

2014-2015 Professional Chapter Annual Report Submission Form

This report covers the period from May 31, 2014 to May 1, 2015.

Due: May 1, 2015

General Information

Region Number: **3**

Chapter Name: **SPJ Florida Pro**

Name and title of Person Submitting Report: **Brandon Ballenger, chapter president**

Phone of Person Submitting Report: [REDACTED]

Email Address of Person Submitting Report: **btballenger@gmail.com**

Chapter Information

Chapter Web Site: **<http://www.spjflorida.com>**

Please provide any additional social media or web links the chapter may have:

- <http://www.facebook.com/SPJFlorida>
- <http://www.twitter.com/spjfla>

Chapter Leadership

Chapter President: **Brandon Ballenger**

Address (to include city, state, ZIP) [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: **btballenger@gmail.com**

Additional Officers/Board Members:

- **Dori Zinn, executive VP**
- **Michele Boyet, membership VP**
- **Dina Weinstein, programming VP**

- Chris Persaud, treasurer
- Christiana Lilly, secretary
- Jason Parsley, immediate past president
- Kristyn Caddell, member
- Megan Fitzgerald, member
- John McDonald, member
- Andrea Richard, member
- John Sotomayor, member
- Betty Wells, member
- Connor Spielmaker, student representative

Date of Elections: 8/16/14

National and Regional Representation

Was your chapter represented at Excellence in Journalism 2014? Yes

Name of Representative(s): Michael Koretzky, Dina Weinstein, Andrea Richard, Dylan Bouscher

If not, did your chapter receive a waiver from your Regional Director? N/A

Was your chapter represented at a 2014 Regional Conference? N/A

Name of Representative(s): N/A

If not, did your chapter receive a waiver from your Regional Director? Yes

Chapter Membership Activities

Describe your ongoing membership recruitment and retention activities and the success of those activities:

In addition to a steady social media presence and programming, this year the chapter developed new branding and a full-color brochure for board members to hand out to prospective members and at events. We also supported programming developed by the FIU and FAU student chapters. Membership has fluctuated but generally held above 100 members.

Chapter Programming

SPJ encourages chapters to hold programs and activities on topics that further SPJ's mission, including ethics, diversity and freedom of information, as well as issues important locally.

Please note: All programs described below must have taken place during the reporting period of May 31, 2014 to May 1, 2015.

How many programs did your chapter have during the reporting period?

14

Diversity

Did your chapter hold a Diversity project or program this year? **Yes**

Date of Program: **8/16/14**

Approximate Attendance: **100**

Please describe: For our 20th Annual Sunshine State Awards reception, we again partnered with the National Association of Hispanic Journalists' South Florida chapter and for the first time included Spanish-language awards. This was also the first year were solicited entries from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The event was very well attended by both organizations, which we attribute to NAHJ's ability to secure free-liquor sponsors like Bacardi.

FOI

Did your chapter hold a Freedom of Information project or program this year? **Yes**

Date of Program: **10/17/14**

Approximate Attendance: **20**

Please describe: We co-sponsored the Florida First Amendment Foundation's sunshine seminar in Deerfield Beach, which covered open meetings and public records laws with three speakers.

Ethics

Did your chapter hold an Ethics project or program this year? **No**

Date of Program: **N/A**

Approximate Attendance: **N/A**

Please describe: **N/A**

Service Project

Did your chapter participate in a service project this year? Yes

Date of Program: Ongoing

Approximate Attendance: 25

Please describe: The chapter worked with a local school district and Sunrise Leadership Academy on a service project to teach grade school kids about journalism and writing. A board member helped the students write a travel guide for their city.

Other Programs

What other professional development programs or activities did your chapter have this year?

Describe as many as you can (include date of program and approximate attendance for each):

Program: [Will Write For Food](#)

Date of Program: 8/30-9/1

Approximate Attendance: 21

Please describe: Students from around the country attended the sixth installment of one of SPJ's strangest (and most exhilarating) programs. In 36 hours, the students took over the Homeless Voice, the country's second-largest homeless newspaper, and produced it beginning to end. From undercover homelessness to standing on street corners to join the ranks of the homeless that sell the newspapers at South Florida intersections, the event was a hit once again. Video, blogs, photos and articles accompanied the project. [Tumblr](#)

Program: [Broward Arts Journalism Alliance events](#)

Date of Programs: 10/18, 1/31, 2/21, 4/23

Approximate Attendance: 30 each

Please describe: Partnered with BAJA and the Goldring Arts Journalism Program at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, and with the Janklow Arts Leadership Program at Syracuse University, for three all-day workshops with a discount for our members: "Disruption, Opportunity, Creativity – How We Live Now," "The Art of Being a Critic and a Journalist in the Internet Age," and "Expanding the Framework for Arts Coverage." We also raffled off several tickets to each for students and pros. One of our board members was also a featured speaker at an outreach event in April.

Program: [JournCamp Miami](#)

Date of Program: 11/8

Approximate Attendance: 60

Please describe: Sent a speaker and multiple board members to this national SPJ-organized training event, and helped promote it among our members with a ticket giveaway.

Program: [Death Race](#)

Date of Program: 12/6

Approximate Attendance: 15

Please describe: Partnered with SPJ FIU and SPJ FAU to host the second-annual Death Race, an event to train journalists in obituary writing. We let the student chapters plan the event — modeled after one we did for students and pros in 2013 -- but paid for it and provided logistics support, including securing advice from the Miami Herald's obit writer, Howard Cohen. Miami Herald Pulitzer-winning photographer Patrick Farrell played the role of the corpse and teared up with a board member in a back room as he watched a livestream of his daughters eulogizing him, and later said it was a valuable event for students and a unique experience. [Quill coverage](#) (pg. 7)

Program: [PRSA-SPJ mixer](#)

Date of Program: 3/12

Approximate Attendance: 40

Please describe: Held a mixer at a bar with the Fort Lauderdale PRSA chapter so members could meet with people who work the same beat on the other side and swap ideas. Great idea, but only a handful of our members went.

Program: [Miami Media School Career Fair](#)

Date of Program: 3/21

Approximate Attendance: 75

Please describe: Partnered with NAHJ, AAJA, and SFBJA to host a job fair at the Miami Media School.

Program: [South Florida Freelance Fair](#)

Date of Program: 3/25

Approximate Attendance: 30

Please describe: Held a job fair and tax seminar (with H&R Block) specifically for freelancers. Publications attending included Miami Herald, Gulfstream Media Group, Boca Raton magazine, The New Tropic, South Florida Gay News, Fort Lauderdale magazine, and Newsmax. We also raffled off a couple gift cards. We got some great feedback and plan to do this again.

Program: [Charles Cobb event](#)

Date of Program: 3/30

Approximate Attendance: 25

Please describe: Hosted Charles E. Cobb, Jr., former National Geographic writer, author of *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed* and civil rights scholar at Books & Books in a partnership with NABJ.

Chapter Communications

How does your chapter communicate with members? Describe your chapter's regular method(s) of communication and other tools used this year:

We communicate with our members through email blasts, regular Facebook (including Facebook events) postings, Twitter, and our website which includes blog posts. We use MailChimp as an email marketing component, promoting our recent chapter news, upcoming events, networking opportunities, Sunshine State Awards news and even job openings. We also promote partner events such as promoted partner events such as a Hacks/Hackers International hackathon, FAF seminars, SPJ FIU digital workshops, Reel Reporting workshops, outside grants and scholarships.

We use Doodle to schedule our board meetings, as well as share Google docs to keep our board informed. We use Google forms to conduct the board's email votes during months we do not meet in person and to collect data from our membership.

Chapter Fundraising

Did your chapter hold any fundraising activities this year? Yes

If so, please describe any successful fundraising campaigns: Our annual Sunshine State Awards are our primary source of funding.

Additional Comments

In addition to the above events, we were sponsors of the long-running **Broward College Speaker Series**, which this year featured Bloomberg politics managing editor Mark Halperin and Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin.

We also awarded a **\$2,500 scholarship** to Claudia Lievano, a sophomore at University of Florida.

We continued to provide **job postings** as a free service for our members, raised an additional \$250 for our **legal defense fund**, paid for our neighbor chapter SPJ Georgia's travel costs to help **fight a lawsuit against a freelancer**, and sent three board members for leadership training at the **Scripps Institute**.

We also helped the Florida Society of News Editors plan a **two-day NewsTrain training** in Orlando which will be held in May, and raffled off registrations to help promote it and provide our members free training opportunities.

Lastly, at our April board meeting, we approved a plan to **purchase the newly released Phantom 3 drone**, with plans to educate people on drone laws, uses for journalism, train people in how to use it, and loan it out to local journalists as FAA regulations evolve.

Chapter Bylaws

Please submit a copy of your chapter's current bylaws with this report.

<http://www.spjflorida.com/about/constitution-bylaws/>

Note: If you are unsure if your chapter is a subordinate chapter with the IRS, please contact Membership Strategist Tara Puckey at tpuckey@spj.org

Financial Review – REQUIRED!

To ensure a chapter's continued financial health and reinforce sound accounting procedures, it is required that three members meet annually with the chapter treasurer to examine the chapter's financial records.

This (at least) three-member committee, appointed by the chapter president, should conduct a review to include, but is not limited to:

- Reviewing bank statements
- Reconciling checks and check registers with bank statements
- Reviewing receipts
- Examining expenses

Did your chapter conduct a financial review during this reporting period? YES

Please provide information for those reviewing the chapter's financial records:

Reviewer #1 Name and Email: Brandon Ballenger, Executive Vice President – btballenger@gmail.com

Reviewer #2 Name and Email: Christopher Persaud, Treasurer – christopher.mark.persaud@gmail.com

Reviewer #3 Name and Email: Jason Parsley, Immediate Past President – jeparsley@gmail.com

Chapter Bank Statements – REQUIRED!

Chapters are required to provide bank statements for all twelve months of this reporting period (example, May 31, 2014 – April 30, 2015) with this report. Chapter foundation accounts are an exception.

Note: If statements are not included, it is not a complete report.

Please include chapter bank statements with this report.

12 months of checking and savings account statements, as well as PayPal current balance, are attached. (Note: April 2015 account statements are not yet available.)

If you have questions or concerns about this report, please contact Membership Strategist Tara Puckey at tpuckey@spj.org or 317.920.4784.