

Minutes of the Business Meeting of the Herpetologists' League

13 July 2018

Joseph A Floreano Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, New York, USA

David Sever called the meeting to order at 18:01 CT.

1. Statement from Board of Trustees read by President Sever:

The Board of Trustees of the Herpetologists' League recognizes the scope of the controversy stemming from the designation of the 2018 Distinguished Herpetologist. This selection was and has been the sole responsibility of the HL President and is made in recognition of the sustained scientific contributions of the awardee to the field of herpetology. HL seeks to promote a vibrant and inclusive society and in response to this situation HL holds the following objectives to be true:

- HL does not condone harassment or discrimination in any of its forms.
- The HL Board of Trustees has rescinded the awarding of the 2018 Distinguished Herpetologist
- HL regrets and apologizes for offensive content presented in the 2018 Distinguished Herpetologist lecture
- The HL Board of Trustees is not responsible for the content of the presentation delivered by the Distinguished Herpetologist awardee
- The HL Board of Trustees welcomes current and future members to become actively involved in HL activities and promote diversity and inclusivity among its ranks.
- The HL Board of Trustees has taken concrete steps to assure that such negative perceptions do not occur in the future. These steps will include but are not limited to the following:
 - Revision of the HL By-laws to codify the Distinguished Herpetologist lecture series
 - HL will sign on to the JMIH code of conduct
 - HL is forming a committee to address the issues associated with professional conduct and has formed a committee to increase diversity and inclusiveness.

Sever went on to state: "On a personal level, I apologize for anything that occurred in the presentation that made anyone feel uncomfortable or was offensive to anyone, that was not, of course, our intention at all, at any time, and we are looking to correct situations like this in the future. One of the things that we have done is form a new committee on diversity and inclusion, and Dr. Lori Neuman-Lee is our new chair of that committee."

Neuman-Lee: "As a female herpetologist and a female young herpetologist, I am very well aware that is not an issue about an award, this is an issue that has been plaguing the field of science and herpetology for many years. We as a society have to do better than this, we as a group have to do better than this, and it's going to take all of us together, working together, coming up with solutions to try and address some of these issues. One of the wonderful things that we talked about in the Board of Trustees was the willingness and excitement to form this committee to come up with some real actionable solutions, not just to say these grand things but what can we actually do to improve the scholarship and improve the

lives of people that do not feel included and do not feel welcomed not only at this meeting but in the field of herpetology. It is unacceptable that any individual does not feel welcome to come to JMIH or to work in the field of herpetology, and to that end we have formed this committee to not only examine some of the issues that may result in people not feeling welcome, but also to take some actionable steps. However, I am one person and although the Board has agreed to help out, I want and hope that many of you can share your ideas your thoughts, you time to help with this issue. I'm not just talking to the women in this room, I'm hoping that every single person can think about how they can improve us."

Neuman-Lee went on to request contacts of HL members interested in participating in the Diversity and Inclusivity committee.

A **motion** proposed by Marvalee Wake to move forward with the agenda of the business meeting so that this discussion can take place in the New Business portion of the meeting was approved unanimously.

2. Approval of Minutes

As published in Dec issue of *Herpetologica*; a **motion** to approve the minutes was approved unanimously.

3. Summary of Business Conducted by HL Board of Trustees in past year (Secretary Renata Platenberg)

o **Summary of annual business:**

- o Elections were held in the fall for VP/President Elect (Kristine Grayson), Secretary (Renata Platenberg), Treasurer (Laurie Mauger), Communication Secretary (Wendy Palen), Herpetologica Editor (Stephen Mullin), Herp Monographs Editor (Michael Harvey), and Executive Committee (Sarah Corey-Rivas, Brian Halsted, and Stephen Richter). Honorary Memberships were approved for Harry Greene, Henry Mushinsky, and Walter Hödl
- o VP-President Elect Kristine Grayson submitted resignation in March. A special election was held and Willem Roosenburg was elected as VP-President Elect.

o **Summary of the Board of Trustees meeting:**

- o Presentations were delivered on behalf of BioOne and on future meeting locations.
- o The Board approved changes to the bylaws and participated in discussion on publishing contracts, discussion of ideas for increasing and retaining membership, and discussion on platform for HL communication. These issues will be discussed in more detail in this meeting.
- o **Motion** to ratify the following changes to the HL bylaws was approved unanimously by the HL membership:
 - Vacancies on BOT for President and Vice President shall be filled by special election (already ratified by membership in election process)
 - Changes to HL committees: Removal of HL Education Committee and addition of HL Distinguished Service Award and Diversity and Inclusivity committees
 - Changes to Joint Committees: Removal of committee for review of scientific and common names, addition of Education, Code of Conduct, and Live Auction committees
 - Addition of provisions that a Distinguished Herpetologist lecture shall be presented as a plenary talk at each Scientific Meeting, and this speaker shall be nominated by the President on approval of the BOT.
- o Journal subscriptions: the BOT approved a change in the definition of student membership to include post-docs (no ratification from membership required)
- o The BOT approved upcoming meeting locations
 - 2019 Snowbird

- 2020 Norfolk VA: 22-26 July 2020
- 2021 JMIH in Phoenix AZ: 21-25 July 2021
- 2022 in Spokane WA: 28 July-1 August 2022
- HL Website: BOT is exploring options of timely update of website, to include migrating platform to WordPress and allowing BOT access to that for updates.
- HL Publishing: the contract with Allen Press ends in Dec 2018, the BOT formed an ad hoc committee from the Long-range Planning Committee and journal editors to examine the publishing contract proposals and identify which would work best for the society.
- There will be a vacancy for Communications Secretary as of 1 January 2019. Wendy Palen is resigning, and this position will be appointed on pro-tem basis by the President.
- **Summary of Special BOT Meeting:**
Today the BOT had special meeting to discuss the issues surrounding the Distinguished Herpetologists speaker and the Board approved changes to the HL bylaws to create a committee for Diversity and Inclusivity and to codify the process for the Distinguished Herpetologist Lecture Series (approved in previous item).

4. Upcoming meeting

Allen Savitzky gave a presentation on the JMIH meeting location at Snowbird, UT.

5. Officers' Reports

- **President's Report** (Dave Sever): time spent this past spring dealing with the publishing contract, as the most important thing we do is publish the two journals. Proposals from Allen Press and Sage were submitted for consideration and there is a committee to decide. New Board members include Willem Roosenburg and Lori Neuman-Lee, but HL lost a valued member of the board, John Herman, previous HL Secretary, who died of cancer on 2 July 2018.
- **Vice President's Report 2017** (Dave Sever): time spent on code of conduct committee made slow progress via email, but meeting again at JMIH, and Lori Neumann may represent HL in this effort moving forward.
- **Treasurer's Report** (Laurie Mauger): financially the HL is in great shape, bringing in more money than going out; annual audit by independent company conducted and no issues found with Treasurer's reports.
- **Vice President's Report 2018** (Willem Roosenburg): I am humbled and honored to be the VP for HL, and hope that I can serve to the best of my ability to improve and make the society stronger; I have been VP for about 4 weeks, so learning about society, also serve as chair of Long Range Planning committee that convened a meeting this week.
- **Secretary's Report** (Renata Platenberg): less than a month after I got back from the meeting last year—I live on St Thomas in the Virgin Islands—my island was hit by category 5 Hurricane Irma that took out my office and classrooms and all textbooks, and then 2 weeks later a second cat 5 named Maria came through. I was out of communication and unable to do anything until about Feb this year and so don't really have anything to report. Elections were run by the Nominations Committee chair Erin Muths and Communications chair Wendy Palen, and I am grateful to them for stepping up and helping to fill the void that I left.
- **Past President's Report** (David Green): As president last year, I made a number of appointments to committees and positions that needed to be filled, and sent letters to winner and losers, and thanked everyone for their contribution. Hurricanes made things not so smooth, with great help from Erin and

Wendy we ran the election anyway. At Midnight 31 Dec I became Past President and have assumed the role of advising the new president if asked and have done my level best not to tell him what to do.

- **Editor of *Herpetologica*** (Steve Mullin)
 - Statistics: the journal remains on schedule, time between initial submission and first decision has continued to decrease, impact factor remains solid among the top four journals focusing on this specialization within the field. It is always worthwhile to acknowledge the help of associate editors, several with subdiscipline emphasis, I am very grateful to their efforts. Next issue will have the award winner for EE Williams awards.
 - Recipients of 2018 EE Williams Research grant competition (presented on behalf of Ann Paterson)
 - Behavior: Jessica Tingle, University of California at Riverside, “Trade-offs between sidewarding and other types of locomotion in Northwestern garter snake *Thamnophis ordinoides*”
 - Conservation: Matthew Atkinson, University of Central Florida, “Understanding the disease dynamics of *Perinsea* in Florida’s amphibian community”
 - Ecology: Aubree Hill, Tennessee Tech University, “Core members of the plethodontid salamander microbiome affect pathogenicity of chytrid fungi”
 - Evolution and Diversity: Anthony Cobos, California State University at Northridge, “Testing Gollom’s rule: convergent evolution among Southeast Asian cave-dwelling geckos”
 - Physiology and Functional Morphology: Jessica Reimche, University of Nevada at Reno, “Molecular evolution of an adaptive physiological trait”
 - Mike Harvey is currently doing research at University of Vienna; *Herpetological Monographs* is also operating on schedule. Full complement of articles will be published in December

6. Committee Reports

- **Symposium Committee**

HL is co-sponsoring two symposia at Utah meeting: “Citizen Science in Herpetology: productive paths and promising future” (Russel Burke and Greg Pauly), and “Expanding Role of Natural History Collections” (Eric Hilton and Gregory Watkins-Collwell, co-sponsored by ASIH).
- **Graduate Research Awards Committee** (Lori Neuman-Lee)

Three students presented, first place: Max Lambert, Yale University, “Sex reversal is widespread in wild green frogs”; first runner up: Jessica Tingle, University of California at Riverside, “Scaling of morphology and locomotion in the Sidewinder Rattlesnake, *Crotalus cerastes*”; second runner up: Sean Wineland, Marshall University, “Multi-scale drivers of Eastern Hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*) extirpation assessed using environmental DNA and occupancy modeling.”
- **Jones-Lovich Award Committee** (Rob Lovich)

Seven proposals were assessed, winner is Van J. Wishingrad, University of Hawaii, “Latitude, elevation, and population genetic structure in *Sceloporus occidentalis* lizards”
- **Semlitsch Award Committee**

The award went to William Peterman, Ohio State University, “The genetics and demographics of amphibian population translocation”
- **Graduate Studies Committee** (Chelsea Clyde-Brockway)

The committee is involved in getting grad students involved in the Herp League. One of the things is we make a calendar of herp photos, students get a free calendar, which are \$10 to non-students to support grad student grants. We are trying to increase social media presence on FB and Twitter.

Graduate committee also does a workshop on topics relevant to graduate students and hosting a social to explore options for careers in herpetology. Last year the workshop was on the peer review process, this year the topic is public image in herpetology: how the public sees us and how we see each other and how to navigate through.

- **Conservation Committee** (Rob Lovich)
 - Kim Lovich is chair of the Conservation Committee, and sent the following information: Over the course of the year the conservation committee was looking at the *BSal* permit process, in discussions with USFWS and other agencies, PARC, other societies. The communal effect was nullified post lawsuit proceedings over the python ban which had nearly the same permitting process. Ongoing discussions with many of the same groups that had not been directly involved, there was concern over the permit process itself over importing amphibians. Running permits through USFWS and USDA-APHIS may have been flawed, as it's the disease itself that needs regulation and the best way might be through APHIS. We continue monitoring discussion from all collaborators regarding *Bsal* issue and permitting regarding importation/export of amphibians.
 - There was also discussion surrounding consensus to merge the main societies conservation committees of the 3 societies; the merging decision was unanimous and follow up with how best to do that is ongoing to formalize that with coordination between societies.
 - Priya Nanjappa provided clarification: USARK (US Association of Reptile Keepers) had sued USFWS about *Boa constrictor* bans, the courts examined the language of the Lacey Act with respect to interstate movement, and were not able to state that the intent of law was to limit interstate movement, but only restricts movement of injurious wildlife between territories, such as Guam, Hawaii, and including Washington DC, and the United States; law could not hold restriction within contiguous US. This now applies to everything: zebra mussels, lionfish, and salamanders. There are import restrictions but no interstate restrictions on injurious wildlife.
 - Sever requested clarification on the joint conservation committee, Lovich confirmed that the joint committee has been formed and formalized across societies.
- **Long-range Planning and Membership Committee** (Willem Roosenburg)
 - The main focus is to develop mechanisms to improve recruitment, with options focused on student recruitments although student membership has increased as general membership has declined. Seeking ideas on ways to provide incentives to increase and sustain general membership.
 - Other related issues of the committee including examining the publishing contract.
 - As an incentive for person who becomes the Communication Secretary there is funding available for students (stipend) to keep up with social media.

7. New Business

- World Congress of Herpetology in New Zealand: Phil Bishop gave an overview of the next WCH in New Zealand.
- Distinguished Speaker: Mo Donnelly gave a statement on diversity and inclusivity within the herpetological field, as follows:
 - “I wrote a resolution that I was going to read to ask the Herp League to do it but it already did it. As a member who has thick skin from years of experiencing insensitive comments made during talks, I wanted to speak for those who were offended and were maybe afraid to speak about feeling like they were marginalized or excluded through that kind of presentation, so I thank the leadership of the organization for making me get off my broom and preventing me from reading the riot act about my offenses, so thanks to all of you, thanks to you David and progress, let's move forward and if everybody follows rule number 1 we'll all be fine so please follow that.

And again, think about every slide in your talk, your slides should convey science. And should never offend anyone, if you think you might be offensive, ask, and people will help. Follow rule #1, and if you're unsure about what rule #1 is it's basically don't be a jerk, or an enabler, just think, be kind to each other. We're here to promote and share our science. And this is the best meeting out there by far, so let's do what we can to promote the thing we work so hard to get to, because I'm telling you right now it's way better than it was when Marty and I were coming here and you could count the women on one hand in the room. I promise you all it's better, I promise you all we will work to make it better, I'm sorry if anyone was offended, and we'll do our best always to make sure everyone feels welcomed and valued."

- Comment from audience member about the need for a statement from HL; it was clarified that the statement had been read at the start of the meeting and was being circulated by Twitter.

Meeting adjourned at: 19:08

Minutes prepared by R. Platenberg