

Minutes of the Council of the Meteoritical Society
March 11, 2007, Director's Conference Room, Lunar and Planetary Institute, Houston.

Council members present: Pres. Joe Goldstein, Past. Pres. Herbert Palme, Vice Pres. Hiroko Nagahara, Treasurer Alan Rubin, Secretary Jeff Grossman, Councilors Marc Chaussidon, Rhian Jones, Noriko Kita, Gopalan Srinivasan, Mark Thiemens, Rainer Wieler, and Jutta Zipfel. **Regrets:** Councilor Henning Haack

Guests present: Gretchen Benedix, Caroline Smith, and Phil Bland (MetSoc 2011 proposal), Trevor Ireland (MetSoc 2011 proposal), Keiji Misawa (MetSoc 2008), Harold Connolly (Pellas-Ryder Committee), Gary Huss (Membership Committee), Frank Podosek (GCA Editor), Tim Jull (MAPS Editor and MetSoc 2007), Tim Swindle (Investments Committee)

President Goldstein called the meeting to order at 12:29 pm, and welcomed returning and new councilors and guests. A round of introductions was made.

After a **motion** by Rubin, the minutes of the August, 2006, Council meeting were unanimously approved.

1. Meetings:

- a) *United Kingdom invitation.* Phil Bland presented an invitation to host the 2011 Annual Meeting in the UK on behalf of a London-based organizing committee. Most of the events would take place at Greenwich Observatory and at Maritime Greenwich College, close to London's downtown. University housing would run \$70-\$90, and good hotels are close by, at ~\$170 (dollars are based on the current high exchange rate of 1.92\$/£). A field trip is planned to Hampton Court and the banquet would be held at NHM. The predicted registration fee would be \$457 (\$228 student), and will be lowered by likely sponsors, including the Royal Society, Oxford Instruments, and Cameca, and, with luck, by a better exchange rate. Dates would be in mid-August. (The Olympics will be held in London the next year.)
- b) *Australia invitation.* Trevor Ireland invited the Society to meet in Cairns, Queensland, Australia, in 2011 (**Attachment 1**). He showed many enticing photographs highlighting the region's subtropical climate and location near the Great Barrier Reef. Austral winter temperatures will be in the 18-26°C range. Cairns has air connections to Tokyo and Sydney, and airfares are currently around \$1400 to Los Angeles. Good hotels are only US\$120, and others range down to much lower amounts. Registration fees are projected to be near US\$400. A field trip to Australian impact craters, similar to the famous 1990 MetSoc trip, is planned.
- c) *Selection of meeting sites.* Council discussed the frequency with which we should have expensive meetings outside Europe and North America, and there was consensus that having an Australian meeting only 3 years after one in Japan was too soon. Chaussidon made a **motion** (Wieler seconded) that we accept the bid to have the 2011 meeting in Greenwich: carried unanimously. There was, however, a strong desire by many councilors to have the Australian bid presented again next year, for a possible 2012 meeting. After a brief debate, it was apparent that many Councilors were ready to make a decision without such a re-bid, and Srinivasan made a **motion** (Thiemens seconded) that we immediately accept the Australian meeting for 2012. It was pointed out by the Secretary that such a move would essentially preempt any competing bids next year and that a US group could conceivably want to bid on a 75th Annual Meeting. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 3 with 3 abstentions.

- d) *Tucson 2007*. Tim Jull reviewed plans for the Tucson meeting to be held in 2007 August. He proposed Harold Connolly as chair of the program committee (no vote of approval was held due to uncertainty over whether such a vote was necessary, but most seemed pleased with the choice). An excursion is planned for Wednesday morning to beat the afternoon heat. The banquet will be at the Pima Air & Space Museum. Special sessions may be held to memorialize Robert Hutchison and honor Jim Arnold. ~\$48,000 is anticipated in sponsor support; \$25,000 from NASA's Cosmochemistry Program is fairly certain. The hotel runs \$89/night at hotel. A pre-meeting field trip on the birds of southern Arizona (Korotev) and a post-meeting trip to Meteor Crater (Kring) are to be offered. [Budget presented to Council is given in **Attachment A**. This note and the scanned attachment were added by the Secretary 19 Nov 2007.]
- e) *Japan 2008*. Keiji Misawa gave an update on the 2008 meeting in Matsue, Japan. The organizing committee now includes Kojima, Nagahara, Miyamoto, and many others. The Nippon Travel Agency has been engaged to help members with travel plans. There are three hotels with a total of ~180 rooms within walking distance of the meeting site, with rates all below ~\$80/night. Registration fees are expected to be very low.

2. Publications:

- a) *Society Publication Committee*. Rainer Wieler gave a brief report on behalf of the Publications Committee. The Society is getting a \$150/year royalty for microfiching the journal. The Committee will soon begin consideration of a proposal by Ingenta to place advertising on the journal website. Jull noted that our contract with Ingenta will be up for renegotiation next year.
- b) *Joint Publications Committee*. Christian Koeberl was not present to present the report of the JPC (**Attachment 2**). The report had been circulated to Council prior to the meeting. There was no discussion.
- c) *GCA Editor's Report*. Frank Podosek reported (**Attachment 3**) on the state of *Geochimica*. Elsevier has begun posting recently accepted manuscripts on its website. Only one author has complained, and that preprint was removed. The *GCA* office has recently tested Elsevier's electronic editorial system, and rejected it in favor of the current system. A recent decision has been made to require that Goldschmidt Conference abstracts be handled by Cambridge publications (or their equivalent) and not by the local organizers. Numbers of submissions and printed pages are increasing, but total pages are expected to level off now that there isn't any backlog of pending manuscripts. The number of individual subscriptions to *GCA* is going down rapidly, as people opt for electronic subscriptions. It was noted that Elsevier still charges an exorbitant price for downloading old, nonsubscribed papers. **Action**: the Secretary will ask the JPC to try to negotiate a cheaper rate.
- d) *MAPS Editor's report*. Tim Jull presented his Editor's report (**Attachment 4**). *MAPS* now costs ~\$391,000/year. Library subscriptions have been fairly constant over 15 years. Printing costs are rising due to an increase in pages, which have risen by 200-400 due to several special issues. Printing costs per page are going up slowly, parallel to the Consumer Price Index. In 2007, the journal will run deficit of ~\$25,000, but possibly as little as \$6000. Over 5 years, this debt has run \$40,000-\$60,000. To cover this, the library rate may have to rise by ~\$100. We might also need to raise the Society contribution to the journal. We should have a better handle on the real numbers after the Society trims its roles of delinquent members this spring so that we can accurately project our future costs; Tim may make a proposal for new rates or a new contribution at the summer Council meeting. *MAPS* may also want to sell off some of its warehouse of back issues. There was a question about whether we should use page charges to cover the deficit. Jull noted that we're collecting excess

page charges (for long papers) already, and this is a rising source of income. But many people don't like page charges. Jull also noted that few people buy reprints anymore.

3. Finance:

- a) *Taxes and corporate status.* Rubin reported that he had been working hard with past Treasurer Kevin McKeegan to correct the situation caused by our failure to file federal income tax forms for the past four years. A CPA has been hired, and our forms 990 have now been filed for 2002-2005. We asked for a waiver of penalties, but may still have to fight if the IRS assesses them. We will request an extension for filing our 2006 forms, and will continue to have the same CPA do our taxes. The cost for completing and filing all the late forms is estimated to be ~\$6000; the bill will probably be issued in late April. Our corporate status with the state of California is in limbo (and may have been so for 30 years), but we are contacting a lawyer to straighten out this situation too.
- b) *MSA contract and membership office.* Grossman updated the Council on our relationship with the Mineralogical Society of America. They have put in place a system to handle our renewals and membership list, and the 2007 renewal drive has gone fairly smoothly. We still have not signed our contract with MSA, but this should happen in the near future.
- c) *Report of the Treasurer (Attachment 5a, b).* Rubin explained that we are basically switching from a crude accrual method of accounting used by the past Treasurer to the cash method that our CPA prefers we use. Executing this change uncovered several anomalies in the last few years' accounting that have been rectified in the 2006 summary of transactions as well as the 2007 budget. McKeegan never charged the Society the \$10,000 he itemized in both 2005 and 2006 to pay an office assistant, and has now forgiven this debt. A number of items were supposed to be paid using Endowment funds (e.g., Nier Prizes and the Logo Contest prize), but the money was never withdrawn. A number of 2006 bills were never paid. Two Pellas-Ryder prizes were never paid. Money was not paid to the journal on the schedule stated in past Treasurer's reports either. In addition to these items, the Zürich meeting returned a \$11,000 surplus to the Society in 2006. This has all been rectified, producing a very large surplus in 2006 and a projected small deficit in 2007 as we pay our past bills. Rubin then explained items in the 2007 budget, which includes the purchase of liability insurance to cover officers in the event of a lawsuit. We will need to investigate what coverage is needed and whether it will cover non-US officers before we know the final costs. All of our investment accounts have now been consolidated with AG Edwards, totalling \$50,000 in the Nier fund and \$456,000 in the general Endowment. Rubin recommended that we should transfer ~\$64,000 from the operating account to the Endowment fund in 2007, covering contributions for 2005-2007. There was a short discussion about how our annual payment of \$98,000 to MAPS is calculated. Huss explained the history of this, and noted that we have never reevaluated it in the ensuing years. We may have to reevaluate the payment this summer following a proposal by MAPS. **Motion:** Rubin moved (Palme seconded) that we immediately transfer \$30,000 to the Endowment, and re-evaluate the balance of the transfer at the end of FY2007: passed unanimously.
- d) *Investments Committee report.* Swindle noted that all of our restricted funds are now in a Russell fund at AG Edwards. The end of year statement was presented (**Attachment 6a**) along with a short report (**Attachment 6b**). The investment account consists of 60% equities and 40% stocks. Last year, we grew at 7.2% (annualized). We recently sponsored an American Chemical Society symposium proposed by Jon Friedrich (authorized by an email vote of Council) with \$1500. Future actions of the Committee will include producing an updated Endowment Fund brochure, and developing guidelines for sponsorship of meetings. Grossman requested that the committee develop a list of programs for which we could solicit targeted donations when members pay their dues: Swindle said the committee would look at this issue. **Motion:** Grossman moved (Zipfel seconded) that the Treasurer and one

member of the Investments Committee, to be appointed by the President, be the signatories on our restricted accounts currently at AG Edwards: passed unanimously.

- e) *Report of the ad hoc Committee on Finance.* Goldstein presented the report of the Finance Committee in 2006 (**Attachment 7a, b**), which called for 5 changes to the bylaws.

Motion by Palme (seconded by Jones): That we adopt the suggested changes to Article 2 of the bylaws, giving the Treasurer the duties of filing our tax and corporate forms, preparing an end-of-year financial report and a budget for the upcoming year, and removing the authority for members of the Executive Committee to spend unilaterally 5% of Society funds. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Jones (seconded by Chaussidon): That we adopt the suggested changes to Article 3 of the bylaws, adding new sections to define the fiscal year, maintain a reserve fund for use in emergencies, set a policy for depositing unspecified gifts in the Endowment fund, and set a policy for transferring surpluses into the Endowment. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Jones (seconded by Thiemens): That we adopt the suggested new bylaw creating an Audit Committee. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Wieler (seconded by Chaussidon): That we adopt the suggested modification of Article 14 of the bylaws, changing the name of the Investments Committee to the Endowment Committee. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Palme (seconded by Thiemens): That we adopt the suggested changes to Article 4 (§3) of the bylaws concerning meeting expenses, with the modification of one word: the Organizing Committee should submit their budget to the Council, instead of the Treasurer. Passed unanimously.

4. Membership Committee:

- a) *Service Award.* Gary Huss presented the recommendation of the Membership Committee that John Schutt receive the 2007 Service Award (**Attachment 8**). Palme made a **motion** that Council accept the recommendation (Thiemens seconded): passed unanimously.
- b) *Dues issues.* Huss reported that the Society has had, in reality, only 750-790 paying members since at least 2004, despite rosy reports of hundreds more given at recent council meetings. The Membership Committee is trying to increase the rolls in several ways. They continue to contact delinquents personally and try to reenlist them. They are working on advertising the Society, including putting out applications at meetings. Last year, we let ~ 8 north African members join for half price, and Huss asked Council whether we should we do this routinely for people in poor countries. If we follow the model used by AGU, this would let people from countries like China and India have discounts. If we do this, should we have 2 or 3 tiers of membership? Should any countries get free membership? Goldstein suggested that we need to study the experience of other societies before doing anything. **Action:** the membership committee would look into the matter further and report back to Council in the summer.
- c) *Life memberships.* Huss then recounted to the Council the fact that one member, Bill Welbon, who joined around 1961, had been an extraordinarily generous contributor to the Society over the years. Thiemens made a **motion** (Grossman seconded) that we grant life membership to Welbon: passed unanimously. **Action:** Goldstein and Huss to write a letter of congratulations and thanks to Welbon.

5. Nomenclature Committee and related issues:

- a) *Committee operations:* Zipfel reported that the NomCom is now caught up on its backlog of submissions. Last year, the committee revised its guidelines to create rules covering the naming “relict meteorites,” including the fossil meteorites from Österplana. The committee is now considering how to formalize the position of the person who runs the online database, as Grossman rotates off the NomCom next year. This may require a bylaws change concerning the make-up of the committee. Finally, the *Meteoritical Bulletin* moves to two issues each year beginning with number 91 this spring.
- b) *Oman meteorites.* Palme introduced the question of what the Society should do in response to a letter received from the Interior Minister of Oman, requesting that the NomCom stop naming Omani meteorites that lack the proper export papers. Council discussed the issue by email, jointly with the NomCom, over the last few months. Two options were debated: 1) doing what the Omanis want, and having the NomCom check export papers on all new meteorites; or 2) cooperating in any way we can, but telling them that the Society does not have the desire, the time, nor the expertise to adjudicate legal claims about meteorite ownership (correspondence recorded in **Attachment 9a**). About 2/3 of the Council and NomCom preferred option 2.

Palme and Zipfel suggested that the Society adopt a formal code of ethics (**Attachment 9b**), which should include a statement that we endorse the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

In the ensuing discussion, there was argument over the legalities of the situation, whether the Convention applies to meteorites, the practicality of doing what the Omanis want, and what the scope of an ethics code would have to be. Many felt the need for legal counsel before taking any action. Goldstein noted that we need to reply to the Omani letter, and that the clear sense of the Council was to follow option 2. Rubin made a **motion** (Thiemens seconded) that the President should respond to the Omani letter following option 2, and that he write to all Society members informing them of this issue; furthermore, Council would vote to approve the Oman letter by email. The motion passed 9-1. **Action:** Palme would make a proposal to Council about how to implement an ethics code, including what kind of a committee should be formed and what it would do. The ultimate action would be in the form of a Constitutional amendment.

c) Pellas-Ryder Committee:

Connolly reported that there are 9 new nominees for PR prize this year. However, management of the prize has been an embarrassment. He proposed changes to the bylaws, the Duties of the President, and the Pellas-Ryder Committee Procedures to fix the problems (**Attachment 10**). A **motion** to accept committee recommended changes to the bylaws was made by Jones (Seconded by Wieler) passed unanimously. A **motion** to accept the committee recommended changes to the two internal documents was made by Wieler (seconded by Thiemens) also passed unanimously.

d) Nominating Committee:

Goldstein’s proposed slate for the Nominating committee had been discussed by email, generating significant dissent. Jones pointed out that the slate is not diverse in expertise, age, or gender, which was seconded by several others. Grossman made a **motion** to accept the slate, but that the bylaws be suspended so that Goldstein could expand the committee by 2 additional members, who would later get Council approval. This passed unanimously. [Note added April 2007: it was recognized after the Council adjourned that in fact, this motion was unconstitutional, as the size of the committee is set in Article 3, section 3. Consequently, the Executive Committee decided that the vote was void. Goldstein

revised the names of the committee, which were approved by email vote on 26 March 2007. The approved committee is: Gary Huss (Chair), with members Meenakshi Wadhwa, Addi Bischoff, Trevor Ireland, Marvin Killgore, Makoto Kimura, and Ian Sanders.]

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Grossman, Secretary