

# **FPS Tele-Conference Meeting**

## **June 20, 2003**

*Meeting was called to order by Andy Sessler at 2:05 pm*

Attending: Tina Kaarsberg, Andy Sessler, Bo Hammer, Andrew Post Zwicker, Antonia Herzog, Tony Nero, David Hafemeister, Susan Ginsberg, Bill Edelstein, Al Saperstein, Pete Zimmerman, Sherri Stephan, Mark Sakitt

- **Report on Fellows Committee, Tina Kaarsberg**

4 are ready, there will be more than 6 submitted

- **Report on Szilard/Burton, Nicholson Committees**

*Nicholson, Antonia Herzog*

3-5 nominations are in the works

*Szilard/Burton (Brecher)*

No report

- **Status Report on Bulletin Board, Tony Nero**

BB is up and running, Ultimate Bulletin Board, from InfoPop., improvements in clarity are on the way; will have moderator for boost-phase...comments to Tony by 7/15

- **Report on Nominating Committee, David Hafemeister**

20 or so names for future available, only 3 positions up for election next year

- **Funding for the Nicholson, Andy Sessler**

talked to DPP about funding issues. But currently Nicholson is not being supported by us or DPP. Almost out of money (see item 8). If it is an "education" award, it is unclear why we should support it. If no one does, award will end due to lack of funding. We can consider adding some money but best solution appears to be pushing DPP. Andy will compose a letter to address these issues to DPP. (**attached**)

- **Report of Newsletter, Al Saperstein**

our web version of the newsletter is currently pulled. We must solve this quickly since this impacts our election. Andy will talk to Blume to find a mutually agreeable solution.

- **Treasure's Report, Andrew Post-Zwicker**

As of 5/31/03 we have \$34,223.99 in our account. The Burton Award has \$79,227.19; Nicholson, \$1,694.87; Szilard, \$82, 572.56

- **Report from POPA, Barbara Gross-Levi**

No report

- **Status of Student Projects, Laurie Fathe**

No report

- **Speaker's List, Bill Edelstein**

working with a variety of people to get a web-based list that is searchable. Must work out a set of guidelines for getting speakers

- **Medals, Pete Zimmerman**

change the Nicholson medal to one for education was discussed by Pete Z. with FED but they are not interested. The Committee on Education is interested but they have well-defined criteria for a new prize and it is not Nicholson.

- **Funding for De-Mining, Andy Sessler**

all think it is an excellent topic. APS does not want to ask Congress for an earmark at this time.

#### **A possible new, Sakharov Medal, Andy Sessler**

related to splitting off the Nicholson award – remove the human rights aspect to Nicholson. Make Sakharov FPS-based makes sense. Assumption that raising money is feasible. We will push forward with the contingency that we must have the money in the bank.

Tentative date for a new meeting: September 15, 2:30 EST

Meeting adjourned: 4:08 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Andrew Post Zwicker  
FPS Secretary  
*Attachments (2)*

Letter to Alan Chodos from Andy Sessler concerning funding for the Nicholson Award and Sakharov Prize

Dear Alan,

On Friday, June 20, the Executive Committee of the Forum on Physics and Society had a conference telephone call. We discussed many things and, in particular, we discussed both the Nicholson Award and the proposed Sakharov Prize. Let me convey to you the view of the FPS (after much discussion and various opinions). I have circulated a draft of this e-mail to the FPS Executive Committee, so even those not in on the phone conversation have concurred in the general sentiments expressed here.

1. On the proposed Sakharov Prize there was general enthusiasm. The FPS would be honored to be responsible for administering such a Prize and we would be pleased to try and raise the necessary money (200 k\$, if we can; at least 100 k\$). The group was very optimistic about its ability to raise the necessary money, especially because of Sakharov's name. The purpose of the Prize would be roughly:

"A physicist who has been a leader in the promotion of human rights and/or peace, domestically and/or internationally, or as been a leader in the promotion of international ties in science".

I hope you will be able, with this support from the FPS, to take the proposal to the Awards and Prize Committee and obtain approval for us to move ahead and start raising money. Given the approval I will put together a fund raising committee and move along the directions we discussed with Darlene and you some time ago.

2. On the Nicholson Award the situation is not so clear for the APS. The FPS Executive Committee expressed, rather strongly, the view that there was little connection between the Nicholson and the interests of the FPS. (This is especially so if #1 and #3 are removed and #2, which is education and role mode is retained as the primary purpose of the Award. We felt that #1 and #3 are clear overlaps with Szilard/ Burton and the proposed Sakharov.) The Executive Committee also felt that it had taken on the administration of this Award as a service to the APS, but such good service should only be for a short while. We are aware of the view of the Awards and Prize Committee and think that if their view is to be followed then the Award should either be accepted by the FED (where it does "naturally" belong), or taken back by the PPD (where Berk and Batterchargee, and Iowa are very interested). If neither of these alternatives can be accomplished then the APS may have to simply let the Award die away.

For this year, we should be okay. As you know, there is considerable effort underway to get a good candidate and I am hopeful that will be the case. (I have stimulated two nominations and I know one, at least, is happening)

Andy

Letter to Marty Blume from Andy Sessler and response from Blume concerning publication of a letter in the July, 2003 issue of Physics and Society

□

□ July 10, 2003

□ Dear Marty,

□

□ Now that the flap over the Forum on Physics and Society (FPS) July Issue

□ of its Newsletter is over, we -- as responsible officers of the FPS

□ (Chair and Council Representative) -- want to initiate a dialogue with

□ you which will ensure, insofar as reasonably possible, that no such flap

□ will recur.

□

□ Let us begin by stating our beliefs relevant to this matter. We believe

□ that you, as editor of Phys. Rev., but also just as a fellow physicist,

□ are entitled to feel that the editor of P&S will stand by any promise

□ made to you. We also believe that when the editor of P&S receives

□ material which possibly could adversely affect the Physical Review, he

□ should, insofar as reasonably possible, inform you of this material so

□ that he may have your input before deciding on publication. On the

□ other hand we do not believe that it is appropriate for you, on your

□ sole authority, to "pull" an issue of P&S from the APS web site when you

□ disapprove of something in its pages. To put it another way we believe

□ that FPS not the editor of Phys Rev is responsible for the contents of

□ P&S, and therefore that a decision to remove any part of a P&S issue

□ from the APS web site without the approval of the FPS Chair must be made

□ by some APS authority to whom FPS can be said to be responsible, e.g.,

□ the APS Executive Officer or the APS President.

□

□ If you agree with these beliefs and non-beliefs of ours, as we hope you

□ do (now that the flap is over and tempers have cooled), we will be happy

□ to explore with you mechanisms for ensuring that you will have the

□ opportunity, before actual publication, to state your objections to

□ impending P&S material which in your opinion might adversely affect the

□ Phys Rev. Our editor Al Saperstein is willing, even anxious, to get

□ input from knowledgeable persons about any material he is considering

□ publishing, not just material which may bear on Phys. Rev. Al's record

□ is excellent and his mistakes are very few; we have great confidence in

□ him. We also want you to be aware P&S has an Editorial Board that one

□ of us (Andy) appointed in April, which sees every issue of the

□ Newsletter before it is released. That Board consists of Lee

□ Schroeder, Harry Lustig and Gloria Lubkin; all outstanding citizens with a

□ well-known long record of public awareness, editorial experience, and ability to

□ understand, and handle, touchy subjects.

□

□ Finally, before closing this letter, we feel we should tell you that all

□□

□ Three of us -- meaning the authors of this letter plus Al -- still  
□ don't understand why you were so disturbed by the P&S July 2003  
□ issue. If the published correspondence had in any way indicated some referee's  
□ criticism of the paper Amit refused to referee, or had disclosed who the  
□ actual □ ultimate referee was, then we three agree you would have had a  
□ legitimate beef. □ Insofar as we can see, however, all that happened was that in one  
□ portion of the □ issue Amit disclosed that he was sent a particular paper and that had  
□ refused to □ referee the paper. (Surely it is no secret that manuscripts sent to the  
□ physical □ review are then sent out to referees. ) Amit gave his reasons for  
□ declining, □ while another part of the same issue reproduced the letter from you (a  
□ letter □ which P&S highly praised) to which Amit's letter was responding. One of  
□ us □ (Ed this time) now feels he made a bad decision when he included your  
□ letter in □ this Council report without first consulting you; Ed therefore now  
□ apologizes to you, and says he won't make a similar mistake again. But  
□ that apology does not in any way moderate our (Ed's and Andy's and Al's)  
□ bewilderment at your so strong adverse reaction to the July 2003 P&S  
□ issue. We think the exploration proposed at the outset of the preceding  
□ paragraph, an exploration which we hope you will agree to pursue, will  
□ be advanced if we are able to understand that strong adverse reaction of  
□ yours.

□□

□ We look forward to your response to this letter.

□□

□ Andy and Ed

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□ Dear Andy et al,

□

□ First I agree with everything that you said. I made it clear (I think)  
□ in my discussions with Al Saperstein and Jeff Marque that I didn't have  
□ any special rights on what is published in the FPS newsletter. What  
□ perturbed me had to do with the sequence of events. Jeff Marque  
□ contacted me by email stating that the editors of the FPS newsletter  
□ wanted to reprint the exchange between me and Amit without commentary,  
□ so that the readers could see what was said. As Amit had reprinted this  
□ around the world already with only his spin on it. I didn't want to see  
□ it further propagated without commentary, and I preferred that it not be  
□ published ('it' being both my and Amit's letters). Unfortunately Jeff  
□ Marque and I communicated by a series of voicemails in a game of  
□ telephone tag that ended with a message from him to me stating that I  
□ didn't need to contact him further and that it wouldn't be published.  
□ ('it' in Jeff's interpretation apparently being only my portion of the  
□ exchange). I had wanted to discuss this further in order to explain the  
□ degree to which this exchange had been propagated and how it had been  
□ misinterpreted by a large number of non physicists. I still can't  
□ understand such a misinterpretation of what I was getting at, but I

I clearly should have followed through and obtained a clear understanding of what was meant by "it".

I had discussed much of this with the presidential line and my fellow operating officers, as well as with many of the editors of the journals. The editors were annoyed with the dissemination of the code for the article that Amit had been asked to referee, because knowledge of that code is the password that gives the authors access to our ASIS electronic inquiry system that gives the current status of the article. On the whole advice given to me was to leave it alone. At the Executive Board retreat I got an email from one of our editors who had received the print version of the Newsletter, along with a URL to the on line version. I was, to say the least, very perturbed by the publication of Amit's letter in view of what I perceived to be the assurance that it would not be published. It still makes no sense to me that omission of my part of the exchange was what was done. As Ed will tell you I was in the midst of other reports and didn't know where to turn. I was advised to contact you, and managed to do so. In the interim I asked that the on line version, which had not yet been publicly announced, be pulled until what I regarded to be an error was corrected.

I did not feel that, in view of the publication of Amit's letter in the print version, that there was any going back to its distribution. It was far better in my view simply to include what I had written. I also asked (you, I believe) to add the statement with my disappointment at the confounding of a plea for scientific cooperation and support of a war, which was eventually added. I would add that my part of the exchange had been discussed at the APS Council meeting, where a number of participants urged its wider distribution, and I would certainly have given Ed permission to reproduce it, had he asked. I claim no rights of censorship of the Forum Newsletter. It's your paper (and mine, of course in a limited sense, as a member), and my elected officers have the final say.

I

I do appreciate the way in which this was finally handled, and I do thank Al Saperstein and you for this. I don't believe that I would have been in time if I hadn't asked that the electronic version be held up pending a resolution of these issues.

I

I think this response is clear, and I really don't believe that special efforts are needed in the future. If I had followed through (as I usually do when there is an apparent agreement) to make sure that both sides are agreeing on the same thing this wouldn't have happened. Things like this are an irregular and relatively rare occurrence in all our affairs, and whatever mechanism is put in place in an effort to prevent

hem will inevitably fail to foresee the circumstances of the next one.  
So let's hang loose.

Marty