that the things in the scrapbooks could not be copied. Vivian asks for volunteers for the history committee to dig through the boxes. She suggests that Sandi takes on the task. Beth tried at one point to take digital pictures, but she didn't have the technology. The clippings, etc in the books are deteriorating and there's some really great stuff that may be unique to the books. The clippings may be found on microfiche at the newspapers or the library – including stories on Helen Waterhouse and Fran Murphy. Someone suggests getting a high school student that could do the job as public service project. Vivian says she will connect with some high school students.

Vivian asks about the fall meeting. We did not have a fall meeting last year (this year's fall meeting also underperformed). Mary Jane thinks it's important doing a fall meeting because it's right after convention. Someone suggests that holding meetings in places where there aren't a lot of members and working with a newspaper or media outlet and come in as their guest. Vivian thinks weather may play a factor. Someone suggests doing something different. Beth planned two successful meetings but in October, people are up against fall festivals and sports and people need to work. Someone asks about Sunday afternoons. Vivian suggests a webinar for everyone to meet up online instead of a traditional fall meeting. Or maybe Skype. She will explore webinars.

Nominating committee comes together every other year. Three people elected at the spring meeting the year before the election year. Ann is nominated – even though she was not in the room. Judith Rogers and Jeff also nominated.

Vivian proposes a bylaws difference that allows people to join at a local level without joining national. Nebraska and Delaware do this and have a very large organization. Dues are now \$10 – and have been since 1986. Vivian suggests doubling it and someone asks about paying in installments. The NFPW website does this, but they take credit cards, and that would be too expensive for us. Dean says it takes a long time to get checks – or even notice – from national when someone joins. Dean says it's good to have meetings twice a year for the face-to-face contact. Beth says that the president should talk to nationals about getting timely information to affiliates. National continues to send information to the wrong officers, even though we have updated the information with them. Non-national members would send a check directly to OPW. NFPW dues could be daunting as an entry point. Beth says that at one point, NFPW didn't allow affiliates to have stand-alone memberships. Dean says if we don't get a check from national in a timely manner – NFPW has use of that money, OPW doesn't. We would like to be notified of new members as well. People can join at any time. Vivian makes a recommendation to raise annual dues to \$20 and Mary Jane seconds it. Dean reads the rules surrounding membership from the bylaws. A question is asked about students who join national for \$10. Dean says OPW gets \$5. Someone suggests a \$5 high student membership. Vivian says, could they pay \$10? And someone asks if the national \$10 membership could be

open to high school students as well a college students. This point will be clarified in the bylaws update.

Vivian asks for everyone to send bios for the website and for them to look at the website and offer ideas. Her husband Ed is doing the E-mail newsletter. Things for the web should go directly to Margery – [met@clevelandmetroparks.com](mailto:met@clevelandmetroparks.com).

Press Club of Cleveland suggested to people at writer's week that they attend OPW's event. Ed Byers says that he is interested in a joint event at Nighttime. Vivian thinks it might be a good fall event (even if there needs to be a business meeting that follows).

Vivian suggests a shadowing project that connects students with organizations under the name of OPW. The Columbus Public Schools do something like that – but Vivian would like to use it for publicity by sending a letter to school officials. Beth says there may be someone in the OEA that deals with things like internships. Sandi says she will ask Judith. Vivian heard something Connie and a student said that she interpreted as “we can't be afraid to mentor.”

Vivian forgot to give Charlize her plant. Vivian wants everyone to E-mail their correct mailing addresses. Beth Deisher is named and OPW's Communicator of the Year – Jeff did the write-up. Vivian says it's a good write-up and they'll find out how it goes in San Antonio.

Sandi talks about a special fundraising project she's working on to replace trees in Columbus parks that were taken out by the ice storms – including an online book auction. Vivian asks Dean about collecting for lunch. 45 signed up and 32 people signed in. Lunch was good and there were a couple of left-overs.