

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

30 July 2014

Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN, USA

Board members in attendance: Marty Crump, David Cundall, Tiffany Doan, Meredith Mahoney, Stephen Mullin, Stan Trauth, Ken Cabarle, Ann Paterson, Kim Lovich, Jim Spotila, David Green, John Herman

Committee members and guests: Roy McDiarmid, Karen Ridgway (Allen Press), Al Savitzky, David Auth (guest), Craig Guyer

Regrets: Michael Harvey, Hal Heatwole, Christopher Petersen, Carol Spencer

Spotila called the meeting to order at 1406.

Opening remarks/question: The Board met in private to consider the question: "Should meetings be open to the public?" It was agreed that it would be open but if things got too sensitive we would close it for those segments.

The meeting then was opened to non-Board members.

All of the following reports were approved unanimously:

1) 2013 BOT and Business Meeting minutes – Herman

The 2013 Board of Trustees Meeting minutes were approved as amended. The spelling of Karen Ridgway will be corrected in the final report.

2) Meeting Management and Planning Committee report – Mahoney

David Green will be taking over as Chair of this committee.

SSAR will be meeting separately for the JMIH for 2015 in Reno.

Committee recommends that we meet with the other societies in New Orleans for 2016, a motion was made, seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Committee recommends that we meet with the other societies for 2017, a motion was made, seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Due to the fact that the 2015 meeting is separate from SSAR the question was raised whether we should run the graduate student social and the live auction because there is a lot of energy and money required. Discussion: in general the graduate student social was deemed

more important and if we should eliminate one activity it should be the auction. Kim Lovich suggested that Southwest PARC may be able to help. SW PARC could also meet in Reno and they would be able to run the auction and split the proceeds.

A motion was made that HL carry out the graduate student social but not the auction, it was seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

As a follow-up, it was suggested that a committee be formed to deal with SSAR in the planning of the graduate student reception and live auction in the future. The all societies joint meeting planning committee was deemed to not be appropriate to handle just HL – SSAR joint dealings. This new committee will also work with SW PARC to determine the feasibility of carrying out the live auction during the 2015 JMIH in Reno.

Spotila will form the new committee.

Heide Burke is the main K-State coordinator for planning the JMIHs. Heide and her staff will require a pay rate increase of about 25-35% for the new contract period. This cost will be divided among all societies. The question was raised by David Green, should we look into a new organizing group? Discussion: K-State has been very supportive but this is a business agreement and likely any organizing company would provide the same level of care and commitment. We have no idea if the new rates from K-State are competitive with other organizations. So, looking into other possibilities would not be a bad idea. Therefore, the committee should meet with the other societies to determine what to do.

3) Past President's report – Trauth

Ken Cabarle and John Herman were introduced as new members of the Board.

4) President's report – Spotila

Questions have been raised about the possibility that the societies join into one society? Spotila is not supportive of this and thinks HL should embrace being the most prestigious herpetological society. Green and Spotila will work on making the society more visible and ensure that it has a greater impact. Possibly through increased funding opportunities for students and a more functional web design.

The bylaws call for us to meet once a month. However, it may be prudent to meet more often as issues are raised or ready to be resolved. The board could meet electronically to deal with things that come up in between annual meeting times. The question was raised, do we need to change the bylaws or can we just call meetings? Discussion: The bylaws are vague as to whether a teleconference would count as an official meeting.

A motion was made that language, as provided in the President's report, needs to be added to allow for these in-between meetings, it was seconded, and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Current award is \$1,000 for Distinguished Herpetologist Award, which seems inadequate given the rising costs of travel, registration, and lodging. It was suggested that HL change the award to reflect these increases to make it more prestigious. Discussion: A number of options were suggested: HL could reimburse the travel costs for award recipients, the registration costs, and/or increase the base award amount. McDiarmid brought up that some members, e.g. Federal employees, may not be able to accept awards and/or reimbursements. Cundall mentioned that the initial idea of the award was that the “honor” was the true award and the monetary gift was more of a bonus to be used as the recipient wanted since they would likely be attending the meetings anyways. Additional discussion suggested a keepsake, plaque, etc., be given as well.

A motion was made to increase the award amount to \$1,500 and have a plaque included with the award. Friendly amendment to the motion was that it takes effect immediately. Vote was in favor unanimously. Whit Gibbons, this year’s recipient, will receive \$1,500 and a plaque.

5) Treasurer’s report – Mahoney

Positive financial year, net assets increased. Book sales of \$1,600 for Snakes of the World.

Calendars were a net loss. Journal pub costs are largest expense followed by meetings.

Firm managing HL accounts hired a specialist to deal with our funds.

Mahoney recommends that we allow this because it is a no cost opportunity to better manage our assets. Vote was in favor unanimously.

Some tax implications with how the IRS is now handling non-profits was discussed. Some graduate awards and the distinguished herpetologist award need to have tax forms filed.

Overall we are in good shape financially.

6) Long Range Planning –Green

The committee will be meeting on Friday, August 1st to discuss ideas.

7) Secretary’s report – Herman

No print copies of the Board of Trustees packet will be provided for cost and environmental concerns. Discussion found that the PBWorks website is a functional file repository and should continue to be used as such.

8) Membership- Trauth

Membership has dropped. We need to identify mechanisms to generate new members and keep current ones. Discussion: We should create a calendar and send it to the grad students to invite them to be more involved. We need to do a better job organizing the marketing of the

calendars at the meeting. We need to get the graduate committee back up and running. Graduate students are joining for awards but not staying. Maybe we should target early career professors and post-docs rather than students. We need to increase our on-line presence. More are favoring on-line publications, which may lead to unsustainable print costs in the future. Trauth, Spotila and Green will work on plans to get this done. We will talk as a board again during the next teleconference.

9) Publications Secretary/Webmaster's report – Cabarle

Website hits are about the same. The website should be re-designed. It needs to be more user-friendly and attractive.

10) Herpetologica Editor's report – Mullin

The journal is on schedule and manuscripts are in the pipeline for the next issues. The associate editors and editorial board have been a big help. Author's instructions will no longer be in print, just on-line. This will reduce the September page number.

The Index of Herpetologica for 1996-2015 is looming, should we offer it in print? Karen Ridgway suggested an on-line searchable database. Tori Best should be someone we contact about putting it together.

Spotila asked if there is more room in the journal. Mullin responded that we are under the contracted page allotment.

11) Herpetological Monographs Editor's report – Harvey

Mullin reported that everything is going well.

12) Allen Press publishing report – Karen Ridgway

The impact factors were just released and both Herpetologica and Herpetological Monographs received high marks and continue to be amongst the highest rated journals in the field: Herpetological Monographs has the highest ranking in the world (with a score of 1.333) and Herpetologica is in 3rd (1.067). The impact factor is based on the previous 2 years of journal performance. Both of HL's journals still rank in the #1 and #2 spots where other metrics are concerned -- Immediacy index (where Herpetologica does best), 5-yr impact factor (where Herpetological Monographs does best), and Article influence score (where Herpetological Monographs does best).

Financials are down a little bit and will likely be down again this year. The possibility of making virtual books, combining articles on a common topic from both journals could be a source of new funds.

The new page layout is going into effect and a sample was shown.

It was suggested that we need to increase our social media effort. Altmetrics, tracks activity on each article including social network citations or mentions, which could be a tool we can use to track the effectiveness in our changes in social media. Some of these changes could include more engaging materials on the website such as videos to go along with the articles.

HL and Allen Press just signed a new 5-year partnership.

13) Archives Committee report – McDiarmid

The Smithsonian is continuing to archive materials for us. It was suggested that we need to be encouraging more additions to the archives. Archives are to this point in paper format only.

14) Symposium Committee report – Leaché

Mahoney reported that February 1st is the deadline for symposium idea submission at the 2016 New Orleans JMIH. We need to work on Symposium ideas while at this conference.

15) Graduate Research Award Committee report – Espinoza

Mahoney reported that the award winners will be announced at the HL business meetings since the traditional last day ceremony will not be held due to the 4-day format.

16)) Williams Award Committee report – Paterson

This year's Williams Award was a smooth process and the proposals were very good. For the first time, honorable mentions were given in most categories and the student response was very positive to this change. The judge system is complex but students are getting a lot of great feedback. Next year will run in a similar way.

17) Jones-Lovich Award Committee report – Spencer

No Report given.

18) Conservation Committee report – Lovich

The committee will keep track of conservation issues to see if HL wants to put out a letter of support or awareness. Such as, the possible ban on gassing rattlesnakes. HL was going to write a letter of support but the legislative proposal has stalled. So, when it comes back we'll re-address. Also, the committee would like to write a letter of support for changes in the Clean Water Act and will be addressing this with the membership.

The committee would like to add more people, particularly students, and is happy to accept any ideas or leads on interesting legislation.

Southwest PARC would like to meet with HL in Reno next year. A discussion should begin to figure out how to make it work best.

19) Herpetological Education Committee report – Guyer

The meritorious teaching award in herpetology and two pre-baccalaureate travel awards were funded. These will be announced at the opening ceremony of the conference.

The committee kind of fell apart due to lack of documentation on the roles. Therefore, some deadlines were missed. New documentation was drafted so this doesn't happen again.

SSAR is funding the registration fees for the pre-baccalaureate travel awards this year without HL contributing but in the future it needs to be sorted out to avoid issues.

20) BioOne/AIBS report – Savitzky

AIBS has many organismal societies that reside under their umbrella. They have two main foci: public policy and education. In particular, conservation and funding, mostly NSF. It represents a notification center for breaking news on funding opportunities and issues.

BioOne provides an on-line subscription base. Recently they started publishing their own journal: Elementa, which is an all on-line open-source journal focusing on human-wildlife interactions. They need manuscript submissions and we should spread the word.

21) Graduate Studies Committee report – Neuman-Lee

It was reported that Neuman-Lee would be stepping down because she will no longer be a student. That she suggested adding an incentive to make the position more attractive. And that she would consider still working on the graduate calendars.

Mullin suggested that maybe a PhD student would provide more continuity.

Spotila suggested to have the grad students send pics for the calendar. These pictures would then be used to develop the calendar, which would then be sent back out to the new students that join. We need to work out some more details about a new calendar system.

It was suggested that maybe the graduate student chair of this committee should also act as the Facebook coordinator.

22) Honorary Memberships – Spotila

There was some preliminary email discussion on whether HL should require biographical information be made available to the membership before a vote is made on new honorary members. This year there were 18 new candidates suggested for a possible 6 slots.

Discussion: How do we identify who gets nominated for a membership vote? Additionally, should it be a vote by the membership at all or should the membership just ratify the Board's decision? It was suggested that it is in our best interest to increase our diversity of

candidates to better represent our membership and the field. It was proposed that we take an action on this discussion at this meeting. There were several options to consider, we could work under the current bylaws and proceed as usual, re-write bylaws and then proceed, or suspend it until further notice and not nominate candidates this year. It was felt that we don't need to take or act on nominations at this moment. Additionally this item should be suspended until after revisions to the bylaws are considered (see New Business).

23) **New Business**

- **Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws revisions – Green**

Green looked through the bylaws and noticed that the duties and roles for officers, committees, awards, etc. are not consistent or clear. In general, a Constitution is more set rules that should be difficult to change and provide for clear guidance on major issues. But the bylaws are the mechanisms to carry out those guiding principles, which should be easier to change. Specifically, a clause for Dissolution needs to be added, the Mission needs to be moved up-front, and a more direct statement that the Society is governed by Board is needed. The biggest problem is that the amendment process for the bylaws is a simple majority rule Board vote and the Constitution amendment process was in the bylaws. This means that with only two majority rule votes by the Board anything in the document could easily be changed, which reduces the power of the Constitution. So, the process to amend the Constitution needs to be moved into the Constitution. Green recommends that the Constitution and bylaws be thoroughly explored and re-worked. Spotila suggested that this would require the original papers to make sure we are working off the full document.

A motion to develop a committee to re-work the document was made, seconded, and a unanimous vote in favor was recorded.

Mullin brought up that his term as Editor of Herpetologica was ending.

A motion to re-appoint Mullin was made, seconded, and a unanimous vote in favor was recorded.

Mullin asked that the K-State registration site for next year's meeting should not exclude SSAR members from attending at the student price, since SSAR is meeting separately. Because we don't want to distance ourselves from further graduate student participation. We also don't want graduate students to get more confused with the registration process. We need to talk with the other societies. So, the joint meeting committee will look into this.

Meeting adjourned at 1727.