

**Thirty-Fourth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference
Rutgers University**

**Governing Board Meeting of the Byzantine Studies Association of North America, Inc.
Session I
Friday, October 17, 2008**

Minutes of the Meeting

Linda Safran, President of BSANA, called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.

Present: Anna Gonosová (Treasurer), Linda Jones Hall, Walter Hanak, Eunice Dauterman Maguire, Henry Maguire, Ralph Mathisen, Leonora Neville, Stratis Papaioannou, Amy Papalexandrou (Vice President), Linda Safran (President), Adam Schor, Ida Sinkevic, Alicia Walker (Secretary), and Ann Marie Yasin.

Regrets: Sarah Bassett and Susan Boyd.

1. Agenda: The agenda was approved as submitted.
2. Approval of Minutes from the previous meetings of the Governing Board (11 and 13.X.07): R. Mathisen observed that his name was misspelled in the minutes from both 2007 meetings. A. Walker noted the errors and will correct them before mounting the documents on the BSANA website. A. M. Yasin moved and I. Sinkevic seconded that the minutes be approved; the motion was unanimously accepted.
3. Old Business
 - a. Update on renovation of the BSANA website: L. Safran reported that the BSANA website has been completely revamped in the past year and is now found at a new address: www.bsana.net. In addition to a new interface, the website has updated and expanded sections on current opportunities, abstracts from past BSC meetings, and a full archive of past BSC/BSANA Board and Business Lunch meetings. She noted that efforts to update listings of North American graduate programs in Byzantine studies on the website are under way. L. Safran has been unable to locate the 1993 winner of the Graduate Student award for best paper and requested the Board's assistance in identifying the recipient.

L. Safran explained that the website is being maintained by Amanda Wagner, who is charging BSANA \$25 per hour for her work. L. Safran noted that A. Wagner bills BSANA in one-minute increments, which result in very low-cost maintenance fees. A. Walker inquired as to the estimated annual maintenance costs. L. Safran explained that those numbers are not presently available, but will be by next year after a full annual cycle of pre- and post-conference updates has been completed. The Board agreed to continue having A. Wagner maintain the site. The Board expressed warm appreciation for L. Safran's outstanding work on the website.

- b. Update on the Tousimis Graduate Student Prize: L. Safran reported that Dr. Tousimis has reimbursed BSANA for several years of Graduate Student Prize fees which had not been promptly submitted. Dr. Tousimis has already supplied the funding for the 2008 awards (which will be announced at the BSC in 2009). L. Safran expressed her confidence that any previous miscommunications with Dr. Tousimis have been resolved and that she does not anticipate any future complications in the funding of the awards. The Board recommended that Dr. Tousimis be publically thanked for his support during the 2008 Business Lunch. L. Safran agreed to do so.

- c. Update on BSANA-sponsored session at the Kalamazoo Medieval Conference 2009: L. Safran reported that submissions for a BSANA-sponsored session at Kalamazoo 2009 were solicited from the membership last fall. A. Papalexandrou and I. Sinkevic served with her on the committee to review the panel proposals, but only one proposal was received and it was deemed inappropriate due to the narrowness of its theme. R. Mathisen also submitted a proposal, with the understanding that it would be pursued only in the event that another suitable proposal was not received. L. Safran then invited Andrea Olsen, a graduate student at John Hopkins University, to assemble a panel for Kalamazoo, which A. Olsen agreed to undertake. The panel will address the topic "Women in the Medieval Mediterranean" and will feature three papers with a response from Annemarie Weyl Carr. A. Olsen will describe the panel in greater detail at the upcoming Business Lunch. L. Safran also noted that BSANA agreed to assist A. Olsen with funding to facilitate her attendance at the Kalamazoo conference.

- d. Approval for the BSANA-sponsored session at the Kalamazoo Medieval Conference 2010: Despite the minimal response for panel proposals this past year, the Board agreed to continue the BSANA-sponsored session this coming year. A. Papalexandrou commented that with a tradition of a Kalamazoo session developing, more submissions might be received this year. L. Safran suggested encouraging graduate students who had recently won awards for papers delivered at the BSC to consider submitting session proposals. A. Papalexandrou noted that advertisement of the opportunity on the BSANA website might also help draw additional submissions. The announcement for the solicitation of proposals will be distributed to the membership by email before the end of October 2008. A. Schor raised the possibility of BSANA sponsoring sessions at other conferences. Discussion ensued. L. Safran noted that Kalamazoo was deemed appropriate because of its interdisciplinary nature and because it does not require participants to be members of any association. L. Safran motioned and A. Gonosová seconded that a subcommittee could be formed at a future date in order to investigate further the possibility of additional BSANA-sponsored conference sessions. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the proposal, but no members to the subcommittee were named at this time.

- e. Report on 2008 revisions to dues policies and procedures and current status of BSANA membership: A. Walker reported that current membership numbers about 300, which is a significant increase over last year (in October 2007, membership was 220). A. Walker and A. Gonosová reported that the Board's decision (11.X.07) to shift the solicitation for annual dues so that it does not coincide with the BSC call for papers has made the collection of dues much easier. A. Walker also noted an increase in graduate-student membership, although specific statistics are not available. The now clearer deadline for

dues submissions also seemed to aid in generating a strong rate of membership renewals. A. Walker and A. Gonosová recommended that the new policies and schedule for dues collection be retained for the coming year.

- f. Discussion of the revised process for blind review of BSC abstracts: A. Papalexandrou reported that the new process for blind review of BSC abstracts had been initiated for the 2008 conference as follows: all abstracts were submitted to the Vice President; after the deadline, the Vice President contacted the Secretary and Treasurer to confirm the membership standing of all submitters; those individuals who were not current members were given a two-week grace period during which to pay their dues, with the exception of foreign scholars and students who were allowed to pay dues at the annual meeting; the Vice President then removed any indication of name and institutional affiliation from all abstracts and forwarded the blinded abstracts to the Chair of the Program committee. After the Program Committee had made its final decision, the names of all abstract submitters were made available to the Chair of the Program Committee, who then notified applicants of the Committee's decision. L. Neville (BSC 2008 Program Committee Chair) voiced her strong support of the new policy, stating that she felt it removed any element of bias from the process of selecting abstracts. The Board agreed that this new policy should be maintained by future Program Committees.

4. President's report

- a. Nomination of new members for the Governing Board: L. Safran reported that the Nominating Committee (A. Papalexandrou, Chair; W. Hanak, S. Boyd, and L. Neville) had proposed the following names to be considered by the membership for election to the Governing Board: Elena Boeck, Sharon Gerstel, Margaret Mullett, Robert Romanchuk, and Nancy Sevchenko. L. Safran expressed appreciation to the committee for their work. L. Safran reported that in addition, a petition to place Patrick Viscuso on the ballot had been received, signed by the required number of four current members of BSANA. A. Walker verified that the signees are current members and will add P. Viscuso's name to the ballot.

In response to questions voiced regarding the need to verify the membership status of those voting at the annual Business Lunch, L. Safran noted that Segundo J. Fernandez, the pro bono lawyer representing BSANA, had confirmed that it was sufficient for current members to self-identify at the Business Meeting and that no further verification of eligibility to vote in the election of new Board Members or any other matters was necessary.

- b. Nomination of the BSC 2009 Chair of the Program Committee and recommendations for Program Committee members: L. Safran reported that several individuals had been proposed for consideration for nomination to the Program Committee for BSC 2009. L. Safran asked the Board to reflect upon the proposed names and tabled the nomination of the Program Committee for further consideration at the Saturday Board Meeting.
- c. Discussion of By-laws and voting issues: L. Safran brought attention to the need to revise the organizational By-laws in order to reflect current institutional practices. A document noting the proposed changes was circulated at the meeting for review by all Board

Members in attendance. The majority of the changes involve updating the By-laws to reflect the distinction between BSC as an annual event and BSANA as an organizational entity. L. Safran highlighted two specific substantive amendments: that the nominating committee will be asked to nominate “at least” four nominees for election to the Board annually; and that a line stating that those attending the BSC must be members of BSANA will be removed so that the By-laws require only those presenting papers or presiding at sessions to be members. An additional amendment provides an exception for membership to session presiders who are faculty of the hosting institution so that non-Byzantinists might participate in the event more easily. R. Mathisen voiced concern that the requirement for individuals to be members in good standing in order to submit an abstract was a discouragement to open participation and that some members, especially those whose abstracts had not been accepted, resented having been charged what amounted to a “submission fee” in order to propose papers for the 2008 conference. A. Gonosová voiced her opinion that support of BSANA should be encouraged and that individuals who wish to participate in the conference should be required to support the organization by paying dues. Lively discussion ensued. A. Walker noted that in the absence of empirical data demonstrating the recent history of membership rates, abstract submission rates, and other pertinent facts, it would be impossible for the Board to determine if requiring that dues be paid in order to submit an abstract was negatively affecting submission rates. A. Walker offered to compile data relevant to this question and to report her findings at the 2009 Board Meeting. The Board agreed to have A. Walker undertake this survey. A. Gonosová noted that in the future, the membership dues form should be redesigned to indicate whether members paying a reduced membership rate are students, retirees, or independent scholars. A. Walker agreed to revise the form in order to separate these categories. Lively discussion ensued regarding the quality of 2008 paper submission and the criteria for their review. L. Neville moved and A. Schor seconded that the specific amendments be accepted as noted on the document. The motion was accepted unanimously. A. Papalexandrou motioned and A. Gonosová seconded that the amended By-laws be ratified. The motion was accepted unanimously. Copies of the By-laws with the suggested amendments clearly indicated will be provided at the Business Lunch.

5. New Business

- a. Proposal to create a position of graduate-student liaison on the BSANA Governing Board: A. Papalexandrou raised the suggestion that a graduate-student member of BSANA be formally designated as a liaison with the Board in order to communicate graduate-student needs and concerns. The Board endorsed the sentiment that more direct communication with the graduate student community would be welcome, and lively discussion ensued regarding the way in which a liaison position might be designated. The Board agreed that the question of how graduate student involvement might be increased should be incorporated into a survey of the membership to be conducted during the coming year.
- b. New abstract prices: A. Gonosová explained that the current five-year cycle of abstracts will be completed in 2009 and that subscriptions for the next series of abstracts, series VIII, will be solicited in the fall 2009. She noted that the cost of postage has significantly increased since the abstract fee was last designated (\$12 per volume, \$60 for the series,

both prices including shipping) and raised for discussion the whether the price of abstracts should be increased. A. Gonosová noted that there are currently 65 institutional subscribers. A. M. Yasin asked if there was a need to draw additional revenue through the sale of abstracts. A. Gonosová said that BSANA's current finances are quite healthy, so the organization could supplement postage costs without difficulty. She suggested that we keep the domestic rate at \$60 and raise international subscriptions to \$75 to defray the expense of international postage. A. Papalexandrou asked if having abstracts available on the website might reduce orders of the hard copies of abstracts. A. M. Yasin raised the possibility that increasing the fee might cause some university libraries to cancel their subscriptions because of funding cuts. In the interest of preserving the widest distribution and availability of the abstracts, the Board agreed not to change the current abstract prices and to reconsider the prices following the next five-year series.

- c. Discussion of graduate-student stipends for attendance/giving papers at BSC: In light of the current surplus in the BSANA budget, due primarily to profits from BSC 2007 and BSC 2006, L. Safran proposed that the amount of reimbursement to graduate students attending the BSC be increased. A. Gonosová confirmed that students are required to submit receipts for any reimbursements and that many students do not request the full reimbursement amount. L. Jones Hall noted that the current economic climate and the recent increases in airline and other expenses would make an increase in reimbursement amounts especially welcome. L. Safran moved and L. Jones Hall seconded that the Board increase the amount of reimbursement for graduate students attending the BSC from the current amount of up to \$300 for those delivering papers and \$100 for those simply attending to a maximum of \$500 for those delivering papers and \$200 for those simply attending. S. Papaioannou suggested the amendment that students simply attending the conference be reimbursed up to \$300. L. Safran accepted the proposal as a friendly amendment. The Board approved the proposal unanimously. L. Safran asked if we would be able to implement the increase this year. A. Gonosová confirmed that this was possible. L. Jones Hall proposed, A. Papalexandrou seconded, and the Board unanimously agreed to implement the increase in funds to graduate students for the 2008 BSC and to make an announcement to this effect at the Business Lunch.
- d. Discussion of a Dumbarton Oaks liaison committee: Due to time constraints, L. Safran tabled discussion of this item until the Saturday Board Meeting.
- e. Discussion of proposal to undertake a survey of BSANA members: L. Safran renewed the proposal voiced at a previous Board Meeting (13.X.07) that the Board undertake a survey of current members of BSANA regarding the future direction of the organization. The Board expressed strong endorsement of this proposal and agreed that it would require extended discussion. Due to time constraints, L. Safran tabled further discussion of this item to the Saturday Board Meeting.
- f. Request for funding to update format and version of BSANA database: A. Walker explained that the current version of the program used to maintain the membership database needs to be updated, and that the new Secretary will need to redesign the format of the database in order to gather categories of data not currently collected. She explained that this would be a significant undertaking and requested that the Board

designate funds for the new Secretary to undertake this project. E. Maguire motioned and L. Safran seconded that the Board designate up to \$500 for technological improvements relating to the BSANA database. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Other Business: No other business was raised.
7. Adjournment: L. Safran duly moved that the meeting be adjourned, A. Papalexandrou seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The Meeting was adjourned at 2:01pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Walker
Secretary, BSANA

"under immediate threat of being suspended due to lack of financial resources," and to request support and suggestions. A. Walker motioned that the Board circulate the letter from *Deltion* to BSANA members through the listserv, that the President of the BSANA write a letter in support of *Deltion* which they can use as necessary, and that the President of the BSANA contact the president of the Christian Archaeological Society to see if there are other ways BSANA can provide support. The motion was unanimously approved.

- b. Discussion of the Dumbarton Oaks liaison committee: L. Safran asked the Board whether the Dumbarton Oaks liaison committee is necessary since the incoming Director of Byzantine Studies (M. Mullett) is a newly appointed member of the BSANA Board. H. Maguire suggested that though the committee has been dormant, it is useful to keep it in existence. M. Mullett offered to continue to offer report from Dumbarton Oaks at BSANA business lunch as A. M. Talbot has done. Motion (H. Maguire) to keep committee dormant: unanimously approved.
- c. Discussion of the proposal to undertake a survey of BSANA members. Committee formed (R. Mathisen (chair), L. Safran, and A. Schor) to design members' survey. A. Walker suggested that survey should be on-line (with paper copies sent to the approx. 30 members who have opted to receive paper correspondence). The survey should particularly target graduate student issues; A. Walker suggested that the committee consult Amy Papalexandrou for input since she had raised related issues during her time on the Board. It was agreed that committee would construct first draft of the survey then circulate it to the Board by email for discussion.
- d. Discussion of the amendment to by-laws passed during Business Lunch (see 18.X.08 minutes: President's Report). Subsequent to the passing of the amended by-laws (article III.3: "Payment of membership fees is mandatory for any person presenting a conference paper or presiding as a session chair, unless the session chair is a faculty member at the institution hosting that year's BSC"), it was discovered that this clause contradicts an existing portion of the by-laws (article V.1: "Any member of the BSANA in good standing may submit an abstract to present his/her work at the BSC." It was decided that the matter will have to be put before the membership at the 2009 Business Meeting.

Motion (L. J. Hall; seconded by A. Walker) to include minutes from the 2008 Business lunch, the annual budget report, and the revised by-laws into the BSC registration packet (rather than distribute them at the beginning of the Business Lunch) so that members can review them in advance of the 2009 Business Lunch meeting: passed (14 in favor, 1 opposed). A. Walker noted that an email should be circulated to the membership in advance of the BSC 2009 explaining that the minutes, budget, and other materials will be distributed in this fashion.

6. New Business

- a. Approval of administrative budget for 2009 Chair of the BSC Local Arrangements Committee: A. Schor presented to the Board for approval that up to \$500 to be made available to Lynn Jones as seed-money for the 2009 BSC: unanimously approved. A.

Gonosová reiterated that the Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee will need to submit receipts to the Treasurer in order to be reimbursed for expenses up to the approved amount.

- b. Approval of funds to assist secretary in upgrading the BSANA membership database. Up to \$500 was approved at the prior business meeting (17.X.08, sect. 5.f). A. Walker specified that these funds were needed in order for the new secretary to get training on the Access database software. A. Walker also suggested that an additional \$125 is needed to purchase an updated version of the Access software; plus funds to purchase copies of *Robert's Rules of Order* for the officers. Unanimously approved.
- c. Other new business: re: Robert Nelson's motion passed at the Business Lunch (17.X.08; Report from the USNCBS). A. Walker will ask R. Nelson for exact wording of proposed session to use in letter to be written by BSANA president to the organizers of the Congress.

7. Adjournment: meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Yasin
Secretary, BSANA