

## Report of Society Business for 1997

### Minutes of Council Meeting, 1997, Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution

1. *Call to order.*—The annual SMBE Council meeting was held at the Kongresshaus, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, Germany, on May 31, 1997. The meeting was called to order by President David Penny at 4:00 p.m. Present were David Penny (President), Dick Lewontin (President-Elect), Richard Hudson (Treasurer), Linda Strausbaugh (Secretary), and Wilfried DeJong (Councilor).

2. *Approval of the minutes.*—The minutes of the 1996 Council and Business meetings held in June 1996 in Tucson, Arizona, were approved as published in the December 1996 issue of *MBE*.

3. *Treasurer's report.*—Dick Hudson presented the Treasurer's report (please refer to accompanying report for details) and discussion followed. The report was in two parts: an accounting of revenue and expenses for calendar year 1996 and a projection for calendar year 1997. It was moved by Hudson, and seconded by Lewontin, that the Treasurer's report be accepted. Vote in favor of acceptance was unanimous. The financial reports of the Society for 1995 were audited by Holly Wichman and Elizabeth Waters. The financial reports for 1996 were audited by Wilfried DeJong and Maryellen Ruvolo.

A number of issues relevant to the Society's financial status were discussed. Hudson reported that the financial status of the Society is strong. He reiterated the Society's intent of maintaining a reserve of 1.25–1.5 times its operating expenses. Hudson reported that the Sloan Foundation account was closed in 1996. Lewontin raised the issue of changing the time frame of the Treasurer's report to coincide with the calendar year to avoid complications. It was agreed that the Treasurer would investigate whether or not there is a better fiscal year end for both Society and reporting purposes.

4. *Secretary's report.*—Linda Strausbaugh presented the report from the Secretary's office.

A number of actions have been taken on behalf of the Society. Agreement has been reached to archive Society documents at the University of California Libraries in Irvine, California. The Secretary has completed the process of moving the Articles of Incorporation from Pennsylvania to Kansas (to colocalize with Allen Press); dissolution of incorporation in Pennsylvania has been initiated. Hudson has initiated action to obtain 501[c] 3 tax-exempt status, including retaining the services of an attorney to assist the Society in its application. The Society has been assigned copyright for the first 12 volumes of *MBE* from the University of Chicago Press. As of April 1, 1997, membership was at 861 members and 450 institutions, a slight increase from the same time last year. A 1996 directory of SMBE members was published at Allen Press and mailed as an insert in *MBE*. Home pages have been established on the World Wide

Web for both the Society (<http://www.hgc.sph.uth.tmc.edu/smbe>) and for *MBE* (<http://www.hgc.sph.uth.tmc.edu/mbe>) and will be maintained and supervised by Dr. Yun-Xin Fu (University of Texas at Houston). The Secretary has also drafted a calendar year activities summary, a working document to provide better continuity among Councils. A Long Range Planning Committee considered society growth, electronic publishing, endowment funds, annual meeting plans, and promotion of molecular evolutionary studies.

Reports were made on the status of SMBE meetings. The 1996 meetings, organized and hosted by Margaret Kidwell, were held in Tucson, Arizona, USA, and were supported by the National Science Foundation and the Research Training Group in the Analysis of Biological Diversity at the University of Arizona. The 1996 Walter Fitch Student Prize was awarded to D. A. Petrov for his presentation "Birth and death of processed pseudogenes in *Drosophila*: Molecular evolution of a non-LTR retrotransposable element." Announcements for the 1997 meeting, to be held in Bavaria, Germany, and organized by Svante Paabo, were published in *MBE*, and brochures were mailed to SMBE members. Information was also available on the internet. The Society's 1998 meetings, co-organized by Barry Hall and Linda Strausbaugh, will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, June 17–20, immediately prior to the joint meetings of the ASN/SSE/SSB at the same site. A report will be provided by Linda Strausbaugh at the Business meeting. Additional information will be made available in *MBE* and on the internet. The site for the 1999 meetings will be Brisbane, Australia, in conjunction with the meetings of the Genetics Society of Australia (Contact person is Jane Hughes, [j.hughes@plato.ens.gu.edu.au](mailto:j.hughes@plato.ens.gu.edu.au), at Griffith University). Requests for proposals from North American sites for the year 2000 meetings will be published in *MBE*.

Elections were held for President-Elect, Treasurer, and for one Councilor (3-year term). President Penny appointed the nominating committee: Margaret Kidwell, Chair (University of Arizona), Ross Crozier (LaTrobe University), Paul Sharp (University of Nottingham), and Linda Strausbaugh (University of Connecticut). The Chair received guidelines for the nominating process, a description of duties of officers and councilors, and a summary of calendar year activities. Andrew Clark (Pennsylvania State University) and Michael Clegg (University of Georgia) were nominees for President-Elect; Richard Hudson (University of California, Irvine) and Marcy Uyenoyama (Duke University) were nominees for Treasurer; Pekka Pamillo (University of Uppsala) and Holly Wichman (University of Idaho) were nominees for Councilor. Ballots and biographies were printed at Allen Press and mailed as inserts in the May issue of *MBE*; ballots were due by July 1, 1997. Andy Clark is President-Elect, Dick Hudson is Treasurer, and Pekka Pamillo is Councilor.

In keeping with previously established procedures (a majority vote of those Council members responding within 24 hours of notification on a case-by-case basis) for rental of the *MBE* subscriber list (\$100 for one time use only) and for inclusion of inserts in journal mailings (\$100 plus any additional mailing costs), services occurred for the following: symposium announcement by National Academy of Sciences; advertisement of *MBE* back issues by University of Chicago Press; book promotion by Blackwell Science; book announcement by Sinauer Associates; software promotion by Gene Codes Corporation. In keeping with the special status of the Sloan Foundation, by virtue of its role in helping to establish the Society, their announcement of the Post-doctoral Fellowship in Computational Molecular Biology was included as an insert at cost.

Several actions related to *MBE* were taken by Council. Simon Esteal (Australian National University) has been appointed Editor of *MBE*, beginning in September 1998. He will begin participation as a nonvoting member of Council on September 1, 1997, and will become a voting member on assuming the duties of Editor. To accommodate increasing scope and numbers of submissions, Council agreed to approve additional editors for *MBE* from a list submitted by Editor Hall. A marketing proposal for the journal, targeted to membership of the Society for the Study of Evolution, was accepted from Allen Marketing and Management. Council authorized Margaret Kidwell to continue development of a proposal with the University of Arizona Libraries for digitization of back issues. In separate actions, Council approved a policy to permit posting of abstracts of accepted articles, set prices for purchase of back issues, and set rates for membership categories for 1997.

Hudson moved, with second by Lewontin, that the Secretary's report be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

5. *Editor's report.*—In the absence of the Editor, David Penny presented the Editor's report. Starting with Volume 14, 1997, *MBE* is published monthly. During the one year period from May 6, 1996–May 5, 1997, 304 submissions were received (37% increase over last year) with an acceptance rate of 46%. The Editor raises the issue that the growth experienced in 1997 (approximately 15% more pages) both reflects the continuing respect enjoyed by *MBE* and requires consideration of additional associated costs if 1998 growth follows suit. Hall reported on continuing efforts to shorten the time of manuscript flow; the average manuscript handling time (receipt to acceptance, less time for author revisions) for this period is 76 days. Hall recommended that Council consider raising page charges to help pay for the increased numbers of pages published. After a lengthy discussion of the necessity and philosophical aspects of increasing page charges, it was decided that the issue should be discussed at greater length and returned to Council for a vote at a later time. The Editor also reported that compliance with U.S. Postal Service regulations required us to announce separate rates for mem-

bership in SMBE and individual subscriptions to *MBE*. Hudson raised the question of whether or not this wording has implications for 501 [c] 3 status applications; he will seek legal opinion on this matter. Penny moved, with Hudson seconding, that wording be clarified to state that it is not possible to subscribe to the journal without membership in the Society. Motion passed unanimously. A motion to adopt the Editor's report was made by Penny, seconded by Hudson, and passed unanimously.

6. *Business.*—*Maintaining continuity in Council.* In response to last year's Council meeting, Secretary Strausbaugh developed material to help maintain continuity in Council. A Summary of Calendar Year Activities is intended as a working document that contains information about necessary activities and timetables. A revised Guideline for Nominations contains a more detailed description of routine duties and qualifications of officers and councilors than currently appears in the by-laws. Motion by Lewontin to accept both documents, seconded by Hudson, passed unanimously.

*Meeting sites:* Building upon discussions in Council and in the Long Range Planning Committee, Strausbaugh (with considerable contributions from Kidwell and Hall) has drafted a Guideline for Meetings. Motion to accept made by Lewontin, seconded by DeJong, passed unanimously.

*Walter Fitch Prize Fund:* An endowed fund of \$10,000 for the Walter Fitch Student Prize has been established by the Treasurer. The selection committee included Dick Lewontin (Harvard University), Wes Brown (University of Michigan), Cecilia Lenave (CNR), Georgio Bernardi (Institut Jacques Monod), and Akie Sato (Max-Planck Institute). There was considerable discussion about several aspects of the student prize: the number to be awarded (two prizes were approved for the 1997 meeting); the number and format of presentations; the appointment and duties of the selection committee; whether or not to announce committee members at the meetings. There was general agreement that these issues should be revisited.

*Archiving SMBE documents:* Council has accepted the proposal from the University Library at the University of California (UC), Irvine for archiving SMBE records. There was consensus that Society business records, Council deliberations, and other documents of a nonconfidential nature should be archived immediately, with the timing, procedure, and sequence of deposits arranged with Jackie Dooley, UC's official for SMBE archiving. There was discussion about archiving more sensitive documents, such as reviewers' comments. Concerns centered around issues of confidentiality, liability (especially as related to the laws of the State of Kansas about officers and nonprofit trustees), and length of time such archived documents would be closed. There was agreement that additional information and further Council deliberations would be prudent.

*Nominating Committee:* Sentiment was expressed that David Penny's idea to ask the Past-President to

serve as Chair and the Secretary to serve as full voting member was a good one, contributing to better continuity in the nominating process. Strausbaugh reiterated that we need to get an earlier start on nominations.

*By-laws considerations:* Council thought it would be a good idea to appoint a committee to revisit the by-laws to evaluate the need for any revisions. Committee members are Linda Strausbaugh, Dick Lewontin, and Dick Hudson.

*Progress in improvement of electronic communication:* David Penny reported on several aspects of electronic communication. Digitization of old journals is being coordinated by Margaret Kidwell and we may expect action soon. Penny has initiated action with Allen Press to work toward electronic methods for new and renewed memberships in the Society. Along this same line, Council notes that there is no address or information inside the cover of *MBE* for membership inquiries directed to Allen Press. There was unanimous agreement that such information should be included in the journal as it is our most visible means of promoting the Society. The President shared with Council a document prepared by Simon Esteal containing suggestions for advancing the state of electronic submissions, manuscript handling, and publishing. Lengthy discussion of these suggestions followed, with Council in agreement in principle with many of the ideas. Council recommends that continued deliberations and discussions take place, especially for those aspects of the proposal that require substantial financial commitments.

*Sponsored meetings:* The suggestion was made that any satellite meetings to our annual meetings that are underwritten by SMBE should be open to all annual conference attendees with those individuals' payments of appropriate additional fees.

*Adjournment:* President Penny called the meeting to a close at 7:07 p.m.

### **Minutes of the Business Meeting, 1997, Society for Molecular Biology and Evolution**

1. *Call to order.*—President David Penny called the Society's business meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. on Tuesday, June 3, 1997, at the Kongresshaus in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, Germany. Copies of the Treasurer's report, the Secretary's report, and the Editor's report were posted for the duration of the meeting for members' information.

2. *Election results.*—President Penny announced that election results would be published in *MBE* in the earliest possible issue.

3. *Walter Fitch Student Prize.*—President Penny announced that there would be two Walter Fitch Student Prizes this year, to be awarded at the Bavarian Evening social event. Comments from floor included observations that the number of presentations was too large, and that some type of prescreening should be considered for future meetings. Members also voiced the opinion that conflicting sessions should be minimized.

4. *Treasurer's report.*—Treasurer Dick Hudson presented a synopsis of the Treasurer's report. Please refer to minutes of the Council meeting and the accompanying Treasurer's report for details. Commentary from the floor by members focused on questions about the accumulation of reserves; Treasurer Hudson and President Penny responded with information about reserve goals and anticipated future expenses, especially those associated with electronic publishing.

5. *Secretary's report.*—Secretary Linda Strausbaugh presented a synopsis of Council and Society activities for the preceding year. Please refer to the Secretary's report in the minutes of the Council meeting for details. Commentary from the floor included testimonials to the usefulness of the Directory and a request to continue publishing it on a 2-year cycle. Members also commented on the difficulties of joining our Society. The Secretary responded that Council was concerned about this and had taken action at its meeting to provide for subscription information in *MBE* and for possibilities for electronic access to new and renewed memberships.

6. *Editor's report.*—David Penny presented the Editor's report. Please refer to the minutes of the Council meeting and the Editor's report, published in its entirety in *MBE*, for details. In addition to members' positive comments about manuscript handling time in general, the question was raised from the floor whether Allen Press can provide advance documentation of page charges to facilitate institutional reimbursement of these costs by members.

7. *Upcoming SMBE meetings.*—Linda Strausbaugh announced that she and Barry Hall are organizing the 1998 meeting to be held in Vancouver, Canada, at the University of British Columbia Conference Center, June 17–20, immediately preceding the joint ASN/SSE/SSB meeting at the same site. She reported that requests for proposals for symposia from the membership have been well received, and proposals will continue to be accepted through June 15, 1998. In addition, every effort will be made to keep registration and housing costs as low as possible; current projections (subject to final estimates from UBC) have registration at under \$150 and the least expensive room at about \$100 for three nights. David Penny announced that the 1999 meetings will be held in Brisbane, Australia, probably during the first week in July. President Penny also issued a call for proposals for sites and organizers for the year 2000 meetings, scheduled to be held in North America. Comments from the floor indicated appreciation for attempts to contain members' costs for the annual meetings. The question was raised from the floor about the issue of joint meetings, particularly the decision made at the annual meeting in Georgia to meet jointly with ASN/SSE every 3 years. President Penny and Secretary Strausbaugh answered the inquiry with three points. First, there is strong sentiment in Council that our Society loses its identity in entirely joint meetings. For this reason, Council prefers a format in which SMBE meetings are held in conjunction with other meetings, allowing attention to be focused on the unique fields of endeavor that our Society encompasses while facilitating travel to

and attendance at more than one conference. This format is being used for the UBC meetings and we will offer to cosponsor one symposium with SSB and SSE, to be held on the final day of SMBE and on the registration day of SSB and SSE. Second, there are societies other than SSE and SSB with which satellite meetings may be appropriate. For example, 1999 meetings in Australia will be coordinated with those of the Genetics Society of Australia. Third, the Council has adopted a geographical rotation of annual meetings that reflects our membership—the joint meetings of ASN/SSE/SSB may or may not match that geography in any given year. Even when geographical sites are similar, there may or may not be a willing organizer at that site for SMBE. Council will encourage and select satellite meeting arrangements whenever appropriate.

8. *Electronic publishing.*—President Penny reported on issues being addressed related to electronic publishing, including e-mail subscriptions, posting of abstracts of papers upon acceptance, digitization of back issues of *MBE*, and electronic submission of manuscripts. Membership comments were fully supportive of these efforts. Questions were raised from the floor about the possibility of placing the Directory on the web. Penny commented that this may require permission, but should be investigated.

9. *Other business.*—One complaint from the floor concerned the lack of abstracts for any of the invited symposium speakers for the Germany meeting. Membership requests that abstracts be obtained from the invited speakers as well in future years.

10. *Adjournment and banquet.*—President Penny adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m. to the Society banquet, a Bavarian Evening at the Bayernhalle, complete with a Bavarian buffet and traditional Bavarian entertainment, provided both by professionals and unsuspecting conference attendees!

11. *Postscript.*—The winners of the Walter Fitch Student Prizes were Christiane Biermann (Stony Brook, N.Y., USA), for her presentation “Sequence variation in the sea urchin sperm protein BINDIN is generated by recombination and length mutations,” and Paul Taylor (University of Leicester, UK) for his presentation “Diversity and mutational analyses of the Y-specific mini-satellite, MSY1.”

## Treasurer's report for Calendar Year 1996

### Assets on January 1, 1996:

Checking accounts	\$76,580.80
Postal accounts	<u>\$2,943.08</u>
Total:	\$79,523.88

### Activity (January 1, 1996–December 31, 1996):

#### Revenue:

Journal revenue (subscriptions, memberships, page charges, reprint payments, advertising):	\$329,711.01
Interest	<u>\$3,070.51</u>
Total:	\$332,781.52

#### Expenses:

Annual Meeting	\$10,329.96
Journal costs (Allen Press, Associate Editor expenses)	\$134,742.75
Postage (direct to Postal Service for journal)	\$5,296.18
Editorial Office	\$17,323.72
Miscellaneous (bank charges, Kansas registration, postal fees, and other items)	<u>\$1,755.27</u>
Total:	\$169,447.88

### Assets on December 31, 1996:

Checking account	\$242,594.49
Postal account	\$7,646.90
Editorial Office account	(\$9,823.72)
Other accounts (Annual Meeting Residuals account)	<u>\$2,439.85</u>
Total:	\$242,857.52

### Sloan Funds

**Balance on January 1, 1996:** \$38,940.01

### Disbursements (January 1, 1996–December 31, 1996):

Postage	\$7,500.00
Editorial Office	\$10,000.00
Allen Press, Inc.	\$21,068.22
Treasurer's Office expenses	\$12.76

**Balance December 1996:** \$359.03