

ASPA National Goings-on

I traveled to Washington, D.C., on September 12 for a meeting at ASPA's national headquarters. Prior to that, none of us had been aware that a large protest rally sponsored by the Tea Party Patriots and others was also scheduled for that day in D.C. The trains I rode in both directions were filled with people on their way to and then from the march. I noted on the return trip that the participants—post-protest—seemed to be talking more of their enthusiasm about participating in the event than of their loathing for politicians and bureaucrats. I still didn't try to tell them anything about my day, however. My day on September 12 included two items of interest here, and I presume you will be more interested in them than the Tea Party folks would have been.



First, ASPA's monthly newspaper, *PA Times*, has suffered a severe drop in advertising sales. It has thus gone from making a modest profit for ASPA to costing enough money (about \$30,000 a year) that it may be necessary to make dramatic changes in its format. This is likely to include reducing the number of issues per year and/or the paper's size and number of pages, in addition to ways to expand its online presence and look for additional revenues. As chairman of the paper's editorial board, I have convened a working group to study possibilities and make recommendations for the paper's reinvention.

We will be soliciting opinions from the national membership via a short survey sometime in the not-too-distant future. But for now, I would very much appreciate any comments from DAPA members: What do you most like about the current *PA Times*? What would you like to see more of, less of, or just different? How much do you value receiving a printed paper, and what electronic formats and features would be most valuable from your perspective? Please let me know your thoughts. Unsolicited advice is also welcome.

Second, some of you are aware that DAPA has been trying to get the national council of ASPA to approve a special status for us as a chapter of the national organization. ASPA does not allow chapters to offer chapter-only memberships. Instead, those interested in joining a chapter must join the national organization as well. DAPA currently gets around this by having two nominally distinct organizations—the Delaware chapter of ASPA, and an affiliated Delaware Association for Public Administration.

There is at least one precedent for ASPA to allow a special-interest *section* (the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management) to offer a section-only membership, and in late June we sent a letter to ASPA President Paul Posner requesting a similar dispensation for our chapter. I asked him about the status of our request while I was in D.C. on the 12th. One major concern he expressed is that it might cost ASPA members, if people selected the less costly DAPA-only membership over a full ASPA membership. Adding and retaining members is currently one of ASPA's top priorities as an organization. I was able to explain to him why I think the arrangement we proposed is unlikely to promote DAPA-only memberships (we explained this in our June letter as well), but he, nonetheless, expects that ASPA's leadership as a group will decline our request.

—by Jonathan Justice