

Business Meeting Minutes: July 12, 2001

FPS Executive Committee Meeting

April 29, 2001

Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Attending: Aviva Brecher (Chair), Bo Hammer (Chair-elect), Laurie Fathe (Vice-Chair), Michael Sobel (Secretary/Treasurer), Peter Zimmerman (Past Chair), Philip Goldstone and Steven Smith (Members-at-large), Ed Gerjuoy (Forum Councillor), Alvin Saperstein (Newsletter Editor), Art Hobson (Reviews Editor), Andrew Post-Zwicker (incoming Secretary/Treasurer), Brendan Plapp and Sherri Stephan (incoming Members-at-large), Marc Sher (Webmaster), Dave Hafemeister

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM.

Aviva Brecher presented the report of the Chair, summarizing the major accomplishments and issues of the past year: We opened our election procedures so as to attract a considerable number of new people into active Forum involvement. We shifted to two Newsletters per year on the web only. This relieved the strain on our finances, but concern exists over the small number of hits on the web site. We are presenting many excellent sessions on timely topics at the March and April meetings, particularly by co-sponsoring with other APS units. Forum members are contributing to several POPA energy studies. We sponsored two tables at each of the meetings to make students aware of science and society issues.

Brecher commented on the timing problem in appointing the Nominating Committee, which contributes to the delay in nomination of candidates for each year's election. Prompt deliberation by that committee is essential, as is retaining backups of documents.

Bo Hammer presented the report of the Program Chair: We were allotted two slots for the March meeting and four for the April meeting, but by co-sponsoring with other units and by using after hours slots, we actually sponsored four sessions in March and six in April. Attendance in March was good. A question was raised about press coverage for sessions we sponsor, which are often of interest to the public. The APS has a new person responsible for press contacts and this may improve coverage. It was suggested that press coverage can be increased if sessions have a hook to local interests.

Ed Gerjuoy presented the report of the Forum Councillor: A proposal for a new Forum on Graduate Student Affairs has just been approved. He and Pete Zimmerman (representing the Forum on Education) were the only ones at Council with reservations. Further discussion of this issue occurred later in the present meeting, when Judy Franz (APS Executive Officer) and Susan Niebur (one of the graduate students active in organizing the new Forum) arrived.

Council approved a statement on national security at the weapons laboratories, urging minimal restriction on scientific exchange, and opposing blanket polygraph testing. A statement on assessment of students in K-12 grades was approved, supporting rigorous assessment of skills in science. New by-laws amendments mandate statutory representation of the Forum of Education on the APS Committee on Education, and of the Forum on International Physics on the APS Committee on International Scientific Affairs. Gerjuoy raised the question of whether a similar arrangement should be created between FPS and POPA, but no formal proposal will be made.

APS is financially sound at the present time, but there are serious concerns about the future, primarily because of changes in methods of publication resulting from expanded use of the Internet. Also, with more physicists working in non-standard fields, there may be fewer who continue to feel tied to the APS.

Judy Franz arrived at the meeting and shortly thereafter Susan Niebur, and the Forum on Graduate Student Affairs was discussed. There are about 6,000 physics graduate students, and discussions had begun in summer, 2000, generally on the issue of improving graduate student involvement in APS activities. The decision was eventually made to propose the Forum which has just been approved. Niebur outlined the following objectives: 7 To enhance communication among campuses; 7 To foster exchange of information on research and on educational issues; 7 To involve graduate students in APS activities; 7 To sponsor sessions at APS meetings on student research and on graduate education issues; 7 To maintain a web site for bringing resources to graduate students. Laurie Fathe presented the Fellowship Committee's report: Although the Forum's nominations were misplaced last year, the three nominees were all eventually approved. (One was deferred to 2001 and one was accepted via nomination by the Forum on Education.) For the present year there are four nominees so far, and possibly two more. There was some discussion about how to locate deserving physicists who may be in non-traditional areas and so may not come to the attention of the Fellowship Committee.

The question of the statues that go with the Burton-Forum Award and the Szilard Fellowship was again brought up. It is sometimes awkward to arrange to transfer the statue from one winner to the next year's winner. Pete Zimmerman moved that we end the practice of giving the statue to the winner each year, and instead have it displayed in a case at APS headquarters, with the names of award winners engraved each year. This motion was seconded by Ed Gerjuoy. After some comments by Dave Hafemeister who for many years has taken responsibility for the statues, the motion was passed.

Michael Sobel presented the Budget Report for the fiscal year that ended June, 2000, and for the current year. For the current year we expect an excess of revenue over expenses of about \$4,500, primarily because of the decision to place two Newsletters on the web only. Savings were less than expected because of additional expenses at meetings, but it is likely that the surplus for the following year will be about \$6,000. Pete Zimmerman recommended that we not plan on spending the surplus immediately, but keep it available for potential new studies, or expenses at meetings. Laurie Fathe

added that with financial problems on the horizon for the APS, support for the Forum from the parent body may be reduced.

Al Saperstein then presented his report on the Newsletter. The number of hits for those Newsletters on the web only was about 1500. This may be compared with a circulation of the paper copy of about 4500, although there is no way of knowing how many subscribers read the paper copy. There was little in the way of complaints or feedback about the new policy. It was suggested that we might put a hit counter on the table of contents, or on individual articles.

Saperstein stressed the need to find a new News Editor as as soon as possible.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Sobel Secretary/Treasurer