

Minutes of the Council of the Meteoritical Society

March 9, 2008, 12:30 pm, Director's Conference Room, Lunar and Planetary Institute, Houston.

Council members present: Pres. Joe Goldstein, Vice Pres. Hiroko Nagahara, Past Pres. Herbert Palme, Treasurer Alan Rubin, Secretary Jeff Grossman, Councilors Marc Chaussidon, Rhian Jones, Noriko Kita, Gopalan Srinivasan, Mark Thiemens, Rainer Wieler, and Jutta Zipfel. **Regrets:** Councilor Henning Haack

Guests present: Keiji Misawa (MetSoc 2008), Gary Huss (Membership Committee), Frank Podosek (GCA Editor), Tim Jull (MAPS Editor), Tim Swindle (Endowment Committee), Mini Wadhwa (Pellas-Ryder Committee), Denton Ebel (Audit Committee), Bob Byrne (JPC), Trevor Ireland (MetSoc 2012), and Guy Libourel (MetSoc 2009).

President Goldstein called the meeting to order at 12:27 pm; introductions were made.

Grossman presented the minutes of the August, 2007, Council meeting. These were accepted unanimously without correction on a **motion** by Thiemens, seconded by Jones.

1. President's Report:

Goldstein gave an overview of his activities over the past six months and upcoming issues for the Council. He reported that, because of the large financial loss experienced at the Tucson meeting, we need to be concerned with safeguarding our financial situation at future meetings. We will be making a much greater effort in the future to coordinate our meeting times with those Geochemical Society's Goldschmidt conference. Rainer Wieler is chairing a special committee that will be looking into the future management of the journal. Goldstein and former President Huss have expressed their concern to NASA over the way they recently have tied budgetary decisions to the proposal-success rate, specifically giving less money to the Cosmochemistry program due to its funding too large a fraction of submitted proposals. The Meteoritical Society has been invited to join the American Geological Institute (AGI). After a brief examination and discussion of AGI prepared materials, the sentiment of Council was that we had no interest in joining at this time. [On 26 March 2008, the President so informed AGI].

2. Secretary's Report:

Grossman reviewed the activities of the executive committee and the Council since the last annual meeting (**attachment 1**). Council voted by e-mail: to apologize to Japanese members of the society for the location of the banquet at the last annual meeting; to authorize the treasurer to forgive a \$17,500 loan and pay an additional \$20,000 to the organizers of the Tucson meeting to cover their financial losses; and, to offer Frank Podosek a new three-year term as GCA editor. Grossman negotiated an arrangement with Steve Mackwell (LPI) and Dave Lindstrom (NASA) whereby the Cosmochemistry program would channel ~\$25,000 each year through LPI to fund travel grants for students at American universities to attend Meteoritical Society meetings. The slate proposed by the nominating committee last summer was elected by acclamation. And, the executive committee began to explore the possibility of setting up a fund in honor of the late Gordon McKay.

3. Meetings Reports:

- a) *Japan, 2008:* Keiji Misawa gave an update on preparations for the 2008 meeting in Japan and presented a budget for the meeting (**Attachment 2**). There will be a pre-meeting workshop on classification of Antarctic meteorites, with a registration fee of \$30-50; Prof. M. Kato will give

the Barringer Lecture on the Kaguya mission; there will be field trips to Nogata on Friday and Saturday, plus a trip to the Iwami Ginzan silver mine . The abstract fee will be \$55 and registration fees will be ~\$240 (members) and \$125 (students) at the current exchange rate of 105 JPY/\$. Four hotels are holding 220 rooms at ~5600-9600 JPY (~\$55 - \$90). There will be enough money to fund ~40 student travel grants; students will have to be members. Nearly \$143,000 in external support has been raised. A memorial session for Gordon McKay is being planned. A **motion** by Jones, seconded by Thiemens, to add T. Mikouchi to the program committee passed unanimously. A second **motion** by Rubin, seconded by Thiemens, to accept the budget for the meeting also passed without dissent. During discussion, Grossman inquired whether there was a large enough contingency fund in the budget. Misawa thought additional support up to \$10,000 could come from NIPR, if necessary.

- b) *Nancy, 2009*: Marc Chaussidon discussed the implications of having the meeting the week of Bastille Day. Because of closures, he suggested having registration on Monday, an excursion Tuesday, and Wednesday-Saturday sessions, meeting at the Faculty of Laws building, a 5 minute walk from the train. On a **motion** by Srinivasan (Wieler second), council voted 8-2 in favor of approving this schedule. There would be trips to Verdun, the Vosges Mts., Lorraine vineyards and castles. The preliminary budget called for a registration fee of 280€ which some councillors thought rather high for Americans at the current exchange rate of >1.5 €/\$. Hotels would be 35-60€ and up. A final budget will be presented in Matsue. Palme made a **motion** (Thiemens second) to approve the organizing committee of M. Chaussidon, G. Libourel, B. Marty, J. Marin, B. Luais, C. Fabre, J. Villeneuve, G. Caro, M. Champenoise and I. Geoffroy (scientists, students and administrators from Nancy), which passed unanimously. The program committee is M. Chaussidon, G. Libourel, B. Marty, R. Wieler, C. Engrand, C. Koeberl, F. Robert, R. Hewins, S. Russell, H. Palme, A. Morbidelli, and A. Bischoff.
- c) *Toronto, 2010*: Srinivasan submitted the local organizing committee for the 2010 meeting to Council, comprising himself, Henderson, Ghent, and Matzner from Univ. Toronto, and Brown, Ozinsky, Flemming, and Bannerjee from Univ. Western Ontario. He has requested financial support from the Canadian Space Agency. A workshop is planned on solar nebula structure and evolution. Banquet plans are uncertain due to the high cost of using the Royal Ontario Museum.
- d) *Cairns, 2012*: Trevor Ireland informed Council that there will be a total eclipse of the sun passing directly over Cairns at 6:45 am on Nov. 13, 2012, and asked whether we might want to hold the MetSoc meeting at that time instead of July or August. It will be very hot in November, with a 40% chance of a clear sky. There followed an open discussion with strong opinions on both sides. **Action**: Ireland will prepare a detailed proposal for council to consider at Matsue.
- e) Goldstein led a discussion about how to prevent future financial losses at annual meetings. Jull explained that “unanticipated expenses” were largely responsible for the loss of >\$42,000 last summer. A large part of these unanticipated expenses were taxes and hotel service charges. Huss pointed out that this happens about every 6 years, although not always with this magnitude. Goldstein made three suggestions: meeting organizers should build a 15% cushion into their budgets to cover such things; they should have line items in their budgets for taxes and service charges; and there should be a review committee to screen the budget before council sees it. Grossman suggested this should be composed of the last 3 meeting organizers. Rubin commented that organizers should not pay for large, unanticipated expenses that are billed after a meeting (as happened at Tucson) without first discussing the matter with Council. Srinivasan suggested that the treasurer keep careful track of long-term meeting surpluses and deficits. **Action**: Jull will make revisions to the “Consolmagno” handbook for meeting organizers that reflect these suggestions.

4. Publications:

- a) *Society Publications Committee*. Rainer Wieler is chairing a special publications committee to consider future changes to MAPS (member include the Publications Committee plus Herzog, Rubin, and Goldstein). He discussed the general types of problems being addressed, including declining institutional subscriptions and “21st Century” publishing issues. A variety of cost-reducing proposals will be considered, including ideas from the MAPS publications office and in consultation with outside publishers. **Action:** the committee will update council on its activities at Matsue.
- b) *Joint Publications Committee Report (Attachment 3)*: Bob Byrne noted that Dave Mittlefehldt and Vince Salters have been added to the JPC. Three new Associate Editors have been approved for GCA. The JPC mediated in a dispute between the Executive Editor and a disgruntled author, as authorized in the bylaws, and supported the Editor’s actions.
- c) *GCA Editor’s report (Attachment 4)*. Podosek reported that GCA is running smoothly. A special issue planned for papers from the Workshop on the Early Solar System last November may be scuttled due to a lack of submissions (only 4 so far). Podosek also discussed how he sent the dispute with the disgruntled author to the JPC; this was ended with an offer to the author to resubmit a revised manuscript. Finally, he noted that the Geochemical Society has adopted a formal policy on databases, encouraging authors to deposit their data. There followed a discussion on whether MetSoc should do this as well, but it was noted that most public databases are not appropriate for us, as they are intended for igneous rocks and the like.
- d) *MAPS Editor’s Report (Attachments 5a, 5b, 5c)*. Jull discussed various ideas for saving money at MAPS. Typesetting costs are large, so two issues (November and January) have been outsourced to India, successfully. The potential savings to the journal are ~\$50,000/year, assuming library subscriptions do not decline greatly. MAPS is also investigating whether their online access might be provided by the Univ. of Arizona library instead of Ingenta, saving perhaps \$7000/year more. Thiemens made a **motion** (Srinivasan second) to accept Jull’s request to increase the library subscription rates by \$50 next year, which passed unanimously. Rubin made a **motion** (Wieler second) to accept Jull’s request to maintain the Society’s contribution to the journal at \$98,200 in 2009, which also passed without dissent.

5. Nomenclature Committee:

Jutta Zipfel reported that Met. Bull. 93 is in production. Editor Harold Connolly has resigned with little warning due to overwork, and a search committee has been formed by the President to replace him by April 1. The NomCom clearly needs restructuring to reduce its workload and enable it to continue doing its essential functions. A proposal to do this will be considered by the Nomenclature Committee later in the week.

6. Ethics:

Palme reviewed the decisions made by Council last year concerning the naming of meteorites from Oman that led to his being asked to investigate how to create an ethics code for the Society. He has put together an informal working group including Hasnaa Chennaoui, Tim McCoy, Douglas Schmitt, Caroline Smith, and Jutta Zipfel. The group believes that meteorites are covered by the UNESCO conventions on cultural property, and want to develop an ethics guideline based on this. There was concern on the council that this is too narrow a basis for such a guideline, that such an interpretation of the conventions might be wrong, that the current group does not represent a wide enough variety of

views, and that the committee's goals are not well defined. **Action:** the ethics group is to consider these concerns and come back with more concrete plans at the next meeting.

7. Finance:

- a) *Treasurer's midyear report (Attachments 6a, 6b):* Rubin reported that MSA is doing a great job with the Society's membership and dues, and that the new system is working very well. He has obtained a credit card and a PayPal account to handle small purchases and other transactions for the Society. The McKay fund has already collected over \$3000 for supporting students at meetings and there is a prospect of getting \$20-25,000 more. Rubin made a **motion** (Thiemens second) that we establish a permanent McKay Fund within the Endowment account if the total amount collected exceeds \$25,000; the details of the uses for this money would be negotiated by the Endowment Committee. This passed unanimously. Rubin then noted that our accountant charged us \$4500 for the last tax return, but he is working with him on ways to lower this in the future. Rubin proposed staying with him for one more tax cycle. \$30,000 was transferred to the Endowment fund last April. Our total assets stand at \$636,000. Rubin is still unable to reconcile the money charged by GCA for our subscriptions with the actual amount we collected and will continue to investigate.
- b) *Audit Committee:* Denton Ebel and his committee examined the Treasurer's reports from FY2006 and the abbreviated FY2007, close-out numbers from these years, and bank statements. No discrepancies were found. Grossman made a **motion** (Thiemens second) that the Treasurer's reports from both fiscal years be accepted: passed unanimously.
- c) *Endowment Committee report (Attachment 7a):* Tim Swindle discussed that our investment strategy is successfully tracking the stock market, but with less volatility. As markets declined in recent months, we have taken losses as well, but not as severe. The committee has developed a set of guidelines for funding outreach projects (**Attachment 7b**), which were unanimously accepted, subject to minor editing, on a **motion** by Jones (Thiemens second). **Action:** Grossman to add the guidelines to the Society Handbook. Candace Kohl has essentially finished developing brochures for the Endowment and Membership committees (**Attachments 8a, 8b**; see below).

8. Membership:

- d) *Membership committee report (Attachment 9).* Gary Huss reported that membership now stands at about the same figure we had at the close of 2007, but we will pass this as the last delinquents are contacted and people register for the Annual Meeting. Ideas are still needed for how to increase our membership. The report on the 2008 Service Award (**Attachment 10**) was presented to Council. Thiemens made a **motion** (Wieler second) that the recommendation of the committee to give the award to Drew Barringer be accepted: passed unanimously with 1 abstention. More nominations are needed for the 2009 award.
- e) *Brochures.* Huss reported that the brochures were nearly final, although minor changes could still be suggested, and he explained how each might be used. There was discussion, without resolution, on how many of each to print. **Action:** Huss will by email make a final proposal on printing, with costs, to be followed by an email vote. Thiemens made a **motion** (Srinivasan second) that we approve the brochures and Grossman made a **motion** (Rubin second) that the Society should thank Candace Kohl for her efforts by sending her flowers. Both passed unanimously.

9. Pellas-Ryder Committee:

Mini Wadhwa reported (Attachment 11) that GSA changed how it appoints members to the P-R committee. All three of its slots will now be ex officio, filled by the past, present, and vice chairs of its PGD. The committee once again is experiencing a shortage of nominations, with only three at this time. The committee is on schedule for selecting this year's winner.

10. Document Retention Policy (Attachment 12):

Grossman presented text outlining a proposed policy for document retention for the Society. This is required for our contract with MSA and is based on a similar policy adopted by MSA itself. Different types of documents would be retained for different lengths of time and then destroyed, except for a list of materials to be permanently archived at the Smithsonian. Grossman made a **motion** (Thiemens second) to adopt the policy: passed unanimously.

11. Website report (Attachment 13):

Genge sent in a brief report by email stating that the website is running well and plans are proceeding for transferring the site to a server at Imperial College.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Grossman, Secretary

Added to the record and sent to Council 28 March 2008, **Attachment 14**, Special Publications Committee update.

[Also to be entered into the record: **Attachment 15**, Final Report of the Pellas-Ryder Committee for 2008, approved by email April 15, 2008]

[Also to be entered into the record: **Attachment 16**, Final Report of the Audit Committee for 2008, received May 9, 2008]