I. General Issues

Duty transition to BSA Meetings Manager -- Commencing in March 2001, Meeting Coordination responsibilities began a gradual transition to Ms. Johanne Stogran, the BSA Meetings Manager, in the BSA Business Office. I cease my activities as the Meeting Coordinator after the Botany 2001 conference. In May 2001, Johanne visited Scott Russell and myself at the University of Oklahoma campus for a two-day, in-depth tutorial on meetings management and web-related activities. The transfer of responsibilities to the Meeting Manager should be complete by the end of the 2001 conference.

Contract negotiations and professional assistance -- Conferon, Inc. continues to serve as our professional meetings management partners for the 2001, 2003, and 2004 meetings. The Botany 2002 conference will utilize the UW-Madison conference services to manage the meeting instead of Conferon. Ed Suddath, executive director of the National Association of Catering Executives, continues to serve as the BSA consultant for contract review.

Role of the Meeting Coordinating Committee -- The MC committee served a limited role in coordinating meeting activities. Most consultation about meeting activities were undertaken with direct consultation with Johanne Stogran, Jeff Osborn, the EC, and Carol Baskin.

II. Botany 2000 Meeting

Account review and summary -- Review of invoices, itemized accounts, refunds, and miscellaneous record keeping are intensive activities during the weeks immediately following a conference. Account review was complicated because it involved Conferon and myself for invoice review and authorization, and payment executed through the business office and treasurer. Because it was necessary to outsource activities such as publication preparation and exhibition oversight, and because of the cost associated with printing and mailing the AJB abstract supplement, expenses exceeded revenue for the Botany 2000 conference. A compounding factor was that the number of paid registrants fell short of predictions by more than 20%. There were 890 total registrants for Botany 2000 of which 805 paid registration fees.

Analyses of costs and how accounts were managed indicated changes were warranted in the way we undertook invoice review and payment as well as how we arranged for conference printing (particularly the AJB abstract volume), exhibition oversight, publication preparation, and mailing expenses. Appropriate changes were implemented during Botany 2001 planning to reduce meeting staging expenses and to make account management more efficient.

III. Botany 2001 Meeting

Site Planning visit -- A planning visit to Albuquerque was undertaken from September 30 to October 2, 2000. Meetings with all local society representatives, the fieldtrip coordinator, Conferon account planner, and local service providers were conducted. This meeting was critical for the success of the conference, especially since major problems were detected after visits to the Hyatt Regency and the Albuquerque CC.

Meeting Personnel -- Important meeting personnel for Botany 2001 are Diane Marshall (BSA local rep), Tim Lowrey (ASPT and IOPB local rep), Kelly Allred (Fieldtrip Coordinator and ABLS local rep), and Sid Ash (AFS and BSA Paleo local rep). Caroline Spinner is the Conferon account planner; Jim Goodman is the Conferon account manager.

Conference logistics -- Contracts are signed with the Hyatt Regency as the host hotel, and with the Plaza Inn, Hotel Blue, and Doubletree as overflow hotels. Only the Doubletree has some attrition vulnerability.
The Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) contract was amended twice to achieve the best possible room situation. Other major contracts were negotiated and signed with Conferon as the registration provider, Tour New Mexico as the destination management company (transportation), Conference Services of the Southwest for conference decoration and exhibition, VAE for audio-visual support, and other agencies for printing services, giveaways, security, etc. Johanne Stogran, BSA Meeting Manager, coordinated the exhibition hall, food & beverage functions, student projectionists, publication assembly and printing, and various other components of the meeting. Jeff Osborn, BSA Program Director, oversaw compilation and layout for the Botany 2001 Program. Caroline Spinner of Conferon oversaw RFP generation and collation for most contracts as well as preparation of the meeting coordination document, the conference agenda, which details ALL logistical details for the conference. Jim Goodman of Conferon handles sales-related items such as contract development, which are reviewed by the Conferon legal department. I served as general coordinator for the meeting, reviewed and negotiated most contracts, prepared the budget, and acted as the primary liaison between the conference activities, Conferon, and our consultant. A detailed review of the Botany 2001 budget and status report was presented at the spring EC meeting in March 2001.

IV. Botany 2002 Meeting
August 2-7; University of Wisconsin at Madison, Pyle and Lowell Conference Centers.
Meeting with AFS, ASPT, BSA, CBA/ABC, and PSA.

Conference logistics -- Meeting management for Botany 2002 will be undertaken by the BSA Meeting Manager and UW-Madison conference services. Conferon was utilized only to secure two overflow hotel contracts at the Howard Johnson Plaza and Madison Inn. The meeting will be staged on the UW campus, in two campus conference centers, and in campus dorms and hotels. The expanded meeting format is facilitated by the reduced staging expenses by using a campus facility.

Meeting Personnel -- Most society local reps are designated and include Ray Evert (BSA), Paul Berry (ASPT), Linda Graham (PSA), and Jean Gerrath (CBA). The Meeting Manager and Program Director will oversee coordination of the meeting logistics and program, respectively, which will make most duties of the Meeting Coordinator obsolete.

Special considerations -- Because UW meeting space has no rental fees, there is the potential for considerable cost savings for Botany 2002. It is anticipated that utilization of UW conference services also may effect cost savings. These savings coupled with reduced housing expenses should result in a conference that costs less to stage and to attend. There are special problems with a campus venue. There are limited options for exhibitors and there are often logistical problems on a campus because buildings are under different management.

V. Botany 2003 Meeting
July 27-31; Mobile, AL; Mobile Convention Center and Adam’s Mark Hotel
Meeting with ABLS, AFS, ASPT, BSA

Conference Logistics - Working with Conferon, contracts are in place with the Mobile Convention Center and the Adams Mark Hotel as the host hotel. Rates at the Adams Mark are $99 sgl/dbl. Contracts with two overflow hotels are still under negotiation as well as for some dormitory space at the University of South Alabama. There will be a tiered housing option for attendees. The MCC is a modern facility, is adjacent to the revitalized downtown, and has a scenic placement by the Mobile riverfront. We have a commitment from E. O. Wilson to serve as our Plenary Speaker. Local society reps and the fieldtrip coordinator are available from Alabama and Mississippi. Because of the abundance of wetlands and aquatic and marine habitats, a tentative theme is ‘aquatic and wetland plants’.
Special considerations -- There are many opportunities for fieldtrips to interesting sites on the Gulf coastal plain and to marine and aquatic habitats. Two botanic gardens are in Mobile and environs and there is an adequate group of active, retired, and amateur botanists/horticulturalists. Local reps are limited at the Univ. of South Alabama and will be recruited throughout the region. Because of the hot and humid venue, extra effort will be required to ‘market’ the meeting starting at the Madison meeting. Recruitment of additional societies to meet with the core botanical societies is underway.

VI. Botany 2004 Meeting  Contract Pending
August 1-5; Snowbird Resort, south of Salt Lake City, UT
Meeting with: societies TBD

Site selection -- Sites for the 2004 meeting were examined in St. Paul, MN, Reno, NV, and Salt Lake City, UT and environs. Although an excellent venue for our group, costs in St. Paul were prohibitive for our group. Formal bids were solicited from two venues in Reno and three venues in the Salt Lake City area. Jeff Osborn and I conducted a ‘fam’ (= familiarization) visit to Salt Lake City and Snowbird, whereas I had conducted site visits previously to Reno (with Judy Verbeke) and to St. Paul (with Carol Baskin). Based on negotiated rates and other considerations, Jeff Osborn, Johanne Stogran, and I recommended that we go to contract with Snowbird Resort.

Conference logistics -- Air travel to SLC is facile, because Delta has a hub in SLC. Shuttle service to the resort is an extra expense and entails 30-45 minutes of extra travel time. The University of Utah, BYU, Utah State University, and Weber State have an adequate supply of local society reps and a fieldtrip coordinator. There are many options for fieldtrips in the Intermountain and Rocky Mountain region. Snowbird resort has excellent meeting facilities and will be able to stage professionally our full conference and exhibition. Negotiated hotel rates are $105 sgl/dbl at the Lodge, $115 sgl/dbl at the Cliff Lodge (top of the line lodge), and $125 for condos that sleep 4-6 with kitchenettes.

Special considerations -- The retreat type setting in the Rocky Mountains and Intermountain region was viewed as an interesting site for the 2004 meeting.

VII  Botany 2005 Meeting  Venue to be determined
dates open; societies open

VIII. REVIEW OF MEETING COORDINATION ISSUES

1. Position of ‘Meeting Coordinator’
   Acquisition of the BSA ‘Meeting Manager’ makes the position of ‘Meeting Coordinator’ redundant. With a slight increase in the duties of the Program Director, the position of the Meeting Coordinator could be eliminated.
   Recommendation -- Eliminate the position of Meeting Coordinator by amending the by-laws.

2. Status of ‘Meeting Coordinating Committee’
   Based on experience for two meetings, a small committee is optimal for conferring on meeting-related issues and for forwarding recommendations. In addition to the Meeting Manager and Program Director, it may be best to have only one other knowledgeable individual on the committee to make it responsive and cohesive.