

ISPGR 2009 Board Meeting Minutes

Date: June 21, 2009, 2-4 pm. Location: Palazzo Re Enzo (1st floor)

Submitted by: Marjorie Woollacott, Ph.D., ISPGR Secretary

Board Members present included: Executive Committee, elected members: President Jim Frank, Secretary, Marjorie Woollacott, Treasurer, Sharon Henry, Website coordinators, John Jeka (and Cheryl Springfels), past organizers, Steven Lord, Fay Horak (past President), Bas Bloem (President elect), current organizers, Lorenzo Chiari and Antonio Naroni, elected Board Members, Emily Keshner, Jacques Duysens, Brad McFadyen and Sandy Brauer, student member Laura Rocchi, and future organizer, Kazuo Ishikawa, from Japan, as well as guest, Steven Robinovich, a possible host for a future meeting in North America.

The meeting was called to order at 2:20 pm by President Jim Frank. He thanked Antonio and Lorenzo for organizing the meeting in Bologna.

The following agenda items were discussed:

1. Minutes of Vermont meeting, 2007: Sharon Henry moved that the minutes be approved, and Emily Keshner seconded the motion. They were approved by the Board.
2. Treasurer's report. Sharon Henry: Sharon passed out a detailed report of the ISPGR accounts. She noted that the society did not have enough credit history to get a merchant's account to the 2007 or 2009 meetings to use credit cards for abstract and member fees, etc. So they used the Springfels account. She noted that for abstract submissions we made \$11,617.58 as profit. Bas asked if we should charge for abstracts. Many conferences don't do this. We do deny some abstracts (about 7-9 per meeting). Sharon noted that it is a good early income stream for the conference.

Sharon also noted that on Oct 1, 2007 we instituted a member fee of \$35.00, and later upped it to \$50. It is a 2-year member fee. You have to be a member to submit an abstract.

Sharon stated that if a conference were canceled we would have to give all money back to the credit card holders. Because the account is not in our name, Cheryl Springfel's company is currently responsible for any debt. This is not ideal. One solution is to buy conference insurance so that if a meeting is canceled, you don't lose the money. This cost \$487.00 in the US for the 2007 meeting. However, Lorenzo couldn't find a company in Italy who offered this insurance. He finally found a company out of the UK. It cost about 3000 Euros for the insurance, much more than in the US.

Bas stated that he has brought all the documents that Herman had given him when Bas was treasurer (prior to Sharon) and was passing them on to Sharon.

Sharon and Springfels transferred most of the money in the US account to Italy. She said that we will hold \$22,373.49 in the Vermont account in case there are bills that come in after the conference. Fay noted that the Board needs to put in bylaws related to issues related to employing Springfels as a subcontractor. We pay the Springfels corporation for their website work.

Sharon also discussed the Springfels Account. She noted that we need member stream to keep up the website. The website was built in 2007, refined in 2008, and it is now almost done.

She noted that Lorenzo will give the account money back that has not been spent on the 2009 meeting, as Sponsorship/Exhibitor money went directly to Lorenzo. There were also direct wires of Registration money to Lorenzo for people who didn't have credit cards.

Lorenzo noted that we lost \$15,000 during the organization of the conference because the dollar was going down during the last year, compared to the Euro with the bad economy. Cheryl of Springfels noted that if you transfer money to local currency in the current credit cycle, you lose less money. Also, if the society has its own credit card, you have much lower fees.

It was suggested that we have 3 accounts: one in the US, one in Europe and one in Japan. Then we simply charge in the local currency. If local host could create account in their own country, that would be helpful.

Bas suggested that we need to get key documents from each conference up on website, in a special area that is locked from normal access. This would include what you need to know from last conference to be used for next organizers. It would also be good, with regard to sponsors, to find out how happy they were, the money they paid, and how much square footage they used. Lorenzo reminded us that we also need an address for our society and a VAT number.

Fay noted that she has worked with an accountant in the past who has not charged us, but he is stepping down. She asked if we would recommend that Sharon get an accountant in Vermont. It was agreed that we should do it.

Kazuo Ishikawa, our next Conference organizer from Japan, noted that they have started to work with an organizer and set up a budget for their meeting in 2011.

3. Report on Website developments (John Jeka & Cheryl Springfels). Cheryl passed out a report on the website work. Her company, Springfel's.com, does web strategies for large nonprofits). They strategized with the ISPGR Board for helping us get online.

2007 work: (page 1 of handout) She noted that we have stable membership data base on line. Also there is a "Back-end" to the website: you only see certain things if you are a logged-in conference organizer. (e.g., the conference organizer manual). There will be a timeline for conference organizers on "deliverables" (e.g., looking for sponsors)

2008 work: (p. 2 of handout). Jon Jeka has created a Wiki for ISPGR expertise in various areas, for

members to contribute their knowledge. It would be moderated by the Board. It has not been used by members yet.

2009 work: did wiki, etc (p, 3 of handout)

Cheryl reminded the Board that we will need about \$5000 minimum to get ready for next conference, and next membership cycle in Oct. 2010. (changes in registration forms, accounting and admin. Support)

Optional future work: deciding if we should go with a professional conference organizer; make registration changes (including wire transfers, if organizers want to do this; registration payments and add-ons to separate out charge for member vs guests).

She discussed the concerns of many members about having to go to three different places on the web for member, abstract and registration fees. It was difficult to do this. Is there a way to make it easier?

4. Update on non-profit status. Fay Horak noted that for nonprofit status, in the US we need to have open books. We also need a bookkeeper to take care of books and 5 years of books that are balanced, in order to get nonprofit status. By the time we are in Japan we will have the 5 year history of books that are balanced. Nothing was balanced before 2007. Fay asked if we should we hire a bookkeeper to do things for the society, in addition to Springfels? She noted that we currently have a US tax ID number. We haven't filed taxes in the US for 07 or 08, for the \$30,000 we made in Vermont. We hope that we can file for the nonprofit status retroactively for those years, once we get it.
5. Professionalization of meeting organization. Fay noted that one problem with our society is that amateur academic professors organize it each time. As academics we have no background in meeting organization. Bas mentioned that a Professional meeting organizer worked with him for the Movement Disorders meeting. But the company was very opaque with the budget. It wasn't clear how much they kept from the sponsors. The contract stated that if there was a loss, they paid, if a profit, it would be split. But the problem is that they don't tell you their account balance. Bas suggested that we could create a smaller task force to do research for going with a professional organization. This was approved by the Board. Cheryl mentioned that if we did this, we could keep the membership account, for transparency.
6. Bylaws review: procedures for electing President and Council members. Jim noted that we need to update and review the requirements concerning people who are eligible for president. Right now it is quite restrictive and we are having difficulty finding people who can run for President. It was decided that this issue can be dealt with by e-mail among the Board Members after the meeting is over. We have a very small group to run for President: Emily K and Jacques D. We also don't have an easy way to elect a student/postdoc member for the Board. It is difficult because they need to come to the next 2 meetings and pay their own way. We could have them on the Board for just 2 years to make

this more reasonable. It would be helpful to post this on the website.

7. Update on student awards. Jim Frank & Emily Keshner. Emily reminded everyone that the Thursday poster presenters need to be at their posters so the judges can review them for the awards. The last students who won from 2007 did not respond to their e-mail that asked if they would be here (these were Veronica Naing, Claire Honeycutt, Marleen van der Linden). Jim noted that we have an award from NDI (\$2000/yr for next 5 conferences, to cover registration fee for winners. But we could save some and just give \$1500). We could reimburse the students who win the award for this year, for their registration fees. He also said that we need to find a Board member for next year to be in charge of this, so Emily doesn't have to organize it at the last minute before conference. John suggested that we might offer a new Investigator award for the next conference, as well.
8. Expectations of conference host for communicating conference plans and financing with the Executive Committee. (Fay/Sharon/John) Sharon asked if we have a way to select the next site? As we were running out of time, we decided to discuss this at dinner the next night or by e-mail.
9. Update on Japan meeting 2011. Kazuo Ishikawa stated that the meeting will be in Akita, Japan. It is in North Japan, near the Japan Sea. At will be at the Akita View Hotel, 2 min from railroad station.
10. Report on Bologna meeting. (Lorenzo & Antonio) Lorenzo noted that there were 498 abstracts submitted; 7 were rejected, 4 withdrawn and thus 487 were accepted; In addition, about 30 people did not register who had abstracts accepted. 462 abstracts will be presented at the conference: 97 oral; 365 posters. We have 2 parallel oral sessions. Exhibitors paid: 2000 Euros for basic booth, plus more for extras.
11. New Board members: The Board members will ask some people on Monday and Tuesday if they would be willing to run for the Board and create a ballot and we will vote Wednesday at noon at the Members Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.