



ISHPSSB

International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Biology

Biannual Newsletter

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President's Semi-Annual Report

Jim Griesemer

The newsletter has been long in coming this time around. Our "Fall" newsletter, following the biennial July conference, usually appears just a few months later. In recent times, publication date has slipped to December or January of the next calendar year. Newsletter numbering also got a little out of whack. In anticipating the day when our newsletter becomes primarily a living, on-line document with an archival print and pdf record, rather than primarily a print document with a posted pdf and

html version, I have let the publication date of the newsletter slip still further. Look for a new formulation of the newsletter in the Spring number.

After Exeter

The Exeter meeting (July 25-29, 2007) was a huge success. The opening reception at the Imperial Pub, hosted on Wednesday evening by outgoing Secretary Chris Young and outgoing Treasurer Keith Benson, was a splendid "welcome back to ISHPSSB." The Presidential Address and Welcome Plenary Session on Thursday kicked things off in a provocative and wide-ranging discussion that was sustained in all 144 sessions, right through to the final presentations (including my own session!) on Sunday. I am pleased to report that the "ISH-Kabibble"

tradition of innovative, transdisciplinary sessions fostering informal co-operative exchanges and collaborations was admirably continued. Once again, there were ample opportunities to meet old friends, make new ones, and to hear the latest word on topics inside and outside one's disciplinary home.

John Dupré, Director of the ESRC Centre for Genomics in Society (Egenis) at Exeter, together with Egenis administrative staff, Ginny Russell and Cheryl Sutton, and the other members of the Local Arrangements Committee, Keith Benson, Jane Calvert, Christine Hauskeller, Staffan Müller-Wille, and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger, produced a wonderfully varied program of activities in and around Exeter

President's Semi-Annual Report, cont.

to complement the conference sessions. The Imperial Pub down the hill from campus provided both a destination and an easy excuse to get a little air and exercise to complement the exciting conversations, (not to mention beer and pub food). I thank them all for all their very hard work over the past two years. I would also like to thank our Program Co-Chairs, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger and Staffan Müller-Wille, and the Program Committee (Carlos Sonnenschein, Anya Plutynski, Christine Hauskeller, Elihu Gerson, Ana Barahona Echeverria, Werner Callebaut, and Carl Craver), who put together an exciting and wide-ranging program. We look forward to an equally engaging program and meeting in Brisbane, Australia in 2009.

It is always a pleasure to work with the many fine volunteers who make ISHPSSB such a successful organization — the one that many of us think of as our “favorite” and with which we most identify professionally and personally. I want to take the opportunity in this semi-annual report to thank those who completed terms on the Council in the past two years: Keith Benson (Treasurer), Jason Byron (Student Representative 2005-2007), Joe Cain (Council Member 2003-2007),

Kathy Cooke (Council Member 2003-2007), Michael Dietrich (Past-President 2005-2007), John Dupré (Local Arrangements 2005-2007), Staffan Müller-Wille (Program Co-Chair 2005-2007), Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (Program Co-Chair 2005-2007), Phil Sloan (Council Member 2003-2007), and Chris Young (Secretary). You will notice that Keith Benson and Chris Young do not have dates of service beside their names. Their service dates back to the

beginnings of the Society. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude (not easily repaid, but I'm sure a beer and a smile in Brisbane would be warmly received). You may also notice that Gar Allen's name is not listed here. That's because I am pleased to thank him not only for his excellent service the past two years as President and his service the two years before that as President-Elect, but also for his continuing to serve in the next two years as Past-President (and Chair of the Nominations Committee). I also want to extend thanks to Frédéric Bouchard for serving as Webmaster, and Roberta Millstein for continuing to serve as Webmaster emerita, positions not (yet) acknowledged as an official assignments in our bureaucracy. Indeed, every one of those listed here has served ISHPSSB in a variety of functions, formal and informal, and we hope they will continue to do so. All have become trusted advisors and their “institutional knowledge” is invaluable and much appreciated by the current novice president. I encourage every member to consider serving the Society in some capacity.

I extend a warm welcome to those joining the ISHPSSB family of Officers and Council members. The list of Officers has been updated at the ISH website: <http://www.ishpssb.org/officers.html>. Werner Callebaut, Sandra Mitchell, and Edna María Suárez Díaz will finish out their Council terms through 2009. Welcome to incoming Council members John Dupré, Jean Gayon, and Betty Smocovitis (2007-2011). The new student “co-representatives” to the Council are Ellen Clarke and Don Goodman-Wilson, who tied in the student election at Exeter. I am very excited to work with Ana Barahona, our new President-Elect, Roberta Millstein, our new Secretary, Lisa

Gannett, our new Treasurer, and Manfred Laubichler and Marsha Richmond, Program Co-chairs. We are indeed fortunate to have as Local Arrangements Co-chairs, Rachel Ankeny and Paul Griffiths. We are in good hands with our Program and Local Arrangements Co-chairs and can look forward to an exciting meeting in Brisbane in the 200th year after Darwin's birth and the publication of Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique*.

As we begin preparations for the Brisbane meeting, 12-17 July 2009, Emmanuel College, St Lucia, Brisbane, Australia (more on that below), the standing and ad hoc committees that serve ISHPSSB are swinging into action. Off-year workshop proposals are in the works and due to the Committee March 7, 2008. The membership of the committees is now updated on an ISH web page: <http://www.ishpssb.org/committees.html>.

My twin agenda items for 2008 are (1) to work to improve representation of social scientists in the society and at the Brisbane meeting and (2) to enhance our presence on the internet (“i-ISHPSSB”), with innovations and improvements in the way we do business (“e-ISHPSSB”), information about the society and means of facilitating communication and collaboration among members, as well as continuing the conversations begun prior to Exeter about ISHPSSB publications, whether print or electronic. I invite you to contact me, members of the Council, and Chairs and members of the various Committees to bring your ideas on these agenda items (or anything else!) that might increase the value of ISHPSSB to you.



Image courtesy of Brisbane Marketing PTY Ltd

ISHPSSB 2009 Brisbane

Paul Griffiths

Local Arrangements

Planning for ISHPSSB 2009 in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia is well advanced. A conference website with full details will go online at <http://www.ishpssb2009.org> in April 2008.

Approximately 350 very affordable rooms will be available at the conference venue itself, Emmanuel College, St Lucia. A range of other accommodation options are available in downtown Brisbane, which is

connected to St Lucia by a regular high-speed river ferry and a bus line.

All bases are covered during a stay in South East Queensland. Here is the opportunity to enjoy a truly urban experience in the state capital Brisbane, safe in the knowledge that you are still within arm's reach of quintessential Australian country, coast and hinterland experiences.

Travel just one hour south east of the city centre and find yourself at the Gold Coast admiring 70km of sun-drenched beaches, fabulous theme parks and a truly frenetic lifestyle. Inland of the Gold Coast, and easily accessible from Brisbane, is the World Heritage-listed Lamington National Park, not to mention some of Queensland's most highly awarded vineyards.

Travel the same distance north and find yourself exploring the gorgeous beaches and spectacular hinterland of the Sunshine Coast. Then there's Fraser Island – the largest sand island in the world, the Great Barrier Reef – over 1,500km of majestic coral home to the greatest variety of flora and fauna species found in any one location in the world, and the Whitsunday Islands – an archipelago of green islands and sandy atolls in the middle of the Great Barrier Reef. This is without mentioning the Daintree – 1200km of pristine World Heritage-listed rainforest, and the 'outback' – 1 million square kilometres of red plains, deserts and tropical wetlands.

STUDENT TRAVEL

Lisa Gannett

lisa.gannett@smu.ca

ISHPSSB supports travel to its meetings for graduate students and independent scholars, based on funding available through memberships and donations to the society.

Please send any recommendations for policy or procedural changes to me or one of the other members of the Travel Support Committee.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

ISHPSSB members typically renew their memberships when they register for the biennial meeting. Those who do not attend a meeting sometimes fail to renew. We maintain a liberal renewal policy, continuing to send Newsletters and renewal information to people who are as much as two years late paying dues. Currently more than 1/3 of members are late paying dues. We ask you to renew when your membership expires. Please renew promptly when your renewal notice arrives in the spring. Remember that the easiest way to process your renewal is using our convenient PayPal service online, available through the Society website. If you have questions about your membership, contact Secretary Roberta Millstein at: rmillstein@UCDavis.edu

Program Brisbane 2009

PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS

MARSHA RICHMOND AND
MANFRED LAUBICHLER

are exploring ways to innovate in the organization of the program for 2009 to accommodate the ever-growing number of people who want to contribute at the meeting. One idea is to introduce poster sessions with incentives that encourage wide cross-disciplinary participation. Look for postings on program-organization in the Spring newsletter and at the ISHPSSB web site.

ISHPSSB is approaching a size that may outstrip our ability to plan a

conference in which: (1) everyone who's work is reasonably within the scope of the society's interests can contribute a paper (2) in a session that avoids severe scheduling conflicts with similar sessions for those interested in a given area, (3) encourages attendees to sample topics beyond a string of sessions with a limited number of organizers, and (4) does not result in extending the length of the conference. These are challenging, interlocking constraints and I hope you will contribute your ideas on program organization to the Program Committee.



Image courtesy of Brisbane Marketing PTY Ltd

OK, where do I plug in the digital projector? Who's got a flash drive I can borrow to transfer my presentation to a PC from my MAC? Is this where the plenary session meets? Are the roundtable sessions just beyond those trees? Can I take a boat to lunch or do I have to walk?

GRENE PRIZE

Peter Taylor

Sabina Leonelli, currently a Research Officer at the London School of Economics working on a project, "How Well Do 'Facts' Travel?," was the 2007 winner of the Marjorie Grene Prize for the best manuscript based on a presentation at one of the two previous ISHPSSB meetings by someone who was, at the time of presentation, a graduate student. Her submission, "Performing Abstraction: Two Ways of Modelling *Arabidopsis thaliana*," provides a fresh, interdisciplinary look at the traditional topics of abstraction in modeling and model-based explanations. Well-written, coherent, and thoroughly documented, the paper reconstructs the practices involved in recent research on the flowering plant *Arabidopsis thaliana*, a common model organism in plant biology. Leonelli successfully integrates approaches from sociology, philosophy, and history of science in her analysis, and focuses less on abstraction as a characteristic of models and more as a practice or "epistemic activity". Highlighting two distinct abstraction processes-material and intellectual-Leonelli also brings out the role of epistemic goals, commitments, and contexts among scientific communities in developing models. The paper ultimately gets at a more nuanced, complex understanding of abstraction in modeling and brings significant, original insight into the processes and practices of abstraction in biological research.

The Committee received nine entries of high quality-indeed, at least four of them are already published or in press. We want to express appreciation for the opportunity to be stretched beyond our own corners of interdisciplinarity. The various entries indicate admirably that ISHPSSB continues to play a role in stimulating innovative contributions

within and across the fields of history, philosophy, and sociology of biology.

Peter Taylor (Chair) and Tara Abraham, on behalf of the rest of the Committee: Kevin Elliott, Lisa Gannett, Christiane Groeben, Sandra Mitchell, and Edna Suárez.

Submit new entries to Tara Abraham, taabraha@uoguelph.ca, Chair of the 2007-09 Grene Prize Committee, by March 1, 2009.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

It has become a common assumption that the meeting labelled "the business meeting" is only for officers of the Society. In fact, this meeting is for the general membership. The ISHPSSB Council holds separate "business meetings" where only Council members have voting rights. It is essential to the Society that as many member as possible attend the General Membership Meeting so that business of concern to the entire Society can be conducted.

July 27, 2007 Minutes

Chris Young

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

There was a motion to suspend the rules to allow us to proceed in the order of the agenda: moved and seconded.

Many thanks were offered to the outgoing council members Mike Dietrich, Joe Cain, Kathy Cooke, Phil Sloan, Jason Byron; local arrangements chair John Dupre; and program co-chairs Staffan Mueller-Wille and Hans-Jeorg Rheinberger; Keith Benson, and Chris Young.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

Keith Benson explained how the use of PayPal has benefited ISHPSSB. Specific

details of the Society's account balances are attached to these minutes.

Secretary's Report

Chris Young reported that membership numbers continue to reflect the attendance trends at biennial meetings. A membership drive in the fall will target members who did not attend this year's meeting. The Society has 465 members in good standing and 294 members with dues delinquent (through July 2007). Called for active members to assist incoming secretary and treasurer.

Nominations and Elections Committee Report

Mike Dietrich thanked individuals on the committee and announced the following results:

- President-elect: Ana Barahona (first president based at an institution outside the United States)
- Program co-chairs: Manfred Laubichler and Marsha Richmond
- Secretary: Roberta Millstein
- Treasurer: Lisa Gannett
- Council members (2007-2011): John Dupre, Jean Gayon, Betty Smocovitis

Operations Committee Report

Jim Griesemer thanked the committee members. The committee has assisted with software selection for the meeting. The committee helped to consider challenges to adoption of responsibility for History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences until the decision was made to keep the journal at the Naples Station without ISHPSSB support. The committee has initiated further discussion on what publishing options would best serve ISHPSSB. A goal for the committee in the next two years might be to implement online voting for society officers.

Site Selection Committee Report

Jim Griesemer described the acceptance of a proposal for the 2009 meeting in Brisbane, Australia. The meeting will take place 12-16 July. Proposals for the 2011 meeting should be forwarded to Ana Barahona.

General Members' Meeting, cont.*Greene Prize Committee Report*

Lisa Gannett announced Sabina Leonelli, London School of Economics, as the winner of the Greene Prize. The full citation was published in the spring 2007 newsletter.

Travel Award Committee Report

Keith Benson announced that approximately \$15,000 was allotted for student travel awards. He noted that Council had approved an additional \$3000-\$5000 for Exeter.

Membership Development Committee Report

Chris Young, with help from Kevin Amidon explained that the committee had discussed strategies for contacting potential members and getting renewals from existing delinquent members. Current strategies have been successful, as demonstrated by the membership numbers.

Off Year Workshop Committee Report

Chris Young acknowledged the successful running of two off-year workshops. Details have been published previous newsletters.

Student Advisory Committee Report

Jason Byron noted the success of the off-year workshop run by students primarily for student members of ISHPSSB. He announced the names of the co-representatives (who will share one vote on Council): Ellen Clark and Don Wilson-Goodman.

Education Committee Report

John Lynch announced the round-table, scheduled for the following day, sponsored by the committee. The committee has also worked to assemble pedagogical materials on a web site: this is ongoing. The committee also prepared a statement on the teaching of Intelligent Design in science classes. This statement is part of new business.

Ad Hoc Committee on Publications Report

Carl Craver reviewed a session on publications that took place on Thursday. A range of suggestions for ISHPSSB

involvement in publication have been identified. The committee will work to create a business plan exploring the viability of these suggestions.

Program Committee Report

Staffan Mueller-Wille thanked co-chair Hans-Jeorg Rheinberger and participants for the approximately 430 submissions.

Local Arrangements Committee Report

John Dupre deferred to the membership to draw their own conclusions about the success of their work.

ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD FROM COUNCIL

The Education Committee prepared a statement on the teaching of Intelligent Design (ID) in schools, which Council discussed. Council then brought to the membership the question of whether ISHPSSB should make statements on controversial issues as well as the question of whether ISHPSSB should make a statement on ID in particular. The goal of bringing these questions to the membership was to get input from members and ultimately to craft a statement that could be put to the membership for a final vote.

Members expressed strong opinions on both sides of the issue of whether ISHPSSB should make public statements. Professional responsibility and the precedent of other associations were cited as reasons for making statements. Concern about professional objectivity and credibility being undermined by the issuing of such statements was seen as a major to making statements. Another concern regarded ISHPSSB's diffuse and informal nature and its very broad (but not very particular) expertise with regard to the kinds of controversial topics that might merit a statement.

Procedures for crafting a statement on any issue were discussed. One method would be to allow any member to craft a statement, which other members could choose to sign or not individually. Giving charge to an existing committee or developing ad hoc committees could also serve as a process for developing

statements for the association to approve or reject.

Some consensus emerged around the notion that the first question of whether statements should be produced by ISHPSSB, but the process of how those statements would be crafted was seen as the primary concern.

The following **motion** was passed:

Let us defer the question of whether the society should issue public statements on controversial topics to Council; that the Council or a committee designated by Council consider the discussion and comments at the general members' meeting to provide to the membership for a vote a procedure for developing such statements.

Invitation to the Brisbane Meeting in 2009: Paul Griffiths issued an enthusiastic invitation to attend the 2009 ISHPSSB meeting in Brisbane, Australia.

Adjournment

OFF-YEAR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS

Chris Young

The call for the up-coming year's off-year workshop proposals in 2008 has closed. The information was widely circulated through the ISH website and listserv. In future years, we hope to have the proposal process better integrated into a more interactive website. Information is included here so that those interested in finding out more about planning off-year workshops or contributing to ones in the works already for summer 2008 can do so. Proposals were due to Chris Young by March 7, 2008.

ISHPSSB meets every two years, in odd-numbered calendar years. During the even-numbered, "off," years, the Society will help to publicize and lend its name to workshops or meetings that meet the following criteria. *(continued next page)*

Off-Year Workshop Proposals, cont.

Such workshops ideally present the opportunity for informal discussions in a relaxed atmosphere, and may also offer formal sessions.

The Off-Year Workshop Committee will consider proposals for workshops that meet the criteria below. Some funding for graduate student (ISHPSSB members only) travel to the workshops may be available.

Additional details about proposal format and past workshops is available online:

http://www.ishpssb.org/operations/workshop_comm.html

- meetings must be interdisciplinary (combining the disciplines of history, philosophy, and or social studies of biology)
- meetings must meet all the requirements of Society meetings concerning accessibility, open access, and open invitations to members
- meetings must be thematic in nature, which distinguishes them from the regular ISHPSSB meetings
- meetings must demonstrates sufficient international viability to reflect the unique character of ISHPSSB
- meetings may be organized as workshops or as conventional meetings, but all members must be eligible to attend
- the selection process for speakers can be determined by clearly indicated processes that differ from those employed in our usual meetings

BUDGET REPORT

ISHPSSB BIENNIAL BUDGET, 2006-07

BALANCE SHEET

[1 July 2007]

Income	
Membership	17,375.00
Subscriptions	5,396.00**
Interest and dividend	3,759.92*
Travel Donation	785.00
Total Income	27,515.92
Expenses	
Newsletter	1,629.28
Secretary-Treasurer's Office (website)	246.75
Subscriptions	5,396.00**
Bank fees	1,392.99*
Graduate Student Travel	400.00
Site Inspection (Exeter and Brisbane)	992.15
Meeting Expenses	1,585.00
Total Expenses	11,142.17
Balance, 06-07	16,373.75
Retained Earnings (from 04-05)	48,823.03
Total	65,196.78***

*As of 31 August 2006, the savings account at Sea Island Bank was closed, since it did not yield any significant interest and the bank charges from the ISHPSSB credit card machine, which went into that account, were substantial. Please note the increase in income that resulted in this change, since ISHPSSB balances are now kept in a money market account handled by PayPal (currently more than 5%)

**Postings of subscription expenses remain 30 days (or more) later than income from subscriptions

***The ISHPSSB balance is actually \$64,901.27, reflecting accounts receivable but not posted on the balance sheet

TREASURER'S UPDATE

Lisa Gannett

In November and December, 2007, banking services for ISHPSSB were transferred to Bank of America in Bangor, Maine from Sea Island Bank in Statesboro, Georgia. The transfer has been complicated because we have a Canadian Treasurer for a U.S. non-profit corporation in a post-9/11 era of international banking regulations. My hope is that choosing the Bank of America—the U.S. bank with the most branches in the most states—will facilitate the work of the treasurer in the future. As Bangor is a day's drive away for this Canadian, it would likely be a good idea if future treasurers live in the U.S.

Our finances remain healthy: as of January 31, 2008, there were balances of \$17,699.21 in the Bank of America account and \$45,943.72 in the PayPal account.

Special Offers from Publishers

Annals of Science

\$99 or £60/year; subscribe online via the 'news and offers' link on the journal's website www.informaworld.com/tasc or write directly to the publisher (contact Lisa or Roberta for address).

Biological Theory

subscribe online via journal's website <http://www.mitpressjournals.org/loi/biot> (contact Lisa or Roberta for code which you need to enter to receive the discounted price).

Biology and Philosophy

\$62/year; together with Journal of the History of Biology: \$99/year; order via PayPal on the society's website.

History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences

Newly available: \$50 or €40/year; order via PayPal on the society's website.

Journal of the History of Biology

\$56/year; together with Biology and Philosophy: \$99/year; order via PayPal on the society's website.

Metascience

An arrangement with Springer is in the works.

Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences

\$40 or €37/year; order via Jane Croft at Elsevier (j.croft@elsevier.com; or contact Lisa or Roberta for regular mailing address).

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For additional Council contact information, visit our website at ishpssb.org or contact Roberta Millstein.

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