

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

11 July 2007

Hyatt Regency, St. Louis, MO, USA

Board Members In attendance:

Aaron Bauer, David Cundall, Christopher Dodd, Lee Fitzgerald, Linda Ford, Neil Ford, Michael Lannoo, Karen Lips, Alicia Mathis, Stephen Mullin, Henry Mushinsky, Patrick Owen, Joseph Pechmann, Lora Smith, Susan Walls

Committee Chairs and other guests:

Tom Jensen, Joseph Mitchell, Alan Savitzky, Allen Press representatives (Angela Fine, Annielaurie Seifert, Derek Gates)

Regrets:

Cathy Bevier, Todd Campbell, Rafael de Sá, Nicole Gerlanc, Christopher Sheil

President Ford called the meeting to order at 1400 h.

Reports:

President's report:

Marvalee Wake is the HL distinguished speaker for 2007.

Several HL personnel will be stepping down: Lora Smith (Treasurer), Chris Sheil (Graduate Award Committee), and Lee Fitzgerald (Herpetological Monographs Editor). Nomination suggestions for these positions are welcomed. Changes in the graduate award will also be discussed that will affect the Graduate Award Committee.

David Cundall was elected as vice president in January of 2007.

The website is now up with Steve Mullin as webmaster. Any corrections or suggestions are welcomed.

The agreement between the SSAR and HL for the Membership Management Services of Allen Press has been signed, and the joint management relationship has begun.

Treasurer's report:

Smith reported that finances were stable this year. Last year the society lost money due to subscription income. Financial statements for last two fiscal years are now available.

Membership continues to decline, possibly due to the website transition. L. Ford noted two actions should help to make up for lost memberships in the last year: the Vice President is reviving the Membership Committee, of which he is chair, and the President will be sending letters to non-renewed members to encourage them to rejoin.

N. Ford inquired whether HL should be more active in managing its investments. Smith noted that HL currently gets income from a Vanguard investment, and it keeps over \$50,000 in a savings account that could be invested to generate more interest. However, Smith suggested that at least some money should be kept fluid. An alternative to the current investment and savings strategy would be to place the total endowment of \$118,000 in a CD. L. Ford recommended that HL should let recent finance changes stabilize before it makes any drastic alterations to its investments. Smith noted that HL could use some expertise in sorting out expected income from current contracts such as the ACG of Allen Press (AP). The AP representatives noted that they will explore whether the current HL contract includes income projections, and they might be able to provide a guaranteed income forecast. Savitsky suggested that HL could learn from ASIH which uses professional investment councilors, and the HL Treasurer could sit on their finance and investment committee. The finances of ASIH have enough checks and balances built in that income would continue for the society without active expert management. L. Ford also noted that ASIH has had long-term consistency with their treasurer, and this has helped their financial stability. She suggested that HL could set up a low-risk, short-term investment strategy that would improve income by a small percentage.

Meeting Committee report – Mushinsky

Joint meetings are planned now through 2011. The forthcoming joint meetings will be in Montreal (2008), Portland, OR (2009), Providence (2010), and Minneapolis (2011). The 2012 joint meeting may be held with the World Congress of Herpetology in North America. Bauer noted that there are two potential sites for this: Tucson, AZ and Vancouver, Canada. The World Congress would invite other societies, and the presidents will be contacted once the bid is announced. Mullin inquired whether there would be cost-sharing between the joint meeting societies and the World Congress, and Bauer responded that currently this is uncertain since only in some cases have the other societies footed part of the bill.

Publications Secretary report – Mullin

Mullin encouraged everyone to notify students to stop by the *Herpetologica* and *Herpetological Monographs* back issues sale. He noted that it is not cost effective for the Publications

Secretary to store old volumes (prior to 1960), and these will be offered at \$1 apiece. Post 1960 issues with newer binding will be \$5/issue or \$20/volume. *Biology of the Reptilia* vols. 14 and 15 will be sold for \$100/vol. \$1000 has been made already in the sale. Mitchell and Bauer suggested that the prices for the sale were too high and encouraged discounts. However, Mullin pointed out that these were the going rates at the previous back issues sale in Indianapolis in 2001. Mullin noted that he will keep five copies of everything archived. Whatever back issues do not sell will be stored at Allen Press which will now be the source for back issues requests and missing claims. Mitchell noted that there are also three complete sets archived at Smithsonian, and Mullin added that one complete set was sent to JSTOR.

Mitchell noted that HL needs to keep adding materials to the archive at the Smithsonian. While it temporarily ran out of space, new space has recently become available. At this point the archive is probably not inventoried. Mushinsky added that while he was President he only sent a small amount to the archive, mainly major reports and signed contracts.

***Herpetologica* Editor's report – Mathis**

Mathis reported that there are few new things to report this year for *Herpetologica*. Numbers of accepted manuscripts and published pages have remained constant. The quality of manuscripts has gone up in last few years, especially for foreign submissions. One increasing problem is that associate editors are becoming fatigued, and it is difficult to find outside reviewers. This increases time to acceptance or rejection for submissions. Mushinsky suggested that part of the problem lies with the current electronic submission process that makes it difficult for reviewers to edit manuscripts. Mathis added that the current system is not very compatible with the "track changes" function, and because of this, awkward writing in manuscripts creates editorial headaches. The AP representatives suggested that some of these problems could be addressed at their upcoming editorial meeting. Mathis noted that two new associate editors have come on board, and she is still looking for one person in behavioral ecology. She underscored the fact that associate editors work really hard for little reward.

Mathis concluded by announcing that she will step down in January, 2009, due to extra work associated with being department head. HL will need to find a new editor for *Herpetologica*, although the assistant (managing editor) will stay on for at least one year longer to ease the transition. Since everything is now electronic, it should be easy to work with this person at a distance. Mushinsky offered Mathis congratulations on maintaining the quality of the journal.

***Herpetological Monographs* Editor's report - Fitzgerald**

At this point in the meeting, Fitzgerald was not present. L. Ford noted that Fitzgerald will be stepping down, and HL will need to find a replacement.

Allen press/AM&M Association Management report

Angela Fine noted that HL currently had 357 nonmember subscriptions, down from 389 last year. This drop was attributed mostly to international and US institutions. AP is exploring the idea of sending sample copies to university departments in the hope that they will forward that information to their libraries to promote institutional subscriptions. AP will also collect information from institutions on why subscriptions have been discontinued. Other news included:

- AP will have sample copies and subscription forms at the meeting exhibit hall. HL should be receiving approximately \$21,000 in royalties
- AP has money allocated to pay for the editor's assistant if and when needed
- AP has altered the budget to allow four-color covers for both HL journals, and these cover images can be different for each issue
- *Herpetological Monographs* is now completely available through JSTOR, while *Herpetologica* is still in the process of being scanned and should be complete in 2008
- *Herpetologica* vol. 62(1) has been reprinted and is now in the inventory for back issue requests.

Journal citation reports were discussed, and those for 2006 will be released soon. Citations for *Herpetologica* declined slightly in 2004 but then increased in 2005. Those for *Herpetological Monographs* also declined slightly, and lower citation levels for this journal are probably a result of it only being published once per year. Journal website usage has increased every quarter since the site was started in 2006.

Association Management report - Gates

Derek Gates discussed the new association management agreement with SSAR. The website is jointly held by HL and SSAR. Members who have not paid their dues will not get access to the website, and if one is a member of both societies he or she will have a common account on the site. The site also offers ballots and survey options as well as a membership directory. Mitchell inquired how members without electronic access could renew, and Gates suggested that paper inserts could be included in the journals as a renewal alternative. Savitzky wondered if there was a verification method for student members since the societies want to promote new members but do not want non-students to cheat and receive student rates. Gates noted that extra website coding issues and email spam issues will make it very difficult to implement a student member verification system for the site. L. Ford stated that any comments or suggestions for the site should be directed to Mullin.

Symposium Committee report – de Sá

De Sá was not able to attend the meeting. L. Ford noted that the BOT needed to vote on changes to the symposium protocol outlined in the symposium report. This might also require a change in the HL Bylaws. Mathis made a motion to implement the changes, and the vote carried unanimously.

Mullin indicated that a symposium linking Darwin and herpetology would be welcome at the joint meeting in 2009.

Changes to HL Bylaws

Mitchell examined the HL Bylaws at the President's request and the following changes were suggested:

- Article II Section 15 should be changed to clarify communications as “electronic”. Mullin noted that the new website forum will likely supplant this, and L. Ford noted that there has not been a Newsletter Editor for several years now.
- Mullin wondered whether “webmaster” should formally be included among the duties of the Publications Secretary (Article II Section 8).

L. Ford suggested that the BOT hold off on these issues and that a Bylaws Committee be formed to review and suggest more changes.

The following suggested changes to the bylaws were effected.

- 1) Article II Section 2: “The President shall serve as Past President for six years on the Board of Trustees” was added.

The President shall be the chairman of the Board of Trustees and presiding officer at meetings of the League. The President shall appoint the Chairs of the Standing Committees of the League and any other committees deemed necessary. The President casts only tie-breaking votes. The President shall serve a 2-year term beginning January 1st and ending December 31st. The President may not serve for two consecutive terms. The President shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees to whom an annual report shall be made. **The President shall serve as Past President for six years on the Board of Trustees.**

- 2) Article II Section 5: “manage the membership and subscription lists” was changed to “oversee the membership and subscription lists”.

The Treasurer shall be elected by a plurality of the ballots cast by the League's membership for a 4-year term. The Treasurer shall be

in charge of all funds, keep the financial records of the League, be a member of the Long Range Planning and Finance Committee, be responsible for an independent yearly audit, and ~~manage~~ **oversee** the membership and subscription lists. The Treasurer shall be responsible to the Board of Trustees to whom an annual report shall be made. The Treasurer shall summarize the annual audit and submit it to the Secretary for publication in *Herpetologica*.

3) Article II Section 10: “and whose term on the Board of Trustees has expired” was added.

If a quorum is lacking for a meeting of the Board of Trustees, the President is authorized to select one or more past-presidents as necessary who are in attendance at the general meeting to attend as voting members at the meeting of the Board of Trustees, thus constituting a quorum. If an insufficient number of past-presidents is available, the President shall request any individual(s) who has (have) formerly served as an officer in the League to attend, and have full voting privileges, **and whose term on the Board of Trustees has expired.**

4) Article IV Section 1: the word “mail” in front of “ballot” on line 2 was omitted.

The President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Publications Secretary, and Councilors shall be elected by ~~mail~~ ballot from a list of nominees assembled by the Nomination Committee, presented to the Board of Trustees for approval and to the members present at the General Business Meeting. Additional nominations shall be supported in writing by five or more members and presented at the General Business Meeting, or sent to the Secretary anytime before or within 3 weeks after the adjournment of the General Business Meeting. Willingness of nominees to serve shall be secured in writing before their names are placed on the ballot.

5) Article IV Section 3: “A ballot should be mailed or distributed electronically by the Secretary” was changed to “A ballot shall be distributed by the secretary.”

A ballot shall be ~~mailed or~~ distributed ~~electronically~~ by the Secretary to all members by September 1st of the second year of the biennium. Ballots returned to the Secretary or a designated Past-President on or before October 31st of the same years shall be tabulated and recorded.

These changes to the bylaws were passed unanimously.

Graduate Research Award report - Cundall

Modifications to the Jaeger Graduate Research Award were discussed. The change of name (removing “Jaeger”) was requested previously by Bob Jaeger. Cundall suggested that to increase participation, HL should simplify the process of applying to compete for the award. The idea will be to try to make the award something that seems amenable to the typical graduate student research schedule. L. Ford noted that it would be good to get graduate students earlier in their studies rather than ones who are almost finished. Lipps added that the website should help in recruiting, but the maximum of two authors limits the competition to people without multiple advisors or coauthors. One solution would be to stipulate that the student should be senior author and should have done most of the work.

The requirement of the extended abstract was discussed. Mathis and Mitchell were concerned that dropping the extended abstract would no longer set the HL award apart from those of the other societies. Cundall noted that the award is also set apart from the others with the dinner and travel awards. Smith noted that for the extended abstract, judging volunteers also need to be recruited. L. Ford noted that many students have not applied for the award since they did not have enough data yet for the extended abstract. Fitzgerald suggested that free meeting registration could be offered as an incentive for applying: \$500 does not go as far as it used to.

Dodd noted another difference between the HL award and others is the invitation to publish in *Herpetologica*. Lannoo suggested that the offer to publish does not mean what it used to since impact factors are now unfortunately important for initial career success. Mathis noted that papers that have won the award in the past have typically been published in other journals with higher impact, and papers with data problems are the ones that tend to end up submitted to *Herpetologica*. Jenssen noted that even if *Herpetologica* had a higher impact factor, it might not attract the best papers anyway since it is a taxon-focused journal.

Dodd noted that Cundall’s proposed changes will require associated changes to the HL Bylaws and website.

The motion to accept Cundall’s suggested changes in the award (approved version below) was passed unanimously.

The Herpetologists’ League Graduate Research Award

If you are a Master’s or Ph.D. student with research results, consider participating in the annual competition for The Herpetologists’ League Graduate Research Awards. To participate, you must (1) be a member of The Herpetologists’ League, (2) be either a registered graduate student or have completed your graduate degree requirements within 14 months of your presentation, (3) submit an abstract (of which you must be the senior

author and have done the majority of the work) by the deadline for submission of abstracts to the Joint Meetings, indicating your desire to compete for the HL Graduate Research Award, and (4) give the oral presentation at the meeting. All presenters will receive evaluations from the judges after the meeting. The top five presentations, as ranked by the judges, will be announced at the meeting banquet. Presenters of the second to fifth ranked presentations will receive \$200 awards. The presenter of the best presentation as ranked by the judges will receive \$500, ten years of back issues of *Herpetologica*, and an invitation to submit a manuscript based on the work presented to either *Herpetologica* or *Herpetological Monographs*, depending on its length. The Herpetologists' League will commit to publishing this manuscript, following successful peer review and editorial revision, as a lead article identifying the author (or senior author) as the winner of the Herpetologists' League Graduate Research Award.

For further information or questions concerning The Herpetologists' League Graduate Research Award, contact -----.

BioOne/AIBS Representative report – Savitzky

Savitzky noted that BioOne is offering the SRMP (Secondary Rights Management Program). He suggested that HL should make sure that it is enrolled in SMRP since this is no charge to the society, and HL gets 100% of the income from the arrangement.

Savitzky also noted that AIBS is looking for sign-on organizations for COPUS (Coalition for the Public Understanding of Science). The motion for HL to join COPUS as signatories and participants passed unanimously.

Education Committee report – Bevier

Bevier was not able to attend, and Mullin gave the report. Mullin noted that the Herpetology Hotline link is now on the HL Website, and it is hosted through the Peabody Museum. HL officers contacted by the public with general herpetology questions are encouraged to forward inquiries to the hotline.

Graduate Studies Committee report – Lannoo

Lannoo noted that grad student interest is still declining, and he questioned whether his approach in letting the students lead is the wrong one. Dodd noted that he formed the Graduate Studies Committee when he was HL President, and the symposium that he ran with Jensen on publishing was well attended. Since then there has been a decline in graduate interest. Board members suggested that explanations for this phenomenon could include:

- the faculty do not understand the interests or needs of the students

- current students are not interested in these meeting activities anymore
- the electronic nature of communication has changed things radically in the last few years making HL and other societies irrelevant
- newer advisors are not encouraging grad students to join societies
- grad students are overspecialized and do not think of themselves as herpetologists
- meetings are too expensive and subscriptions are not necessarily needed for journal access

L. Ford noted that the permit workshop for this year in conjunction with the ASIH Collections Committee did not occur due to lack of money and a formal proposal. She suggested that returning to an approach in which faculty guide the activities might be a solution. Lips noted that educational workshops that give some sort of training or that offer travel funding successfully attract students. It might be useful to include a poll on the new HL website to determine what current grad students want from the society. Jennsen and Dodd suggested that four items important to grad students are publishing, writing grants, writing research protocols, and applying for jobs, and these could be rotated as workshop topics each year. N. Ford noted grad students will probably not take initiative on this, so faculty will have to.

Solutions that were suggested for recruiting grad student members included:

- giving students an incentive to join such as a paper competition or ability to apply for a society grant
- giving out extra copies of the special issue of *Herpetologica* on these topics with all grad student purchases at the back issues sale
- influencing colleagues to get their students to join and to come to the meeting
- reactivating the Membership Committee under Cundall
- asking Kansas State Conference Services and using the new HL website to put up announcements about grad workshops
- adding an elected grad student representative to the HL Board of Trustees whose meeting attendance is subsidized

Dodd made a motion for HL to institute five \$200 grants toward student travel in which students must be members to apply. Names would be drawn randomly, not first come first serve, and the drawing would be held before the meeting. The motion was tabled.

L. Ford noted that all of these issues are the province of the Long Range Planning and Membership Committees that will be headed by Cundall. She suggested that we should wait on spending more money than we do currently since we do not have enough experience with the new HL financial arrangements yet to predict future income levels.

Walls made the motion to accept the above reports, and this passed unanimously with the following change to the 2006 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes: in the summary of the Treasurer's Report, "the lower price of" should be amended to "lack of income from".

New Business

- a) L. Ford asked whether the Board of Trustees wanted to help sponsor the proposed symposium, "Amphibian Declines and Chitridiomycosis: Translating Science into Urgent Action" in November 2007 in Tempe, AZ. Mitchell noted that supporting this would bring greater exposure to HL, and Mathis recommended that HL should give a few hundred dollars to this since it supports herpetological conservation, a major focus of HL. N. Ford made a motion to support at the \$500 level, and this passed with thirteen votes in favor and one against.
- b) Owen inquired whether the Board had any objections to future elections being handled electronically. Even though this is technically allowed in the Bylaws, this has historically been done with paper ballot. N. Ford noted that the only obstacle might be people without emails or up-to-date emails.
- c) Mullin was congratulated for his work on the new HL website. Jennsen suggested that a useful addition would be including a *pdf* file of the current guidelines for the use of live reptiles and amphibians in research.
- d) Mathis noted that she never heard back from last year's Distinguished Speaker about publishing in *Herpetologica*, and she requested that HL actively solicit this for the current year. L. Ford noted that the BOT did not approve the publishing of the Distinguished Speaker lecture until October, 2006, so the 2007 lecturer is the first speaker with this opportunity available.
- e) Smith introduced the issue of gratis membership for EMBL. With current society financial arrangements this is considered special status and is not really a membership category with AP. Dodd noted that this was historically approved by the BOT. Fitzgerald suggested that EMBL should now have to pay. Mullin and Bauer noted that the EMBL website is well used and is linked to the new HL site, so continuation of the gratis membership should be supported.
- f) L. Ford noted that HL does not yet know how much royalties to expect for *Lizards of American Southwest: a Photographic Field Guide*. This money could be applied to graduate student support or to symposiums, and the issue will eventually be put up for BOT vote. A conservation application for the funds has been requested by the editors (Jones and Lovitch) offering the royalties.

g) L. Ford noted that for the JSTOR Publisher Sales Service Program, individuals may purchase single articles by credit card. JSTOR collects a \$4 service fee in addition to whatever the publisher (i.e., HL) charges per article. L. Ford inquired what fee HL would like to apply in addition. Mathis made a motion that \$6 go to HL for *Herpetologica* articles (for a total of \$10 per article). This passed unanimously. Mullin made a motion that \$11 go to HL for Herpetological Monographs articles (for a total of \$15 per article), and this passed unanimously.

h) Mullin discussed the new HL website. Fields will be used rather than email addresses to contact officers to limit spam. HL will be able to post current announcements, and additional links, *pdf* files, and images can also be added. L. Ford noted that the site still needs more historical information on distinguished speakers, so BOT members should try to contribute. De Sá is working on the Spanish language version of the site, and other languages may be added in the future as well. A text only version of the site is also available. Mullin noted that fliers advertising herpetology related books could be posted if they were sent electronically to Mullin.

i) L. Ford inquired whether HL wanted to be a member of the AIBS Public Policy Office which required a fee. Mullin felt that this was an unnecessary contribution to their lobbying and not necessary for the HL.

j) L. Ford noted that HL was invited to be part of the *Encyclopedia of Life*. EOL would scan and archive all HL journals, and this would be a good alternative if JSTOR does not complete the process. The idea is to make the literature accessible in economically disadvantaged countries.

k) Bauer requested that any promotional materials for HL would be useful to send to Europe, since currently a number of Europeans are interested in joining North American societies.

President Ford adjourned the meeting at 1850 h.