

Minutes of the FHP Executive Committee Meeting

Tampa, Florida

16 April 2005

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Michael Riordan, substituting for Chair Nina Byers, who was unable to attend.

1. Introductions . The following, who were in attendance, introduced themselves: Ben Bederson, Ken Ford, Noemie Koller, Gloria Lubkin, Mike Nauenberg, Michael Riordan, Bob Romer, Dan Siegel, Roger Stuewer, Virginia Trimble, and newly elected member Catherine Westfall. Absent were Nina Byers, Patrick McCray, John Rigden, Spencer Weart, and newly elected officers Bill Evenson, David Jackson, and Larry Josbeno.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of May 2, 2004 . These minutes were approved as presented. Following up on a promised action [Item 4(e) in those minutes], Virginia Trimble reported that the present death rate of APS members is too great to contemplate publishing obits in standard places for all who die. She said that posting them on a Web site also does not appear practical at present—at least as a general rule. Depositing them in the Niels Bohr Library is a possibility that could be discussed.

3. Report of the Chair . Michael Riordan read aloud sections of Nina Byers' written report, and took the occasion to compliment the Pais Award (now Prize) Committee for its outstanding work, as well as the Prize Selection Committee for its outstanding choice. The part of the Chair's report dealing with the Special Program Fund was left to be included in item 7 below.

4. Secretary-Treasurer's Report .

(a) *Election results*. Ken Ford reported that 405 members—12 percent of the FHP membership—voted this year, 350 on the Web, 55 on paper. Because members were not reminded more than once to vote, the total fell short of the 472 total (15 percent) of 2004. Elected were William Evenson as Vice-Chair, Larry Josbeno as Secretary-Treasurer, Roger Stuewer as Forum Councillor, and J. David Jackson and Catherine Westfall as Members at Large of the Executive Committee. **ACTION**. Roger Stuewer suggested that in light of his election as Forum Councillor, he resign his position as At-Large Member of the Executive Committee effective January 1, 2006. Without formal vote, the Executive Committee concurred in this proposal, with the understanding that **in addition to two At-Large Members to be elected to three-year terms (2006-2009), a third At-Large Member would be elected to serve from the date of the 2006 election through the end of Roger's current term in April 2007.**

(b) *Membership*. The APS tally of membership shows 3,389 FHP members in 2005, a record high. The increase of more than 240 since 2004 may be attributable in part to recruitment efforts made at FHP sessions and at other meetings such as those of AAPT.

(c) *Finances*. Ken discussed the final 2004 numbers, which showed income of \$20,041 (exclusive of donations to support lecturers, but inclusive of Virginia Trimble's gift of \$5,000 to support the Newsletter) and almost exactly balancing expenses of \$20, 300. FHP assets were approximately \$14,000 at the beginning and at the end of the year, similar to the end-of-year balances in 2003 and 2002. Ken also discussed the donations to the Special Programs Fund, totaling \$9,000 (with an additional pledge of \$500). Of that \$9,000, \$4,000 was for named lectures and a studentship, and \$5,000 was to support travel of invited speakers. Finally, Ken compared the 2005 budget adopted a year ago with his projections for actual 2005 income and expenditures. The latter was modified and converted to a revised budget later in the meeting [item 19(b)].

(d) *Web site*. Ken reported that, with the cooperation of members who spotted needed updates and corrections, and with the help of a very efficient APS staff member, Sara Connors, he had kept the Web site reasonably up

to date.

5. 2006 budget . Ken Ford suggested that this be the joint responsibility of the new Chair, Bob Romer, and the new Secretary-Treasurer, Larry Josbeno, who could submit their recommended budget electronically to the Executive Committee for approval. The Committee concurred (without formal vote).

6. Program Committee Report . Bob Romer reported on the following matters:

(a) *Contributed papers*. This year is record-setting, with eight contributed papers in two sessions in March and twelve in three sessions in April. Papers remain at 24 minutes this year, but could be reduced in the future if their number grows substantially.

(b) *"Einstein and Friends" talks*. There are eleven in 2005, a highly successful initiative.

(c) *Named lectures*. This idea, originating in FHP (special credit going to Virginia Trimble, abetted by Bob Romer), gained favor with APS, leading to a policy that each Forum may have up to one named lecture per meeting. FHP in fact has two such in 2005 (honoring Robert Dicke in March and Gertrude Scharff-Goldhaber in April), and tentatively two scheduled for 2006 (honoring John Bardeen and J. Robert Oppenheimer).

(d) *Two little-known policies*. Bob drew attention to the facts that (i) an APS member may contribute a Forum paper in addition to a regular research paper at a given meeting, and (ii) Forum sessions are open to the public.

(e) *Recruitment*. Efforts to gain new members at Forum sessions have been successful.

(f) *Quality of submitted papers*. It was the general, although not unanimous, opinion of Executive Committee members that this year's contributed papers have been of high quality.

7. Special Program Fund . Michael Riordan led discussions of the following matters.

(a) *Named lectures*. The March Dicke lecture was presented by Anne Kox. The April Goldhaber lecture is to be given by Lillian Hoddeson. Candidates for the Bardeen and Oppenheimer lectures in 2006 have not yet been identified.

ACTION . The following motion passed without dissent: **The Executive Committee delegates to the Program Committee the responsibility to develop additional named lectures and to solicit funds to support such lectures, and requests that the Program Committee keep the Executive Committee fully informed on such activities.**

(b) *Studentships* (for contributed papers honoring a past physicist). Michael suggested, and the Committee concurred, that the future of studentships should be considered but not necessarily decided on. This will be a matter for the Program Committee to address.

(c) *Research grants*. The proposal put forth by Nina Byers, that the Forum should seek to raise funds in order to provide small research grants in the history of physics, especially for student assistants, was deemed in discussion to be worthy of consideration. It was the consensus of the Executive Committee that further steps in this direction should await a more specific plan and/or funds in hand to inaugurate it. **ACTION**. The following motion passed without dissent: **The Executive Committee defers until next year the task of drawing up a priority list for Special Programs, as called for in a policy statement adopted in 2004.**

8. Newsletter Editor's Report . Ben Bederson supplemented his written report by drawing attention to his use of the spring issue to focus on Forum elections and the fall issue to highlight papers presented at meetings in the

preceding spring. He noted that he has canvassed those on a free mailing list that he "inherited" and as a result has been able to pare this list. He mentioned further that his term as Editor will be ending in 2006 and that Michael Riordan, as previously agreed, will be the next Editor. He mentioned also that the Newsletter may be used in the not-too-distant future to conduct a survey of FHP members. Ben said that particular issues of the Newsletter could be made longer without much impact on the budget. (The noticeable increase in the cost of the Newsletter in 2004 is attributable to an increase in postal rates, not to any change in the size of the Newsletter.) Ben spoke finally of his wish to enhance the visual attractiveness of the Newsletter through improved design and perhaps color. There followed a general discussion of how, gradually over time, FHP might transition to a primarily Web-based Newsletter. Executive Committee members seemed in no hurry to abandon the paper edition. It was agreed that some discussion with officers of the Forum on Physics and Society might be fruitful, since they have the same problem of high cost associated with a paper Newsletter.

8a. Report of the Publications Committee (*not on original agenda*). Ben Bederson reported for this committee, whose other members are Bill Evenson, Dan Greenberger, John Rigden, and Michael Riordan. The committee is exploring the possibility of a book (or books) based on FHP invited talks. They also favor a new APS journal devoted to the history of physics, but exploration of this possibility is in a very early stage. It was suggested that the very successful, admired journal *Perspectives in Physics*, edited by John Rigden and Roger Stuewer, might morph into such a journal. Roger presented some information on this journal under item 19 below.

9. Forum Councillor's Report . Gloria Lubkin reported on the APS Council meetings that took place in Seattle in November 2004 and in Tampa the preceding day (April 15). The Council gave considerable attention to public-affairs issues, including problems that some foreign nationals have in getting visas, and also adopted a "Vision Statement." Gloria mentioned that John Bahcall, for health reasons, has had to resign from the APS presidential line. She reported also that Helen Quinn will be heading a search committee to find replacements next year for retiring Editor in Chief Marty Blume and retiring Treasurer Tom McIlraith.

10. Discussions with APS Officers .

Tom McIlraith visited the meeting and reported on APS finances. The Society finished 2004 with a net income. Annual expenditures are now around \$40 million, three-quarters of which is attributable to publications. APS reserves amount to about \$100 million. The Society is still able to allocate 7 percent of the reserve balance for operations, including those of the units. Licensing arrangements with universities and other institutions for online access to journals have offset declining subscriptions to the paper products, leaving the journals overall with a healthy net revenue. The Society is launching a new journal on physics education research, which will be online only. It will be supported by page charges and will be free to users. Michael Riordan suggested to Tom that FHP financial reports (and perhaps all unit financial reports) show Executive Committee travel and speaker travel on separate lines so that expenditures on these different kinds of travel can be better tracked.

Judy Franz visited the meeting and congratulated FHP on two notable achievements of the year—establishing the Pais Prize and launching the Historic Sites initiative. She also spoke warmly of the "Einstein and Friends" talks. In response to a question from Ben Bederson, Judy said that the concept of associate membership in APS (say by someone interested only in history) was not practical, although she noted that FHP was free to establish a "Friends of the Forum" or similar group, persons who could be kept informed of FHP activities. Ken Ford took the occasion to tell Judy that many members of her staff had been unfailingly agreeable and helpful during his nearly four years as FHP Secretary-Treasurer.

11. By-Laws . Gloria Lubkin reminded the Executive Committee that revisions to the FHP By-Laws adopted in 2001 had never been forwarded to the APS Committee on Constitution and By-Laws for official APS consideration (although she had attempted to bring up the matter previously, including at the 2004 meeting in Denver). **ACTION.** The following motion passed without dissent. **The Executive Committee affirms its approval of the By-Laws as revised in 2001 and sends them forward to APS for consideration and**

approval. Gloria agreed to handle this matter.

12. Pais Award (Prize) Committee Report . Ben Bederson supplemented Harry Lustig's written report. All present congratulated the committee on its outstanding work. Because of extra expenses associated with the award of the first Prize, the balance in the Pais Prize fund has fallen somewhat below \$200,000. Virginia Trimble generously agreed to "top off" the fund, restoring it to its former grandeur. During the course of this meeting, she presented the requisite check. **ACTION.** The following motion, which had been suggested by the Pais committee, was adopted without dissent. **The Pais Award Committee is re-named the Pais Prize Committee and is kept in office, with the same membership, for one more year, until the Spring 2006 meeting of the FHP Executive Committee.**

13. Fellowship Committee Report . Virginia Trimble supplemented her written report by reminding Executive Committee members that they and others can nominate outstanding candidates for APS Fellowship. She noted, however, that the percentage of FHP members who are already Fellows is relatively high, perhaps higher than for any other unit, because of their achievements in fields other than history. (At the Business meeting to be held on April 18, Bill Evenson will be honored for his election to Fellowship.)

14. Membership Committee Report . As noted earlier in these minutes, efforts to recruit new members at Forum sessions have been successful. Harry Lustig, Chair of the Membership Committee, has suggested that FHP members be surveyed. The committee encouraged him to draw up a draft survey. Ben Bederson expressed a willingness to distribute it via the Newsletter.

15. Nominating Committee Report . Michael Riordan reported on the efforts of the committee to secure outstanding nominees this year, regretting only that it had not secured two candidates for Secretary-Treasurer (although the one candidate is deemed highly qualified—and is willing!). He drew attention to two possible candidates for the coming year who are interested in serving but were not available this year. He and other Executive Committee members suggested possible future members of the Nominating Committee itself (one member each year is named by the APS Council).

16. Historic Sites Committee . Supplementing the committee's written report, Roger Stuewer spoke of the committee's initial successes in identifying five initial sites (at Case Western Reserve University, The Johns Hopkins University, the Franklin Institute, Washington University, and Yale University) for recognition with plaques. The committee expects to continue and expand its work in the future.

17. World Year of Physics Speakers Program . Virginia Trimble supplemented her written report by noting that there have been a large number of requests for speakers and already quite a few matches arranged. She noted that the success of the effort owes much to the leadership of Richard Price and his staff at UT Brownsville, representing the Topical Group on Gravity, with which FHP has joined. A bit less than half of the \$2,000 allocated to FHP by APS has been spent to date. Virginia expressed the goal of spending the rest of the money this spring and then seeking an additional allocation.

18. Committees for 2005-2006 . Bob Romer reported that the appointment of new committees is largely completed, with the following so far having agreed to serve on the all-important Program Committee: Virginia Trimble (Chair), Bill Evenson, Larry Josbeno, Noemie Koller, Bob Romer, and Catherine Westfall. In consultation with the Committee Chair, he may appoint one or two additional members. He reported further that the 2005-2006 Nominating Committee consists of Nina Byers (Chair), Charles Holbrow, David Jackson, and Harry Lustig, with one additional member to be named by APS. As noted under item 4(a) above, this committee will need to nominate candidates for one additional short-term At-Large Member of the Executive Committee.

19. Other Business .

(a) *Physics in Perspective.* On behalf of himself and co-editor John Rigden, Roger Stuewer distributed

information on this journal, now in its seventh year. He noted that several members of the FHP Executive Committee are contributors to it. The present publisher, Birkhäuser, already gives special rates to APS members and might be open to a joint publishing arrangement with APS or AIP. Without formal action, most members of the Executive Committee encouraged Roger and John to pursue discussion related to a possible future home for the journal in a society.

(b) *2005 Budget*. **ACTION**. At Michael Riordan's suggestion, **the Executive Committee approved the adoption of a 2005 budget**, which is an amended version of the 2005 projection distributed by Ken Ford. The revised budget takes account of a generous gift of \$5,000 by Virginia Trimble to support the Newsletter (a gift tendered at this meeting). It shows total income of \$20,100, total expenditures of \$21,750, and a change in the FHP account balance from \$14,166 at the beginning of the year to \$12,516 at the end of the year. [Note added by the Secretary-Treasurer: Since many of the expenditures in this budget have already been accomplished or committed, a budget revision to achieve break-even in the current year is not possible.]

As the meeting drew to a close, plaques of appreciation were presented to outgoing members Michael Riordan, Gloria Lubkin, and Dan Siegel (with a similar plaque being mailed to Patrick McCray).

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Kenneth Ford
Secretary-Treasurer

Minutes of the April 2005 Annual Business Meeting of the APS Forum on History of Physics (FHP)

Romer reported on various recent and forthcoming forum activities. Two sessions of invited talks were presented at the March meeting in Los Angeles, a total of eight lectures on the general subject of *"Einstein and Friends"*, with the friends being such luminaries as Lorentz, Bohr, Ehrenfest, etc. Another such session was held at this April meeting, together with two additional invited sessions at Tampa, on *"Quantum Optics"* and on *"The Rise of Megascience"*.

One new feature of our invited sessions is the "named lecture". Responding to our request, APS has now given each forum permission to have one of its invited talk at each meeting where it has invited sessions be named for a distinguished scientist. This is not a talk about the individual, nor even in his or her particular area of research; rather, it is a means of paying modest tribute to the person named - and of attracting donor support for travel expenses for the speaker. Thus at the March meeting we had a talk by A. J. Kox titled *"Einstein and Lorentz (The Robert H. Dicke Lecture)"*, while at the April meeting, Lillian Hoddeson gave a talk titled *"Megascience on the Prairie (The Gertrude Scharff-Goldhaber Lecture)"*, the latter talk being generously supported by the Goldhaber family.

Contributed papers are on the increase. At the March meeting, we had a session with eight talks. One of these was given by a graduate student, whose travel expenses were supported by a contribution from the Bardeen family. At the April meeting, we had a total of twelve contributed papers, in three different sessions.

A significant number of new members of the forum have been attracted by the device of announcing at various meetings the attractions (and low cost) of forum membership and then passing around a pad on which people can sign up.

Romer also reported that the Pais Award had now become the Pais Prize, as a result of further contributions. Martin Klein, the first recipient of the Pais Prize, had received the award on the previous day and had given his talk a few hours earlier that afternoon.

Although neither outgoing Treasurer Ken Ford nor incoming Treasurer Larry Josbeno were able to be present, Romer reported that FHP finances were currently in very good shape. He cautioned, however, that this happy state of affairs (and our ability to provide more help than usual this year to support travel by invited speakers) was largely the result of the generosity of particular donors and could not be counted on in the long term.

Finally, he had the happy task of presenting to Bill Evenson, FHP's most recently elected APS Fellow, a fellowship certificate and pin.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 5:30 P.M.

Robert H. Romer, FHP Chair