



**International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies
2014 Annual Meeting**

**Hilton Hotel Salt Lake Center
Room**

2.00 p.m. July 30, 2014

Minutes – Approved July 8, 2015

1. Call to order

1.1 The meeting was called to order.

2. Roll Call

2.1 The roll call of IAJGS members or their representatives present was taken. There were 58 IAJGS members present including those being represented by proxy.

2.2 It was noted that in addition to Hal Bookbinder, Co-Chair of 2014 Conference, there were two guests present, Warren Blatt from JewishGen and Larry Hamilton, IAJGS legal counsel.

3. Approval of the Minutes from 2013 IAJGS Annual Meeting

3.1 Merle Kastner moved and Barbara Hershey seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the 2013 Annual Meeting. The motion was passed unanimously, with no objections or abstentions.

4. Revision of Agenda

4.1 The meeting agreed to take the Treasurer's Report and the Archivist Report before the President's Report.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 Paul Silverstone, IAJGS Treasurer, presented the financial report and noted that the figures reflected the successful conference in 2013. This would put IAJGS in good standing for future years. Nolan Altman, current Vice President, explained that the Profit and Loss figures had been broken down to show more detail as to where funds had been spent. The Equity Analysis showed which funds were restricted and non-restricted. A motion was made by Jan Meisels Allen and seconded by Marlis Humphrey to accept the Treasurers Report. The motion was passed unanimously.

6. Archivist Report

6.1 Joel Spector, IAJGS Archivist, reported on the work he was doing to preserve IAJGS records and artefacts. These included Board papers, contracts, conference syllabi, etc. 1800 items had been archived to date. Electronic files were backed up and hard copy documents were kept in archival standard boxes and folders. The archive was fully catalogued. Meeting delegates were asked to provide suitable documents to the Archivist. It was explained that certain documents had to be kept in paper form, such as Board minutes, contracts and tax returns. It was suggested from the floor that one of the electronic backups should be in the cloud. The long-term accessibility of digital formats needed to be taken into account. It was asked if IAJGS could advise members on archiving their own records. It was suggested that a management webinar on archiving could be run.

7. President's Report

7.1 Marlis Humphrey, IAJGS President, introduced the report and explained that the IAJGS mission statement had been revised to a much shorter one. Five areas had been identified to fulfil the mission. General growth in people doing genealogy had gone up around 300% but membership of societies had gone down one percent. Many IAJGS members had lost over 10% of membership in the last year or so. Members and the Membership Development Committee were being looked to share information on ways to improve membership levels. The Board wanted to bring knowledge of what things succeeded to all members. IAJGS was fiscally healthy but a lot of the money was committed to future conferences. The President commended the 68 committee and post holder volunteers for their efforts on behalf of IAJGS.

7.2 It was explained that the plan was to identify and engage people at the base level, such as the casually curious about their Jewish roots and those that are in the Jewish community.

7.3 The newly reconstituted JGS of Maryland had 80 members and around 50 people attending meetings. IAJGS had started to promote JGSes at events such as RootsTech in the USA and Who Do You Think You Are? Live in the UK. Technology issues had been identified for members and this was being addressed through a technology plan. Other opportunities to promote JGSes were being exploited. It was stated that the current logo required redesigning along with developing proper corporate branding.

7.4 Binyamin Lewis, President of the Yeshiva University Family Discovery Club spoke about how the club had been started to try and get more young people interested in family history. 90 students had shown interest straightaway. The club wanted to design short, 5-minute long, genealogy classes. The aim was also to train members to a level where they would move on to existing societies around the world to be the future.

8. Annual Report of the IAJGS

IAJGS Strategic Plan

8.1 The President explained that the various parts of the strategic plan would be measured using a dashboard approach, seeing how IAJGS moved forward and what worked. Transparency would be increased through things like the Annual Report and new financial procedures. The aim was to also run regular GoToMeeting sessions with leaders to discuss issues. The Board would be looking to the members to help support activities as necessary and also would be looking outside IAJGS.

8.2 Warren Blatt, Managing Director of JewishGen, was invited to speak about co-operation between JewishGen and IAJGS. Warren explained that there had been discussion with IAJGS about ways of working together better. It had been agreed that the first thing that could be done was to collaborate on the JewishGen Memorial Plaques Database project. The IAJGS members would be able to leverage contacts with synagogues, Hillel houses and other places with plaques. The organization of the project was discussed briefly and it was agreed that the project should be set up in the lead up to International Jewish Genealogy Month.

IAJGS Strategic Initiative Technology

8.3 Daniel Horowitz reported that the new IAJGS website was live. The intention with content was to do crowd-sourcing on the website, Facebook, Twitter, etc. The IAJGS webinar resource was being promoted amongst members and there would be a “how to do webinars” instructional video available. A template web site for members to use as the basis of their own sites was being explored. The Tech Luncheon at the conference had highlighted the need to use social media more to get information about JGSes out to non-members. It was reported that in 2013-14 there had been 20 webinars with around 1,000 attendees and 20 Board and committee meetings over GoToWebinar and GoToMeeting systems. The IAJGS website would have a members’ only area to place material in. A technology forum was possibly going to be set up as well.

IAJGS Strategic Initiative Benefits & Services

8.4 Garri Regev gave a short presentation on the Board’s benefits and services initiative. The aim was to help the JGSes in managing themselves. Webinars JGS leaders would be run on a range of management topics to help them develop and run their societies. Information for JGSes could be in placed in shared folders or on the IAJGS website. The “Society in a Box” concept would be information aimed at helping IAJGS members and potential new members.

Q&A and Discussion of Plan

8.5 A question was raised about transparency from the leadership. In response it was explained that more was being done to improve communications with IAJGS members about what was happening. A specific point was made from the floor about how communications were handled in the nomination of individuals for the positions of Director. It was suggested by the questioner that IAJGS needed to look at the nominees as individuals and what they could offer rather than what their personal genealogical research was about. It was asked from the floor what the priority order was for the strategic plan. In response it was explained that it was about balancing

conferences against benefits and services, with marketing, technology and programming important areas. It was asked if Board meetings could be open to or broadcast to members. It was explained that it was up to the Board whether to invite people to its meetings. The President thanked the Board for their efforts in putting the strategic plan together.

9. Committee Reports and Presentations

PRAMC Report

- 9.1 Jan Meisels Allen, Chair of the Public Records Access Monitoring Committee, presented the committee's annual report and made the following points:
- 9.1.1 A major issue in Europe was the Right to be Forgotten ruling and how it would affect internet search results;
 - 9.1.2 All IAJGS members should be on the IAJGS Records Access Alerts list. There were 15 members still not on the list;
 - 9.1.3 123 records alerts had been issued since the 2013 conference;
 - 9.1.4 The Records Preservation and Access Committee (RPAC) that IAJGS was a member of had joined the very useful National Coalition for History;
 - 9.1.5 RPAC had been persuaded to write letters about records access in Poland;
 - 9.1.6 A meeting on access to Holocaust records in Berlin had been attended and the genealogical point of view had been presented at the meeting;
 - 9.1.7 There were big problems with the cost of access to US Social Security Death records that still had to be resolved;
 - 9.1.8 The Genealogists Declaration of Rights had obtained 173 signatures during the current conference. Leaders of US-based member organizations should take the GDoR to their individual members to get them to sign it; and
 - 9.1.9 It was better to go in person to lobby about records access than to write letters.

Membership Development Report

9.2 Mark Nicholls, Chair of the Membership Development Committee gave a brief update of the report, including that during 2013/14 the following new Members had joined IAJGS:

Selskabet for Dansk Jodisk Historie (Society for Danish Jewish History);
JGS of Maryland; and
Yeshiva University Family Discovery Club

9.3 Progress was being made on developing other new societies.

Stern Grant and Stedman Grant Awards Approval

9.4 Laurence Harris, Chair of the Grant Awards Committee, explained that the committee had received six nominations for the Stern Grant and Stedman Grant Awards and recommended the following to receive the awards in 2014:

Jewish Colonies in South America – Census records and passenger lists - US\$3,000 Rabbi Malcolm Stern Award

Odessa Document Acquisition and Translation Projects Project - US\$3,000 Stedman Award

9.5 The following motion was made and seconded from the floor:

That the membership of IAJGS accept the recommendations of the Stern Grant and Stedman Grant Awards Committee.

The motion was passed unanimously.

9.6 It was asked that more nominations be put forward for 2015.

Awards Review Ad Hoc

9.6 Nolan Altman, Chair of the Awards Review Ad Hoc Committee, presented the findings of the committee and its recommendations for the future of IAJGS awards. The committee recommended keeping the Stern Grant and Stedman Grant Awards and Lifetime Achievement Award as they were. There were other new categories that could be created to better reflect the IAJGS mission statement. Not all of the new categories would need to be given every year if there were insufficient nominations. The committee's recommendations would be sent to all JGS leaders for comment by October 15, 2014. Concern was raised from the floor about the proposed removal of a category for newsletters.

Presentation of Nominating Committee Recommendations and Election of Directors-at-large and Vice President to the IAJGS Board

9.7 The President introduced the item, explaining the nominating process and the procedures to be followed at the Annual Meeting for any further nominations and for the voting process. The ballot procedure involved the appointment of Inspectors of Election. The inspectors of election were Gary Mokotoff and Karen Franklin, both of whom were Past Presidents of IAJGS. Each inspector had signed the required oath as Inspector of Election that would be filed with the record of the meeting. The inspectors would receive all ballots, hear and determine all challenges and questions arising in connection with the right to vote, count and tabulate all votes, determine the result, and do all acts as were proper to conduct the election with fairness to all members.

9.8 The President stated that she had appointed, with board approval, a Nominations Committee, consisting of two non-Board members, Thomas Fuerth (President of the Swedish Jewish Genealogical Society) and Amy Wachs (Treasurer of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Cleveland), and one Board member, Mark Nicholls (Secretary of the IAJGS). The Nominating Committee had proposed a slate of nominees for all open positions, and that slate was distributed to the members of IAJGS on June 30, 2014.

9.9 Mark Nicholls, on behalf of committee Chair Thomas Fürth, presented the recommendations of the Nominating Committee, explaining that the committee had looked at 15 different people for the Director positions and considered the skills and talents that each individual could bring to IAJGS. The committee ended up with only six of the possible candidates being willing to stand as Directors. The choice of nominee for the Vice President position was straightforward. The nominations for the six Director positions and one for the Vice President were recommended to the meeting.

9.10 The President thanked the Nominations Committee for their efforts. The President then called for any nominations from the floor for the Director and Vice President positions. There being no new nominations for either position, the nominations were declared closed. The President asked each candidate to introduce themselves in the following order: Ken Bravo, Vice President nominee; Nolan Altman, Director at Large; Quinton Atkinson, Director at Large; Daniel Horowitz, Director at Large; Deborah Long (via GotoMeeting), Director at Large; Shipley Munson, Director at Large; and Garri Regev, Director at Large.

9.11 The President opened up discussion to the floor. The following points were made. Jeremy Frankel, San Francisco Bay Area JGS, said that all 501(c) organizations faced the same challenges as IAJGS in getting people to run them. The concerns that he had were about conflict of interest for individuals who were employees of genealogy companies and data providers. There was also an issue of being seen from the outside as being bankrolled by these companies and there needed to be clear separation between them and IAJGS. Jan Meisels Allen, JGS of Conejo Valley and Ventura County, responded that most major boards had people from such companies on them to provide new ideas, these included the boards of the National Genealogical Society and the Federation of Genealogical Societies. The issue of whether someone was pursuing their Jewish genealogy was not material. It was pointed out from the floor that there should be clear conflict of interest policies in place to avoid any problems arising. Two further points were made: first that IAJGS should be thankful that people had put their names forward as there had been great difficulty in the past getting people to serve; and finally that IAJGS needed the best people to do the job irrespective of background.

9.12 The ballot was declared open and voting took place and the results were announced after the item on future conferences. The results of the ballot were:

54 Votes were cast

Vice President – Ken Bravo received 53 votes and was declared elected as Vice President;

Directors at Large – All candidates received at least 43 votes and had therefore received the required majority of votes to be elected. All candidates were, therefore, declared as elected as Directors to the Board.

The terms of office for all newly-elected Board Members would commence at the end of the meeting.

10. Future Conferences Announcements

10.1 The details of the next four International Conferences were announced:

- 2015 Ramada Hotel, Jerusalem, 6-10 July
- 2016 Sheraton Hotel, Seattle, 7-12 August
- 2017 Walt Disney World Swan Hotel, 23-28 July
- 2018 Eastern Europe, venue being scoped.

Jerusalem 2015

10.2 Michael Goldstein, Chairman of the 2015 conference, stated that he had been overwhelmed by the commitment from the delegates at the current conference to Jerusalem 2015. The 2015 conference would start with a Shabbaton. In the event that the situation in Israel continued as at present full refunds would be available until October 2014. Registration should go fully live within the next week.

11. Acknowledgements

11.1 The President thanked Hal Bookbinder, Co-Chair of Salt Lake City 2014, for the work done to make the conference a possibility at all and a success now. Hal Bookbinder paid thanks to his other Co-Chairs Banai Feldstein for fantastic efforts and to Ken Bravo who had stepped in late in the day. Hal finally thanked all of the many volunteers who had helped make the conference a success.

11.2 The President thanked Jackye Sullins, outgoing IAJGS Director, for her work on the Board over the years.

12. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the meeting was proposed and seconded and passed unanimously.

Mark Nicholls
Secretary IAJGS