

## **Minutes of the 2010 Business Meeting of the Herpetologists' League**

**9 July 2010**

**The Westin Providence, Rhode Island, USA**

**Heatwole brought the meeting to order at 6:05**

Highlights of Board of Trustees meeting were discussed:

### **Meeting Planning report – Mahoney**

The next (2011) meeting is in Minneapolis, and the 2012 meeting in Vancouver is a joint meeting with the World Congress of Herpetology. The 2013 meeting is in Albuquerque. In 2014, the meeting may be shortened to 4 days.

### **Past President report – Cundall**

An E. E. Williams award committee was created to support graduate research, and it is currently chaired by Erin Muths.

### **President's Report – Heatwole**

HL has joined a Memorandum of Understanding with ASIH and SSAR regarding shared financial responsibilities for the Joint Meeting. Dawn Wilson is finishing her term of chairing the Graduate Research Award Committee, and the incoming chair is Robert Espinoza. The Herpetologists' League thanks Wilson for her service. Brad Moon's tenure as Editor of *Herpetologica* has been extended.

### **Treasurer's Report – Mahoney**

HL's current income comes both from memberships and from royalties from AP subscriptions. The major expense is the publication of the journals. HL's asset manager is now managing the endowment to increase its earnings, and this endowment is now supporting graduate research grants.

### **Secretary's Report – Owen**

The last election in the autumn of 2010 was run electronically through Allen Press. Upcoming elections will still occur electronically, and any suggestions are welcomed to improve the process.

### **Publications Secretary's and Webmaster's report – Mullin**

Any needed backissues of HL's journals will be shipped to the Butantan Institute which was recently hit by a fire. Other backissues will be donated to charitable causes. Suggestions for the HL website are welcomed. The website's discussion board is currently underutilized.

### **Joint SSAR/HL Auction - Heatwole**

Heatwole suggested that HL could contribute more to the joint auction. Backissues and more of other items could be donated in the future in the name of the society. Mahoney noted that HL has only participated in the auction for the past few years, and someone from HL should help Watkins-Colwell of SSAR on the auction. Muths suggested that HL could make its members more aware of the auction and the possibility of donating items. Ford and Cundall noted that many contributors are both HL and SSAR members, and these donations are not usually identified by society. This could be creating the perception that HL is not really contributing to the auction.

### ***Herpetologica* Editor – Moon**

*Herpetologica* is now on time, and when Moon started as editor it had been six months behind. New associate editors have been appointed, and they are doing an excellent job. A new website (PeerTrack) is being used for submissions, and this has resulted in fewer submission problems (although it has also resulted in a few new editorial problems). Numbers of submissions have decreased slightly, although this seems within normal variation. The acceptance rate is at about 60%. There is currently a good relationship with AP which returns really good royalties. The contract with AP ends at the end of 2010, and the intention is to renew the contract. HL is moving toward more electronic publication of its journals. The impact factor is increasing for the journals.

### **Honorary Member nominations – Heatwole**

There are currently ten Honorary Members. No more than five can be from the U. S. and Canada combined. Three slots are now open with the passing of Ilya Darevsky, Henry Fitch, and Carl Gans. Nominations were requested from the floor. No additional nominations were received, so nominations were closed. Voting will now occur online as per the Bylaws amended in the Board of Trustees meeting.

### **Conservation Committee report – Smith**

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared western populations of the Northern Leopard Frog threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and the Conservation Committee submitted a comment on this status. However, the threatened status may no longer be declared. The

committee discussed a ban on dangerous pythons and boas. However, it was decided that the committee had a high diversity of opinion on this issue, so it was tabled. Regarding trap/neuter/release programs for stray cats, the Conservation Committee feels the literature has been misread, and a position statement on this issue is being written. The Conservation Committee depends on members of HL to inform them of pertinent conservation issues, and the committee will send out periodic email blasts to the society to keep it updated.

***Lizards of the American Southwest royalties - Cundall***

The royalties have been set up as a research fund, and this was initiated when Linda Ford was president of HL. The Board of Trustees has approved the Jones-Lovich Grant in Herpetology to support graduate student research on the biology of reptiles and amphibians in the American Southwest. Mahoney noted that an announcement will go out shortly with more details. HL now has a presentation award as well as two research grant awards. Cundall indicated that the committee will soon be formed. has been set up as research fund, initiated when Ford president

**EE Williams Award Committee – Muths**

Muths thanked the judges, and comments from the 2010 competition have been returned to participants. Most participants were from the U. S. and Canada, and hopefully there will be more international submissions in the future. Winners of the awards for 2010 were:

Conservation: Rob Bragg

Behavior: Emer Sherri

Physiology: Matt Holding

Ecology: Julienne Ng

There was no award given this year in Morphology/Systematics. The due date for submissions is now December 1.

**Herpetological Education Committee – Bevier**

The 2010 Meritorious Teaching Award in Herpetology was awarded to Whit Gibbons. ASIH is currently developing a parallel teaching award in ichthyology.

**Graduate Studies Committee – Neuman-Lee**

HL's recent activities, such as the creation of new student awards, have increased student membership. The Graduate Studies Committee is currently producing a calendar showcasing student photos. Unfortunately, this was not available for sale at the 2010 meeting, but it will be ready for the 2011 meeting. The committee is still looking for more ideas to encourage students to join HL.

## **Vice President’s Report, Long Range Planning and Finance and Membership Committee Reports - Trauth**

Trauth discussed the following ideas for alleviating HL’s recent decline in membership:

- 1) Recruit more Ph.D. students as reviewers of manuscripts submitted to be published in *Herpetologica* (the Journal). The benefits here relate to a positive atmosphere of “nurturing of future reviewers” by bringing students into the reviewing and editing process. Moon noted that Peer Track allows researchers to set up accounts and to volunteer as reviewers. One does not have to be submitting a manuscript to volunteer as a reviewer.
- 2) Increase marketing options for the Journal. Moon noted that Allen Press is currently doing a good job with this, and it has been issuing press releases that have been garnering attention for the journal.
- 3) Provide on-line availability of the Journal to students at a reasonable cost and provide the Journal to students who review manuscripts at no cost.
- 4) Address Journal content. There are issues concerning the types of articles published in the Journal (e.g., the presence of too many species descriptions). Another related issue would be the partitioning of the cover Table of Contents into sub-heading to reflect a focused of sets of articles (e.g., similar to the *Journal of Herpetology*). Several members pointed out that the journal contains a diversity of subjects in addition to species descriptions, and there has to be somewhere to publish this kind of article. The various student awards include several categories besides systematics. One possible addition to the journal could be “point of view” articles.
- 5) Inquire, via survey, about the HL website use by the membership. Mullin noted that hits for the HL website increased by 30% last year. Create more important student-driven activities. One such activity would be a biennial symposium organized by grad students, but supervised by membership volunteers or mentors. Allocated funds and awards for the top three presentations. A student noted that the SSAR/HL social has been great for students being able to meet society officers, and having it before the reception serves as a great icebreaker. Another member noted that there used to be a mentor program for students attending the meeting, and this is something that could be reinstated. Trauth recommended that HL increase student participation in the Business Meeting. Mahoney noted that the HL awards should be announced at the meeting like SSAR does, rather than at the banquet. Muths suggested changing the name of the Business meeting to the “Membership Meeting” and serving refreshments.
- 6) Ask long-standing members to contact former students (and possibly for them to contact their students) to encourage a continued membership. One member suggested that one neglected area for potential future members would be wildlife management professionals. Heatwole noted that he will be trying to set up an agreement with the

other Joint Meeting societies about multiple memberships incrementally reducing meeting costs.

- 7) Identify who exactly represents “generation ‘X’” (age-wise) through a survey. We could fondly refer to them as the “crucifer age group.” This young generation of herpetologists’ needs to be intently listened to by the HL leadership and coddled, so to speak. Some of them will be the society’s future leaders. Make the Journal articles available as free PDFs to students, but limit the free access only to the previous year’s set of articles. A member noted that this could be a good marketing tool, even given that most are already available as PDFs to members and through library databases. All members already get electronic access to backissues. Kraus suggested packaging best of Herpetologica citation classics to pass out to students. Moon noted that Allen Press now highlights the most recent highly downloaded papers.
- 8) Acknowledge all long-standing members by listing their membership time-in-years and/or their service to HL on the HL website. This would not represent a competition, but rather would show membership commitment to HL. Also, we could ask volunteers from this group to provide statements as to “what it means to be a member of HL.”
- 9) Allow use of the HL logo by members. I think students would enjoy revealing on their personal web pages this affiliation. Mullin noted that this would not be a problem.

**President Heatwole adjourned the meeting at 19:40.**