

**California Writers Club  
Professional Conduct  
and  
Consequences of Failure to Adhere**  
by Margie Yee Webb

**Background**

The California Writers Club is an educational nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation.

Our California Writers Club Policies and Procedures include language relating to professional conduct, but do not address consequences of failure to adhere to that professional conduct and how to handle disruptive behavior. Only that branches may involve the Central Board regarding a member's application for renewal of membership due to detrimental, libelous, or slanderous behavior. See portions copied below.

Under Section VIII Officers of the Central Board: "All officers are responsible for setting a tone of engagement and for encouraging a harmonious and collaborative operation, both in meetings and associated communication."

Under Section XI Committees and Specialty Directorates: "Officers, directors, and event chairs must show personal integrity, must be free of conflicts of interests, and carry out their duties in a professional manner."

Under Section VII Dues and Fees: With a 2/3 vote of the Central Board Representatives, "Branches will deny a member's application for renewal if that member has exhibited behavior that the central board deems to be detrimental, libelous, or slanderous to CWC's good name or its members."

**Incident**

The California Writers Club, Sacramento Branch had an incident at our Luncheon Meeting on June 20, 2015. The incident involved Person A with a loud raised voice, shouting at Person B. Additionally, Person A grabbed arm, would not let go and blocked the way of Person B. Person B attempted to walk away and stated "stop" multiple times. Two witnesses intervened before Person A finally stopped shouting and following Person B. In light of the incident, Person B is fearful of Person A and that a similar incident may happen again.

## **Consequences and Discipline**

What is “bad behavior”?

“Bad behavior” should have consequences. Some “bad behavior” must have consequences and require discipline.

What are the consequences of “bad behavior”? What should the consequences be for incidents that may include violence?

## **Responsibility**

Where does responsibility belong in handling the incident? Does it matter if persons involved in incident are or a combination of: “guests” or “regular members” or “other members” that include volunteers, board members and officers?

Where does responsibility belong in handling incident when it is brought to the attention of the “other members”? At branch board level? At Central Board level?

Where does responsibility belong if incident involved “other members”? At branch board level? At Central Board level?

Does the incident or would similar incidents cause a liability for CWC?

What responsibility and obligation does the Central Board have in handling the incident?

## **Training**

Should there be training provided on professional conduct, what is unacceptable and unprofessional conduct, and what is workplace violence?

Should there be workplace violence prevention training?

Should the Central Board have oversight for any training?

## **Request**

As a corporation, we should have a policy on workplace violence prevention, be aware of the different types of workplace violence and what can be done to prevent or minimize incidents of violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. We are all volunteers and should have a safe and secure environment.

I request for a committee to review, discuss and make recommendations regarding policies for handling unacceptable and unprofessional conduct and workplace violence situations, and for consequences, discipline and training.

## **Current Language Relating to Professional Conduct in CWC P&Ps**

### **CWC P&Ps**

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## **VIII OFFICERS OF THE CENTRAL BOARD**

B) Duties of officers: All officers are responsible for setting a tone of engagement and for encouraging a harmonious and collaborative operation, both in meetings and associated communication.

### **CWC P&Ps**

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## **XI COMMITTEES AND SPECIALTY DIRECTORATES**

c The Ethics and Standards Section.

(i) The committee will recommend standards on a case-by-case basis as issues arise with the aim of developing an evolving code of standards.

(ii) Officers, directors, and event chairs must show personal integrity, must be free of conflicts of interests, and carry out their duties in a professional manner.

## **Consequences of Failure to Adhere To Professional Conduct**

### **CWC P&Ps**

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## **VII DUES AND FEES**

B) Members in good standing have until September 30 to renew their membership at the local branch. On October 1, CWC shall drop all delinquent members from the rolls. If dropped, a member must re-qualify his or her status and pay the new member enrollment fees.

1) Non-renewal of membership.

Branches will deny a member's application for renewal if that member has exhibited behavior that the central board deems to be detrimental, libelous, or slanderous to CWC's good name or its members. Documentation of accusations followed by a 2/3 vote from the current central board will be required to deny renewal of membership. The central board reserves the right to define the parameters of detrimental, libelous, or slanderous behavior.