

**Society of Nematologists**  
**54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**July 19, 2015 – East Lansing, MI**

**In attendance: Stephen Thomas (President), Byron Adams (President Elect), Patty Timper (Vice President), Jon Eisenback (Past President), Senyu Chen (Treasurer), Andrea Skantar (Secretary), Nancy Burelle (Editor in Chief, Journal of Nematology), Roxana Myers (Web Editor), Axel Elling, Horacio Lopez-Nicora, Paulo Vieira.**

**AGENDA**

1. **Announcements:** President Steve Thomas thanked members of the EB for coming and participating throughout the year, and reminded everyone of the President's reception Monday night.
2. **Call to Order:** President Stephen Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:11 am EDT.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Byron Adams moved and Axel Elling seconded the motion to accept the Agenda. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Motion to Approve Consent Agenda:** Nancy Burelle moved and Axel Elling seconded the motion to accept the consent agenda, dispensing with coverage of individual officer and committee reports to allow more time for New Business, with a discussion of the finances to take place at end of Old Business. The motion passed unanimously.
5. **Approval of Minutes of Electronic EB Meeting:** Patty Timper moved and Byron Adams seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the Electronic EB Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **Executive Board Reports**
  - a) Past President
  - b) President
  - c) President-Elect
  - d) Vice-President
  - e) Secretary
  - f) Treasurer
  - g) Editor-in-Chief, JON
  - h) Web Page Editor
7. **Other Reports**
  - a) N. A. Cobb Foundation
  - b) Archives
8. **Standing Committee Reports**
  - a) Biological Control
  - b) Ecology
  - c) Education
  - d) Entomophilic Nematology
  - e) Extension
  - f) Finance Advisory

- g) Honors and Awards
- h) Industry
- i) Long Range Planning
- j) Meeting Site Selection
- k) Membership
- l) Plant Resistance
- m) Regulatory
- n) Systematic Resources
- o) Student Committee

## 9. Affiliated Organizations

- a) AIBS
- b) CoFarm
- c) IFNS
- d) NSCA

## 10. OLD BUSINESS

- a) **Budget 2014-15:** The budget is kept by calendar year, so the budget provided by Treasurer Senyu Chen on page 7 in the handout binder is 2014 budget only. We had no library contracts, no subscriptions as income, thus no income from the journal. \$18,000 expense for journal for formatting. Business office expense was \$17,000. EIC Nancy Burelle said charges for formatting may be made stricter, as we've been absorbing all those costs right now. We could consider charging changes to galley proofs back to the authors.
- b) **Membership:** Membership is \$69.95 (\$500.00 for Sustaining Members) and has generated \$21,000 income. Usually when we increase dues we lose members. We could consider instituting page charges for non-members, but that will still not offset the current cost of publication, \$200 per paper. We have 183 members right now; no invoices go out when membership expires – just an email reminder that it is time to renew. We need to remind people to renew their memberships. We need to emphasize the benefits of being a member. If we turn a profit from this meeting, then SON will be back in black, after this year's \$17,000 deficit.
- c) **Alternative models for the journal:** (Steve Thomas, Byron Adams) With BioOne, it may be possible to aggregate library accessibility with other journals. Some journals get paid for each time they are accessed. So while we'd still have formatting costs, they'd be partially offset by the money we'd get back. The Weed Science Society doesn't get money back because their journals still go directly to their members as well as to BioOne for electronic bundling, so we have to make sure there are no conflicts with the SON constitution, which has a similar stipulation for our members, should we decide to affiliate with BioOne. **Action item, Byron: look into costs and possible conflicts.**
- d) **The Journal:** Nancy Burelle has focused primarily on the nuts and bolts of the content and staying on time with quarterly publication, and not so much on the finances. The journal is still too fragile to re-institute page charges. We

can absorb the cost of operating JON for a few years, but we may have to institute page charges again eventually. Errors are sometimes still present at galley stage. If we can find out at what stage the errors persist (final review or galley stage) then perhaps we can start to charge for corrections after a certain point, since the publisher charges SON for these changes. Senyu: we do have some investment income in addition to income from dues and annual meetings. Steve: we may be able to use some of that income to offset JON expenses. We need to be sure this is actual income from these mutual funds rather than just fluctuations in market valuation, in which case we probably shouldn't touch it. **Action item for Senyu: find out what the dividends/interest have been and whether it is real gains (e.g. dividends paid) or just market fluctuations.**

- e) **Business Office-meeting planning:** What is the average expense for Business Office activities that support running the annual meeting? Russ Ingham estimated \$22,000 for local arrangements run through Oregon State University; Patty Timper noted a similar estimate when University of Georgia helped run the Savannah meeting, and said that it was much cheaper to use university resources to negotiate the contracts associated with running of a meeting. However, MSU wanted \$50,000, so this is not always feasible. Sometimes no university resources are available. The local arrangements chair will have to estimate how much meeting planning – either using university resources or the Business Office - would cost. This potential source of cost-savings should be a consideration going forward when the EB decides where to have future meetings.
- f) **More on the budget:** Steve Thomas opened a second SON checking account with US Bank. The purpose is to accept EFT transfers from abroad, which protects the SON operations account when it comes to foreign fund exchanges. There are no checks associated with the account; it is just for receiving funds. Senyu and the Business Office can provide account information as needed to foreign registrants. The funds can then be moved from there into other SON accounts. **Action item: Steve and Senyu will investigate the possibility of outgoing wire transfers.**

## 11. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Vintage Nematode Esophageal Morphology posters.** Steve Thomas explained that Russ Ingham has a number of nice drawings of nematode esophageae created by Kathy Merrifield that he would like to donate to SON. **Axel Elling moved and Nancy Burelle seconded a motion to use the vintage posters as a fundraiser for Cobb Foundation. The motion passed unanimously.**
- b) **Mechanisms to assist new officers** (“example” files). Steve Thomas said that he has expanded the electronic reservoir of documents to help new officers so they can see how things were done in the past. **Action item: Steve and Andrea, modification to OPs manual. We also need a mechanism to give**

**access via old web site structure (password access) to those who need it (local arrangements chair), to be changed with new system at a later date.**

- c) **IFNS.** Spread the word, if anyone in the US wishes to put in a bid to host the 7<sup>th</sup> International Congress in 2020, the deadline for letter of intent is Dec 1, 2015. Robin Giblin-Davis and Axel Elling are the SON representatives and Larry Duncan is current IFNS president. Currently bids may be expected from China and possibly Brazil.
- d) **Abstracts.** Steve Thomas and Byron Adams addressed the issue of abstracts submitted by foreign registrants if denied a visa. They paid the fee and it's not their fault, so we should still publish it. Justification for keeping the abstract fee: while it doesn't cost us anything to print the abstracts anymore, it still is a fee that supports functioning of the society. Plus, it keeps frivolous submissions to a minimum. People do expect to pay a fee. We don't pull abstracts after they're submitted unless they ask us to. There's no way to refund line item abstract fees when bundled with registration payments. Alternatively, going forward we can ask people to register separately from abstract submissions, then if one of the two payments has to be refunded it is possible. The abstract submission deadline could be before the registration deadline, also. Byron pointed out that the meeting registration site should be set up to say who is registering separately from who is paying. This will allow PIs to register and pay for multiple students and should eliminate nametags not matching registrants.
- e) **Budget 2015-16:** If additional meeting tours are planned, then they should be day before or day after (and not extend the meeting by a day). What is ONTA planning to do in Montreal since they usually do mid-meeting tours? Mario Tenuta is going to be at this year's meeting, but is leaving early. The Business Office and treasurer should set time limit on refund of registration fees, and put guidelines for such in Ops Manual. We need a policy for that and we need a policy for handling it. **A motion was made by Patty Timper: Move to set a policy for registration cancellation that matches the contract deadlines set by local arrangements; this policy must be pre-stated on the meeting registration web page. Action item: change the Ops Manual to reflect this requirement. Senyu seconded. Passed unanimously.**
- f) **Business Office** (*Byron, Andrea, Senyu, Steve*): Banking regulations require a physical address so we can't easily go back to a rotating volunteer business office model. In the past, each treasurer and secretary was the place of record; that model would not work anymore. To change banking and IRS addresses every three years would cause problems. We're incorporated in Maryland and have tax-exempt status registered in Kansas.

Given the decline in membership and loss of income the Society has experienced lately, the cost-benefit of maintaining a business office needs to be considered. It's nice to have the option to use the business office to run a meeting.

It is estimated to cost \$100 per member per year currently to maintain a database. There were a few responses to the previous business office RFP that came from members. Standard business office charges are \$50/hr, so although it may seem expensive, what we're paying is not a lot in the grand scheme of things. Jim Starr ran the business office for a peanut society. He's now retired. We can't ask the current already taxed volunteers to do more.

*Byron:* we've invested a lot in the web page to facilitate operations of the business office, but these have been underutilized. The amount of time it takes to process membership transactions must be addressed, and the processing of financial transactions needs to be made more transparent.

Information the EB needs to have and understand regarding Business Office function: 1) We need to compile a list of duties. 2) We need to know what banking information is accessible to the business office. 3) Fund disbursement process (goes thru Senyu). 4) Procedures for receipt of money (through business office). 5) We need a regular reporting of office transactions. 6) After this meeting, we'll see the bills and know better the timeline for transactions. 7) Insist upon accountability. In next 6 months we need to get sample files set up online covering duties required and incorporate these into the next RFA. Future transitions to any business office should be seamless.

- g) Make it easier for the Website Editor to make changes.** (Roxana Myers, Byron Adams). Part of the company that Byron initially contracted to design the site has been sold and it is now more difficult for employees to make changes when needed. The current website technology is susceptible to hacks. The company recommended we use a plug and play template to create a new website, such as Wordpress. Crystal, our contact person with the design company doesn't want to redo our website. Roxana has spent a lot of time recovering from the hack and expressed concern about any future attacks or significant website revisions/modifications interfering with her regular work. **Action item: Byron will investigate options for getting our website rebuilt.**

Branding of SON. **Is our logo a registered trademark?** Can we get a limited branding of Society of Nematologists on t-shirts, etc.? **We need one source of the official SON logo as a resource on the website.** If we settle on a limited set of designs, we can begin to put those out there for branding purposes, which may generate extra income.

- h) Industry Committee concerns – facilitating collaboration.** (Axel Elling, Steve Thomas) The Chair of the Industry Committee maintains list of contacts but the current chair never got that info from his predecessor so we're starting over. We're lacking smooth communication with current sustaining associates and don't know what these organizations are expecting for the financial contributions they are making. Haddish Melakeberhan had previously proposed different levels of membership—what do each of these levels mean for us and for the companies who donate: ...booth space at annual meetings? ...information in the program and on the website?

The current Sustaining Associate annual membership of \$500 is a small advertising expense for some of these companies. How is the order of the logos on the website determined? Some companies that don't pay are currently getting free advertising because they still appear on the website and in JON. Do they get one free meeting registration? A discount? What about the sustaining associate status vs "friend?" "Friends of SON" support the meeting. There may be different industry contacts for either function. We could/should scale the size of logo on the webpage for how much they donate. Companies expect space at the meeting to hang an industry banner.

**Action items: Get the Industry Committee to discuss their wants and must haves. Andrea will maintain twitter contact with company sponsors, and specific contact names are desirable and would be more personal. Could there be a session at the upcoming meeting for companies to introduce new products? Requests for funding support need to go in EARLY to the Industry contacts (make sure Ops Manual instructs on this). We could be waiting too late (should be no later than Jan-Mar). The person whose job is it to recruit Sustaining Associate renewals needs to be clearly designated in the Ops Manual; recruitment should be synced with membership renewals.**

- i) **Re-instatement of NNL.** (Steve Thomas): The membership misses NNL. This electronic newsletter contained many interesting topics like interviewing 'living legend' nematologists, book reviews, job postings, etc. **Byron Adams moved and Patty Timper seconded that we find a newsletter editor.** Discussion: the web site is not reader friendly. A good example of timely content is the CAST website 'Friday's Notes'. News aggregators online are also good sources of content as are the social media sites. The newsletter could include features on research of different nematology labs in the Society. This should be brought up at the business meeting. There are templates for newsletters to make it easier to produce. **The motion passed unanimously.** Jon Eisenback and Paulo Vieira volunteered to be co-editors of the newsletter. **Byron Adams moved that Jon and Paulo serve as coeditors. The motion was seconded by Axel Elling and passed unanimously.**
- j) **Benefits for emeritus members.** New criteria were proposed for emeritus status: they must be retired SON members: they should get free membership and pay a reduced meeting registration rate at annual meetings (student rate). There was general agreement with this proposal as long as it doesn't result in a significant financial cost to the Society. This is not likely to occur, as we're probably not talking about that many people. We should also give free meeting registration to Honorary Members. **Byron moved to allow honorary members free registration and establish that emeritus members pay the student registration rate. Patty seconded.** Current Honorary Members include: John Webster, Dick Hussey, and Virginia Ferris. **Action item,**

**Andrea, Koon-Hui: Put this information in the Local Arrangements section of the Ops Manual. The motion passed unanimously.**

- k) **We need to create a list of emeritus members. Action item, Andrea, Roxana, Jon, and Paulo:** Put a note requesting help in identifying emeritus members on the website, in the newsletter and on social media.

**12. *Jon Eisenback* moved and *Nancy Burelle* seconded a motion to adjourn the 1st Executive Board Meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 3:49 pm EDT.**