

FORUM MATTERS

FPS Executive Committee Meeting, April 6, 2003

Called to order at 2:35 pm by Laurie Fathe, Chair for a few more hours...

Attending: Laurie Fathe, Andy Sessler, Aviva Brecher, Al Saperstein, Marc Sher, Bo Hammer, Mark Sakitt, Tony Nero, Charles Ferguson, Sherri Stephan, Ed Gerjuoy, Brendan Plapp, Andrew Post-Zwicker, Susan Ginsberg, Tom McIllarth, Judy Franz

1) Report on De-mining study funding – Sessler

Funding remains an issue, APS will not provide funding but did approve, for the first time ever, requesting funding directly from Congress.

2) Should there be separate committees for Nicholson/Szilard awards due to large overlap?

Can not simply merge the committees without APS approval. This is still an ongoing discussion.

3) Graduate student support for FPS-relevant study

Should we support funding for a graduate student? Not only for studies but invite grad student to Washington Day Congressional Visits. Invite a member of Grad student forum to be a liaison to FPS as a way to foster ties between FPS and graduate students.

4) Treasurer's Report – Post-Zwicker

As of 2/28/03 we have \$35,446.90. Since switching from 4 to 2 printed newsletters we find ourselves in the position of how best to spend our money. (approximately. \$4,000 per printed newsletter savings)

5) POPA report – Brecher

Fuel Cell report will be soon posted on POPA site and a summary will be published in P&S.

Must make sure that we use this new position on POPA to our advantage. On the other hand, we must make sure that we make clear to POPA, other APS groups, why we deserve to have representation.

6) Council Report – Gerjuoy

Issues of obtaining Visas, leaving country, returning. Of particular interest due to next March mtg. is in Montreal. APS alerted departmental Chairs, a statement concerning this was approved.

April APS Executive Board and Council meeting are now available on the APS Governance website. You can find all the APS minutes at: <http://www.aps.org/exec/minutes/>. Please note that this is a password protected site and you need to have a free member web account in order to access the minutes. Also, be reminded that these are only DRAFT minutes and have not been officially approved.

7) Newsletter – Saperstein

We need to increase our submissions to P&S from mtg. sessions.

Executive Committee must also submit relevant material to P&S

We again have a News Editor, Jeff Marque

8) Election - Fathe

We agreed to switch our elections to be calendar year, to coincide with APS elections. Implication is that AI needs nominations by June 1. Will be in the July issue, then multiple reminders.

8) Extend the reach of invited sessions - Nero

Often discussion after session or sessions that are mostly discussion is the most interesting of session. Can we do a real-time electronic follow-up discussion on a list serv? Nero to follow-up.

9) APS Studies - Nero

Can we do something with our available funds? How do we match issues of interest with available resources (people, funding).

10) APS public affairs – Ginsberg for Slake

Climate change
Missile defense
Non-proliferation/nuclear testing

Groups going to Hill have made a big difference...FPS needs to do more
Need to help out with letters

11) Sessions for 2004

Interest from others already for joint sessions
March sessions were well attended. 2 in March, 4 in April is our normal allotment

Non-proliferation
Alternative careers

Meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew Post-Zwicker, Secretary/Treasurer

Summary, For FPS Executive Committee, of APS Council Meeting 4/4/03.

This document summarizes, with what I take to be appropriate amplifications, those actions, events, discussions, etc., at the 4/4/03 APS Council meeting that are likely to be of special interest to FPS. I remind you that Council meeting Minutes are posted on the APS web page. Click on "Society Governance", and then on "Current Council and Committees". The Minutes are password protected, so you need to set up an APS web account.. I am informed that

the Minutes of the 4/4/03 meeting will not be posted for a week or so (as of this writing, 4/25/03); Minutes of past Council meetings are posted now. With this Introduction, here goes:

1. Visa Issues. The recent increased restrictions on visas, which were the subject of much discussion at the previous 11/10/02 Council meeting, again occupied considerable Council time. Irving Lerch, the very able APS Director International Affairs who is Judy's liaison to CISA and CIFS, and who is resigning at the end of this year alas, presented many facts about the new visa situation that I had not known. In particular, under recent legislation, including the 1994 Foreign Relations Security Act and the 2001 Patriot Act:

a) Consular officials can be held personally, even criminally, responsible for terrorist acts by persons entering the U.S. under visas granted by those officials if, after review following such acts, the visas are adjudged to have been granted without full compliance with regulations; and

b) The ultimate authority to issue visas now resides in the Department of Homeland Security, not the State Department.

These facts a) and b) sure make it understandable that consular officials often drag their feet on visa issuances..

2. Visa Issues (continued). APS is trying to get Congress to implement various measures that could alleviate the problems foreign scientists and science students are encountering in getting visas. APS also is trying to get the Administration to implement measures that will make it easier for foreign scientists with visas to get back into the U.S. after leaving for a short time, e.g., to go to a meeting abroad or to visit with their families. Lerch stressed that in general the government regards a visa as only a one-time permission to enter the U.S. If the holder of a visa leaves the country he may have to be re-evaluated for entry all over again. Accordingly any visa holder who knows he will be leaving the country and wants to return should attempt to obtain the needed permission to re-enter before actually leaving. Subsequent to the above-described visa problems discussion, Council took the following actions:

a) Council adopted an APS "Statement on Visa Rules and Government Procedures Hampering U.S. Science and Technology", in which the APS calls on the Administration and Congress "to implement appropriate and effective visa rules and government procedures that sustain science and technology". After the Council meeting, however, objections were raised to some other language (not quoted above) in the Statement. In fact Myriam Sarachik, APS President this year, has appointed a special subcommittee, which I have been asked to chair, to

recommend what the finally approved language of the Statement should be. If the output of this subcommittee is of special interest to FPS, then of course I will appropriately inform the FPS Exec Committee as soon as I know that output.

b) The APS March 2004 meeting will be held in Montreal. It now is far too late to bring the meeting back to the U.S. Thus Judy, Council, anybody who knows anything about how the government presently is handling visas, are and have to be very concerned about the possibility that foreign scientists and students residing here on visas will have difficulties returning if they leave the U.S. to attend the Montreal meeting. Council therefore passed a resolution stating (in part): "we strongly encourage non-U.S. citizens to personally take responsibility for assuring that they will have confirmation of permission for immediate reentry to the U.S. after the 2004 March meeting." Council also took measures to ensure that this resolution is posted on the APS March meeting website and on the 2004 March meeting registration form.

3. Nuclear testing. The Council unanimously passed a Statement prepared by POPA (which presently is chaired by John Ahearne, a former FPS Chair), reaffirming the APS April 1997 Statement that "fully informed technical studies have concluded continued testing is not required to retain confidence in the safety and reliability of the remaining nuclear weapons in the United States stockpile." This new Statement also urged the Congress and the Administration "to provide sufficient notification and justification for any proposed nuclear test to allow adequate time for informed and thorough analysis and public discussion." I can't see how we the FPS Executive Committee could have produced a better Statement on this subject than Council approved.

4. Perpetual Motion Machines. I can't help mentioning in this Summary that Council rejected the text of a proposed APS Statement, prepared by POPA at Bob Park's urging, and approved by the Executive Board for presentation to Council. This proposed Statement read, in its entirety: "The laws of nature forbid categorically the construction of perpetual motion machines or sources of unlimited useful energy. The American Physical Society deplores attempts to mislead and defraud the public based on systems that claim to violate these laws." Apparently Council felt it is presumptuous for us to be certain we now know enough about nature to guarantee that perpetual motion machines cannot be constructed. To Council's credit, however, and for Park's peace of mind, Council finally agreed to an alternative Statement reading: "The American Physical Society deplores attempts to mislead and defraud the public based on claims of

perpetual motion machines or sources of unlimited useful energy, unsubstantiated by experimentally tested established physical principles."

5. Report by Marty Blume, Phys Rev Editor-in-chief. In his long report on the state of APS publications, which will be summarized in the posted Council Minutes, and which I will not discuss in its entirety, Blume brought up the following subjects of special interest to FPS (in my view):

a) Guidelines for the editors and staff, for use in investigations of research misconduct, are being prepared. The most common misconduct is plagiarism.

b) Three foreign referees have notified Blume that, because of US policies, notably the war against Iraq, those referees would refuse to do any refereeing for Phys Rev. As Blume noted, three referees are a very small fraction of the number of foreign referees the Phys Rev uses; nevertheless, as Blume also noted, these notifications are evidence of the deep unease with U.S. foreign policy that many of us have discerned in our own conversations with foreign scientists. Blume then discussed the canonical letter he has constructed to respond to such referee refusals. I think this letter is so apt that I have decided to include it in this Summary despite its nontrivial length (Blume's letter doesn't appear in the Minutes):

"We have received your email with your decision not to review a paper for us in light of the American invasion of Iraq. We recognize that reviewing manuscripts is a voluntary activity, one that you perform as a service to the physics community, and thank you for your efforts. Given the voluntary nature of your participation we of course respect your decision to cease, and have made an indication in our data base so that no further papers will be sent to you for review until you inform us otherwise.

"We ask, however, that you consider the following, in hopes that in the not too distant future you will decide to review for us again. We regard science as an international enterprise, and we do our best to put aside political disagreements in the interest of furthering the pursuit of scientific matters. We have never used other than scientific criteria in judging the acceptability of a paper for publication, without regard to the country of origin of the author. We have done this even in cases where some of us have disagreed strongly with the policies of that country, and we will continue this practice. We believe it is essential that all parties involved make every effort to separate social and political differences from their participation in scientific research and publication. The pursuit of scientific knowledge needs to transcend such issues."

6. Lobbying Guidelines. Council unanimously adopted a document that, as Mike Lubell made plain, in essence establishes Guidelines and Procedures for APS lobbying of Congress in support of an APS project . The Guidelines make explicit that the proposed project "should be beneficial to society at large", and that "neither the APS nor any of its members shall be the primary beneficiary of the project." During the discussion leading up to the adoption of these Guidelines it was remarked that the APS difficulty in finding funding for the APS de-mining study might be eased if the APS were to establish such Guidelines and Procedures, to which it could point. To my best recollection, this was the only mention of the de-mining study during this Council meeting.

7. World Year of Physics 2005. In my report to FPS summarizing the 11/10/02 Council meeting I mentioned that there is going to be an international celebration of physics in 2005. Alan Chodos, APS Associate Executive Officer, reported to Council on the developing plans for this World Year. The APS, which is the official organizing body for the U.S., is calling its program "Einstein in the 21st century", recollecting that 2005 is the 100th anniversary of Einstein's marvelous 1905 year. Obviously, as I suggested in my aforementioned report, we FPS should be thinking about how we can participate in the World Year activities. In particular, the planning of FPS sessions in 2004-2005 should take this World Year of Physics 2005 project into account. In this connection I remind you that Bo Hammer, who only in April 2003 gave up his position as FPS Past Chair, is on the advisory committee for the World Year.

8. Boost Phase Missile Defense Study. Finally I inform you that in her introductory remarks to Council Judy Franz said that the already long delayed Boost Phase Missile Defense Study report still is not completed (Council originally expected to receive the report before its April 2002 meeting), but that she hoped the report would be sent to the Review Committee by the end of April 2003, in which event Council would see the report shortly thereafter. The report will become available for public release just as soon as Council accepts it, presumably by email ballot unless Council wants to delay the report's acceptance and public release until its November meeting. I am alerting FPS to these plans because, especially in view of North Korea's very recent (though possibly untrue) assertion that it already possesses nuclear weapons, it seems clear FPS should plan on a session relevant to this Boost Phase report at the 2004 March and/or April meetings, even though missile defense already has been the subject of FPS sessions in 2003 (in large part on the expectation that the Boost Phase Study would have been released well before the 2003 March and April meetings).

Before closing this report I want to remind the FPS Executive Committee, as I reminded it in my last report, that the Council Committee on Committees (of which I am a member) will convene some time before the next Council meeting in order to prepare its list of recommended APS members for filling the many forthcoming vacancies on the various APS Committees. These Committees, which carry out and determine many of the Society's policies, are listed and described in the APS Bylaws. The Committee on Committees welcomes suggested names for its recommendations. I reiterate my previous report's urging that the FPS Executive Committee try to "propose, for the various APS Committees, possible members for these APS Committees who are aware of and sympathetic to FPS goals, and of course whose qualifications are good enough to give them a chance of being appointed or elected, as the case may be."

*Edward Gerjuoy
Forum Councillor*