

MINUTES OF THE HL BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
26 JUNE 2003  
PANORAMA ROOM, HOTEL TROPICAL  
MANAUS, AMAZONIA, BRAZIL

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: de Sa, Dodd, Given, Mathis, Mitchell, Mushinsky, Phillips, Wilson

COMMITTEE CHAIRS IN ATTENDANCE: Beachy, Kaiser

GUEST: Joseph Mendelson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Bauer, Cooper, Fitzgerald, Iverson, Jenssen, Kearney, Lovich, Sievert.

President Dodd called the meeting to order at 1407 h.

President Dodd announced that next year he would chair a committee to revise the By-Laws, which have not been changed in 13 years. The committee will consist of past-presidents of the HL. Anyone with specific recommendations is welcome to communicate with Dodd. Dodd also discussed that there has been confusion regarding who nominates members to various HL committees. Appointed chairs are expected to nominate members to their committees; this is not the role of the President.

Minutes of the 2002 Board of Trustees and Business meetings in Kansas City were approved unanimously.

Vice President Mushinsky presented future meeting venues. HL is committed to joint meetings with ASIH and SSAR through 2005: Norman, OK in 2004 and Tampa, FL in 2005. We have not yet received an invitation for 2006 that will probably be in New Orleans. An invitation to meet in Ithaca, NY in 2007 will come up under new business. We are intending to meet in Vancouver in 2008 in conjunction with the World Congress of Herpetology. Additionally, Mushinsky recommended that it would be easier if ASIH, SSAR and HL shared financial responsibility of future meetings. At the moment ASIH puts money up front, and takes all of the financial risks and potential profits (or losses). One formula is that societies would receive profits (or incur losses) in proportion to the number of participants from each society. The HL Board approved that Mushinsky continue investigating this.

### **Reports**

The following reports were either approved unanimously or approved unanimously with minor editorial changes: President's, Vice President's, Treasurer's, Secretary's, President's report, Publication Secretary's, *Herpetologica* Editor's, *Herpetological Monographs* Editor's, HL Newsletter Editor's, Symposium Committee Chair's, HL Robert G. Jaeger Award for Graduate Research Committee Chair's, Special Publications Committee Chair's, Conservation Committee Chair's, and AIBS representative's (presented orally). There were no reports from the Herpetological Checklist Committee or the Graduate Studies Committee.

President Dodd sent thank you letters to all of the outgoing Associate Editors (Carl Anthony, Edmund Brodie, David Green and Linda Zimmerman). There was no Robert G. Jaeger Award competition this year; five presenters checked off on the meeting registration that they intended to complete, but did not submit extended abstracts and were disqualified. Under Special Publications, Chair Kaiser will resign his position as of 31 December 2003 and will assist in identifying a new chair. Under AIBS, it was noted that President Dodd continues to circulate communications from AIBS via email and created an advertisement for the HL that was published, for free, in BioScience. Under Graduate Studies, President Dodd will reconstitute the committee with individuals who have been active in the past. There will be a one-hour HL graduate studies workshop on some aspect of professional development next year in Norman.

### **Old Business**

Nominations for 2003 HL Election. Lovich, Chair of the Nominations Committee for the 2003 elections, presented the following slate of nominees: Vice President - Linda Ford, H. Bradley Shaffer, and Bob Jaeger; Treasurer - Lora Smith; Executive Council - Chris Austin, Ray Saumure, James Harding, Nicole Valenzuela, Michael Lannoo, Stanley Fox, Mike Adams, Robert Fisher, Neil Ford, and Susan Walls. The nomination report was approved unanimously; approval of the nominees will occur at the HL Business Meeting.

BioOne Update. After a considerable time lag, our publications are officially on BioOne.

### **New Business**

Resolution on Intelligent Design Theory. The resolution, adopted from the AAAS Board Resolution on Intelligent Design Theory, was passed with 12 in favor, one against and one abstaining. One member, who sent comments in writing, was concerned about censorship of dissenting opinions, and asserted that quality education presents all views and allows students to make informed decisions. Members at the meeting agreed that we are not saying that Intelligent Design is inappropriate to teach, but that it is inappropriate to present as a legitimate theory in the context of science. The text of the resolution follows:

**The resolution is adopted from the AAAS Board Resolution on Intelligent Design Theory that was approved by the AAAS Board of Directors on 10/18/02.**

The contemporary theory of biological evolution is one of the most robust products of scientific inquiry. It is the foundation for research in many areas of biology as well as an essential element of science education. To become informed and responsible citizens in our contemporary technological world, students need to study the theories and empirical evidence central to current scientific understanding.

Over the past several years proponents of so-called "intelligent design theory," also known as ID, have challenged the accepted scientific theory of biological evolution. As part of this effort they have sought to introduce the teaching of "intelligent design

theory" into the science curricula of the public schools. The movement presents "intelligent design theory" to the public as a theoretical innovation, supported by scientific evidence, that offers a more adequate explanation for the origin of the diversity of living organisms than the current scientifically accepted theory of evolution. In response to this effort, individual scientists and philosophers of science have provided substantive critiques of "intelligent design," demonstrating significant conceptual flaws in its formulation, a lack of credible scientific evidence, and misrepresentations of scientific facts.

Recognizing that the "intelligent design theory" represents a challenge to the quality of science education, the Board of Trustees of the HERPETOLOGISTS' LEAGUE adopts the following resolution:

Whereas, ID proponents claim that contemporary evolutionary theory is incapable of explaining the origin of the diversity of living organisms;

Whereas, to date, the ID movement has failed to offer credible scientific evidence to support their claim that ID undermines the current scientifically accepted theory of evolution;

Whereas, the ID movement has not proposed a scientific means of testing its claims;

Therefore Be It Resolved, that the lack of scientific warrant for so-called "intelligent design theory" makes it improper to include as a part of science education;

Therefore Be Further It Resolved, that the HERPETOLOGISTS' LEAGUE urges citizens across the nation to oppose the establishment of policies that would permit the teaching of "intelligent design theory" as a part of the science curricula of the public schools;

Therefore Be It Further Resolved, that the HERPETOLOGISTS' LEAGUE calls upon its members to assist those engaged in overseeing science education policy to understand the nature of science, the content of contemporary evolutionary theory and the inappropriateness of "intelligent design theory" as subject matter for science education;

Therefore Be Further It Resolved, that the HERPETOLOGISTS' LEAGUE encourages its affiliated societies to endorse this resolution and to communicate their support to appropriate parties at the federal, state and local levels of the government.

By-Laws Addition: Editorial Board. One member, commenting in writing, stated that he would prefer the editors making appointments rather than the HL President. Members at the meeting, however, were comfortable with the quality of collaboration implied in the proposal. The proposal passed with 13 in favor and one opposed. The text of the addition is as follows:

Section 14. Editorial Board. The Editorial Board shall consist of from 6 to 8 members appointed by the President based upon the recommendations of the Editors of *Herpetologica* and *Herpetological Monographs*. Editorial Board members will serve 2-year memberships subject to renewal. The duties of the Editorial Board shall be to provide editorial, administrative, and ethical advice to the Editor(s) and Associate Editors of *Herpetologica* and *Herpetological Monographs*; review controversial aspects of manuscripts (for example, animal care, legal, or ethical issues) as requested; examine manuscripts where conflicting reviews have been received and to advise the Editor(s) whether a manuscript should be accepted or rejected; and review manuscripts in unusual circumstances when quick turn-around is required. The Editor(s), however, will continue to make final decisions regarding whether manuscripts should be accepted or rejected. Further, the Editorial Board shall assist the outgoing editor, President, and Board of Trustees in finding replacements for editors that retire or resign, and assist in the transition between editorships.

Honorary Members. Six individuals were elected honorary members of the HL. Carl Gans was elected as a US/Canadian member, and Donald Broadley, Harold Cogger, Ilya Darevsky, Paulo Vanzolini, and Ermi Zhao were elected international members. President Dodd will send letters informing recipients of this honor.

Salary Request for Editor's Assistant. Editor Jenssen recommended increasing the salary of the Editorial Assistant for *Herpetologica* from \$9,000 to \$12,000. The request was approved unanimously.

Cornell 2007 Invitation. The board voted to accept the invitation to meet in Cornell in 2007 unanimously.

Joint Meeting Motions Regarding Symposia. This proposal came from Henry Mushinsky, the HL/SSAR Representative to the Meeting Planning Committee for Joint Meetings of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. The proposal passed with 12 in favor and 1 opposed. There were three motions. 1. Limit the number of symposia sponsored (funded or not funded) by HL to a total of two. 2. Limit all symposia to one day. 3. In order to coordinate with standard meeting formats, symposia presentations should be either 15 or 30-minutes in length.

New editor of *Herpetologica*. Alicia Mathis was approved unanimously as the next editor of *Herpetologica*.

HL Symposia Approval Process. Steps #4 and #5 of the Symposia approval process was modified to reflect a more appropriate timeline and decision-making process. These steps now are: #4 - Symposium Committee selects no more than two funded proposals for the annual meeting, decides on the financial report, and presents them to the HL Board for final approval at the annual Board meeting; and #5 - The HL President notifies Symposia Chairs of acceptance or rejection within two weeks of the annual meeting.

HL Mission Statement. Developing a mission statement was the primary work of the ad hoc Membership Committee chaired by Mushinsky. The proposed statement was approved with 12 in favor and 1 opposed. It reads as follows:

“The Herpetologists’ League exists to promote scientific study and conservation of amphibians and reptiles. The primary goals of the League are to support the acquisition of knowledge about these organisms, and to transmit that knowledge through publications, conferences, and symposia. Activities sponsored by the League are designed to engage and encourage young scientists to join our mission. The products of the Herpetologists’ League contribute to the global effort to understand and conserve the biological diversity on Earth.”

Recommendation from the Symposium Committee. Ten members voted to support and provide full funding of the proposal “Ecology and evolution: a tribute to Eric Pianka.” Thus, HL will only sponsor one symposium in Norman in 2004.

2003-2004 Budget. It was noted that the proposed budget was identified as 2002-2003 instead of 2003-2004. The proposed budget for 2003-2004 was approved unanimously.

HL Newsletter Format. HL Newsletter Editor Beachy intends to move the HL Newsletter to electronic format. Members present encouraged him to move forward as soon as possible. Keeping email addresses current will continue to be problematic, and Beachy is well aware of that.

The board meeting was adjourned at 17:00 h.

Respectfully submitted,

Mac F. Given