

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

7 July 2010

The Westin Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Board members in attendance:

David Cundall, Linda Ford, Hal Heatwole, Fred Kraus, Meredith Mahoney, Brad Moon, Stephen Mullin, Henry Mushinsky, Erin Muths, Patrick Owen, Brian Smith

Committee Chairs and other guests:

Rafael de Sá, Lori Neuman-Lee, Al Savitzky, Dawn Wilson, Allen Press representatives (Mary Reilly, Daniella Bone, Emily Miller)

Regrets:

Cathy Bevier, Michelle Boone, Jim McGuire, Paul Hampton, Melissa Pilgrim, Tod Reeder, Stan Trauth

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

2009 Minutes

The Minutes of the 2009 Board of Trustees and Business Meetings were approved unanimously.

All of the following reports were approved unanimously:

Joint Meeting Management and Planning Committee Report - Mahoney

Mahoney first discussed recommendations 1-7 of the Meeting Management and Planning Committee (see MMPC report). The main issue is whether HL would like to help form a multi-society meeting planning committee, or whether HL should remain represented on an ASIH planning committee. A main concern is how apportionment of representatives between the JMIH societies on the committee will be worked out.

Mahoney moved that HL accept MMPC recommendations 1-7 (see MMPC Report). This motion was approved unanimously.

Mahoney then discussed MMPC recommendations 8-19 (see report). These recommendations involve reducing the time of the JMIH which consequently would limit the number of oral presentations while expanding the poster sessions. The ASIH banquet would potentially be eliminated. The JMIH is locked into the current format through 2014.

Cundall moved to approve items 8-16 (see MMPC Report). This motion was approved unanimously.

Item 18 involving entering into a long-term agreement with a major hotel chain provoked discussion, and several board members wondered how such a long-term agreement would reduce meeting costs.

Heatwole moved to support item 18 (see MMPC Report) with further investigation. This motion was approved unanimously.

Herpetologica Editor's Report - Moon

Moon indicated that the journal is back on schedule and will stay on schedule. The transition to a new manuscript handling website (PeerTrack) has pros and cons. While it retains “track changes”, other features are difficult to use. Reilly noted that an upgrade is planned to fix some of these issues. Moon noted that *Herpetologica* published a Point of View article from the most recent Distinguished Herpetologist (Julian Lee). He has also appointed new associate editors (Rulon Clark, Richard Lehtinen, and Christopher Austin) to replace editors that have stepped down (Troy Baird, Paul Chippendale, and Frank Burbrink). Moon wondered whether the Editor's report would be tied to the fiscal year as had been the tradition with the previous editor (Mathis). Mahoney noted that there is no financial reason why they should be linked.

Moon moved that the calendar year of the Herpetologica Editor's Report should be changed to correspond to the publication schedule of the journal. This motion was approved unanimously.

Muths indicated that the *Journal of Herpetology* is interested in whether researchers who have submitted manuscripts have also reviewed manuscripts, and the journal would like to know whether a librarian that they are working with could have access to the previous reviewer database of *Herpetologica* for the same purpose. The journal editors are experiencing increasing difficulty in getting professionals to commit to manuscript reviews.

Moon moved to allow the Journal of Herpetology affiliated librarian to have access to Herpetologica's records. This motion was approved unanimously.

Moon wondered whether or not it would be useful to try to standardize formats across the herpetological journals, and the Board supported this idea.

Moon moved to investigate standardizing the format of Herpetologica and Herpetological Monographs with that of the Journal of Herpetology. This motion was approved unanimously.

Allen Press Report – Reilly, Bone, Miller

Reilly and Bone indicated that AP has been active in adding the journals to more aggregators, and it is also emphasizing institutional subscriptions in other regions of the globe such as Asia. A lapsed subscriber campaign is being used in addition to the usual renewal campaigns to maintain subscriptions. Press releases that are being sent to interested journalists are being used to highlight specific articles in the journals. BioONE is also being used to feature articles. AP is holding a back issue sale, and it may donate remaining back issues to non-profits to reduce storage costs. Reilly noted that while revenue has declined slightly, expenses have declined slightly as well.

Heatwole wondered about the implications of the journals eventually going completely electronic. Reilly expressed some doubt that this would happen in the near future since many subscribers still want hard copies. If this did happen, the revenue to expense ratio would be expected to stay similar to what it is now. Savitzky noted that ASIH has offered electronic-only subscriptions for several years now, with regular members and especially students shifting to online-only. Reilly indicated that AP would survey the membership about moving in this direction.

Miller introduced herself and how she deals with post-acceptance editing. Upcoming issues of *Herpetologica* are on schedule for distribution.

President's Report - Heatwole

Heatwole discussed the Memorandum of Understanding which had been previously approved by the Board (see President's report). Mullin wondered where HL's share of possible losses would be pulled from. Mahoney indicated that losses could be covered by the operating budget (royalty funds are an increasingly stable source of income), and then possibly by the endowment. Heatwole noted that signatories can pull out of the agreement with 18 months of advance notice.

Treasurer's Report - Mahoney

After fees, the endowment has increased 17% in value. It has been a good investment year, and the investments are well diversified thanks to the management of Tederick. Royalty income is substantial and has been increasing annually.

BioONE/AIBS Representative Report - Savitzky

Savitzky suggested that print journals may be more likely to disappear than Reilly suggested. In the process, societies may lose some members who like print, but the societies will save money by eliminating the printing and mailing costs. Compared to other disciplines, the herpetological archive has a decent shelf-life and good royalty potential.

Secretary's Report - Owen

Owen requested any additional materials for the wiki archive that would be of general interest to Board members. Ford suggested adding electronic copies of contracts.

Symposium Committee Report – de Sá

De Sá wondered why the current symposium proposal was not voted on in time for the JMIH planning meeting. Mahoney replied that there had been no time for a Board of Trustees vote on the proposal before the planning meeting, and that in the future there would be better communication about the timelines of both the Symposium and Meeting Planning committees.

Williams Award Committee Report – Muths

Muths indicated that there has been a good response from potential judges, and she expects the number of student applications to increase. Most applicants have been from the U. S. so far.

Graduate Studies Committee Report – Neuman-Lee

Neuman-Lee indicated that there has been strong interest in the calendars. Many prospective photos have been submitted, and the panel selected the final photos by February. However, there was difficulty arranging printing of the calendars through AP, so they have not been printed in time for sale at the Providence JMIH. Online vendors are now a possibility for printing the calendars and could be sold at PARC meetings or other venues. The second calendar will be ready for the Minneapolis JMIH meeting. Paul Hampton, co-chair of the committee, has defunded, so a replacement graduate student is needed. Neuman-Lee is willing to continue as co-chair.

Conservation Committee Report – Smith

Smith wondered whether he could periodically send information about the Conservation Committee's activities to the membership, and whether the committee could issue press releases. Ford noted that email blasts can be sent through the HL Website and through ZenScientist. Smith noted that the HL Conservation Committee is currently pursuing closer working relationships with the other society conservation committees.

Publications Secretary and Webmaster Report - Mullin

Mullin indicated that reports are now conforming to the calendar year of the Treasurer's report. The web-based forum is underutilized, and Mullin encouraged it to be used more as information can be put on the listserv very quickly. Mullin is still interested in getting a Spanish-language mirror site for the society.

Education Committee Report – Mullin

Mullin noted that the inaugural round of the Meritorious Teaching Award in Herpetology has been very successful. He encouraged the Board to support Bevier's request for further funding.

Mullin made a motion requesting \$200 in funding for the Meritorious Teaching Award in Herpetology for next year. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business:

New Honorary Members

Heatwole encouraged all board members, regular members, and student members to attend the HL Business Meeting since nominations will be taken for new honorary members to replace Ilya Darevsky, Henry Fitch, and Carl Gans. Cundall proposed a revision to the Bylaws that would allow electronic voting for Honorary Members from the HL membership. The Business Meetings currently have low attendance, and this would allow more participation from the membership.

Article I Sec 3 is amended as:

Honorary members shall be nominated by the Board of Trustees and at the General Business meeting, and additional nominations may be made from the floor. Honorary members shall be elected by a simple majority vote conducted by the general membership.

This revision to the HL Bylaws passed unanimously.

Lizards of the American Southwest Grant

Cundall made the following motions establishing a new graduate student research program for field research in American Southwest:

First Motion:

I move to create a new formal grant program for graduate student research with the following conditions:

1. funding to be supplied initially from royalties received from sales of Lizards of the American Southwest edited by Larry Jones and Rob Lovich, and any other contributions and accruals.
2. grants to be called the Jones-Lovich Grants in Herpetology.
3. grants to be awarded solely for herpetological field research in the American Southwest contingent upon availability of funds.
4. grant conditions and proposal requirements to be advertised along with the E. E. Williams Grant program in both *Herpetologica* and on the HL website.
5. proposals to be reviewed by a committee of three to five HL members. (I recommend that the committee chair invite Larry Jones and Rob Lovich to serve on the committee for as long as they wish.)

Second Motion:

I move that the treasurer explore possibilities for establishing endowments to support the E. E. Williams and the Jones-Lovich Grants.

The motions were approved unanimously.

There would be a single award per year with \$1000 awarded per year. Moon noted that he could get an announcement into the September issue of *Herpetologica*. Cundall will find people to serve on the committee.

Distinguished Herpetologist

Heatwole requested nominations for the next Distinguished Herpetologist by August 10 2010.

Contract with Allen Press

Mahoney noted that the current 5 year contract runs through end of 2010. It will automatically renew for 5 more years. HL has a good current arrangement with AP, especially the manuscript submission website and paid editor. AP does all institutional subscription work, and HL splits royalties with AP. HL pays AP to publish the journals. The royalty income is excellent and is now around 50% of the annual income of HL. Mahoney suggested that HL could consider requesting a shorter contract. Moon indicated that his frustrations were minor compared to the benefits derived from the AP relationship. Despite the problems with the PeerTrack system, editorial support is very good and responsive. Heatwole noted that Taylor and Francis have made a big push for HL business. He suggested that if HL is interested in a relationship with another publisher, then open bids should be put in from multiple publishers. The Board consensus was to try to negotiate a new contract with AP, preferably less than 5 years.

Membership

Heatwole noted that there will be a meeting of the Membership Committee later in JMIH.

Collaboration with other herpetological societies

Heatwole noted that steps in this direction have already been taken with the Memorandum of Understanding. Interdependence should increase over time. Heatwole requested more ideas for moving in this direction. Mullin noted that the Meritorious Teaching Award is a step in this direction.

***Herpetologica* Editor's term**

Moon indicated that his current term of 2 years will be up at the end of 2010, and he has no current plans to step down as *Herpetologica* Editor as long as the Board is satisfied with his performance. Cundall thanked Moon for getting journal back on schedule.

Heatwole moved that Moon be reappointed as Herpetologica Editor for new 2-year term. The motion was approved unanimously.

Donations of back issues to Butantan Institute

Moon indicated that he is looking into the possibility of donating back issues to the Butantan Institute since one of their libraries recently burned down. The Board agreed that HL would donate part of the shipping expense if donations are needed.

President Heatwole adjourned the meeting at 17:40.