

BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON - 132nd Annual Meeting, 23 August 2005

President Roy McDiarmid called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Waldo Schmitt Room, National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C. Council members and editorial staff present: Michael Carleton, Marilyn Schotte, Jeffrey Williams, and Neal Woodman (Elected Council); Ron Heyer (President Elect); Chad Walter (Treasurer); Carole Baldwin (Secretary); Richard Banks (Editor and Past President); Bruce Collette, Leslie Knapp, and David Pawson (Past Presidents); and Steve Gardiner (Associate Editor).

Minutes of the 131st Annual Meeting, published in Volume 117(4) of the *Proceedings*, were approved. President McDiarmid then summarized recent Society activities, noting that during 2005 there had been a Council meeting on February 22 and a meeting of certain elected Council on August 10.

President McDiarmid then called on Chad Walter for the Treasurer's Report (Table 1). Income for the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004 was \$81,820.66, and expenses for the same period were \$74,153.68. Total Society assets as of 15 April 2005 were \$116,620.11. After fluctuating monthly during the year, the Society's endowment fund showed an increase of \$5,946.46 at the end of 2004, which includes \$350.00 in donations by Society members. Walter noted that the Society continues to bear the financial burden of waiving charges for more billable *Proceedings* pages than the recommended 20% per volume; for Volume 117, the Society waived approximately 25% of page charges to authors. Prior to the meeting, Council member Neal Woodman and past President Don Wilson submitted a statement to President McDiarmid indicating that they had reviewed the financial statements and accountings of the Treasurer and were satisfied with their findings. The Treasurer's report was approved.

Proceedings Editor Richard Banks reported that Issues 117(3) and 117(4) were published in December, 2004, and Issues 118(1) and 118(2) were published in April, 2005, and June, 2005, respectively. Those issues comprised 69 papers and 857 pages. Issue 118(1) was a memorial issue dedicated to Brian Kensley, deceased past President of the Society. Issue 118(3) will be published in September, 2005, and 118(4) in December. There is no backlog of papers awaiting publication, and the most important factor determining speed of publication is turnaround time by the Associate Editors and authors. Banks noted that submissions are down from 2004 -- 47 at the end of July, 2004, 28 at the end of July, 2005.

Regarding the large number of free pages the Society publishes each year, Banks indicated that he is estimating page charges when he receives a manuscript and is including this estimate in his letter to authors that acknowledges manuscript receipt. In efforts to minimize the number of free pages published per volume, Banks queues the papers for publication based on authors' ability to pay page charges. It was suggested at the August 10, 2005, meeting of selected Council that the Editor also try being more insistent in his communications with authors regarding the paying of pages charges.

Banks then noted that the Society has been approached about publishing several new Bulletins. The Council unanimously approved a bulletin entitled *Terrestrial Vertebrates of the Guiana Shield*, which is being paid for by Vicki Funk's Biodiversity of the Guiana Shield Project and

should be published in the fall of 2005; a Bulletin on the vascular plants of Plummers Island, by Stan Shetler, which is being paid for by the Washington Biologists' Field Club and also may be out in 2005; and, assuming private funding is available as stated by the author, Clyde Roper, the first part of a 3-part series on the cephalopods of the Indian Ocean. Considerable discussion ensued regarding a fourth proposed Bulletin a multi-authored compilation on the biodiversity of Gabon. Because no Society editorial staff was involved with the reviews of the manuscripts to be included (16 papers in English and in French), the Council was hesitant to approve the content for publication as a Society Bulletin. A majority of the Council approved a motion to allow Banks to request the reviews of the papers and to have them reviewed by the Publications Committee (Ron Heyer, Michael Carleton, and Neal Woodman). Following this review, acceptance of the Bulletin will be voted upon by the Council. This Bulletin is scheduled to be published and paid for by The Smithsonian Institution's Monitoring and Assessment of Biodiversity Program. President McDiarmid concluded this discussion by acknowledging that the Society needs a process for dealing with future Bulletins and that he would draft a set of guidelines that outline a proposed process.

One change to the *Proceedings* editorial staff was announced: Dan Nicholson has replaced Ted Bayer as the Classical Languages Editor. Banks thanked all of the Associate Editors and credited the quality of the journal to their hard work. He was particularly grateful for Christopher Boyko's efforts on the Kensley Memorial Issue. President McDiarmid then reminded the Council that Dick Banks is serving as the acting Editor and that the Society needs to locate a replacement as soon as possible. Past President Bruce Collette presented a motion on behalf of the Society formerly thanking Banks for taking over when the Society needed an Editor and for handling the complicated issues related to the publication of Bulletins. The motion was unanimously approved.

On behalf of Custodian of Publications, Storrs Olson, McDiarmid reported little activity in the sales of publications. The Society sold twelve copies of Bulletin 11, which is significant in light of the large number of copies of that Bulletin distributed by the authors (Springer and Johnson). Society web-page developer, Steve Gardiner, noted that he would add information regarding the availability of Bulletins to the website.

Secretary Baldwin read a report submitted prior to the meeting by the Finance Committee, which comprises Stephen Cairns, Frank Ferrari, Chad Walter, and Richard Banks. The Committee met on 11 March 2005 and noted a modest increase in the Endowment Fund due to appreciation and an increase of about \$3,000 from gifts to the Endowment Fund, a new means of increasing the Society's funds initiated in 2004. The Committee discussed and endorsed the policy of providing authors PDF (Portable Document Format) files in lieu of reprints, with the PDF files being sold at approximately the cost of 100 reprints. Treasurer Walter noted that the Society is receiving requests from authors for PDF files as well as reprints. The Committee also discussed the possibility of raising dues and subscription rates for the *Proceedings*, but decided to delay any increases. The Committee concluded that it is satisfied with the status of the finances of the Society. President McDiarmid suggested that the Committee may want to consider any future changes in dues in the context of the Society's future decisions regarding electronic publishing of the *Proceedings*. He then called for a vote on the Finance- Committee report, which was approved.

McDiarmid called on Steve Gardiner to provide an update of the Society's request to have the *Proceedings* included in the BioOne database collection. Gardiner stated that he had received a letter from the Director of Business Development at BioOne indicating that the company was not accepting new journal titles until it completes a review of all of its holdings and examines its strategy for adding new ones. BioOne will then contact interested publishers. Gardiner emphasized that he believes electronic publishing is critical for the future health of the journal. He also suggested the Society consider converting to a larger page format, which would be better for the type of material we publish, especially figures. Jon Norenberg suggested that we consider converting entirely to electronic publishing. McDiarmid questioned the Society's goals: Do we want to publish hard and electronic copies of the *Proceedings*? He then appointed Steve Gardiner, Stephen Cairns, and Jon Norenberg as members of a new Electronic Publishing Committee and charged them with investigating the

Society's options, including the idea of going fully electronic.

President McDiarmid concluded the meeting by reminding the attendees to submit names to be considered for the position of Editor and for members of a Membership Committee, a currently defunct committee but one required by the Constitution. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole C. Baldwin
Secretary