

Minutes
CPN Board of Directors Meeting
07/28/04

- Convened: 7:45 p.m., Marly's home, Takoma Park
- Attendees: Chris (facilitator), C.T., Debi, Kathleen, Marly, Rick, Robbi,
4 non-Board members
- Item: Final Nomination Committee Report (Robbi)
- Discussion: Stats from elections – 92 ballots were prepared; 19 were hand-delivered, and 73 were mailed. 27 ballots were returned. There were 14 renewals (11 from expired members, 3 from soon-to-be-expired members). Total income from renewals was \$645. The cost of the election was \$121.93 (copying, large envelopes, postage; the red envelopes were donated by a Board member). The Nomination Committee cut election costs by not putting stamps on the red return envelopes.
- Outcome: Election results –

Kathleen – elected to 3-year term
Robbi – re-elected to 3-year term
Rick – re-elected to 1-year term
- Item: Welcome to New/Re-Elected Board Members (Chris)
- Discussion: Welcome and congratulations to Kathleen on being elected, and to Rick and Robbi on being re-elected. We are pleased to finally have seven members on the Board again. Kathleen asked that all Board members review their vision and goals for CPN.
- Kathleen – I see our mission as two-fold – to provide a venue and options for social interaction in a supportive, comfortable, fun environment, and to be an example to society of stable, honest, average Americans who are polyamorous. Membership recruitment and retention and program enhancement are also very important.
- Rick – I would like to see more adult events. I would like to see the Board continue to work hard, but not suffer from burn out. I want us to provide opportunities for people to create and re-create (e.g., new programs, classes, SIGs, larger meetings, programs repeated yearly for newcomers such as legal/accounting issues for polys, jealousy, the importance of communication, etc.).
- Debi – Reviewing from last year's candidate statement, my commitment was to help facilitate consistent communication, to attract and retain new members, to meet the needs of the current membership, and many more specific goals. In retrospect, I was naïve about the volume of work we were undertaking, and the

limited amount of participation from the membership. I feel that I fell short of my commitments, especially with regard to communication with the membership, and am determined to return to that goal. We accomplished a lot in the last year, but we have much more work to do, and I have some ideas about how we might proceed.

Marly – CPN is the closest thing to family for me. Being in the leadership of CPN guarantees challenges and growth, much as the polyamory lifestyle does. As a part of this, we must continually revisit our assumptions, accept constructive feedback, and provide each other loving support when it gets hard. This has been a challenging year, but there is no question about each Board member's commitment to helping to grow CPN. The Blue Sheet experience has been invaluable and has given all of us insights into what our members want and need, and some ideas on how to accomplish these. The Board got bogged down in the minutia of running the organization, but I think anyone would have. Now that we have laid the foundation for better procedures and process, we can implement our mission and programs more effectively. If we bring people together often enough, we'll make those all-important connections with each other that lead to eager participation in the life and work of our community, and we will grow. We have hardly begun to explore and share with each other the logistics of actually living the poly lifestyle. I want CPN to be whatever its members want it to be, and what they are prepared to make happen, which can include lots of social and educational activities, a presence and a voice in the wider community (poly people and their allies as well as the mainstream), learning and improving the social skills that are so essential in practicing all forms of relationship (and even more so in polyamory), learning how to support each other better in the poly lifestyle, and creating the bonds that lead to involvement and the enrichment of each other's lives.

Robbi – For me, it's all about community. The Membership, Communications, and Programs Teams are inwardly focused. They are about the community, making it larger, more useful, whatever the membership wants it to be. The Blue Sheet process made it clear to me – we have to do a better job at knowing what the membership wants and communicating about it. The Outreach & Advocacy Team will do their job best when we help to make this community more vibrant. So we need to enrich the communication, so that this community can be what it wants to be, however much they want to plug into the community.

C.T. – I'm very disappointed that Sacred Loving has been canceled, which means there will be no east coast gathering for polys this year. I want CPN to be as vital as possible. I hope to keep the gains we've made in the last year, and I'm concerned about that. We should provide the infrastructure of resources that members can use, and the programs should be generated by the community. Here is the candidate statement I submitted last year for the election... I have been a life-long practitioner of polyamory, even before the word was in common usage. In the 90's, I was instrumental in starting several poly support/discussion groups in New England where I lived. I have been around CPN since it started and have been a member for about 2 years. I have spoken at CPN gatherings about my philosophy regarding the poly lifestyle. Those of you who know me from the

Loving More (East) community know I have as alternative an approach to organizational process as I do towards the relationship process. I've written a book on consensus decisionmaking process. If I were to serve on the board, I would want both the board and the CPN community to take a sincere interest in learning consensus process and consider the possibility of one day using it. I am currently on the Membership Committee of CPN. I am looking forward to:
1) working on member support services to retain the current members and,
2) outreach/recruitment to identify and connect with people who relate to being poly, so they can find us (a poly support group) and feel welcome.

Chris – I see CPN as a community, not only providing social support, but helping each other by sharing our experiences. I would like to see CPN continue to support those of us who struggle by providing guidance or answers to questions that are asked. Over the last year, I have continually heard "I found CPN via the Internet." I think we are barely tapping what the internet can provide for our local community and those who are part of our extended community. I don't believe that CPN is only for VA/DC/MD. I'd like to see CPN take a more active part in participation and leadership on the East Coast. CPN needs to look at how BR functions. They bill me, and every year I support them because they have quality educational programs. I also want the Teams to be led by non-Board members. And we need venues for adult events.

Non-Board Member – Not everyone is struggling. Some want social events. Maybe we can look at how other large groups grow their communities.

Item: Misc. Item – Board Subsidizing CPN Expenses (Non-Board Member)

Discussion: A non-Board member had done some figuring and arrived at the conclusion that individual Board members are paying roughly half of the expense of CPN, and felt that this needs to change – that the Board should not have to subsidize the cost of running CPN. It was generally felt that, although Board members have done this voluntarily, it is setting a precedent that we do not want to continue, so as not to discourage anyone from participating on the Board because of financial constraints.

Outcome: The membership needs to be made aware that the Board has been subsidizing the cost of CPN events, and to the extent possible, how much has been donated by Board members, and the precedent needs to be changed so that Board members are reimbursed for their expenses.

Item: Misc. Item – Membership Numbers (Non-Board Member)

Discussion: A non-Board member asked whether membership numbers have declined. The general feeling was that it has, and that attendance is down at major events as compared to a couple of years ago. It was noted that at PALS events, attendees paid an admission fee, and provided a potluck dish. Adult events were held at Moonridge in Beltsville. The then-owner, who is now deceased, had no restrictions regarding the types of events held. We should check into the availability of that venue.

Outcome: The Membership Team is working on systematizing and tracking membership so that consistent follow-up can be made. Efforts will continue to find venues for adult events, including checking on Moonridge.

Item: Town Meeting re Process for Upcoming Year (Debi)

Discussion: A Town Meeting was proposed in order to get input from the membership on what they would like to focus on and accomplish in the coming year. The process would consist of making a list of items, prioritizing the list, and then breaking the list down into separate, smaller lists for each Team and the Board. The Team members or Board members would then focus together on the first one or two items on their respective list, and work together to accomplish that goal, moving on to the next item as previous items are accomplished. Debi feels that we need to get back to focusing on what the membership wants, while remembering that Board members are also part of the membership and our goals and visions would be included on the lists. Debi also feels that, although the Board accomplished a lot in the last year, we were all overworked and overwhelmed, and this new process might help us to better focus and support each other.

It was requested that we review our accomplishments over the last year. Below is just a partial list (not in order). Many more were not mentioned:

Changed CPN's mailing address from Mail Boxes, etc. in DC to a post office box in Takoma Park (cost –\$70/year) (researched cost, location, etc.)

Disconnected an actual phone line in a former Board member's home (cost – approximately \$40/month) and subscribed to a voicemail service with paging feature (cost – approximately \$15/month) (researched several options to find best price)

Redesigned the website (format and some content)

Updated (on a continuing basis) the website calendar and e-mail reminders

Transferred the treasury and bookkeeping responsibilities from a former Board member to a new Board member; changed the requisite signature cards at the bank

Replaced a new Board member who resigned; functioned without one Board member after another resignation, finishing out the term with only six of the usual seven (since October)

Organized the election process

Cleaned up the membership database

Held a Board retreat to review goals and plan the second half of the year

Helped to plan, and held the NCSF fundraiser

Made donations to NCSF and ITCR

Held two holiday dances (December and February (luau))

Held a summer family picnic in Virginia

Held numerous Maryland and Virginia orientations, discussions, and social events

Initiated distribution of information packages to prospective new members at orientations

Held at least three educational events (communication skills, jealousy, STIs), and scheduled a presentation for this fall on making safer sex sexy

Facilitated the continuation of the women's SIG and the bipolar SIG

Initiated the bi men's SIG and the Virginia munch

Facilitated the continuation of the Programs Team

Activated the Membership and Communications Teams

Began the process of systematizing membership tracking (to help keep up with follow-up, renewals, etc.)

Outcome: The August orientation and regular Board meeting will be replaced with a Town Meeting on August 15 in order to get input from the membership on what they would like to accomplish in the coming year. We will post an announcement of the Town Meeting to the public list, and mail announcements to members who do not have e-mail. The following options will be provided for response from the membership – posting to the public list, responding privately to cpninfo@yahoo.com, or anonymously via CPN's post office box.

Item: Misc. Item – Number of New Members in Last 12 Months (Chris)

Discussion: 28 new members have joined since last July, but approximately as many have gone to expired status, so the current members number is approximately the same.

Outcome: The Membership and Programs Teams need to discuss the decision to schedule specific events for new members such as a new member wine & cheese or meet & greet.

Item: Misc. Item – Comment (Non-Board Member)

Discussion: CPN is an organization based on relationships. The Board and membership need to be in relationship for consistent communication to take place.

Outcome: Very good point to keep in mind.

Next
Meeting: Town Meeting, August 15, 7:30 p.m., UUCSS

Adjourned: 9:35 p.m.