

Minutes of the Council of the Meteoritical Society
March 22, 2009, Indian Springs Room,
Woodlands Waterway Marriott Hotel & Convention Center, The Woodlands, Texas.

Council members present: Pres. Hiroko Nagahara, Vice Pres. Ed Scott, Past Pres. Joe Goldstein, Treasurer Alan Rubin, Secretary Jeff Grossman, Councilors Rhian Jones, Harold Connolly, Gretchen Benedix, Alex Deutsch, Keiji Misawa and Rainer Wieler. **Regrets:** Councilors Gopalan Srinivasan, and Mark Thiemens

Guests present: Marc Chaussidon and Guy Libourel (MetSoc 2009), Denton Ebel, Mike Weisberg, and Jon Friedrich (MetSoc 2010), Alex Ruzicka and Chris Herd (MetSoc 2013 bids), Gary Huss (Membership Committee), Tim Jull (MAPS Editor), Tim Swindle (Endowment Committee), Kevin Righter (Nomenclature Committee), Mini Wadhwa (McKay Award Committee), John Wasson (MAPS planning committee).

President Nagahara called the meeting to order at 12:16 pm and introduced the new councilors.

Grossman presented the minutes of the July, 2009, Council meeting. These were accepted unanimously on a **motion** from Connolly seconded by Benedix.

1. Secretary's Report:

Grossman reviewed the activities of the executive committee and the Council since the July meeting (**Attachment 1**). Key accomplishments were: The society received a gift of \$20000 from Linda Uljon, widow of Gordon McKay. Council voted by email to establish a permanent McKay fund as part of the endowment. A simplified version of the society logo was approved for special uses. G. Srinivasan withdrew his offer to host the 2010 meeting in Toronto and council voted electronically to hold the meeting in New York City, with Denton Ebel as chair of the LOC. An agreement was reached with Smithsonian Archives to allow us to continue depositing archival material in their collection. Steve Mackwell of the Lunar and Planetary Institute agreed to provide student travel money for the 2009 MetSoc meeting to partially make up for NASA's inability to provide such funding this year. And, the society established a presence on the social networking website, Facebook.com. and appointed Cari Corrigan as its administrator.

2. Meetings:

- a) *2013 meeting bids:* Two proposals to host the 2013 meeting of the society were presented to council. Chris Herd offered to hold the meeting in Edmonton, Canada (**Attachment 2a**). The city is easily accessible by air and offers a variety of suitable hotels and a conference center. LOC members would come from the University of Alberta, The Institute for Space Science, Exploration and Technology, the Royal Astronomical Society, and Grant MacEwan College. A wide variety of field trips would be possible. Alex Ruzicka proposed Portland, Oregon, as the meeting site (**Attachment 2b**). The city is served by air and offers inexpensive transportation. The meeting could be at the university or a downtown hotel. Many scenic field trip possibilities were offered. Ruzicka and Melinda Hutson would form the core of the LOC. After some lively discussion, a motion by Grossman, seconded by Connolly, to accept the bid from Edmonton was approved 8-2. **Action:** Herd was asked to provide more details of the meeting logistics and organizing committee and report back within a year.
- b) *2008 meeting recap:* Keiji Misawa presented final data from last summer's meeting in Japan. There were 310 registered participants plus 25 guests. 42% were from Japan and 33% from the

US. Two thirds of the income for the meeting came from local support. The cost breakdown was reviewed in several slides (**Attachment 2c**).

- c) *2009 meeting update (Attachment 2d)*: Marc Chaussidon reminded council that the abstract deadline for the Nancy meeting was only one month after LPSC. There was a brief discussion of problems members had encountered with the website for booking hotels. The budget was presented and appeared to be in balance. Plans for the pre-conference workshop, “Experimentation and modeling in Cosmochemistry,” were also progressing well.
- d) *2010 meeting update (Attachment 2e)*: Denton Ebel, with Mike Weisberg and Jon Friedrich in attendance, informed council of difficulties they were having securing a meeting location in Manhattan. CUNY reneged on its offer to provide a discounted rate to hold the meeting at its graduate center, which would now cost ~\$100k. A meeting site at a New Brunswick, NJ, hotel was being explored, but several councilors expressed disappointment about not having the meeting in the city. The LOC is still going to try to find an alternate site in Manhattan or adjacent areas of Brooklyn.

3. Publications:

- a) *MAPS Editor’s Report*. Tim Jull presented his annual report (**Attachment 3a,b**). All typesetting is now being done in India, which has nearly eliminated the recent production backlog. This system saves ~\$37k/year, which should erase the accumulated deficit from the last few years by the end of 2009, despite increases in overhead rates from the University of Arizona each year. The number of pages printed this year is nearly unchanged, which translates to an increased rejection rate. The 2010 budget was created under the assumption that no structural changes would be made to the journal (i.e., involving a commercial publisher). He requested that subscription prices remain the same and suggested a reduced society contribution for 2010 of \$75000. **Wielier** made a **motion**, seconded by Connolly, to accept Jull’s proposals for subscription prices and the society contribution, which passed 11-0.
- b) *Society Publications Committee; MAPS Planning Committee*: Joe Goldstein reviewed the circumstances leading up to the establishment of the MAPS planning committee last year. There was serious concern among councilors about the growing deficit that MAPS was accumulating, which had reached ~\$50000. In addition, there was concern that the journal was in danger of losing library subscriptions and was not staying current with new methods and formats in the area of electronic publication. The committee was charged with examining questions of how best to deal with the deficit and how to publish the journal in the future, including possible partnerships with commercial publishers. Rainer Wielier, chair of the PubCom and planning committee, then reviewed the activities of the committee and presented its recommendations (**Attachment 4a,b**). The committee obtained bids from five commercial firms for publishing MAPS and also considered a proposal from the current editor to continue publication in-house. In addition, a supplemental proposal that would fold MAPS into GeoScienceWorld (GSW) was considered. Important issues discussed by the committee were editorial independence, ownership, mode of operation, open access of past issues, duration of contract, allowed numbers of pages, color charges, excess page charges, management structure, possible consortia agreements, continued publication of our abstract volume, pricing, the number of subscriptions required to initiate the contract, “donation initiatives” (3rd world subscription packages), and so forth. The commercial bids included a wide variety of financial models, with the common theme that all would raise institutional subscription rates substantially. After reviewing the details of the various scenarios, on March 21, 2009, the planning committee voted 8-1 that the society should collaborate with an outside publisher. Having agreed to this, the planning committee voted unanimously that the preferred publisher should be Elsevier. The planning committee then agree unanimously that a subcommittee should be appointed by the president to carry out the negotiations. Tim Jull presented a view in favor of MAPS remaining independent. He saw no compelling reason to

make the change and argued that the budget was now under control and turning a profit. He acknowledged that there is risk of future financial problems involving decreasing subscriptions, but thought this risk was difficult to evaluate. A commercial contract would be complex and difficult to terminate in the future. John Wasson also argued against going to a commercial publisher, complaining that this would lead to huge subscription increases that would be out of our control and damaging to our libraries. He also argued that the initial contract offers were “sweetheart” deals, which would not be renewed on such favorable terms five years hence. After a brief discussion, in which Gary Huss suggested the possibility that we ask Elsevier to simply market the journal instead of publishing it and then share in the profits, the discussion was suspended until March 23 (see below).

- c) *Renewal of MAPS Editors term:* Rainer Wieler reported that the publications committee has evaluated Tim Jull’s service as editor of MAPS, and recommends that he be reappointed to another term in 2011-2014 (**Attachment 5**). Jull has agreed to serve. Benedix made a **motion** (Connolly second) to accept this recommendation and authorize the committee to negotiate a new contract; passed 11-0.

4. Finance

- a) *Treasurer’s Interim Report.* Alan Rubin reviewed the status of the society’s finances nearing the end of FY2008/2009 (**Attachment 6a,b**). MSA continues to do an excellent job handling the collection of dues and maintaining the membership list. Together with MSA, Rubin is working on ways of reducing some of the fees associated with the Wachovia bank account in Virginia. The McKay fund now stands near \$30000 and is being held in our checking account along with ~\$8000 in donations to other endowment funds. Rubin is seeking the advice of the endowment committee on whether to transfer these funds to the investment account or to continue to hold them in the checking account [note: the next day the committee formally recommended making the transfer. – *sec’y*]. Our operating bank account has a balance near \$154k and total assets including restricted funds are ~\$514k. A deficit of \$8600 is projected for the year, but this is in part because a \$10000 check from the Barringers to cover student travel was received last FY, but paid out this FY. In addition, the royalty money received from Elsevier for GCA was lower than usual this year. Rubin noted that we had not appointed a Deputy Treasurer after the last election. He made a **motion**, seconded by Connolly, that Paul Warren be reappointed to the post; passed 11-0.
- b) *Audit committee report:* Denton Ebel reported that the audit of the 2007/2008 fiscal year was not yet complete, with several outstanding issues to resolve. He expected these to be resolved soon.
- c) *Endowment committee report:* Tim Swindle noted that Wachovia has taken over AG Edwards and now handles our Endowment fund investments. In his report (**Attachment 7**), he notes that our investments have performed similarly to the Dow Jones index, and therefore lost more money in the recent financial downturn than we had expected; the mixture of stocks and bonds in the fund are clearly underperforming. Our endowment brochures are now printed and the committee is considering ways of distributing them.

- 5. **Membership Committee:** Gary Huss reported (**Attachment 8**) that 871 people had renewed or joined in 2009, which is similar to where we stood last year at this time. Six people had taken advantage of our new dues rate for underprivileged countries on the Hinari list, most from north Africa. The new membership brochures are also being distributed by the committee, which will also now look into producing a small poster to go behind the brochures in displays at meetings. This will require new, higher-resolution images and will run into some production costs. Connolly made a **motion** (Jones seconded) that up to \$1000 be spent from the endowment funds for this purpose; passed 9-1. Jeff Grossman described how the new Facebook site would be used by the society, especially for communicating with younger members. **Action:** Grossman would add links to this site to the regular society web pages.

6. **Nomenclature Committee:** Kevin Righter informed council of changes that will begin in the next Meteoritical Bulletin: the number of individual descriptions of meteorites will be reduced, concentrating on observed falls and unusual specimens. The editor again requests support from the society to help handle the many submissions and votes needed to process a still-rising number of new meteorites. Tracking all of these is increasingly difficult. Possible types of support could include an online submission process or clerical support. Grossman noted that the same programmer who created and maintains the MSA site can create such an online system for us for a reasonable price. This will be further investigated in coming months. The nomcom is also still struggling with the question of how to handle meteorites that may be illegally exported from their countries of origin; some members will not vote to approve names for such meteorites. A majority of council members indicated that the existing guidelines, which do not consider legal issues, are sufficient and committee members should be urged to follow them. Investigations into export laws and legal claims are beyond the scope of the nomcom. Righter then recommended that Mike Weisberg, who is finishing out Harold Connolly's term as Bulletin Editor following his resignation, be appointed to a new term beginning in 2010. Weisberg has indicated his willingness to serve. On a **motion** from Connolly seconded by Jones, Weisberg was so appointed (11-0).
7. **McKay Award committee:** Mini Wadhwa reported that the membership of the inaugural McKay committee has nearly been set [note, April 6, 2009: members are Mini Wadhwa (Chair), Marc Chaussidon (Vice-Chair), Gretchen Benedix, Harold Connolly, Matthieu Gounelle, Tim McCoy, Scott Messenger, Shogo Tachibana—*sec'y*]. The McKay award application has been added to what was formerly the student travel grant application form. Information about the award will also be added to the Facebook page. A new bylaw was submitted by Wadhwa to the council last month, officially establishing the McKay award (**Attachment 9**). Benedix made a **motion**, seconded by Jones, to approve the bylaw. Grossman then made a **motion** to amend the text (Connolly seconded), by striking two clauses as indicated in the document. The bylaw was adopted, as amended, by a vote of 11-0.
8. **Nominating committee:** President Nagahara presented the following names to council for the 2011-2012 nominating committee: Adrian Brearley (chair), Sara Russell, Dieter Stöffler, Tom Burbine, Christine Floss, Tomoki Nakamura. On a **motion** from Connolly seconded by Benedix, council approved this committee by a vote of 10-0, with Jones abstaining.
9. **Website report:** Matt Genge sent in a brief report by email (**Attachment 10**), which was briefly discussed.
10. **Archives issues:** Grossman discussed the new arrangements the society has with the Smithsonian Institution (SI) Archives, which do not rely on Roy Clarke or other colleagues at the National Museum of Natural History, who are unwilling to provide further support to the society in this regard. One issue with a public archive like that at the SI is that anybody can see the documents, including sensitive information such as reports of award committees. To avoid this problem, the SI archivist drafted an addendum to our Deed of Gift (**Attachment 11**) which stipulates that award-committee reports are to be sealed for 30 years unless the society grants access to an individual requestor. Grossman made a **motion** (seconder not recorded) that the President be authorized to sign this addendum; this passed by a wide margin (vote total not recorded).

The meeting was suspended for the day at 6:16 pm.

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At 7:38 pm, the council meeting was reconvened by President Nagahara to continue the discussion of publication issues. In attendance were council members Grossman, Scott, Goldstein, Nagahara, Rubin, Jones, Misawa, Deutsch, Benedix, Thiemens, Connolly, and Wieler (Srinivasan absent), and MAPS planning committee members Cyrena Goodrich, Nicholas Dauphas, Tim Jull, Brigitte Zanda and John Wasson.

Wieler reviewed the discussion up to this point and the recommendations of the planning committee. He noted that starting any new contract next January, as all the bids specified, would be difficult unless we moved quickly.

Ed Scott asked the three members of the planning committee who were absent for the final vote whether they supported the 8-1 decision to go to a commercial publisher. Two were against and one was undecided. In addition, one who voted in favor was now said he was against.

There followed a roaming discussion of many issues, including how much editorial independence we would really have with a publisher, whether our institutional subscriptions were likely to decline with and without a commercial publisher and by how much, the effect on libraries of rising subscription rates, what the future of electronic publishing would be if we continue to be independent, the financial risks of commercial publishers, and a prolonged discussion of exactly what the benefits to the society would be in using a publisher like Elsevier. During this discussion, there was a **motion** by Goldstein, seconded by Wieler, that we stop publishing MAPS in house and go with an outside publisher. At the end of the discussion, each council member summarized his or her opinion of the relative benefits of going with an outside publisher vs. continuing to publish the journal ourselves. A vote was then taken on the motion, which carried 8-4. **Action:** Grossman will announce this decision to the members by email and allow them an opportunity to comment.

Wieler then made a **motion**, seconded by Rubin, that the preferred commercial publisher, based on the submitted bids, should be Elsevier; passed 12-0.

Finally, Grossman made a **motion**, seconded by Connolly, that the society should continue negotiating with the commercial publishers with the aim that the first issue of MAPS printed by the selected external publisher be the January 2010 issue; passed 12-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Grossman, Secretary