

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

11 July 2018

JF Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Grand Lilac Ballroom, Rochester, New York, USA

HL President David Sever called the meeting to order at 14:09.

A. Welcome & Introductions and Guest Presentations

Board members in attendance: David Sever, Laurie Mauger, Willem Roosenburg, David Green, Lori Neuman-Lee, Stephen Mullin, Lisa Hazard, Chelsea Clyde-Brockway, Renata Platenberg

Committee members and guests: Al Savitzky, Pat Gregory, Peter Burns (Allen Press), Carol Spencer

1) Update on BioOne. Guest presenter: Susi Skomal, President/CEO, BioOne

HL journals are doing very well. Impact factor for *Herp Monographs* is 2, ranks 33rd amongst 166 zoological journals, and earned a total of \$8876 during 2017, and since 2003 when journal first entered BioOne, we returned \$76,708. *Herpetologica* impact factor is 1.013, 90 of 166 zoological journals, earned \$29,153, total of \$285,435 since joining in 2004. Total BioOne royalties returned to publishers since 2001 is \$45 million, represents 65% of what BioOne has earned on subscriptions.

BioOne is moving to new platform in 2019 as a cost saving measure to continue returning on mission to publisher and avoid raising rates/subscriptions rates to libraries. New tax laws affecting endowments and other expenditures; the move is to a fellow Not-for-Profit, this is a common practice and will be a seamless transition. No reflection on Allen Press, which is a founding organization of BioOne; just need to save cash.

A herpetologist is one of the winners of BioOne's new Ambassador Award for early career author published prior year, nominated by a publication participating in BioOne. There were 18 nominations, 16 submitted their synopsis of article in plain English (a way that the public can grasp the importance of what they are doing). Winner was Lawrence Woods for research on hawksbill sea turtles, published in *Journal of Herpetology*.

Discussion: Sever asked about the relationship with JSTOR; Skomal responded that the two are not related, although both are not for profit with aligned missions, most journals are in both. HL also receives revenue from JSTOR through Allen Press.

Savitsky pointed out that according to fiscal information, the society gets more income from publishing royalties than from membership, so publishing is the primary source of income.

BioOne was started as offering incremental revenue, it was never intended to cover costs of publishing, but over time more papers and more citations increases revenue.

2) Future meeting update

- **JMIH 2019: Al Savitsky** presented overview of 2019 meeting in Snowbird, Utah. Venue is Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort, 30 mi from airport, 8000 ft elevation, all events entirely self-contained within site; three buildings with variety of accommodation units, convenience store with booze and such. Poster sessions will be in tent outside, lots of gathering spaces although food options are somewhat limited and pricey. Children activities for 2 of the days. Venue has event permits for serving alcohol. While in Utah can explore the Mighty Five national parks and Bears Ears and Escalante monuments before they disappear.
- **Meeting Management Committee and planning update—Henry Mushinski**

Mushinski thanked the society for the Honorary Herp League membership.

The meeting management committee comprises 3 herpetologists and 3 ichthyologists with all societies represented. We were requested to review our relationship with K-state, which is operating the 2018 & 2019 meetings, and after that will switch to different management company. The committee sent out detailed requests for proposals and 7 companies responded. There was one clear winner: Burk & Associates, Inc. (BAI), and the committee has entered into a 3-year contract starting in 2020. They specialize in scientific meetings, international, family run. Lori Strong is the new “Heidi”.

Reviewed venues for next 3 years, but many came back too expensive. Typically, the conference pays for hotel rooms and the meeting spaces come free. Meeting venues were narrowed down to 3 sites that rose to top:

- Norfolk VA in 2020 (22-26 July)—nice town, room rates reasonable, on river, Marriot Hotel, local host is Eric Hilton from VIMS, lots of local attractions, maybe even a special beer.
- Phoenix AZ in 2021 (21-25 July) Renaissance Hotel, reasonable room rates, downtown Phoenix, lots of bars. Desert access.
- Spokane WA in 2022 (28 Jul – 1 Aug) Room rates \$155; downtown, on river.

All 3 hotels owned by Marriott umbrella, one benefit is transfer of info on client/meeting, guests can enroll in rewards.

Societies have to approve venues so committee can move forward with planning. AES has agreed, ASIH too, just HL needs to decide now because of the 3-year agreement. Sever stated that BOT will decide after the presentation from SSAR on the 2021 meeting.

Discussion: Roosenburg asked about savings, Mushinski responded that we’ll pay BAI less to run meeting than we pay K-state. Meeting costs themselves may or may not go down. Green added that BAI doesn’t add on fee scales, all costs are up front. Room rate is important but so are the fees that accumulate. BAI knows how to negotiate to keep costs lower.

Short discussion on holding meetings at academic institutions, which has become a thing of the past: campuses don't have infrastructure for catering and are more expensive in the long run.

B. Minutes of Previous Meetings

3) 2017 BoT and Business meeting minutes

Correction needed for Wendy Palen's name. No additional discussion. Minutes approved.

C. Officers' Reports

4) President's report—David Sever

Wendy Palen has resigned as of 1 Jan, so we need a new communication secretary, requires an election.

John Herman, previous HL secretary, died 2 July 2019 after long battle with cancer. John was hard worker for the society.

Board needs to approve some minor changes in bylaws:

- Change already approved: VP vacancy shall be filled by special election.
- Standing committees: add HL Distinguished Service Award, remove the Education committee because it's now a joint committee with SSAR.
- Joint committees:
 - Removal of Committee for Reviewing Standard Names (joint with SSAR and ASIH)
D Green: it's actually an SSAR committee, was never a joint committee, so housekeeping warrants removal.
 - Addition of Education Committee, joint with SSAR
 - Addition/formalization of ad hoc committee for Code of Conduct
 - Addition of Live Auction Committee, joint with SSAR;
We should have representative on committee, but haven't done that. David Green: we have a memorandum of understanding that outlines what we do.
- Two-year term (renewable) for representatives on those committees.

MOTION: to approve changes to Bylaws. Motion passes with no discussion.

ACTION: Bylaw changes need ratification by membership at business meeting.

David Green was president until 31 Dec, we did some early stuff with Allen Press, including copyright license access agreement for open access articles: Mullin explained that one article is identified for each issue by editor as a promotional articles, Allen Press does a press release about the articles which are then designated as open access for a limited time, not paid for by author; licenses applied to articles that are open access indefinitely are paid for by author. Also

Allen Press started using software to check plagiarism (manuscripts submitted since April), Allen Press is paying for this service.

Lori Neuman-Lee is new councilor.

David Green, on behalf of Meeting Management Committee, sent out info on childcare: Green confirmed that there is childcare at this meeting, organized the same as last year, and HL is contributing toward cost, but there is still no permanent childcare policy. There was discussion on whether BIA would be able to establish childcare but there are problems with liability. Snowbird has a camp, but other venues we need to do it ad hoc.

HL received a royalty check for \$28,000; publishing agreement expires at the end of this year, have gone back & forth about new contract, paid dues and are still member society of AIBS, contract with JSTOR modified somewhat to make journals available in electronic format.

Sara Ruane sent results of deliberations of the symposium committee, BOT supported recommendations for 2 symposia, HL is co-sponsoring those at Utah.

Kristine Grayson resigned as VP, so had special election, and Willem Roosenburg is new VP.

Discussion about the HL website: Ann Paterson has identified some problems with current website. Laura Gibbons designed the website, we pay her \$25 a month to do the updates, plus a yearly fee of \$120 for hosting, but things haven't been updated. Mullin & Mauger stated that they haven't had the same problems. Paterson had suggested that we change to Word Press format and give the HL Board access to make updates. Sever indicated a willingness to keep Gibbons as webmaster. It was determined that the Communications Secretary (Wendy Palen) is the one who is supposed to send updates to the website.

HL awards will be presented after keynote speakers and hopefully there will be plaques.

Sever also stated that HL has received another proposal for publishing the journal from Sage and would like to form an ad hoc committee from the Long-term Committee and journal editors to look into options for publishing contracts. This has to be settled by end of the year.

ACTION: Ad hoc committee formed to examine publishing proposals.

5) Past President's report—David Green

Last 6 months of presidency were highlighted by elections without secretary. Erin Muths, Wendy Palen, and Green ran the elections. Outgoing presidents thank everyone who helps the League, and congratulate winners, console losers, pass baton to incoming president, and offer services as advisor as needed. It's been a pleasure to serve league and great honor.

6) Past Vice President's Report—David Sever

Remaining months as vice president spent communicating with others on Code of Conduct Committee, first version is appended to 2018 BOT report.

7) Vice President's Report—Willem Roosenburg

Roosenburg stated that he's honored to be elected and is here to serve. Today met with the Long-range Planning Membership and Finance Committee. Items discussed included the cost of shifting to new meeting management, the ad hoc committee with editors with regards to resolving decision over Sage and Allen Press, and ways to improve and enhance membership, noting that student membership has increased but regular membership continues to decline.

The committee explored ideas for how to get students involved: workshops for students in getting started in becoming professional herpetologists, meet and greet with established herpetologists, and ideas for how to recruit undergraduates and bring them to meetings, such as special undergraduate poster session or elevator talk session. Laurie had idea of mini HL study abroad program/course that we can offer for credit. How do we recruit and retain more general members—awards? We already do that as the society that gives the most awards and money already. We are brainstorming.... Online access to scientific literature makes it easier to drop membership.

Mauger suggested a reduced intermediate membership for post-docs (not student and not full member). This would require a change in definition of "student".

Discussion on updates to website and social media sites, grad student committee used to do it then that task got transferred to the Communications Secretary, and the activity and quality of the activity has gone down. Original material, rather than retweets, should be higher, and having more administrators for social media would be a benefit, although HL offers a stipend of \$2000 as enticement for students to do the updates. The Communications Secretary should be asked to develop a list of things that the stipend supports. Roosenburg suggested John Mare's lab with his grad students might be good candidate. Erin Muths will continue as Nominations chair to locate the Communications Secretary, but she needs a committee.

8) Treasurer's Report—Laurie Mauger

Finished in positive this year, transferred a large amount of \$90,000 for Semlitsch Award to the investment account, leaving \$10,000 for payment of the last two awards. Publishing Secretary account was closed, transferred funds to main HL account. Investments are up, earned \$12,500 in investments, and royalties are coming in. Memberships come through Christy Classi who manages the memberships through Wild Apricot; her contract up in October and this is renewable if we like her. She's easy to work with, very responsive, does a great job. William's awards are distributed in April, Lovich award distributed in June. We are still getting royalties from lizards of American southwest that fund the Lovich award.

Mauger will be starting at Duke in the fall and no longer has the SUU email address. Mailing address will change when she finds a place to live.

9) Secretary's Report—Renata Platenberg

The Board had a few discussions via email that have been put into report; these were already covered by President Sever.

10) *Herpetologica* and *Herp Monographs* Editor's Report—Stephen Mullin

Summary statistics haven't changed much; same number of articles published in 2017, acceptance/rejection rates consistent with previous years; time to decision has decreased by a single day. Under-budget in terms of number of overall submissions for this year (2018), initial submissions by mid-July are lower than previous years. Looking for new additional submissions: encourage colleagues to publish in *Herpetologica*. Impact factor reported by Susi is from June 2018 report based on 2017 volume, 1.333 is the 2016 volume in report released in 2017.

Mullin stated that he's been doing this since 2013, and his ability to serve as department chair, mentor grad students, and *Herpetologica* editor is taxing. He has approached Sara Woodley (guest editor of special edition), who has tentatively agreed to be considered as editor, which requires appointment by board and HL election. Mullin's term ends in 2019, but he would like to do a transition period because it was so helpful when Brad Moon served a year. Mullin stated that he's loved this job and the society, but there's too many competing interests for his time.

Sever agreed that Sara is an excellent candidate. Mullin made the point that Sara has not been a regular attendee of JMIH; the Editorship requires ~350-400 hours per year, and made the suggestion that HL comp registration fees for editor of both journals to help make the position easier to handle. This is within president fiat authority and a bylaw amendment is not required.

Roosenburg asked what percentage of submissions are from non-HL members, Mullin responded that those are relatively few. He had received one request from international asking for a page charge waiver, it's editor's discretion to grant that. Herp League members can request waivers for page charges, and where there are multiple authors there's usually someone who is HL member.

Sever stated that the society will miss Mullin as editor, and that the HL has been blessed with the most efficient and knowledgeable editors.

Mullin extended apologies for Michael Harvey who is conducting research in Vienna.

11) Communications Secretary's Report—Wendy Palen (absent, report read into record by Platenberg)

HL has a vibrant social media presence through regular posts, have increased social media presence by adding 28% growth in twitter followers, and Facebook showed a 7.5% growth. Report includes some statistics on gender and age and geography.

The report highlighted problems with HL website, i.e., it's not compliant with google search security and has a dated design that is difficult to navigate. None of us are able to make updates on the website. Recommends consultation with Laura Gibbons and Ann Paterson and suggests offering a contract to a web developer to translate website to WordPress, which is non-technical and easy to learn, and allow multiple board members access to update the website.

Platenberg confirmed that this report, and all others discussed today, are on the HL PBworks site.

Discussion: The new communications secretary should decide whether a change is needed, but the website should be updated immediately. Ann knows someone who can do the change over, Sever can authorize investigation into use of WordPress. Wendy can suggest a replacement for communications secretary; the suggestion to have special election for editor and communication secretary was nixed: this position can be appointed *pro tem* then elected during normal election cycle, as bylaws prevent special elections. Mullin clarified that he's not resigning but wanted to start transitioning with new editor.

D. Standing Committee Reports

12) Symposium Committee—Sara Ruane (absent)

There will be two joint symposia next year.

13) Graduate Student Research Awards—Tim Mitchell, chair for last year (absent)

Alison Welch, Timothy Mitchell, and Laurie Mauger were judges for the oral competition, this year applicants needed to complete an additional step in submitting a supplementary lay summary. Possible some students were unable to apply because they either reflected more carefully about the appropriateness of their research or they didn't know about this step.

First place went to Décio T. Corrêa from the University of Texas at Austin. There were only 4 entries, so no runner up award. Hopefully future competitions will have more applicants.

14) EE Williams Award—Ann Paterson (absent)

Ann was disappointed at low number of applicants. It was commented that Ann is frustrated with problem with judges not providing adequate reviews to students.

15) Jones-Lovich Award—Carol Spencer

Lower number of submissions although within usual range, which is typically between 7-22; this year was 7. Same judges every year.

Winner this year is Van J. Wishingrad, University of Hawaii, winner will be announced at the HL Business Meeting (by Rob Lovich). Recipient will receive \$1000 award earned from royalties from Jones-Lovich book. Mauger confirmed that there are enough funds left for probably 3 more years.

Committee is recruiting more judges and maybe another chair.

16) Semlitsch Award Committee—Michelle Boone (absent)

No report submitted. Bill Peterman of Ohio State University was their choice. This is a \$5000 award for funding of a research project; award money goes to the university rather than the recipient. HL can't write a check but can present a coupon to the winner.

17) Graduate Student Committee—Chelsea Clyde-Brockway

Clyde-Brockway stated that she has renewed her chair position for 2 years although will be graduating next year; happy to keep helping out until replacement found. Sever stated that she can be brought into the BOT after her term as committee chair.

Calendar will be distributed at JMIH from Allen Press table and HL Business Meeting; all students and award winners get free calendar, \$10 to everyone else.

Facebook membership—low number of likes and followers this year compared with previous.

Committee organized workshop on Saturday lunchtime on scientific perceptions and how scientists deal with how they are perceived and engagement with public.

Discussion on logistics of Grad Student Social and the Live Auction. SSAR and HL working together and splitting the cost for the Social. Ann Paterson is not here to do the auction, maybe students could work on auction, which is being organized by Sean Graham this year. Sever is meeting with Rick Shine on Friday and will ask if he needs help.

E. Joint and External Committee Reports

18) BioOne/AIBS and Liaison—Al Savitzky

BioOne report is unnecessary, because we heard from Susi Skomal. AIBS is busy with legislative stuff because of need to be busy with legislative stuff. Not much to report on the Liaison Committee; it will meet this week to discuss professional/fiscal management, financial officer activities. All treasurers will have a better time if given professional management, and BAI is also offering financial management in addition to meeting management. Savitzky identified that out of three societies and all these committees, no one knows what we are doing, e.g., there was a desire for a joint conservation committee without realizing that one already exists. All the same people yet little coordination between them. He then excused himself to attend the next meeting.

19) Long-range Planning Committee

Report deferred, as this has already been discussed.

20) Special Presentation: Alison Rabosky, presenting on behalf of SSAR, introduced the venue for the 2021 SSAR stand-alone meeting at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

The meeting will take place in newly renovated museum space with rich herpetological tradition, and the organizers have experience in organizing meetings and working with the university. The city is great for conferences and can support a large influx of people, it also has great beer. The conference will produce a commemorative book with submissions by young scientists. The cost is estimated at \$100,000; the facilities are more expensive, but staff are included in that. Professional registration is \$350; dorms are reasonable, no price on that yet. University has a lot of dorm accommodation, the venue has limited number of rooms, and there is additional

accommodation in the city. Conference enrollment will need to be capped at around 400-500, (SSAR membership is 2000). Dates are 5-9 Aug 2021.

21) Meeting Management Committee—David Green

The submitted report includes a discussion on moving to BAI, which was discussed earlier. Green emphasized the need to keep costs down in selecting JMIH venues, while going where people want to go and budgeting with fixed and per capita prices is challenging.

Decisions are needed for the upcoming meeting venues. BOT can approve without the requirement for membership ratification.

MOTION by David Green to approve Norfolk in 2020, noting that the other societies have already approved. Mullin requested clarification on whether we are also agreeing to the BAI contract if we approve Norfolk. Green stated that we've already approved the new contract with BAI, although there is an opt-out clause which SSAR has taken for 2021 but which is too late to take for Norfolk. **Motion was approved unanimously.**

MOTION by David Green to approve Spokane in 2022, noting that we do still have the option to go somewhere else. **Motion was approved unanimously.**

The next decision is whether to meet in Phoenix with ASIH or in Ann Arbor with SSAR in 2021. Ann Arbor is later and only herpetology. Contribution of HL to meeting is relatively low as a high proportion of HL members are also members of other societies, so wherever HL intends to go it will not greatly affect the attendance of that meeting. What matters is where the Board would like to meet. The dates are non-overlapping so people can attend both meetings.

Green offered a comparison of both venues: Ann Arbor is all herpetology, cheaper dorm accommodation, meeting venue is the Michigan League building. Detroit and some nearby reserves are local attractions. In Phoenix the venue is hotel and convention center downtown, room rates are \$139, hottest time of year but great for reptiles, and there will be ichthyologists.

Discussion: Mullin stated that he expected the registration rates to be lower for a campus-based conference, \$350 is high. He also has concerns about size of the meeting being capped at 400, which might be too exclusive for students. Average JMIH meeting is 1000-1200 people and true benefits of economies of scale towards cost of registration and some other stuff.

MOTION to hold meeting with JMIH in Phoenix; **motion was approved with 6 votes for Phoenix and 2 for Ann Arbor.**

22) Allen Press publishing report—Peter Burns, Allen Press

Peter Burns explained the current co-publishing arrangement between HL and Allen Press: Allen Press collects all journal revenues, covers costs of journal production expenses, then pays money back to HL in a guaranteed set amount payment each year, plus royalties. Allen Press provides HL with production services, editing, printing, online hosting, peer review, and a publisher that helps with whatever comes up; some clients need all those services and some don't. However, Allen Press is now losing money under this arrangement because the amount of revenue from

HL journals has gone down while publishing expenses have gone up. Allen Press proposes changes in next contract that make the component parts of publishing made available separately, with overall journal management shifting back to HL as it was years ago before the co-publishing agreement. HL can purchase additional services, or do them in-house, e.g., marketing can be done by HL (press releases, subscription renewals, reminders) or purchase service from Allen Press.

Proposal is that HL will continue with Allen Press for publishing services, and HL treasurer will start getting invoices for all those services and revenues checks. Currently, money comes to Allen Press through subscriptions, author fees, and licensing, but under new arrangement all the revenue goes to HL and HL pays Allen Press for services. Revenues and invoices for services would be staggered across the year, with subscriptions being front-loaded at start of year.

Peter Burns provided an a la carte list of services; licensing revenues exclude BioOne and JSTOR because HL already has that relationship, but do include Cengage, ProQuest, EBSCO; Allen Press manages those relationships and keeps 15% of revenues of what comes in from those sources.

Sever questioned an item in the publishing agreement that shows a loss of \$9000. Burns responded that Allen Press is taking that loss since revenue has gone down and expenses have gone up. Subscriptions and licensing are going down with a lot of journals, people not renewing membership and not joining.

Sever observed that under the co-publishing agreement the society we can't continue without taking loss, and can't afford to take loss. Mullin commented that the last contract had a tier cost approach built into the 3 -year package, with increasing loss in last year than first. The journal revenue doesn't change, but some of the costs would have to increase.

Burns explained that in a new co-publishing agreement, the terms of the arrangement have changed, so instead of providing a guaranteed payment of \$20,000, this amount is now \$10,000, and the royalty rate is reduced. We can continue as we have been but the terms of the contract have to be different so Allen Press doesn't continue to have loss. AP asked if HL can consider subsidizing the publication of the journal, and the response is no; some clients make revenue from other sources [meetings, membership] and can subsidize the journals. The alternative is proposing a different arrangement, where HL only purchases services that it needs, leaving more money with HL.

Allen Press also works with ASIH & SSAR but doesn't have the same co-publishing agreement, maybe we can find out how they're doing it and use as a model; also consider how HL did this prior to the co-publishing agreement.

Sever questioned the workload for treasurer and editor—what do they have to change? Burns again suggested finding out what the other societies do. Someone at HL will need to take on the management and decision-making role. Allen Press is available to consult through this process but is unable to make the decisions.

Sever asked about who pays our editorial assistant Kathy Wadsworth, Burns replied that Allen Press doesn't pay individuals but rather sends HL the money and HL pays her. Under the new agreement, there would be no payment for her, but HL would receive all of the revenue to spend as needed.

Roosenburg asked what the total revenue is for the journal over a year, and Burns confirmed that for 2017 it was around \$140,000. Mauger asked about expenses, and Burns stated that they exceed that amount. Expenses also include what HL pays Allen Press (which is revenue to AP) for members to receive the journals, which last year was \$32,000. Burns provided an estimate that the journals bring in \$135,000-\$140,000, production expenses to Allen Press will be \$110,000, giving around \$20,000 to HL to decide how to spend, which is about what the royalty payment is now. The publishing administration model is designed to be flexible, such that HL can save money by doing the marketing etc., or pay Allen Press to do it.

Mullin queried the logistics and the change in time needed by the treasurer to manage streams of revenue and payments, he also noted that it would be a disservice to the journals to divest from having an editorial assistant: regardless of who pays for it, we definitely need that person. It would be unreasonable to have HL add these tasks, e.g., articulation with subscription management services and institutional libraries, foisted onto existing roles of any of its current officers.

Burns thought that it would make sense to have a single person on the payroll of all 3 societies that can manage the journal administration, and that he would be happy to have those discussion with the other societies, who manage their own journal publications themselves.

ACTION: talk to other societies to see what their agreement and structure is, how they do it.

Sever and Mullin both noted that the other societies have additional management positions for those administrative tasks; the HL editors as currently described would not have the time to manage these tasks.

ACTION: Sever appointed a committee of the Long-Range Management Committee and Editors to render a decision on the publishing contracts.

Mullin asked about lead time for new contract, Burns felt that if there was to be a complex transition to another publisher would need more time, but a shift in the current arrangement could be accomplished in a short space of time, mid-December or perhaps earlier.

F. New Business

MOTION (Roosenburg, seconded by Neuman-Lee) to include post docs in "students" category for membership fees. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:56pm

Minutes prepared by R. Platenberg