

ASCB National Office: The First Three Years, 1978-81
Recollections Twenty Years Later

In March 1996, past-president Susan Gerbi sent a letter to all past officers of ASCB soliciting their help in providing information about the history of the Society. It was her hope to get facts, opinions, and stories which would help make the Society's past come alive. In a belated response to her request, I am putting down as much as I can remember of the three years during which the national office of the Society was established. Most of the following exercise in recall is substantiated by the archives of the Society held in custody by the Albin O. Kuhn Library and Gallery at The University of Maryland Baltimore County, UMBC, the rest is personal recollection.

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The American Society for Cell Biology, organized in 1960 and incorporated in the State of New York in 1961, held its first meeting November 2-4, 1961 at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. Two hundred and twenty-two papers were presented. From the beginning the members of the new society were not only on the forefront of this newly-recognized field of science, they also were feisty, creative, and fun to be with. The meetings were well attended and were small enough so that there was always a lively exchange of opinion and information. I vividly remember one particular occasion when Phil Sekievitz got up at a business meeting to describe what he had seen at the International Congress for Biochemistry that he had recently attended. He told us that, in addition to platform presentations, members displayed their work in posters tacked on the walls. "Maybe we should do that, too." said Phil. "More members could be heard from". Everyone knows what that led to.

The membership grew rapidly as the years went by and in these first years the ASCB was guided and operated by volunteers who served as officers, as members of Council, or on various committees. The hardest working officers were the secretary and treasurer, who, because of their responsibilities, were re-elected each year for a period

of several years. Thus, from 1961 to 1978 only three members served as secretary: Montrose J. Moses (1961-67), George D. Pappas (1967-73), and Nancy L.R. Bucher (1973-78). The Secretary's office was the hub of the organization, sustaining its continuity by guarding its archives, maintaining membership and dues-billing records, dealing with journal subscriptions, and, equally important, coordinating the Society's activities.

In 1976, the prestige of ASCB was recognized when it hosted the First International Congress for Cell Biology concurrently with its Seventeenth Annual Meeting held in Boston, Massachusetts. It was an enormous undertaking for a young society, and, under the leadership of George Palade, Keith Porter, Bill Brinkley, Betty Hay, and Nancy Bucher, its members rose to the occasion with great aplomb. But the effort in producing the event took so much time and energy from so many people that it was clear that the Society would have to change its style of management if future challenges were to be met.

No one was more aware of that reality than Nancy Bucher who was Secretary at the time of the Congress. It was Nancy who recognized that busy member-scientists could no longer efficiently manage the affairs of the Society. Therefore, in the fall of 1977, with the eighteenth annual meeting in San Diego, CA, looming ahead, Nancy sent a letter to President-elect Keith Porter suggesting that it was time the Society established a permanent business office; she wrote, "the present mode of operating the Society is no longer practicable due to the greatly increased size of the membership and consequent requirements for office space and demands on the Secretary's time. In addition, an undue cost burden is placed upon the institution where the Secretary's office is located. The elected Secretary should make decisions involving policy, but the routine business of the Society should eventually be handled by an executive officer in a central office. This central office could also assist the Treasurer, who would continue to plan and oversee the budget. It could also carry out much of the routine work that now burdens the Program Chairperson, and eventually take over the Placement Service".

As a result of this letter, I was approached by Nancy and Keith at the San Diego meeting with the proposition that I stand for election as secretary of the Society and occupy myself, among other duties, with establishing and managing a national office. Since Nancy and I enjoyed a long-standing friendship, she knew that I was retiring from the National Institutes of Health in September, 1978, and, perhaps, she thought that I would jump at the chance to fit in with their plan, but, to put it mildly, I was unenthusiastic. I had a retirement agenda that I looked forward to fulfilling and was not eager to replace it with something else. But I underestimated their powers of persuasion, and, in the end, I consented to give it a go as a half-time commitment. I further agreed that, even if I were not elected Secretary, I would help in establishing a permanent office. Later during that meeting, the Council agreed that a national office was needed and that Bethesda, Maryland was an appropriate place for its establishment.

During the winter of 1977-78 several things were accomplished. I had conversations with the comptroller of The Federation of Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) and the executive directors of several societies, ranging from the oldest and wealthiest (The American Physiological Society) to one the newest and poorest (American Assn. of Immunologists), to see how they managed their affairs and to get an appreciation of the physical needs of an office. Because there was no office space available at FASEB, I requested that they include ASCB in the list of prospective tenants for a new building that was to be built, and looked for office space elsewhere.

On a quiet street in Bethesda where residences were being converted into offices, I found space suitable to become the headquarters of the National Office. The space was ample and the cost was \$170 per month. To my astonishment and delight, it transpired that the property was jointly-owned by an ASCB member, Helene Guttman, and a friend. Helene was an active member who had served with success on the Education Committee. This was a most fortunate coincidence because Helene and her co-owner agreed to postpone signing a lease until the necessary formalities for the establishment of a national office could be completed.

In hunting for an administrative assistant I was fortunate again. When the local office of a computer firm left Bethesda, Marian Cyr chose to stay behind and was job hunting. Marian had extensive secretarial and office experience and was looking for a few more years of work before she and her husband retired to their home in Bethesda. She had excellent and enthusiastic endorsements from her former employers and when I explained my situation and offered her a job as my administrative assistant, she accepted. The basic needs for the establishment of a national office were now in place.

On August 31, 1978, I retired from NIH, and, in keeping with my agenda, went on a tour of France for the month of September. Upon my return to Bethesda, the function of the office began. On the first of October, a lease for office space was signed and Marion Cyr was hired. She was a joy to work with and I learned a lot from her - heaven knows I needed to! We spent the month buying furniture. Marian knew exactly what to buy and where to put it when it arrived at the office. At the end of the month I wrote a progress report to the Executive Committee: -

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CELL BIOLOGY NOW HAS ITS OWN OFFICE

The Society has come of age and has moved out of the laboratory into its own suite. On October 1, 1978, a 3-year lease was taken on 700 square feet of space, comprising 4 pleasant, airy rooms on the top floor of a house at 4326 Montgomery Ave., Bethesda, Maryland 20014 (Tel: 301-652-4041).

Appropriate furnishings have been bought and the office is already functioning in a modest way. Mrs. Marian Cyr is our new Administrative Assistant.

It is envisaged that with the passage of time, not only will the present functions of the Secretary's office be performed, but also they will be expanded in such a way as to benefit the efficiency and economy of the Society. Thus, this central office will handle much of the routine work of the Program Chairman, will assist the Treasurer by making disbursements and will eventually take over the Placement Service.

A NEWSLETTER containing a variety of items useful to the membership will be published at appropriate intervals. As time goes on, the office intends to make itself a clearing house for information pertaining to cell biology and cell biologists and to this end will be in touch with the membership from time to time in order to obtain information about their discipline and the direction it is going

It is hoped that the new operation will be innovative, efficient and responsive to the needs of the Society as it continues to

grow.

Emma Shelton, Secretary

October 30, 1978

At the nineteenth annual meeting of the Society in San Antonio, TX, Keith Porter made the official announcement: "By action of Council, a Business Office has been established". And I assumed the office of Secretary of the Society and Executive Director of the National Office.

STARTING UP:

Many things had to be done to get started - -

In December 1978, Marian and I spent two days in Boston instituting the transfer of the Society's records to the National Office. While I talked to Nancy about her official responsibilities, Marian worked with Nancy's able assistant, Joyce Rosenthal, a woman well-known and liked by all. Joyce had worked hard to organize the mountain of accumulated records and spent hours in instructing Marian how to deal with them.

Dues-billing and journal subscriptions were two chores that Nancy had managed to shuffle off early in her tenure when she arranged for the business office of FASEB to take over the job, but the responsibility for keeping track of the membership remained with the Secretary. The method used for keeping track was truly Byzantine; it had been set up when the society was born and had never been changed. Each year every member's name was typed on a 3x5 card when dues were paid. Not only was one card kept, but two, one for the current year and one for the past year and each in a different color, white for who *is* a member and green for who *was* a member. I don't believe a card had ever been thrown away. I liked to say that the cards were kept in shoe boxes, but that wasn't true, they were in file boxes. It was a method I was determined not to inherit.

In January 1979, the Secretary's files were transferred from Boston to Bethesda and, since the Treasurer's files also came to us, Marian and I spent weeks going through the records and putting them in order. Arthur M. Zimmerman, the Treasurer, had been

threatening to send “trunks of stuff” to Bethesda and he did just that. Art had inherited such a mountain of material, that it was, indeed, stored in the three foot-lockers which he shipped to us. He couldn't wait to get rid of them! When opened, the foot-lockers were found to be filled with bills, check stubs, canceled checks, and stacks of paper that had been accumulated and passed on from one Treasurer to the next since the Society's creation. I closed the lids of the trunks and never opened them again during my tenure of office. In fact, I must report that the foot-lockers were not opened until the archives of the Society were transferred to the Kuhn Library at UMBC in 1994.

After the San Antonio Meeting, Marian and I worked like beavers to put together the physical plant of the National Office and to understand and cope with our many obligations. It took a long time on the telephone to take care of such items as worker's compensation and health insurance for Marian and insurance for the office. Both of us were getting into some serious things such as the meeting in Toronto and the Second International Congress for Cell Biology in Berlin.

We had the Certificate of Incorporation framed and hung it on the wall.

But it was not until March that the Constitution and By-Laws Committee met in Bethesda to make the changes in the By-Laws that would make us legal. Article XII of the By-Laws established the National Office and the appointment of an Executive Director to oversee its activities.

But I still was not on the payroll.

In June, the Executive Committee met in an office at FASEB to deal with the legal and fiscal details of hiring an Executive Director, with length of service and salary to be determined. When David Sabatini, who was President of ASCB at the time, asked what I would consider an appropriate salary to be, I became conscious, for the first time in my life, that I did not want to be subject to bias because of being a woman and I responded that the sum should be comparable to that paid to my male successor. The agreement arrived at was \$17,000 a year, based on a 20-hour week, for a term of

three years with a cost of living increase of 7% per annum. It was a reasonable compensation. (To put the salary, equivalent to \$35,000, in perspective, it should be noted that \$50,000 was top-salary in 1979). Early on, Keith had said to me, "Make sure to get a contract". Taking his advice, I had a local lawyer prepare a contract incorporating the agreement that was signed on July 19, 1979 and made effective as of January 1, 1979.

In April, 1979, Marian had told me she was leaving. She had attended the eighteenth annual meeting at San Antonio in 1978, had worked hard all winter, and was smart enough to see what was in store for her in the months to come. I was sorry to see her go; she was a good friend and good worker. True to her character, Marian had found another gem in the person of Agnes Sady Brumett to replace her. "Angie" left a job at NIH to come with us; she was 27 years old, competent and smart, going to night school to earn a degree in business administration, and she stayed with us for two years.

FIRSTS:

There were a lot of firsts, of course, but some had a unique identity.

Gavel, Logo, E.B. Wilson Medal

Keith Porter was an active and creative leader of every society to which he belonged. He very much enjoyed the collegiality of the scientific meeting, he liked talking to people, he liked leading people, and he had ideas of how a society should recognize its members and identify itself to the world at large. It is not surprising, then, that he created what became three permanent features of the Society, - the transfer of the **President's Gavel**, the **Society's Logo** and the **E.B. Wilson Medal**.

In the past, ceremony had no place in the meetings of the society - when a new president took office he or she simply stood up, usually to applause, and carried on. But, in the new order of things, Keith wanted more than that. He wanted more formality in the transfer of responsibility from one president to the next and asked the National Office to buy a gavel that could be used as a symbol of office. I was happy to

oblige. The passing of the gavel from David Sabatini to Bill Brinkley at the nineteenth annual meeting in Toronto in November 1979 began a tradition that is still in use today.

Because the Society was beginning to show leadership in the scientific community, Keith believed it needed a logo to identify itself, for example, a logo on the cover of the *Journal of Cell Biology* could be used to give us some identity in our long-standing association (battle?) with the Rockefeller Press. Sometime in the Fall of 1979, a commercial artist named Mark Swisher looked at pictures of cells shown to him by Porter and drew the design destined to be accepted as the Society's logo. It was a beautiful and timeless symbol, full of motion -- but it was not immediately accepted! The Council at its interim meeting in March 1979, decided that a contest should be held with a two hundred dollar prize going to the one who would draw the winning design. The contest was a flop. I remember showing Swisher's design to a scientist-artist friend who took one look at it and said he couldn't do better. No one could do better. Swisher got \$120 for his work!

In establishing the E.B. Wilson Award in 1980, Keith arranged for Mark Swisher to design a silver medal that incorporated the society's logo, (see Fig. 1). Twenty-five medals were cast at a cost of \$500 apiece (the price of silver was close to its peak). In November 1980 during the 20th annual meeting in Cincinnati, the Council established the E. B. Wilson Medal as the Society's highest award - to be presented to a member for "outstanding contributions and service to the science of cell biology". At the twenty first annual meeting at Anaheim, CA., Keith Porter, together with George Palade and Dan Mazia, was presented with the E.B. Wilson Medal.

The Keith Porter Lecture. In 1981, a singular event that became a highpoint of future Annual Meetings, was created *for* Keith Porter, not by him. It was the Keith Porter Lecture. Early that year, Mary Bonneville and Lee Peachey, former students of Porter's and trustees of a fund set up in his honor, sent a letter to the Council with a proposal to create a **Keith Porter Lecture**. The lectureship, a prestigious and gracious event, was to be a great honor. When considered by the council at the 21st Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA, the proposal was enthusiastically endorsed and the

lectureship came into being.

The Newsletter. While visiting the offices of several scientific societies in 1978, I observed that each of them published a newsletter to communicate with the membership on a monthly basis. Since it seemed a good policy to follow, the first **ASCB Newsletter** appeared in August 1979. For two years I wrote the Newsletter and every month walked the copy to a local printer who also worked out of an office in a former house. In looking at those Newsletters today, I'm surprised and impressed by the amount of information they contain, but to compare those first Newsletters with their counterparts of twenty years later is to be humble in light of what the Society has now become!

MEMBERSHIP FILES

It is a given, and we were all too aware of it, that a society cannot exist without knowledge of the status and whereabouts of its membership. But bringing ASCB membership records fully under the control of the National Office was a task we struggled with for two years. It took that long because we had to let FASEB continue to care for the membership records while we coped with higher-priority things such as national and international meetings and the like.

To go back a bit. The Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, FASEB, founded in 1912, had at some point established offices in the manor house of one of the grand estates that once lined a country road called the Rockville Pike that ran northwest out of Washington, D.C. By 1979, FASEB had expanded into a large pseudo-Colonial office building and had become a mini-bureaucracy serving its six constituent societies. The Federation provided its members with a print shop, a mail room, and a shared computer, each of which was guarded by a supervisor. These facilities were available to non-member societies, but for a price both personal and financial. To get anything done at FASEB, it was essential to establish rapport with a supervisor. For example, unless the supervisor in the mailroom was sweet-talked, a mail job due to go out on the first of the month risked being bumped to the end of the month by a FASEB member. This arrangement could be a bit disconcerting to non-

member societies that used FASEB's services. We longed to be free of FASEB, but we had many irons in the fire and we had to live with it for longer than we cared to.

There was a further hitch in the arrangements with FASEB. Someone in the FASEB hierarchy had purchased an English computer designed to fill the needs of member societies that were plugged into it. It was a total disaster (nobody knew how to run it) which put FASEB in debt. That debt was passed on to the consumer (us) so that as of 1 August 1979, we were to be assessed an annual fee of one dollar per member above the previous cost of file maintenance, and, as if that were not enough, the cost of mailing-labels was raised by 60%.

We *had* to get a computer! I asked other non-member societies how they managed membership records and, as I recall, it was the executive officer of the Endocrine Society who put me in touch with Peter O'Meara of Terminal Systems, a time-sharing computer company. Peter became the man upon whom we relied for all aspects of dealing with membership data. In December 1979 Peter supervised the installation of a computer terminal and a data-phone (later known as a modem) connected via a committed telephone line with the Terminal Systems computer. All systems were go! -- But, wait! -- The records could *not* be transferred from the FASEB British-made computer directly to Terminal Systems - the British-made computer was incompatible with the American-made instrument at Terminal Systems. What a set-back! It forced Angie Brumett, a whiz at the keyboard, to use her spare time during the first three months of 1980 to type over 4000 names, addresses, and ancillary information into Terminal Systems' computer. Because of her prowess, it was with relief and joy that our commitment to the FASEB computer was formally ended on 1 April 1980.

Now we were free to deal with our membership data in a much more sophisticated way than heretofore had been possible. In November 1980, the Society was found to have 4290 members good standing and to be growing at a rate of 8,1%. More important, when the cost of file maintenance caused us to look closely at the status of our members, we discovered that 300 (7.5%) of them were arrears in dues payment. These arrears, when topped by the expense of provided services, represented a

substantial loss of revenue. However, rather than take these members off the list at once, in a personal letter I gave each a chance to renew before January 1, 1981 or be dropped from membership.

No record exists of the those who came back into the fold, but, after two years, the records of the National Office finally reflected a valid membership and contained much more information about each member than before had been available. And, more to our satisfaction, Terminal Systems could now give us address labels, indexes for the abstracts and program for the annual meetings, and a membership directory in a timely fashion.

ANNUAL MEETINGS:

A major task devolving to the national office was processing the abstracts for the annual meeting and providing space for the program committee to assemble and prepare the program. Each year in the past, the chair of the program committee had been required to start the process virtually *de novo*; it was a heavy commitment in time for the chair, and in cost for the society. Now, continuity would be provided by the National Office. In the summer of 1979, it was with great trepidation and naivete that the national office began receiving the abstracts of papers to be presented at the nineteenth annual meeting in Toronto, Canada. For help, I hired two college students, home for the summer, and came very quickly to appreciate the enormity of handling all the paper work. It began by the numbering each abstract upon receipt and filing the accompanying 3X5 cards inscribed with author's name and abstract title according to the author's field of interest. After the deadline, abstracts were sent to member-volunteers to be evaluated for acceptance. Of 1371 abstracts received, 176 were "below the cutoff". Fortunately for me, Peter Satir was Program Chair. He was on top of the job, innovative, accommodating and never lost his temper - which, with all the glitches - he had every right to do. I loved him!

The Program Committee used a newly-installed blackboard when it met in the mini-boardroom at Montgomery Avenue to arrange the program. It took two days of labor

and devotion to put relevant papers together in the various sessions and to decide the order of oral presentation from platform and grouping in a poster session. The decision to put a paper in an oral presentation or a poster session was ticklish business because platform sessions were considered to have more prestige than poster sessions (although nobody said so). At the Toronto meeting, papers were about equally distributed, 513 platform and 665 poster. (By the way, we owned the poster boards, built to our specifications, and made money by renting them to other societies).

The indexes for the program and abstracts gave us a real headache in 1979. There was no easy way to produce them except from the 3X5 cards sent in with each abstract, a typewriter and the local printer - we had no computer. It was another story in 1980 when, for the first time, the indexes were produced by Terminal Systems from data Angie punched into the computer as the abstracts came in. No more 3x5 cards! It is hard to express how triumphant we felt with that accomplishment. Twenty years later it seems laughable.

The physical arrangements for the meetings, hotel selection, meeting rooms advance reservations and the like, presented too large a task for us and they remained in the hands of Fred Kettlekamp of Professional Associates at St. Louis. With the exception of the first one, Fred had handled all our meetings and arranged to print the program. He was honest, capable, and easy to get along with, but sadly, he was getting old and less reliable by 1979 and there were serious problems with the session rooms at Toronto, for which, of course, Peter had to take the blame. Kettlekamp was destined to go. I looked into possibility that FASEB might manage the 1980 meeting, but Fred and his son Steve were still with us at the 1981 meeting in Anaheim, CA. The only job we disengaged from Fred was printing the program. The program had been printed for years by Brown Printing located near Professional Associates in St. Louis, a logical arrangement when the locus of the program chair changed each year, but when the program was produced at Bethesda in 1980, it was sent to a local firm, Saul's Lithograph, to be printed at a modest saving and great convenience. The abstracts themselves, which appeared as an issue of *The Journal of Cell Biology*, were printed by The Rockefeller University Press.

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR CELL BIOLOGY, ICCB; BERLIN, GERMANY, 1980

Another bit of history, if you will bear with me. In 1933, there was founded in Sweden the Society for the Study of Cytology, an organization that thrived until the outbreak of World War II. After the war, in 1947, the society was re-formed under the name of the International Society for Cell Biology (ISCB) and held its first meeting at Yale University in 1950. The founders and officers of the ISCB were a snooty bunch, a carry-over from pre-war days, perhaps, who seemed more interested in keeping people out of the society than letting them in. My application for membership in '56 was delayed until 1957 when my paper presented at the ISCB meeting in St. Andrews, Scotland, was deemed worthy. The founding of ASCB changed all that by welcoming members with open arms; ISCB faded away. These post-war meetings were very exciting, as were the two decades of the '50s and '60s. After ASCB was formed and cell biology was firmly established as a legitimate discipline, cell biologists around the world were anxious to meet and communicate with each other. Thus, at the ASCB meeting in St. Louis in 1972, the International Federation for Cell Biology (IFCB) was formally established. The IFCB was made up of ASCB, The European Cell Biology Organization, Ibero-American Society for Cell Biology, Indian Society for Cell Biology, and Japanese Society for Cell Biology. It was the IFCB that sponsored the first International Congress for Cell Biology in Boston in 1976.

When the First International Congress for Cell Biology was held, the annual ASCB meeting was canceled, but in 1980, with Berlin being so far away, the members voted overwhelmingly to hold the 20th Annual Meeting in Cincinnati. Fortunately, experience with the 19th Annual Meeting had resulted in such crucial changes by Peter Satir that the job was much easier and more efficient all around. I do not recall that the annual meeting in 1980 was an undue burden to the office staff.

In thinking about it now, I am amazed at how much was accomplished at the National Office during 1979, its first year of existence. By the time of the meeting in Toronto, many of the arrangements for the ICCB were already in place. The first and second

circulars and registration forms had been sent to the membership, and group flights to Berlin and three trips - Scandinavia, Austria & Germany, Eastern Europe - had been arranged by Chevy Chase Travel. Elizabeth Flinn of Chevy Chase Travel had been in touch with Ms. Flothmann of the German Convention Service to arrange for travel and housing for the ASCB participants during their stay in Berlin and I had been in touch with my colleagues around the world in matters concerning the program and business of the congress. I enjoyed preparing for the ICCB. In my dual capacity as Secretary and Executive Director of the Society, I made many friends among my counterparts abroad; it was a pleasant and stimulating experience.

In preparing for the Berlin meeting, I remembered the excitement and intellectual stimulation I had derived from those post-war international affairs and I was driven to do some thing I had never done in my life - write a grant request. I wanted to give some penniless young member a chance to go to Berlin. With help from my friends in the grants business at NIH, I prepared proposals in June 1979 to the National Institutes of Health (\$70,000), the Office of Naval Research (\$ 5,000), and the National Science Foundation (\$30,000). We ultimately received grants totaling \$44,000. Bill Brinkley, then president, and I determined that the Executive Committee should judge the applications on the basis of merit and award a sum of money commensurate with the distance an awardee had to travel. One hundred twelve applications were received from 27 States, District of Columbia, Canada, England, and Sweden. Sixty-four grants were awarded to applicants from 20 States (range; \$915 from California to \$529 from New York), District of Columbia, Canada, and London, England.

The positive feed-back from the awardees was extremely gratifying, and I was so thrilled with the success of the project that I asked permission of the Council to start a Travel Fund for the 3rd ICCB to be held in Japan in 1984. The Fund would be created from \$5 donations contributed with payment of dues. If one-half the membership responded and the money put at interest, I argued, by the time of the meeting, well over \$40,000 would be available for distribution and perhaps for matching funds. These activities were another "first" for the Society.

PUBLIC POLICY

In 1977, the council had voted not to hold ASCB meetings in states had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, a protest that many organizations were making at that time. But, this action, as well as many past activities of the Public Policy Committee, was found to be in violation of the Articles of Incorporation of the Society. Article VIII of the Articles of Incorporation of ASCB read, in part, "...nor shall *any part* of the activities of the Corporation consist of carrying on propaganda,..." (italics mine). This was prohibitively restrictive and one of the first actions taken by the Public Policy Committee when the National Office came into being was to address this dilemma. Re-writing the Articles of Incorporation was seriously considered and I was asked to consult a lawyer about the possibility of incorporating in Maryland. We were relieved of that chore when the lawyer (good man!) pointed out that the addition of the word "substantial" between "any" and "part" in Article VIII, would accomplish the goal of bringing the Articles into compliance with the law. It was also learned that up to 5% of our total budget could be spent in lobbying to influence legislation, provided that it was germane to the purposes of the society. By November 1979, the membership had voted to amend the Articles of Incorporation; Article VIII now read "...any *substantial part...etc*", and we were home free.

Although I was pressed to do so many times, I never became involved with public policy. I am sure I disappointed a lot of people by my inaction. It was beyond my capacity and that of our small office to be effective in dealing with "the Hill". I was working half-time and had more pressing things to do. Further, it was my belief then, as it is now, that it takes a lot of "savvy" to be effective in carrying a message to the Congress and it requires a lot of thought and preparation before-hand; to do less greatly reduces respect for an organization and hinders any chance of getting a message across.

Twenty years later, ASCB, through thoughtful preparation, has taken its place as one of the most successful educators and lobbyists of the Congress among all of the scientific societies .

FINANCE:

When I became Executive Director of the National Office I had been a member of ASCB since its inception and had served on its Council, but I had never paid much attention to the Society's organization. So, it was a surprise and embarrassment to discover that the Society had no Finance Committee. It was a sign of the Society's youth that the Treasurer, alone, controlled the budget and received and disbursed monies. It was time to grow up. To establish a Finance Committee became an early priority of the National Office and during the summer of 1979, after changes in the by-laws had provided for it, the first Committee was appointed by President David Sabatini.

I expected Art Zimmerman, the Treasurer, to be as overjoyed to hand over his responsibilities as Nancy had been to shuffle off hers, and, while I didn't expect to write my own pay check, I did anticipate that the National Office would receive money and pay bills as part of its function. I was quickly disabused of that idea. In 1979, the Treasurer and Finance Committee were not prepared to allow cash flow - even a little bit! - to be a responsibility of the National Office. Rather, it was recommended that 1) all income would be reported monthly to the Treasurer, 2) the bulk of the revenue would be sent to the Treasurer, and 3) the Treasurer would sign all cheques except those directly related to operation of the central office. The last two items made it quite awkward for us to function efficiently.

In August 1979, Angie wrote to Gladys Allen, who kept the books for Art Zimmerman, "Could you give us a breakdown of the cost of services (mailing and printing, etc) performed for us by FASEB as these bills go directly to Dr. Zimmerman for payment and we have no way of knowing the amount. We would like (to) compare prices for similar services elsewhere (to have) some idea of the true operating cost of this office". It was really a struggle, but by keeping up pressure for change, we were rewarded in 1980 when the Council accepted our proposal that fiscal responsibility be transferred to the National Office with the aid of a professional auditor.

In January 1981, the Society's financial records were audited for the first time, and bill-paying function was transferred to the National Office soon thereafter. In November, at the 21st Annual Meeting in Anaheim, California, Jane Overton, the new Treasurer, reported to the Council that the newly established accounting system would permit the Executive Director and the Treasurer to make accurate statements about the present and prospective financial position of the Society. I considered this system, that had taken three years to put in place, to be the last brick in the structure of the National Office.

My feeling was - "mission accomplished".

EPILOGUE

Nineteen eighty-one was a year of transition for the National Office. I was leaving at the end of the year and a new Secretary and Executive Director were needed for 1982. In due course, Robert Trelstad was elected Secretary and R.S. Young was due to become the next Executive Director. The Montgomery Avenue house, like an old shoe, could no longer serve us well. Time to move along -- to FASEB, of all places. I really didn't like FASEB's bureaucratic attitude, but had to admit that there were overriding advantages to the new offices we came to occupy in their modern building in the Fall of 1981. In the end, the tail wagged the dog and ASCB was instrumental in bringing about substantive changes in the structure and operation of FASEB.

There were changes in personnel in 1981. Angie was too good for her job (she wanted mine!) and gave notice with plenty of time for me to hunt for her replacement. In asking myself where to turn for help, I remembered a visit to the mansion at FASEB where I chatted with Dorothea Wilson, the wife of one of my NIH colleagues. She was sitting behind the reception desk. "No-brain work", she had said. I called Dorothea - would she be interested in Angie's job? You bet. When she came, Dorothea looked at her job with some realism and suggested that we hire an accountant to take charge of the fiscal responsibilities of the office. Again I was able to rob FASEB when Georgia Monitor left her job to come with us to keep the books; she stayed for seventeen years. Dorothea Wilson proved to be a skilled manager who

ultimately became the very successful Executive Director of ASCB. She ran a happy shop, gaining the devotion of all who worked for her, and the admiration and respect of those she served; she prided herself on that.

A great deal of credit for the establishment of the National Office must go to the hard-working, faithful, and intelligent Administrative Assistants who each contributed their special talents to the job. Among them, Angie Brumett stands out. Without a person of her caliber and talent, I doubt the office would have been able to achieve what it did in so short a time. ASCB is in her debt.

If asked how I felt about my three years as Secretary and Executive Director of ASCB I would quote Nancy Bucher, who, after retiring as Secretary of ASCB in 1978, wrote thus to L. M. (Sam) Franks, General Secretary, IFCB,

--“ I will not miss the work load, but am sorry to lose the pleasant associations that the job entails”.--

Emma Shelton
Bethesda, Maryland
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