



Northern California Peace Corps Association Annual Board Retreat

March 6, 2016

South Berkeley Senior Center, Berkeley, CA

Minutes - Morning Session (9am-1:00pm)

Board Members Present: Lie Njie (Acting President), Jessica Sevrin (Treasurer), Dorothy Herzberg (At Large), Justina Wu (At Large), Glenn Anaiscourt (East Bay), Vern Philips (East Bay), Tara Trepanier Gill (South Bay), Meredith Miller Vostrejs (South Bay), Jane Ferguson Flout (SF), Terry Vogt (SF), Amy Ross (Santa Cruz), Nichole Clarke (North Bay)

Facilitator: Nancy Ragey

1. Welcome and Warm Up
 - Introductions and ice breaker
 - Ground rules: listen closely, respectfully and constructively; seek clarification and disagree respectfully; allow and encourage everyone to participate; fully participate and take responsibility for the group and its process; dive to discussion when required; speak up.

2. Setting Context
 - Results from board survey: Desired retreat goals (build relationships, strategy planning, set group norms and processes); organizational strengths (membership/member skills, size of participant base, programs); board strengths (commitment and passion, expertise, diversity of experience); challenges (divisiveness, lack of norms for working together, newness of Board, budget/fundraising, lack of decision-making processes); and how to address challenges (clarify roles and responsibilities, access fundraising capacity, collaborative/fair/supportive leadership, ambition matched with capacity, set group norms, set strategy).
 - Review Compass Point Board Responsibility Matrix: Overview of governance responsibilities (affirm mission and purpose; legal; financial; ED; planning; programs; efficiency and impact; financial viability; policies; evaluation; board effectiveness. Note collective governance is distinct from role of Board members acting individually to volunteer and support the organization.
 - Review of current NorCalPCA activities: Third Goal (Story telling, festival of cultures, Global Presenters); Member services (readjustment services, networking, social activities); Charitable (grants program, community service/outreach); Advocacy.

3. Discussion: Future Goals
 - What does success look like? What our highest priorities?
 - Small group activity - identify desired accomplishments within 3 years:

- ▶ Third Goal: expand geography to all 5 regions and broaden diversity of venue and audience /demographics; improve and modernize communications and social media strategy; explore new media (films, digital, etc); expand social media audience to include non-RPCVs (e.g. 25% of impressions not RPCVS); have a sustainable Global Presenters Program;
- ▶ Increase fundraising; get 2-3 big grants to support programs.
- ▶ Charitable purpose: increase visibility and outreach of NorCal grants program; increase impact and participation of community service.
- ▶ Member Services: increase communications to all RPCVs in NorCal regardless of membership status; increase membership participation and tracking; solicit membership feedback and represent their priorities; increase membership and engagement – improve visibility and make participation easy; increase membership leadership and empowerment; clarify and improve readjustment services.

4. Break/ Mindfulness Meditation

5. Global Presenters Program

- History and overview of GPP by Frank Price: Historically speaking engagements were coordinated by volunteers; in the past year there was a paid coordinator resulting in a significant increase in the number of speakers and locations. Frank recommends keeping Betsy as a paid coordinator and suggests increasing her pay and hours.
- Discussion of GPP included: need for metrics, tracking and evaluation; coordination efficiency should increase as program infrastructure developed; desired outcome of GPP = increasing global awareness and citizenship; costs of paying for a coordinator at current hourly rate and requested increase; impact of paying a GPP coordinator on current and future NorCal operating budgets.
- All agree GPP is a priority; concern is fundraising. Discussion about options available to Board (continue paying coordinator to end of FY, operate at deficit; stop paying coordinator and switch to volunteer; pay coordinator with time limited contract; fundraise and reevaluate; pay speakers instead; collaborate/integrate speaking opportunities into other existing programs outside of NorCal; etc).

6. Overview of NorCalPCA's Financial Structure

- Review of handouts from Nancy:
 - ▶ Budget has three “pots”: operating budget, Fidelity investment funds (reserve account), grants (restricted)
 - ▶ Income vs. expense pie charts
 - ▶ Current FY budget operating at a deficit (approximately \$11k including GPP salary)
 - ▶ At current spending, need increased fundraising 300% to balance budget



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Minutes – Board Meeting (12:15pm-1:00pm)

1. **Decisions Made.** The Board unanimously approved four motions to immediately implement the following actions:
 - 1.1. The Board unanimously approved extending the current contract to fund the Outreach Coordinator position of the Global Presenters Program (GPP) through the end FY2016 (September 30, 2016), at the current rate and the current number of hours, recognizing that funding the contract will mean NorCalPCA will be operating at a deficit for FY2016.
 - 1.2. The Board unanimously approved the immediate formation of a Fundraising Committee that will initially focus on raising funds to pay for the contract for the Outreach Coordinator for GPP through FY16 and FY2017. The Fundraising Committee is chaired by Board Member Terry Vogt with support from Board Members Frank Price, Glenn Anaiscourt, Will Spargur, and Meredith Vostrejs; and with input from current GPP Outreach Coordinator Betsy Aaron.
 - 1.3. The Board unanimously agreed to discuss at its August 2016 Board Meeting the results of the Fundraising Committee's efforts to date; define the contours of a future Outreach Coordinator contract for GPP; and submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) for such a contract.
 - 1.4. The Board unanimously approved immediately hiring a bookkeeper for \$1,200 to reconcile NorCalPCA's FY2016 budget; produce the final FY2016 NorCalPCA budget for Board approval; and file NorCalPCA 2015 taxes. Treasurer Tara Gill will manage the bookkeeper's efforts. Board Member Terry Vogt generously offered to donate \$1,200 to NorCalPCA's general funds to help offset the cost of the bookkeeper.
 - 1.5. The Board unanimously approved the February 2016 minutes with Jessica Sevrin's correction that the Communications Chair is Justina Wu.
2. **Executive Committee.**
 - 2.1. The Board elected the Executive Committee using a confidential balloting process that was administered by the Board's outside retreat facilitator. Each board member cast 1 vote. Vern Philips was allowed to cast two sets of votes: one set for himself, and one set for Will Spargur in Will's absence. The results of the election are as follows:
 - + President: Craig Michael Lie Njie
 - + Vice President: Glenn Anaiscourt
 - + Treasurer: Tara Gill (with support from Terry Vogt and Jessica Sevrin)
 - + Secretary: Jane Ferguson Flout (with support from Meredith Vostrejs)
3. **Board Meetings:** The Board agreed that each board member will be in charge of hosting, setting up and facilitating a board meeting at a location of their choice.
4. **Conflict of interest (COI):** COI forms were distributed to all board members to be reviewed and signed.
5. **Audit and 2016 Strategy Doc:** Glenn and Lie will perform a full audit of all of NorCalPCA activities, processes, technologies, and services, and interview key owners for 2016 strategy and milestones. The combined doc will be sent to the Board before April Board Meeting.



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Vern's House, Berkeley, CA

Minutes - Afternoon Session (1:00pm-5:00pm)

1. Lunch!
2. Open Discussion and Strategic Planning – there was a variety of open discussion
3. Get-to-Know-each-other activity: Glenn led the members in a get-to-know-each-other activity to share things we liked.
4. Rotation of board meetings: All Board Members will host one board meeting at a date and location of their choosing during the first 10 days of the Month. Board Members can swap their months with other Board Members. Board Members must notify the full Board of the date and location of their board meeting as soon as possible, but no later than 5 weeks before the meeting. Board meetings should include an optional social activity either before, after, or both before and after the formal meeting. Hosts and Locations are in the Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1heQ3G5CvJktrfOhaxd1V7X7HIIJoEMNpMpRt_5BPJ4/edit?usp=sharing

Current 2016 list:

February 2016: Lie: Oakland, social activity: meetup for drinks and snacks before

March 2016: Lie: Berkeley (with this retreat), social activity: Lunch at Vern's house

April 2016: Dorothy: El Cerrito: social activity: TBD

May 2016: Tara: social activity: TBD

June 2016: Nichole: social activity: TBD

July 2016: Glenn: social activity: TBD

August 2016: Justina: social activity: TBD

September 2016: Merideth: social activity: TBD

October 2016: Amy: social activity: TBD

5. Commitments: Board Members discussed interests and commitments to NorCalPCA. Currently in Progress, to be finalized at April Board Meeting. Current docs that hold this information can be found in the Sign-Up sheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ASPX-Cja-huqICq453IZiCWbF-QJYZHZo4Gr9tEfljA/edit?usp=sharing>

6. Committees and Activities: Board Members discussed NorCalPCA Committees. Currently in Progress, to be finalized at April Board Meeting. Current docs that hold this information can be found in the Committees and Programs sheet:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1K2mFq741L41wpAm6VapTpo5cj61vpXs6r1a_Rxm270/edit?usp=sharing

7. Membership Engagement with Board Members: Members need better access to their representatives on the board, and better communications channels. How can we do this? Office hours? Regional meetings/planning sessions? Surveys? Lots of options, we should be working on this soon. (Update: Lie is bringing in a former board member to present at the April board meeting on how to schedule and run an effective regional planning meet-up. Lie and Tiffani are working on including in the member survey a question to find out how the membership wants us to provide this communications channel. Lie will work to highlight a different board member in each monthly eConnection newsletter.)
8. Upgrading our collaboration with National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), other NPCA Affiliate groups like ours, and with Peace Corps: we need to work better at membership acquisition and sharing between these groups, coordinating communications, and other items. Lie and Glenn will be working with NPCA over the next weeks and months on that, and will be working with Peace Corps on a MOU for what that relationship looks like.
9. Business cards: Glenn will be working on a set of general business cards to give to all board members that include our website, facebook, twitter, general email address (info@norcalpca.org ?), and more. Stay tuned for a draft
10. Nichole handed out most excellent boxes of supplies for regional representatives with signage, name tags, other supplies. Very cool! More to come
11. Regional budgets? Previously we had a portion of membership dues sent to each region to host events. That has become more centralized over the last couple of years. Open discussion: should we shift back to the old system?
12. Membership: Expanding: We need to look at creative ways to expand our membership. \$20/member is too limiting and turns some people away. Should we allow people to become members if they volunteer a minimum number of hours to help NorCalPCA each year? Should we offer tiers of membership to try and get more money from those who can afford it? Lie and Glenn to work on draft suggestions to bring to the next board meeting.
13. Open discussion: should NorCalPCA be involved in helping RPCVs in need? For instance, William Harliss from Thailand needs help with day-to-day tasks, money, and emotional support. Should NorCalPCA devote time/budget to that? Should we be telling our membership about it? If we go down this path, how do we choose who to help? How do we decide what funds and time to devote to this? Everyone agreed we should help somehow with NorCal RPCVs in need, but no clear consensus on how to do this.
14. Communications Discussion: We decided in the morning session that revamping our communications is a key 2016 priority. There's lots we can and needs to be done. Here's a long list of items that the Communications Committee will be working on in the near future:
 - [] Budget: Newsletter + Will's \$500 request for fliers + biz cards + what else? What should the yearly budget be?
 - [] Alan Toth's proposal for a filmmaker committee with budget
 - [] Who controls access to the regional Yahoo Groups? What's the process for accepting people?
 - [] Survey: Lie and Tiffani are working on a membership survey to go out sometime during the week of March 21st

[] It was agreed that our current communications can be made to be much better focused, and distributed. Right now we have an email list of ~4000 addresses for our email blasts, ~600 members, and a couple thousand physical mailing addresses. We agreed that in 2016 we need to get better at four types of communications:

1. Board communicating to members and RPCVs (external: outgoing)
2. RPCVs & members communicating to board (external: incoming)
3. RPCVs & Members to RPCVs and Members (external to external, helped by NorCalPCA, e.g. job postings, rooms for rent, requests for help, etc...)
4. Board to Board

We have three distinct groups of people that we are communicating with:

(1) 20-34yr / Young Professionals & Recently Returned: respond better to social media, the group we're least successful at communicating with (Amy offered to help with this, Glenn and Lie are doing a Young Professional focus group to find out more [see below], Justina working on revamping our social media)

(2) 35-54yr: mid-career & returned for a while now: respond better to emails, the group we're most successful at communicating with

(3) 55+ & retired: some good with email, most want printed and mailed communications, we're OK with this group but really need some more focus here (Dorothy offered to work on this)

BIG COMMUNICATIONS GOALS from the Retreat: Increase our external communications reach to 7500+ people by end of 2016, make our intra-board communications better, look at how we can better communicate with retired RPCVs, and revamp our tech and communications to help RPCVs talk to other RPCVs

[] Google AdWords: should we pay for some adwords to better direct people searching for Peace Corps in NorCal to our website.

[] Yahoo Groups: Should we keep them?

- + Internal Communications: Should we get a Slack or some other system?
- + External Communications: Yahoo groups are underutilized. Who controls access to the Yahoo Groups? Someone still waiting to get added to the list after several days...

[] Social Media efforts: Discussion about maybe setting up two facebook accounts? Who is in charge of what? What's the process when someone emails a board member and says "Can you distribute this to your membership?" What's our Twitter strategy?

[] Combining forces: NPCA, Peace Corps, and other affiliate groups: how do we cross-pollinate communications? How do we get our calls to action/requests out through NPCA and vice-versa? Glenn and Lie to talk with NPCA in the coming weeks to discuss strategy and options.

[] Keeping track of all of the Communications Committee efforts: There's so much going on and so many people involved, what's the best way to keep track and make sure that our processes are stable and long-term sustainable?

[] eConnection: Marlow writes content, Rustin puts into email form. Will puts on website (Lie and Glenn now know how to do this, too). Stories are the most interesting to readers according to Rustin. Frequency: Monthly. Open Rate: ~30%. Open questions

Q: Should we change frequency/length/content?

Q: Should we solicit and include member-content such as requests for help and notifications of non-NorCalPCA events and gatherings?

[] Events email is weekly, has a lower open rate than eConnection. Should we keep as is or change? What is email overload?

[] Newsletter: once a year there's a paper newsletter. Tara is working on figuring out a good budget, needs help from the Comms Committee to know how much to budget for. Lie talked with Marlow (who writes a lot of the content) and Tiffani and goal is to try and get a draft newsletter ready by the April 9 board meeting for the board to review/edit/approve, and then print and mail out end of April.

[] Suggestion: Lie and Tiffani talked about possibly allowing membership to send us tweet-sized requests for help for something involving RPCVs. These could be added to the eConnection, events, and/or newsletter. Maybe also get retweeted or sent out on Facebook or other?

[] Member Survey: We agreed at the retreat to send out a member survey. Someone needs to lead this effort, and maybe get the survey out in the next week or two.

[] Content for Membership Requests to "donate": Lie and Tiffani and Glenn have discussed some ideas to change how we ask for members to "donate". Right now we ask for money, suggestion is to also have a section to volunteer some number of hours (in addition to and/or instead of just giving money) to create a "bank" of volunteers to leverage when requests come out. Needs someone to coordinate this.

[] Tri-Fold handouts for : Will put together tri-fold fliers that we were each given to board members in the afternoon of the retreat, should we be printing more / distributing?

Note: Membership committee is going to discuss how to change membership at April board meeting...

[] Membership forms: Will gave board members some example forms for membership. Should we change this?

Note: Membership committee is going to discuss how to change membership at April board meeting...

[] Printed Fliers asking for membership / renewals? See attached draft from Will. What do we want to do?

[] Lie and Glenn hosting a "Millennial Focus Group" dinner on Monday, March 28. Goal is to figure out how to better communicate with millennials, and get them more engaged.

[] Biz cards: Glenn is on it, will send out a prototype to review, 2-sided, Side 1: NorCal logo, full name, contact info (info@NorCalPCA.org), website; Side 2: quick membership signup with checkboxes for money or donations

[] Our current video assets (story jams, global presenters, etc...) -- what should we do with these? Who curates and manages these assets?