Certification Board – Entomological Society of America

Meeting Minutes, November 16, 2003
Cincinnati, OH

Hyatt Hotel

Present: Phil Sloderbeck (Director), Robin Todd (guest), Arun Sen (guest), Gerry Wegner (past NC branch rep), Von Kaster (NC branch rep-elect), Pat Copp (Pacific Branch rep), Jeff Weier (Director-Elect), Greg Cronholm (SW branch rep-elect), Mike Merchant (Past Director), Don Alleman (SE Branch rep), Bob Davis (SW branch rep), Shripat Kamble (Governing Board liaison), Bill Wymer (Eastern branch rep). Also present for the first half of the meeting: Christopher Stelzig, ESA HQ.

The meeting was called to order by Certification Board Director, Phil Sloderbeck at 2:50 pm. Mike Merchant agreed to serve as secretary to record minutes.

Chris Stelzig introduced Dorcas Thi’ongo to the board as our new contact at DMG (Drohan Management Group). He noted that the cooperation between ESA and DMG had been going more smoothly since Dorcas started serving as the BCE contact person. Dorcas works 40% of her time on BCE.

The first item of business was brought up by Chris Stelzig. He noted the new BCE qualifying exam has been posted on the web. The ESA has purchased a copy of online software package called ExamView. It was inexpensive and allows posting of exams online for a minimal fee of $99 per year. He asked the Board for approval to begin administering the qualifying exam as a web-based exam on a trial basis. Currently the qualifying exam is the only exam that has been set up online. Specialty exams are still only available as hard copy. When a prospective BCE goes to a proctor to take exams, he will have the option to take the qualifying as either an electronic exam or as a paper exam. An advantage of the online exam is that it provides immediate feedback on whether the test-taker passed or failed the exam. The tester would then take any specialty exams on paper. Mike Merchant made a motion to accept the plan to begin using online exams for the qualifying tests until such time that all exams could be posted electronically. PC seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Phil Sloderbeck asked if the Board would accept last year’s meeting minutes as passed out electronically. Mike Merchant made a motion to accept the minutes. Gerry Wegner seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Chris Stelzig agreed to mail the new Board copies of the current program manual for the Certification Program.

Phil Sloderbeck then provided the Board with a summary of Board activities in 2003. A discussion ensued about the current Professional Maintenance and Certification (PM&C) process. Chris Stelzig reported that this process was proceeding more smoothly this year. Under the current system, in
November Dorcas is mailing out notifications to BCEs of their need to submit PM&C paperwork (some Board members indicated that they have already received theirs this year). The PM&C paperwork is then due March 15 of the following year. Dorcas also contacts delinquent BCEs who fail to submit their paperwork in time. Shripat Kamble asked if the PM&C period should perhaps be extended from being required every 5 years instead of the current three years. After discussion the board declined to make the change, citing satisfaction with the current system.

Chris Stelzig noted that DMG is now handling the emeritus status request process. Some dissatisfaction was expressed with the current vagueness of the wording in the program manual regarding who was qualified to apply for emeritus status. Of particular concern was the position of retired BCEs who still maintain some scholarly pursuits, perhaps including some consulting. A motion was made by Mike Merchant to change the wording of the program manual on page 13 under requirements for qualification for retired status. He moved that the wording of the current point be changed to read (3.) "Retired from full-time employment in entomology." The motioned was seconded by JW. The board agreed that this wording should allow sufficient leeway for a Director to penalize someone who was working sufficiently to not be retired and who should be required to maintain active certification, while helping truly retired BCEs to continue to receive honoraria and other minor income sources from their entomological knowledge after retirement. The motion passed.

Shripat Kamble gave the Governing Board report, citing Board support for the Certification program, along with some concern about continued downward trend in the numbers of certified entomologists. Currently, there are 382 BCEs compared to 433 at the end of 2002. A change in the way BCE expenses are calculated shows a potential shortfall in the BCE balance of income vs expenses. Chris Stelzig reported that current budget assumes that 15% of his salary is currently budgeted for BCE, and 40% of Dorcas Thi’ongo’s time is credited to the BCE program. The Board supported a motion by Bob Davis to authorize Chris Stelzig to make the necessary adjustments to come up with a balanced budget for 2004. It was noted that ESA HQ did not inform director Sloderbeck of the deadline for submitting the 2004 budget request, which meant the ESA HQ staff calculated the budget without Board consent. The board agreed this was unacceptable and must not be repeated in 2004. The BCE director should be aware of the need to begin working with ESA HQ staff on the 2005 budget by early summer.

The Awards committee report included news that a proposal has been made to begin offering a student award program at the Branch level. The board noted the importance of forwarding the proposal as soon as possible to the ESA Awards committee for their review and approval. The board also suggested that the proposal include detailed criteria for selecting award winners, possibly with an emphasis on selecting winners based on service to their department and the Society. The board recommended that one of the nominators for award applicants be a BCE, and that the proposed $1000 cash award be given to an overall national winner. These suggestions should be forwarded to the Awards committee by the new director.

Arun Sen of the PM&C committee reported that the auditing program was going well, with relatively few problems. Except that possibly there needs to be a way to make sure that reports selected for auditing are pulled from different categories since this year all four had been from the same category.
He also requested guidance on whether non-entomological meetings should be allowed under continuing education meetings. The board agreed that non-entomological meetings could count for a portion of CEUs for the year, but should not make up a majority of CEUs. Arun was requested to review the PM&C document and prepare a proposal for the Board on ways to simplify and streamline the PM&C process during the next year.

Phil Sloderbeck reported on the Communication Committee for Stuart Mitchell. A BCE symposium on innovations in pest management has been scheduled for this year's meeting. Gerry Wegner suggested a symposium topic on delusory parasitosis for next year and agreed to coorganize such a symposium. The committee plans to focus activities this year on review and updating of website information about the certification program. Chris Stelzig noted that ESA is in the process of redesigning the entire ESA website and that the communications committee should contact ESA HQ staff to work with them on web content.

Phil Sloderbeck then asked Mike Merchant for a report on the ACE program. The new ACE exam is currently available on the web for pre-testing. Approximately 25 PCOs have pretested the exam to date and Mike Merchant plans to complete evaluation of the exam by Christmas. Considering the absence of ACE launch items in the 2004 budget it was decided that marketing products (patches, decals, brochures, etc) should be spent before the end of the year under our 2003 budget. Mike Merchant will get with Chris Stelzig to accomplish this as soon as possible, before Christmas.

The Board discussed details of the ACE program. Recommendations of the board included:

- Dues be kept low to encourage participation. Exam fee should be $50, and dues should start at $50 per year.
- Membership benefits should include a subscription to the ESA newsletter and an online subscription to one journal. Chris Stelzig confirmed that this was technically feasible.
- Benefits should include availability of a uniform patch, vehicle window decal, camera-ready ACE logo for use in advertisements (would have to go out with guidelines for accompanying wording, such as “This business employs an Associate Certified Entomologist.”).
- The ACE program should have a representative on the Certification Board. Although it will be easier the first year to appoint a representative, this should be an elected position—voted on by all ACEs. Mike Merchant will work with Chris Stelzig to write proposed rules into the operating manual.
- Mike Merchant should work with Chris Stelzig to develop a draft ACE manual and bylaws.
- Dues payment details will need to be established with the assistance of Chris Stelzig.
- The test should be rigorous and not “dumbed down” to increase the passing rate.
- We should no longer pursue a partnership program with state associations. We should instead work directly with state associations to get the word out and keep the dues low. This will smooth the start-up process for the program and be one less thing to worry about.

Gerry Wegner made a suggestion to have a silent auction at Branch Meetings to raise money that could be used to fund the student awards program. One concern that was raised was how to handle the money since currently all money generated by BCE is returned to the ESA general account. No action was taken
The board discussed policy concerning a leniency period after the 6 month grace window for paying dues or sending in the PM&C paperwork. A motion was made by Bill Wymer to have a three month grace period, and the motion was seconded by Bob Davis. After discussion Bill Wymer and Bob Davis agreed to withdraw the motion and bring this issue up during the general business meeting. However there was a request that a list of non-renewals be forwarded to Branch Reps. At some point before BCE’s are dropped from the program.

Phil Sloderbeck reported that George Schoeler had two nominations to fill vacancies on the Examination committee: Eric Natwick for Plant Related Specialty area and Hanif Gulmahamad for Urban and Industrial specialty area. Bill Wymer moved to accept the nominations. Jeff Weier seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Phil Sloderbeck introduced the topic of how to pass and archive motions electronically between board meetings. It is difficult to electronically pass motions in the traditional manner with a formal motion, a second, discussion and then voting. Mike Merchant moved that a new section on procedures for electronic motions be added to the BCE Program Manual. Von Kaster seconded the motion. The motion passed with agreement that Chris Stelzig should draft appropriate procedures for later passage by the board.

In other business, Mike Merchant asked that the board study the possibility this year of requiring a degree in entomology-related field to become a BCE. With the advent of the ACE program, requirements for a BCE should be strengthened, he argued. The board agreed that this should be a topic for vote at next year’s board meeting and asked Chris Stelzig to draft a motion to that effect for consideration.

Phil Sloderbeck adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:30 pm. [MEM2]

I spoke with Stuart Mitchell, and he said he would be happy to work with Gerry to get the symposium put together.

Phil, I had to guess here, did not note time.