

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of the Herpetologists' League

22 July 2009

Hilton Portland & Executive Tower, Portland, OR, USA

Board Members in Attendance:

David Cundall, Linda Ford, Harold Heatwole, Meredith Mahoney, Brad Moon, Stephen Mullin, Henry Mushinsky, Erin Muths, Patrick Owen, Joseph Pechmann, Melissa Pilgrim, Tod Reeder

Committee chairs and other guests:

Cathy Bevier, Paul Hampton, Joseph Mitchell, Lori Neuman-Lee, Dawn Wilson, Allen Press (Mary Reilly, Daniela Bone), ENTRIX (Steve Godley)

Regrets:

Michelle Boone, Todd Campbell, Rafael de Sá, Ken Dodd, Fredric Janzen, Al Savitzky

President Cundall called the meeting to order at 14:00.

2008 Minutes

Mahoney noted a typo in the 2008 BoT Minutes which was corrected. *The 2008 BoT and Business Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.*

Meeting sites report – Cundall

The report was approved unanimously.

Long Range Planning and Membership Committee reports - Heatwole

Heatwole noted that declining membership is one of the society's chief issues at the moment, and the main reason for membership loss seems to be money. An additional reason is that journals can be obtained through institutional libraries without society membership. The profile of HL could be raised on Google by influencing its priority in web searches. Heatwole announced that there will be a membership meeting later during the Joint Meeting to discuss retention and recruitment of new members. Reeder noted that the current trend is of increasing student involvement in the societies with increased meeting attendance, but that there is a disconnect between this and declining membership. Ford added that the Nomination Committee contacted a number of prospective candidates, but many were not members of HL. Professionals join just one society to get the reduced registration rate, and many are not members of multiple societies. Pechmann suggested that membership could be separated from the journal subscriptions, and this could make membership

cheaper. Heatwole suggested that a reduced rate could be allowed for multiple society memberships, and this could increase memberships.

Treasurer's report – Mahoney

HL investments currently include \$39,000 in cash and \$64,000 in mutual funds. Matt Tederick, HL's new financial advisor, is keeping track of market trends. He is easy to work with and understands the goals of the society regarding its investments. *The treasurer's report was approved unanimously.*

Secretary's report – Owen

Owen noted that he has created a wiki site to archive society documents, and this will be made available to the BoT shortly. *The secretary's report was approved unanimously.*

Publications secretary – Mullin

Mullin noted that Allen Press is greatly reducing the work load of the publications secretary as far as handling back issues. \$4000 of the Publications Secretary's funds has been transferred to the Treasurer's account (this was not all of the funds from Publications Secretary's account). *Herpetologica* recently received an award for its cover, and this was driven by Allen Press. *The Publications Secretary's report was approved unanimously.*

Herpetologica Editor – Moon

Moon noted that the June issue will be mailed Aug 3. He is still catching up with backlog and dealing with proof stage issues. The impact factors for *Herpetologica* and *Herpetological Monographs* have increased. The new manuscript submission system that will eventually be switched to looks to be an improvement. *The Herpetologica Editor's report was approved unanimously.*

Herpetological Monographs Editor – Reeder

The report was approved unanimously.

Graduate Research Award Committee - Wilson

Wilson noted that Daniel Warner was the winner in 2008. Fourteen papers have been submitted for 2009 which indicates that the award competition is increasing in popularity. *The committee report was approved unanimously.*

AIBS/BioONE – Savitzky

Al Savitzky was not able to be present: Barb Savitzky was terminally ill and passed away during the Board Meeting. Two condolence cards were signed by many members and mailed to Al Savitzky by Past President Linda Ford and President Cundall. Mitchell noted that Barb Savitzky had been active in HL service as a past councilor and a judge for student awards.

Herpetological Education Committee – Bevier

The Education Committee now has its own web site, and materials will continue to be added.

Bevier introduced a proposal for the Meritorious Teaching Award in Herpetology which is modeled after an award given by the Animal Behavior Society. SSAR has already voted to support the award. Nominations for outstanding teachers will be solicited from undergraduate and graduate students. A committee will choose the recipient who will receive \$500 and a plaque. The award will hopefully be supported by all three societies. The award may not be given every year. Mullin noted that it will be possible for the same person to receive the award twice given that teaching tools and technologies advance over time. Bevier indicated that the same individual can only be re-nominated once. The Education Committee is requesting \$200 from each society. The announcement of the award would appear on the society websites, in *Herpetological Review*, and other relevant places. Mushinsky noted that ASIH has also voted to support the award in principle.

Cundall moved that HL provide \$200 to support the award. The motion was approved unanimously.

Graduate studies committee – Neuman-Lee and Hampton

Neuman-Lee discussed a survey of student membership and noted that the main reason for not renewing was cost. Two proposals to stimulate student interest in the society include offering research grants and travel awards to the JMIH. The graduate studies committee could do fundraising. One possibility is selling a calendar with photographs of amphibians and reptiles, and the calendar would contain interesting dates specific to the society. Reeder suggested that the calendar could showcase photography by students. The calendar could be offered on the annual membership renewal form. Wilson noted that the calendar could also be sold in the exhibit hall at the meeting. Neuman-Lee noted that it is very easy to put a calendar together, and they could probably be sold for around \$10 if 50 copies were ordered, and the calendars could be sold for less if more were ordered. Moon wondered what the break-even point would be with calendar sales. Hampton noted that more information is needed on how many people would buy the calendar in order to determine how many calendars to order. Reeder indicated that HL has to make the decision first to support the grants, and then the calendars could be used secondarily to support the grants. Mahoney wondered what the priority of the awards would be since the society will probably only be able to initially support one. Hampton suggested that the research grant should be supported since students would be willing to join the society just for the opportunity to apply for the research grants. It would also be good to advertise that students will get feedback from applying for the grants. Mushinsky wondered who would perform the peer review. Hampton suggested that faculty would be better since they have more experience writing grants. Mahoney wondered whether there should be a single award or multiple awards. Neuman-Lee suggested having several different award categories to attract different types of research. Moon suggested that the 5 topical areas of *Herpetologica* could be used as a model for partitioning the awards.

Cundall moved that the committee come up with a preliminary budget for the calendars. Whatever the calendars make above \$2000 could go toward grant support. The motion was approved unanimously.

Cundall moved to fund the research award initially for 2 years for \$2000/year (\$4000 total), provisional on how much outside money can come in, \$1000 per award.

Mitchell wondered whether the \$100,000 endowment goal been reached. The original idea was to use any money interest above this for research awards to generate more interest in HL. Mahoney suggested that money could be removed from the investments managed by Tederick in the future, and \$2000 could be allocated right now out of the main HL operating budget.

Pechmann made a motion amending Cundall's motion: the grant should start with 5 categories modeled after those of Herpetologica with \$2500 to start (\$500 per award). This was unanimously approved.

Neuman-Lee indicated that the committee would welcome suggestions for the award chair.

Allen Press Report – Reilly and Bone

There was a profit of \$31,000 which is an increase over last year. AP nominated *Herpetologica* for a SNAP (Society of National Association Publications) Award, and it was one of the few biology journals winning the award. There was a trend of 15-20% drop of biology journal subscriptions, and this was about a 15% drop for *Herpetologica* and *Herpetological Monographs*. Despite this there has been an increase in subscription revenue due to reductions in expenses. There have been delays in mailing and printing, and these issues will be solved by the end of 2009. \$3100 in inventory fees were paid for back-issue storage last year. It was suggested that since back issue sales have dropped off due to JSTOR archiving, some of the back-issue inventory could be purged to save money. This would not happen until January 2010 since storage is paid through the end of 2009. In 2008 there was a campaign to new potential subscribers which offered a discount and free trial if subscribing to more than one title. The journals have been advertised at a variety of conferences, and this will continue through 2009. The new journal site will be up by the end of 2009 with new search and reporting options – it will be more user friendly, and there will be new manuscript submission and reprint ordering systems. Color plates will now have to be pre-paid by authors. The impact factors increased for both journals, as did their ranking among zoological journals.

New Business

ENTRIX and other data archives - Steve Godley (technical director of ENTRIX)

ENTRIX is a way of archiving datasets, sonograms, videos, etc that are usually only archived as appendices or online. Alternatives include the Allen Press website and DRYAD. Godley's expertise could be used to host archival information on the HL or Allen Press website for publications. Pechmann suggested that HL policy should be that archival data is reviewed along with the manuscript to maintain quality. Cundall noted that it should be up to the authors to determine what data will be archived, and that this should not become a requirement. Heatwole noted that archiving color figures is particularly valuable. Reilly noted that AP offers the option to print manuscripts in black and white, but figures can be archived in color online for \$75. Non-color appendices are free. Appendices would carry the same copyright policy as manuscripts.

Heatwole moved that Herpetologica and Herpetological Monographs insert in their instructions to authors that authors are encouraged to submit the data on which their papers are based to Allen Press, DRYAD, or other another agency for archiving in a way accessible to other researchers. This motion was approved unanimously.

Wilson noted that SSAR seemed to be in agreement with this policy as well.

Bylaws amendments

Cundall moved that all changes to the Bylaws, other than those regarding Moon's submission, be approved. The changes were approved unanimously. The changes chiefly involve bringing Bylaws language into line with current society practice and establishing the President and Treasurer as representatives to the JMIH meeting planning committee.

Moon's changes to the Bylaws involved the role of the Editor in appointing Associate Editors, and he moved that the Editor, not President, appoint and remove associate editors. Cundall noted that the society has been run with the assumption that those holding service positions are members. However, the previous Editor and many associate editors were not members. Cundall suggested that the Editor should have more communication with the president about editorial appointments. Wilson noted that there is precedent for other societies utilizing non-members as associate editors for their journals. Ford noted that there are important membership issues since membership is declining at the same time that top positions in the society are going to non-members. She suggested that the BoT approve associate editors as needed through electronic vote since the BoT represents a cross-section of the membership. Muths suggested that the BoT would not micromanage the journal as long as the Editor was doing a good job.

A motion was made to reject Moon's proposed changes to the bylaws, and this was approved with one vote against. A motion was then made to approve Cundall's revised changes. This was approved with one vote against.

(An annotated version of 2007 Bylaws with Cundall's suggested revisions as well as 2009 Bylaws incorporating these revisions is posted on the HL website).

Nominations – Ford

A slate of candidates is now ready for the upcoming election, and this was a difficult job given the declining membership in the society. Willing members were often already serving on the boards of other societies. *A motion was made to approve the list of candidates, and this was approved unanimously.*

Bartholomew membership management proposal – Mahoney

The AM&M agreement is costing more than anticipated, and the quality of service is sometimes poor. The Bartholomew proposal is cheaper, and he is experienced having been the previous membership secretary for SSAR. In his proposal, it is easier for members to renew. The website will be based on a Facebook platform and will have more functionality. It will be able to handle elections and will have private and public areas. Cundall noted that the current contract ends at the end of this year, and it is effectively a subcontract through SSAR. SSAR has just voted to approve Bartholomew's proposal, so it makes sense for HL to follow.

Mahoney moved to transfer membership management to Bartholomew, and this was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 18:15.