

## Biological Society of Washington Annual Meeting, 1 June 2018

President Jerry Harasewych called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM in the Invertebrate Zoology Conference Room (W214), National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. Council members present included: Jerry Harasewych (President), Stephen Gardiner

(President-elect), Ken Tighe (Treasurer), Suzanne Peurach (Secretary), Martha Nizinski (Council member), Peter Burns (Allen Press representative; via videolink), and members Carole Baldwin, Stephen Cairns, Bruce Collette, Roy McDiarmid, Mike Carleton, and Tom Munroe.

Harasewych called the meeting to order, welcomed the guests, and asked for a report on the election of officers. BSW recently changed their arrangements with Allen Press so that individual subscribers now receive a membership with their individual subscriptions. Peter Burns provided the names of individual subscribers along with their contact email addresses to President Harasewych. There were 131 individual members who were sent a meeting notice and a ballot for the election. President-elect Stephen Gardiner assisted with the production of the ballot.

### Report of Elections

Secretary Suzanne Peurach announced the results of the 2018–2020 electronic ballot, to which 25 members voted, all in the affirmative with no write-in submissions. The ballot was approved unanimously by the President and attending members for the following positions: President, Stephen Gardiner; Secretary, Suzanne Peurach; Treasurer, Kenneth Tighe; and Elected Council, Al Gardner, Martha Nizinski, Anna Phillips, and Jeff Williams.

### Reports for FY 2017

Treasurer Ken Tighe then summarized the Treasurer's report for FY 2017–2018. Costs to the Society have decreased substantially due to the renegotiation of the contract with Allen Press for the production of the *Proceedings*. Allen Press covers all expenses and receives all income, up to a certain level. Any additional income would come to the Society as a royalty, but, so far, our earnings have never reached that specified level. Total expenses for 2018 were \$5550.00 for page charges, open access fees, and website design fees. There were no charges for 2017 because the new contract had just begun, and charges for production are typically submitted for payment in the subsequent year. As of 31 May 2018, the Society's endowment fund is valued at \$224,327.76, and the Merrill Lynch account rose in net value by \$55,437.88 since January of 2017.

Editor of the *Proceedings*, Rick Hochberg, was not able to attend the meeting but sent the Editor's report for 2017 to Harasewych, who provided the following summary at the meeting: The *Proceedings* currently utilizes 28 Associate Editors, covering all major animal phyla. Rationale for this assemblage of Associate Editors was to encourage more manuscript submissions. During FY 2017, there were 23 submissions, including 10 individual submissions, 10 that were part of a memorial series, and three rejections. At the time of the Annual Meeting for 2018, there are 12 submissions. By contrast, 30–36 papers were submitted in 2010–2013, and 2014 was an exceptional year with 48 papers submitted. Hochberg commented that we continue to receive high-quality manuscripts focusing on taxonomy, but that this field of study continues to wane in the

USA, and that competition from other journals is increasing. *Zootaxa* and *ZooKeys* have lower open access fees and do not charge for color. Hochberg suggested that the Society support authors by waiving fees, especially for color, in order to compete with these other journals.

Peter Burns then summarized the Publisher's Report that he sent to us earlier this year regarding 2017. Two things stand out – 2017 looked much like 2016. Journal revenue was just over \$61,000 in 2016 and just slightly less than that in 2017. From year to year, we have been consistent with the number of articles, 19 in 2016 and 20 in 2017. This gives us a good foundation to build upon, and subsidizing charges to authors has been very well received and helpful. He then mentioned that the contract with Allen Press expires at the end of the current year and asked what we might want to see changed with the next contract. Burns wanted to see what effect it would have on our finances if we stopped printing altogether. He said that a survey of members ~10 years ago indicated that they wanted to continue printing articles. Several members present still agreed. A quick look at who receives print copies showed that the majority of them were going to individuals. Collette remarked that this shows that individuals still want their printed copies. Baldwin asked if Allen Press minds printing for the BSW, and Burns said that they are happy with the current arrangement; it is sustainable at least for a while, but they would like to see membership and manuscript submission ultimately grow. Burns said that before the contract renewal he wants to review the financials, get new production quotes, and see how other pricing might have changed (paper and postage) and will get that information to us soon.

Gardiner asked about mailings and wanted to know if all shipping (archival copies, editor's copies, etc.) happens at the same time, and the answer from Burns was yes.

McDiarmid asked about the turnaround time for the quote request. Burns hopes to get the quote back to us within the next month or two so that we can review and decide if we want to make any changes before the current contract expires.

Harasewych concluded the reports by reviewing concerns raised by previous president Gardiner about the well-being of the Society and the *Proceedings* – that he was concerned that the *Proceedings* was costing more to produce than it was bringing in, and also that there was a decrease in the number of manuscript submissions. He worried that we would run out of manuscripts before we would run out of money. Since then, financially, the Society's standing has improved dramatically due to increases in the stock market, but also by curtailing expenses with the restructuring of the subscription format with Allen Press. This arrangement saves us an average of ~ \$7000 per year, which more than offsets the funds utilized by the Editor to waive page charges. Membership is now revenue neutral. We print just once per year now, saving funds as well. Harasewych said that he is still concerned over the decreased number of manuscript submissions and posited that this possibly reflects the reduction in numbers of curatorial staff here and elsewhere in the USA, as well as the focus of their research. Baldwin pointed out that many of the newer curators here and abroad are indeed working on taxonomy, but they publish in *Zootaxa* and *ZooKeys*, for a number of reasons. Baldwin said that her primary reason for this is because she requires color for her research. She asked what is the lowest number of manuscript submissions that we can receive to stay sustainable? An open discussion occurred concerning ways we could increase membership and manuscript submissions.

Harasewych expressed his concern about the structure of the Society, that there is a dwindling number of members amenable to serving as officers, and

observed that the majority of the members are just subscribers to a publication rather than active participants to an organization. Harasewych then officially passed the 'gavel' to incoming (and returning) President Stephen Gardiner.

#### New and Ongoing Business

Newly elected President Stephen Gardiner picked up the earlier discussion about page and color charges and how to encourage manuscript submissions. Burns suggested that we survey previous *PBSW* authors, especially those who have not published lately, and see what their thoughts are regarding publishing and what could we change to encourage submissions in the future. Baldwin pointed out that we need to ask publishers in *ZooKeys* and *Zootaxa* and find out how to get them to publish in the *PBSW*. Burns suggested he could formulate a survey for listservs or organizations as part of his marketing role. Baldwin mentioned the low impact factor of the *Proceedings* and that we know what some of the issues are that lead people to publish elsewhere, such as page and color charges. Baldwin asked on average how many publications come out on *Zootaxa* and *ZooKeys* versus the *PBSW*, and Burns said over 400 for *Zootaxa* and over 700 in *ZooKeys*, so magnitudes are quite larger. Baldwin questioned what is the best way to move forward for science. If the Society were dissolved at some point in the future, could its endowment be used for something else, such as supporting fellowships or science in some other way?

Stephen Gardiner thanked Jerry for taking over for him in the past when he was overloaded and for bringing the Society into a much more stable financial

footing. Gardiner also thanked the members for welcoming him back and said that first he fully supports using the funds at our disposal to go toward publication in the journal, until such as time as we decide to dissolve the Society for some other purpose, and to him that means covering 100% page charges and 100% color charges. Given the average growth of the current stock market at around 4%, we could continue as-is for quite a long time, but it would be still be better to try to help to grow the Society. Gardiner wants to hear ideas from all of the members before we renew the contract with Allen Press and, likewise, will work with Burns to see what we can do to increase manuscript submissions. He also brought up promoting Open Access – should we promote Open Access? It would have cost \$20,000 for volume 130 of the *Proceedings*. Burns said it is fine to promote Open Access for those who want or need it due to funding mandates but thought an all Open Access policy would take away revenues that we receive from institutions such as BioOne. It would be difficult for us to lose those funds. If we see manuscript submissions grow significantly in the future, then we could replace that revenue stream and not make Open Access fees too high for the authors to bear, but we are not yet at that point.

Baldwin thanked Gardiner for being willing and enthusiastic about taking the office of President on at this time. Gardiner thanked everyone again and adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Suzanne Peurach  
Secretary