
Minutes of the Business Meeting

Charles Sanders Peirce Society

28 December 2001

Following the annual scholarly meeting, with papers by Tom Short (“How To Make Peirce’s Fixation Clear,” delivered in lieu of a Presidential Address from Umberto Eco) and Jesse Norman, the Society’s essay contest winner, (“Peirce, Provability and the Alpha Graphs”), Secretary-Treasurer Migotti called the meeting to order at about 7:15 p.m.

1. The minutes of the 2000 Business Meeting were approved as published in the Fall issue of the *Transactions*.
2. André De Tienne delivered the following report on behalf of the Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee examined a number of issues this year, pertaining mostly to how the Society could improve both its visibility and its efficiency in accomplishing its stated purpose, that of “encouraging study of and communication about the work of Charles S. Peirce and its ongoing influence in the many fields of intellectual endeavor to which he contributed.” Some of these issues were brought to the Committee’s attention by regular members of the Society, who are thanked for their thoughtful diligence.

In particular, it has been noted that the Society’s participation in meetings organized by other associations, such as the Semiotic Society of America, the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy, and even the American Philosophical Association, has declined over the last few years. The Peirce Society used to sponsor a session at the SSA’s annual meeting, but hasn’t done so for quite some time. The number of Peirce-related papers at the SAAP meeting is admittedly too small. Different suggestions have been made to improve this state of affairs, such as having more than one Peirce session at the Eastern APA. After discussing the pros and cons of various solutions, the Executive Committee has agreed that it should become more pro-active in establishing a Peirce Society presence in appropriate venues. Three steps the Committee is now considering are the following. (1) The Committee will find ways to sponsor a session both at

the SSA annual meeting and at the SAAP annual meeting. (2) We may organize a larger Peirce session at the Eastern APA if we can separate the business meeting from the time slot reserved for the philosophy session; this would allow more papers to be read at the session, and also allocate more time to discuss the Society's business. (3) The Committee will find ways to encourage Peirce scholars to present papers at other sessions of any of the three divisional meetings of the APA.

The Committee wishes to remind all members that any member can, and is encouraged to, organize a Peirce session at meetings of learned societies, but that for such sessions to become sponsored by the Peirce Society, they need (1) to be organized by a Peirce Society member in good standing, and (2) the proposed program needs to have been approved by the Executive Committee.

The Committee also began to discuss issues related to the improvement of the Society's operation. As these discussions have just started, not much needs to be reported at this point. The Committee simply wishes to inform the membership that some aspects of the Society's constitution are being examined to determine whether their wording allows for all the flexibility that is desired in order to run the Society's business efficiently and openly — for instance in the event of an officer's having become unable to fulfill his or her duties for any reason.

To end this report, a few words regarding the future are in order. The Peirce Society has entered a period of transition. Quite a number of scholars of the first few generations, who founded the Society or accompanied its growth in the last six decades, have died, retired, or reduced their involvement in the Society's affairs. The readership of the *Transactions*, after reaching one of its peak years just after the Sesquicentennial Congress of 1989, has decreased and become stagnant, hovering at about 500 subscribers, only a quarter to a fifth of whom are foreigners. Since about half of the subscriptions come from libraries, the actual number of voting members amounts to a little more than 200. For lack of precise statistics, it is unclear whether the Society's rejuvenation rate matches that of its aging rate. There is a growing sense, however, that the Society ought to become more vigilant in order to make sure that its stated purpose continues to be promoted and achieved, even with greater vigor, in the future. For this we may need to find ways to increase the membership among the younger generation, and to tap more systematically the overseas community of Peirce scholars. We may also want to reflect on how to encourage the teaching of Peirce's philosophy at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in American universities. Finally, as we have learned from the Sesquicentennial Congress, nothing helps more a Society's dynamics than its involvement in conferences and its celebration of anniversaries. In that regard, it is never too soon to start thinking about some future events, such as the 2003 World Congress of Philosophy in Turkey, the 40th anniversary of the *Transactions* in 2005, or the 60th anniversary of the Peirce Society in 2006. We may not care to celebrate the 90th anniversary of

Peirce's death in 2004, but let's make sure the Society is alive and kicking when the time comes to celebrate both the 175th year of Peirce's birth, and the 100th of his death, in 2014.

3. Peter Hare delivered the following report on the *Transactions*:

In 2001 there were 492 member/subscribers (388 domestic and 104 foreign). The journal's bank balance is \$16,846.30. A double issue (Winter and Spring) in 2002 in honor of Richard S. Robin is in press.

4. Mark Migotti delivered a preliminary version of the following financial report:

2001 income was \$1,987.66 (\$1,476 in membership dues, \$510.66 in interest, and \$1.00 from a refunded bank charge).

2001 expenditures were c. \$2,129.18 (594.26 for mailings; \$600 for travel subventions for essay contest winners (\$100 for Menno Hulswit the 2000 winner, and \$500 for Jesse Norman, the 2001 winner) \$500 for the essay contest prize; a \$249.02 for dues to the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie for 2000 and 2001, \$99.99 for an overhead projector for one of the talks at the meeting, \$45.91 for dinner for the essay contest winner, and \$40 for a Society membership for the financially strapped Centro Interamericano de Semiótica Peirce, Ediciones Castellanas (CISPES) of Buenos Aires.

As of December 31, 2000 the Society's assets were: \$13,635.02, a decrease of \$141.49 from last year. The breakdown of the assets is: \$61.36 in savings, \$229.33 in checking, and \$13,344.33 in a money market account.

5. Nathan Houser delivered the following report on the Peirce Edition Project:

2001 was a mixed year for the Peirce Edition Project. In most respects it was a very successful year but the resignation of our technical transcriber and the need to move temporarily out of our regular quarters for the summer led to some delays. Volume 8 is well in hand but it will not go to the printer until sometime in the fall. Fortunately, earlier this month we hired a new technical transcriber who promises to make an excellent addition to our staff, and the air conditioning system for our offices (the overhaul of which is what forced us to vacate our offices for several weeks) now delivers substantially more air-conditioned oxygen — which was very much needed.

I am very glad to report that NEH has funded the Peirce Edition for two more years — the new grant took effect in November. We were awarded \$100,000 plus \$25,000 in matching funds. This is the third NEH award since PEP's reorganization in the mid 90's. These awards, although small relative to

our overall needs, are crucial for the continuation of production without interruption — and they are important for the stature of the Edition. We continue to be grateful to NEH for this recognition and vote of confidence and we are of course grateful to any of you who may have served as referees for our grant applications. I am also glad to report that the William James and John Dewey letters editions were funded this year.

Some of the other highlights from 2001 include substantial improvements in our computer-based transcription and production methods that we believe will yield noticeable improvements in the layout and formatting consistency of our forthcoming volumes. These improved methods will also help facilitate the publication of an electronic edition of the *Writings*. I am especially pleased to be able to report that André De Tienne, Associate Editor, is well on his way to achieving a promotion with tenure in Philosophy and there is good reason to expect that next year I will be able to report that Cornelis de Waal, Assistant Editor, has a tenure-track appointment in Philosophy. Obviously these appointment prospects bode very well for the future of the edition.

Another important event in 2001 was the retirement of Don D. Roberts from the chairmanship of PEP's Board of Advisors and the appointment of Thomas Short to that position. I am deeply grateful to Don for the excellent service he has given PEP over so many years, and that he will continue to give as member of the Board's Executive Committee. And I am delighted that Tom has taken the torch from Don — and has already demonstrated that he is an extremely able successor. Tom has taken the reins just as we begin in earnest our efforts to establish an endowment for PEP, something very important for the completion of the edition and the continuation of PEP as a center for the study of Peirce's thought. We are not quite ready to publicly launch our endowment campaign, but I can tell you with much pleasure that we have just received from Charls and Claire Pearson our lead gift of \$150,000. You will be hearing more about this effort and about the NEH matching funds challenge. We are grateful to several of you who contributed in December to help us make the NEH match.

6. There was no Old or New Business.
7. Neither outgoing President Eco nor incoming President Deledalle being present, the Secretary-Treasurer called the meeting to a close at around 7.30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Migotti
Secretary-Treasurer