

## American Physical Society

### Forum on History of Physics (FHP)

#### Minutes of the Annual Executive Committee Meeting - Monday, April 18, 2016

##### Salt Lake City Marriott Downtown at City Creek – Solitude Room

Present: Catherine Westfall (Chair), Robert Crease (Chair-Elect), Alan Chodos (Vice-Chair), Cameron Reed (Secretary-Treasurer), Brian Schwartz (Past Chair), Daniel Kleppner (Councilor), Alvin Saperstein (Member-at-Large), Donald Salisbury (Incoming Member-at-Large), Peter Pesic (representing Physics in Perspective).

1. Introduction. Westfall called the meeting to order at 7:23 a.m. All present introduced themselves. Items were taken up in the order of the agenda circulated by Westfall a few days prior to the meeting.

2. Physics Heritage Fund. Westfall and Kleppner briefly summarized the motivation for and history of this fund, the primary purpose of which is to provide the Forum with funding to support recoding of meeting sessions and funding for speakers who may be retired, not APS members, from abroad, or the like. The Fund and its associated Heritage Lectureship Award have now exceeded the funding goal of \$200,000; further details can be found in proposed usage guidelines (Appendix 1). Reed briefly summarized the current financial state of the associated accounts. Westfall summarized the proposed usage guidelines, which were unanimously approved. Westfall presented Kleppner with certificates of appreciation in recognition of the efforts of himself and the other members of the Physics Heritage Committee (Gloria Lubkin, Marty Blume, Virginia Trimble, Michael Riordan, David Cassidy, and Neal Lane) in establishing and securing funding for the Fund.

3. By-Law changes. Reed summarized proposed changes to FHP By-Laws. These changes are in response to two factors: APS has prepared a list of “Best Practices” for Units, and the fact that the 2017 “April” meeting will be held in January 2017. The latter event would normally mean that new members of the Executive Committee would take office at that time; a proposed wording change would delay this until the last APS general meeting of the year. The proposed changes were approved unanimously; Reed will send them to the Chair of the APS Governance Committee as well as to Kate Kirby (APS CEO) and Ken Cole (Corporate Secretary).

4. Treasurer’s report. Reed summarized the state of Forum finances and membership. Westfall remarked that Program Committees need to provide the Treasurer with estimates of program costs and proposals for use of Heritage Fund monies. Chodos pointed out that the Beller Lectureship and Marshak Awards are also possible sources of program funds.

5. Councilor’s Report. Kleppner summarized a number of recent APS Council actions. Most relevant to FHP is ongoing concern with erosion of attendance at the April meetings. It had been

proposed to move the April meeting to the Fall, but some Units refused. A four-year program committee has been established to undertake longer-range planning; this could be a good opportunity for FHP to play a larger role in the meeting, for example by mounting “star” sessions. It was remarked that we need to be thinking about sessions for the next few years, particularly for the joint 2019 meeting, and to get potential speakers to agree in principle to appearing. APS now has a publisher; the looming challenge in this area will be the transition to open access publications. A new Editor-in-Chief is to be announced soon. Council also took up the issue of the number of Fellowships to be granted each year; this was prompted by the fact that some 35% of APS members are students. Under existing rules, FHP has eight Fellowship “slots” annually; in the future, the number of slots will be reduced to one per one thousand unit members. The Panel on Public Affairs (POPA) is adding an industrial physicist. APS is lobbying with the American Geophysical Union to develop a Congressional statement on environmental stewardship. Concerning the 2019 meeting, Chodos suggested that we plan a session on the history of APS; this led Saperstein to propose a session on the history of scientific societies in general. Many important physics anniversaries will occur during the next decade.

6. Fellowship Committee report. Chodos summarized the work of the Fellowship Committee (himself, Ed Gerjuoy, Ron Mickens, and Pete Zimmerman. All four proposed candidates (Richard Staley, Bruce Hunt, Tom Greenslade, Dwight Neuenschwander) were approved by APS Council. Dan Kennefick will chair the Committee for the coming year; other members are San Austin, Bruce Hunt, Richard Staley, and Pete Zimmerman. It is important to not only carefully evaluate existing nominations but also to develop new ones.

A break was declared at 8:25 a.m.; deliberations resumed at 8:40.

7. Nominating Committee report. Schwartz summarized the work of the Nominating Committee. For the coming election cycle we will need candidates for Vice-Chair, two Members-at-large, and Forum Councilor. Westfall will chair this year’s committee, and would appreciate suggestions for nominees.

8. Pais Prize Committee report. Pesic summarized the work of this committee. He thought that there is one strong carry-over candidate (although there is some doubt about this) and one new nominee; Crease remarked that he was anticipating three good candidates by the end of the summer. Concern remains that we need more nominees. Nominations remain active for three years once submitted. Richard Staley will chair the committee this year.

9. Program Committee. Crease summarized the work of the Program Committee. FHP sponsored Invited Sessions at each of the March and April meetings. At the March meeting these were Peer Review, History of Electrical Science, Steven Weinberg (co-sponsored with FPS) and the Iran Nuclear Deal (also co-sponsored with FPS). The Weinberg session was particularly well attended, and included the Beller Award lecture by David Wooton of the University of York, UK. At the March meeting all FHP sessions were held on the same day, which was convenient; it was remarked that we should alert Christine Lenihan (Meetings) that this would be a helpful arrangement for us in the future. April meeting Invited Sessions were on Sidney Coleman (co-sponsored with DPF), the Pais Prize, and Big Science. There is still some confusion regarding responsibility for audio and video recording of sessions; Crease suggested that the Program

Committee contact Greg Good (AIP) regarding this. Chodos proposed that for next year we look to offer foreign and younger-oriented sessions; we need to organize “April” sessions for January. The new Program Committee comprises Chodos and Dan Kennefick. Westfall remarked that she is involved in organizing a Laboratory History meeting at the Smithsonian in January and that some speakers could perhaps do both meetings. Suggestions for future sessions were discussed, including a number involving anniversaries of events that occurred with years ending in “7”, such as Bryce DeWitt’s 1967 papers on gravitation and Hugh Everett’s 1957 many-worlds theory. Other proposals involved problems of translation in science (i.e., Arabs to Greeks without originality), rare manuscripts of scientific interest (Archimedes), Eddington’s 1919 eclipse expedition, science museums, and Los Alamos (Aimee Slaughter would be a good contact here).

10. Staged readings of plays. Brian Schwartz has arranged for the performance of eight plays over the last four years. This year’s were “No No Nobel” (March meeting), which concerned five people who did not win Nobel prizes, and “Delicate Particle Logic” (April meeting) which revolved around the relationship between Lise Meitner and Otto Hahn. Attendance usually runs to 40-50. For the January 2017 “April” meeting, “Reykjavik,” a play written by Richard Rhodes, is scheduled to be performed; this concerns the Reagan/Gorbachev nuclear arms negotiations of the 1980’s. Chodos suggested that Schwartz find a junior person to train to take over this responsibility, which is an excellent outreach activity for the Forum. It was remarked that Greg Mack (APS Government Relations) may have an interest in this area. Schwartz remarked that he would like to see APS establish a modest budget for this activity. Westfall asked Chodos to facilitate Mack with Schwartz.

11. Newsletter Editor’s report. Crease has been serving as Editor since 2011; he would like to find a successor as he is now moving into the Forum Chair position; it was suggested that he try to find an assistant to train in this regard. He remarked that securing book reviews is an ongoing concern.

12. General discussion. Kleppner remarked on his proposal for a 2000-word history of physics essay contest for early-career (pre-Ph.D.) members which would offer a \$1000 award plus travel support for the winner to attend a meeting to present their work. The idea was raised of extending this to other media (for example, short videos), but it was felt that encouraging writing would be valuable. Westfall offered that she, Schwartz, and Pesic collaborate to develop this proposal. The final item discussed was strategies to improve voter turnout in Forum elections; Chodos suggested that a prize be awarded to a randomly-selected winner, and offered to develop such a proposal.

Outgoing members of the Executive Committee were thanked heartily for their service.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cameron Reed, Secretary-Treasurer  
22 April 2016

(Appendix 1)

**American Physical Society  
Forum on History of Physics**

**FHP Heritage Fund and FHP Heritage Lectureship Award Guidelines**

*Adopted by FHP Executive Committee, April 18, 2016*

In the summer of 2012, the Physics Heritage Committee initiated a fundraising campaign to endow the Physics Heritage Fund to support FHP programs. Committee members included Dan Kleppner (Chair), Gloria Lubkin (Co-Chair), Marty Blume (Co-Chair), Virginia Trimble, Michael Riordan, David Cassidy, and Neal Lane. The solicitation letter sent to potential initial donors described the purpose of the Fund as follows:

“The Physics Heritage Fund has been created to support the programs of the FHP. The fund is needed to create and archive videotapes of its sessions as well as to support other initiatives. Furthermore, the Forum has unusual needs for travel support. Speakers at APS meetings are expected to pay their own travel costs but the Forum speakers are often retired and have restricted resources for travel, and may not even be members of the APS. Some speakers must travel from abroad. At present, support for FHP speakers who lack resources often has to be generated on an *ad hoc* basis, which vastly complicates the programming procedure.”

In early 2015, the endowment goal of \$200,000 was reached. APS Accounting procedures divide the available funds into two accounts: the FHP Heritage Fund (donations), and the FHP Heritage Lectureship Award (accrued interest); these are referred to hereafter collectively as “the Fund”. The total of these two accounts must remain at or above \$200,000; any balance above that level may be used for the purposes of the Fund.

*Guidelines for Use*

1. The FHP Secretary-Treasurer will keep records of the status of the Fund accounts and amounts disbursed. This information will be noted on the Secretary-Treasurer’s annual report to the FHP Executive Committee, and shared with the Executive Committee in advance of its consideration of funding requests.
2. At the beginning of each calendar year, the FHP Secretary-Treasurer will report to members of the FHP Executive Committee and organizers of FHP sessions the amount of funding available. It is anticipated that most requests for support will arise from organizers of FHP-sponsored sessions to be held at March and April APS meetings that will be organized in that calendar year and held the following year.

3. Applications should be sent to the Chair of FHP by June 30 of the year in which the activity is planned. Applications must indicate how the proposed activity is in the spirit of the purpose of the Fund, the amount requested, and a justification for the amount requested. The Executive Committee should remain open to new ideas for use of funds.
4. The Chair will forward requests as they are received to the Executive Committee. Soon after June 30, the Executive Committee will confer to discuss and vote on each request. Executive Committee members involved in requests may be involved in the discussion of those requests but must recuse themselves from voting. Voting will be by simple majority. The Executive Committee will prioritize approved requests in accordance with availability of funds.
5. The Chair will inform all applicants of the Executive Committee's decision regarding their requests.
6. If funds remain available after decisions have been made for requests received by the June 30 deadline, the Secretary-Treasurer will so inform the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will decide whether to solicit further proposals for the then-current calendar year or to retain the funds for use in following years.
7. These guidelines may be amended by majority vote of the FHP Executive Committee at any time.