

Chris Burroughs and Cheryl Fallstead contacted the Press Women affiliates around the country that do not have the words Press Women in their names. Some of the affiliates purposely changed their names to reflect the changing communications world. Others never changed their names, having adopted the name without the words Press Women when they were initially established. The following are comments from the various affiliates about name changes.

**Delaware Press Association, Katherine Ward** — Our name was changed in 1997. When we changed our name, we had 63 members. Today we are at three times that number.

1. Years ago (early '90s, when NFPW dues were doubled--I think they went from \$35 to \$70, but don't hold me to that), we faced the problem of people not wanting to, or not being able to, support the national expense.
2. To save our affiliate, we decided to offer a state-only option. OUR ONE BIG CONCERN was that we would undercut NFPW, and we did NOT want to do that. We, therefore, hoped to build a really strong affiliate with more people at the lower state-only rate and then have activities that would keep them coming to meetings and keep them coming back with dues every year. AND we wanted to run a STRONG communications contest -- open also to non-members - - so that we might have lots of first-place winners who would want to go on to the national contest, thereby providing a yearly crop of people taking out NFPW memberships as well. We, of course, always encourage all of our members to consider the NFPW option, and there always are those who choose the dual membership whether they enter the contest or not.
3. We always aim to be a really good NFPW affiliate and always brand everything we do with some kind of NFPW imprimatur to keep before people that we are a good, strong, loyal affiliate of a great national organization. We NEVER want to lose sight of how important it is to us to be part of a national federation.
4. Bottom line, we want a strong local affiliate, which we have achieved by a combination of:
  - reasonable dues (\$20 for the last 15 years) with an eye toward giving our members a great bang for their membership dollar -- most come back year-over-year, and we constantly pull in new members (we actively look for good new members);
  - offering 4 great professional development-type programs every year;
  - an early-December Holiday Luncheon at which we have a strong speaker (this past Dec., we had the CBS Chief White House Correspondent, Major Garrett) and present, with great fanfare, our communicator of achievement for the coming year;
  - a delightful "Summer Fun" event -- a great opportunity to enjoy each other's company and to forge great friendships;
  - a big Communications Contest (we get between 200 and 300 or more entries) with a festive awards banquet, in late April or early May, complete with an engaging speaker;
  - an informative, online, quarterly newsletter;
  - a comprehensive website;
  - a student program (HS Communications Contest);
  - a good relationship with other like-minded organizations, and we sometimes offer joint programs (just two or three weeks ago we had a program on the politics of open

government / FOI in Delaware — hosted with the Delaware Coalition for Open Government);

- staying in touch with members by email to announce programs and events (of our own or of interest that are offered by other communications organizations) and to give them a heads-up on job opportunities;
- encouraging our members to attend the NFPW conference each year.

5. One major and helpful decision back in 1997 was to change our name to seem to be as inclusive as we already were. Men always were welcome to join and some entered our contest, but they often asked "can I" because our name was Delaware Press Women. We value our heritage and our underpinnings (our history on our website pays homage to our founding and the growth of our organization from our founding in 1977 and through 1997 when we effected the NAME CHANGE — but DEFINITELY NOT A VALUES CHANGE. At Delaware Press Association, the ratio of men to women remains about the same: about 25 - 30% of our membership is of the male persuasion. Some of them have been excellent board members (our current president is the first man to hold that position). They are great, enthusiastic affiliate members and add to our numbers — which often gets up around 200. Making the name change did not in any way remove from our focus the need to support women in the communications workforce, but we are supportive of, and give great service to, all of our members, regardless of gender or the field of communications in which they work. We are, and for years have been, a strong, united, loyal NFPW affiliate of 150 - 200 members that provides about 60 - 75 members to NFPW each year.

**Idaho Media Professionals, Teri Eresman** — We changed our name in 2007 from Idaho Press Women to Media Network Idaho. We really liked the name Idaho Media Professionals, but not IMP. We changed our name because our male members encouraged us to do so. They are no longer members because they didn't want to help organize things and be responsible for any programs/projects. We haven't really noticed a change since we changed our name.

**Illinois Women's Press Association, Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas** — Illinois Woman's Press Association has always been our name since 1885. We have not seriously considered changing it. During the NFPW spring board meeting this past weekend in Birmingham, Alabama, this subject was brought up. The argument to keep the organization's name has been discussed many times over the years. Teri Ehresman, our current NFPW president, shared with us that the Idaho affiliate did in fact vote to change its name to Media Network Idaho a few years ago because there were a handful of male members who convinced them this would be a positive...increase members, etc. These men are no longer members of the affiliate. They got the organization to change its name and didn't renew their dues.

Here is what I say about the "women" in our name. Personally, I make no apologies for NFPW, or IWPA for that matter, being a "women's" organization. Yes, we do encourage men to join if they care to. We are open to them. But there is still a very real glass ceiling in the world. Women struggle every day in not only our country but around the globe for equality. That glass ceiling -- the invisible barrier -- prevents women from getting ahead in business, accepting low paying jobs and remaining silent for far too long. To quote *Forbes* magazine, "There's another reason why the pay gap has barely budged in the last five years: Women don't ask for more money.

“They don’t think they deserve it,” says Lois Frankel, president of Corporate Coaching International and author of *Nice Girls Don’t Get the Corner Office*. She adds, “We don’t have the [negotiating] skills. We see it as something smarmy.” “There is much yet to achieve and the comfort and friendship, advice and networking in our organizations make a difference.

Just this month Jimmy Carter's new book, *A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power* has been published by Simon & Schuster and it has been described as “an impassioned account of the human rights abuses against women and girls around the world.” Equality for women has far to go in our lifetime. Would I ever suggest our organization's remove the word "women" from the name? No.

So before I go off on my mantra about women mentoring women, I'll just share my belief that the women of the National Federation of Press Women, past and present, have been better friends, mentors, and supporters for me than men. Should we change the "women" in our name? No one has ever given me a compelling argument to do so.

The definition of the word "press" has changed over the years as the media has evolved. That might be in need of explanation for the younger women on college campuses today and just joining the work force. But I would share with you that we have many positives to highlight and focus our efforts on. Changing a name isn't going to do that much. It's the personalities involved, the mentoring, networking, the professional contests. Focus on the things your organization and NFPW do so well.

I hope I have given you some things to contemplate and share with your members. I do wish you answers as you struggle to define your affiliate. Personally, I wouldn't worry so much about what you call your affiliate. I would focus on what your affiliate wants to achieve. I would embrace who each of you are and bring to the table.

**Women’s Press Club of Indiana, Julie Slaymaker** — We've been Woman's Press Club of Indiana since 1913! We've never changed our name, even though the spelling drives editors mad! At one point, we considered changing our name but nixed it. Women journalists fought too hard to get where we are. To change our name would negate that struggle.

**Kansas Professional Communicators, Gwen Larson** — I've CC'd some of our other members who were active during the name change. I hope they'll also respond. In fact, Jane Lee, a former NFPW board member, was our president when the change was made. I joined about two years after the move.

Personally, I believe "communicators" fits our industry better than "press" does. I joined the organization as a newspaper reporter, but now I work in media relations and marketing for a university. If I were to market the organization on my campus, I would go after students in our journalism minor (part of the English department), in our communications department (where PR classes are taught) and our School of Business (which has a business marketing degree).

The only advice I would give you if you choose to change the name is not getting yourself in too deep with merchandise to promote the name. Merchandise is always great. KPC purchased

button-up shirts, long-sleeved T-shirts and mugs that were branded. We still have shirts to sell 10-plus years later.

If you choose to market your name that way (which is awesome, BTW, because your members can also wear them on logo day at national conference), I would suggest finding an "on-demand" solution. NFPW, for instance, has a shop that will create embroidered shirts, vests, etc., as ordered. And the prices aren't bad. I believe Teri Ehresman developed that contract and would have additional information.

**Kansas Professional Communicators, Jane Lee** — I was president when the name change took place and was an advocate for the change.

That was about 12 years ago, however, I do not recall any problems or major inconveniences connected with the change. Of course, official documents had to be changed, letterhead, etc.

The one thing that stands out in my mind were comments by several persons, some members, some nonmembers, on one particular aspect of the change. They believed that the new name it gave the organization more stature and sounded more "important." I remember one member saying that her boss was more impressed with her award from Kansas Professional Communicators than from Kansas Press Women. He did not realize it was the same organization -- until she told him.

Some also commented on the fact that it made the organization seem more encompassing, and that men could join without feeling embarrassed about being part of a women's organization. We did have a few join, but I don't think the name change had much to do with that issue.

The sad thing is that removing "women" enhanced the organization, which means that "women" was a negative. Sad commentary.

All in all, I think it was a very positive move and definitely is a better reflection of our organization. We do have men and "press" people are becoming outnumbered by those in other aspects of communications.

**Ohio Professional Writers** — Their president said the name change didn't help or hurt membership. The only reason people join the organization in Ohio is for the contests. They don't even go to meetings.

**Media Women of South Carolina, Meg Hunt, past president of NFPW** — Media Women of South Carolina hasn't changed its name. We've been MWSC since our inception in 1980.

As a longtime member of MWSC and NFPW and as an NFPW past president, I can tell you that this topic has been discussed and debated more times than I can count. Some affiliates have opted to change their name for the same reasons you've cited. Some indicated success at doing so. Others have said that it changed nothing. And some have said that those for whom they changed their affiliate name (men, in particular) never joined at all.

It is certainly a topic that has remained a lively one. I wish you well in the discussions but would also urge very open, objective, and honest conversation as to what you hope such a name change would achieve. If I or anyone else on the NFPW board can be of further help in any way, please don't hesitate to let us know.

**North Dakota Professional Communicators, Ellen Crawford** — We changed our name back in the 1980s for a couple of reasons: Men wanted to join but didn't like the "women" in the title (we were North Dakota Press Women). Also, we no longer were just "press." In fact, we have more marketing, PR and freelance people and book authors than we do newspaper people. We didn't get many men at first, but now 12 of our approximately 75 members are men.

Our membership didn't jump after the name change, but that was more of a result of our membership recruitment efforts (more precisely, lack of them) than anything. If we have a big push to recruit, we bring in members. Our current membership is as high as it has been for several years.

The biggest problem we face is the cost. NFPW raised dues drastically (\$20 or more at a time) twice in the last 25 years, and we lost several members because of those increases. We took another hit when the largest paper in the state stopped paying reporters' dues.

Our other problem is keeping members once we get them. Yes, we bring in a lot of younger people, but they don't seem to stay more than a year or two. They don't come to the conferences or workshops we hold and don't enter the contest. Those who do get involved tend to become active members.

One thing we have done that really helps us is offer a state-only membership for \$25. Those members can attend conferences and workshops at the member rate and can vote. They also can hold a district director position on the board but not any of the other board positions. They also can't enter the contest. That has brought us at least 20 members.