

IBHA Members' Meeting

Saturday, August 4, 2012, 3:00 p.m.

2012 Conference of the
International Big History Association
Grand Valley State University



International
Big History
Association

Agenda:

1. President's Welcome: David Christian
2. Officers' Reports:
 - a. President's Report: David Christian
 - b. Treasurer's Report: Craig Benjamin
 - c. International Coordinator's Report: Barry Rodrigue
 - d. Secretary's Report: Lowell Gustafson
3. Next *International Big History Association* Conference to be held at Dominican University of California, August 6 – 10, 2014: Mojgan Behmand.
4. Proposed amendment to the IBHA by-laws, as proposed by Barry Rodrigue to the IBHA Board on April 22, 2012 and seconded by Craig Benjamin:
 - a. "I propose to have Article 3.2 of the Bylaws changed as follows:
 - i. 3.2 Director Qualifications. To be eligible for election to the Board of Directors, an individual must not be an "Interested Person." For purposes of this section, an "Interested Person" is defined as either (a) a person currently being compensated by the Corporation for services rendered to it within the previous twelve (12) months, whether as a full time or part time employee, independent contractor or otherwise; or (b) any brother, sister, ancestor, descendant, spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, or mother-in-law of any person described in subpart (a), or of already appointed board members."
 - ii. **Accepted** with 6 votes in favor, and one vote against.
 - iii. This motion will be put on the agenda of the general membership meeting in August as a motion proposed by the board that needs to be voted on.
5. Election of Nominated Board Members
 - a. Article 3.1 of the Bylaws states, among other things:
 - b. "Commencing with the first annual meeting of the members in 2012, directors shall be elected for three-year terms at each annual members meeting; provided, however, that some directors may be elected to one or two year terms as the members may deem necessary in order to provide for a relatively balanced staggering of the terms of office, such that approximately one-third of directors' terms shall expire in any given year."
 - c. This is why different term lengths have been proposed. In the future, all terms will be three years. See separate sheet for brief bios of candidates.

Minutes

Fred Spier called meeting to order at 3:08 pm.
A quorum was established.

1 and 2) President's Welcome and Report

David Christian welcomed everyone to the first IBHA members' meeting. He commented on how thrilling it is to see so many great discussions about big history. He discussed how the International Big History Association was established on 20 August 2010, at the Geological Observatory at Coldigioco in Italy, which is run by Alessandro Montanari and Paula Martello. Michael Dix and Daron Green were among the participants at the meeting.

The Big Historians who met at Coldigioco were David Christian of Macquarie University in Sydney (Australia), Fred Spier of the University of Amsterdam (Netherlands), Walter Alvarez of the University of California at Berkeley (USA), Craig Benjamin of Grand Valley State University in Michigan (USA), Cynthia Brown of Dominican University in California (USA), Lowell Gustafson of Villanova University in Pennsylvania (USA), and Barry Rodrigue of the University of Southern Maine (USA). They constituted themselves as a provisional executive committee and voted in favor of the following initiatives:

- Establish an International Big History Association.
- Establish an international Big History website. On this website, we voted to include an active discussion board and an electronic library/archives of Big History.
- Hold the first international Big History conference in 2012. We voted to hold this conference at Grand Valley University (Michigan, USA).

A board was established, with David Christian as President, Fred Spier as Vice-President, Craig Benjamin at Treasurer, Barry Rodrigue as Secretary, and Walter Alvarez, Cynthia Brown, and Lowell Gustafson as board members.

The board met in January 2011 at GVSU. Barry Rodrigue was appointed as International Coordinator and Lowell Gustafson as Secretary. In April 2011, the Board approved the new IBHA By Laws and the IBHA was legally constituted as a non-profit organization. The board was expanded to include Eric Chaisson, Esther Quaedackers, Katherine Schick, and Joseph Voros.

A number of IBHA members presented papers at the World History Association meeting in Beijing in July 2011 and at the Global Futures 2045 conference in Moscow in February 2012. IBHA members Akop Nazaretyan, Leonid Grinin, and Andrey Korotayev, established a Center in Moscow for the study of Big History and Systems Forecasting as a part of the Institute of Oriental Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences), directed by Dr. Vitaly Naumkin. The Big History Project was initiated. David Christian made a presentation at TED and was invited to the World Economic Forum at Davos.

The IBHA now has 260 members. 130 papers are being presented at the inaugural IBHA conference.

The IBHA and its members have made thrilling progress in just under two years!

3) **Treasurer Report**

Craig Benjamin reported that Microsoft External Research gave an unrestricted gift of \$75,000 to the IBHA in 2010. It gave another \$10,000 to help pay for IBHA expenses for the 2012 conference. The Big History Project gave the IBHA \$10,000 to help cover IBHA conference costs. With these generous gifts, membership dues, and conference fees, the IBHA will have a little over \$90,000 after the conference.

The major expenses to the IBHA so far have been legal fees in setting up by-laws and non-profit status, a part time administrative assistant salary, and conference costs.

4) **International Coordinator's report**

Barry H. Rodrigue reported that several activities have been done as a synthesis of IBHA and independent projects:

- *China*. In July 2011, after our presentations at the WHA conference in Beijing, Barry traveled to South China and spoke on Big History to professors in the History Department at Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou. This included a formal power-point presentation and informal discussions. The dialogue has continued since then, and he has also reached out to professors at other universities in China.

He visited the Paleontological Fossil National Geo-Park in Chaoyang (Liaoning), on the border with Inner Mongolia (<http://english.cctv.com/20090805/101461.shtml>). It suggests similarities to the Coldigioco Geological Observatory in Italy, as to its potential as a Big History site: It is a research and teaching site, as well as a preservation site.

- *Anthology*. In the process of recruiting authors for the University of California Press anthology on Big History (sourcebook and student reader), he reached out to many people who were doing macrohistorical research but who were not members of the IBHA. In order to bring them up to speed about our work, he referred them to the IBHA activities, website, newsletter, etc. and encouraged them to join the IBHA. Some of these contacts included biologist Stuart Kauffman (USA), geographer Vaclav Smil (Canada), physicist George Ellis (South Africa), archeologist Sada Mire (Somaliland), and historian Zhu Weibin (China).

- *Moscow Congress*. The Congress on *Global Futures 2045* was held in Moscow (Russia) in February 2012. As co-coordinator of the Congress, he obtained invitations for all the board members of the IBHA and other Big Historians: all expenses paid. It was a good opportunity for us to dialogue with new people on the subject of Big History and related fields of study. A mini-board meeting was held in Moscow at this time.

- *Russian Big History*. As a foreign member of the Eurasian Center for Big History & System Forecasting (Russian Academy of Sciences), along with Fred and David, he has been engaged in discussions with their Russian members about infrastructure and how such western centers operate. He has sought to bring some of their operations in line with how we operate at the IBHA.

• *Articles.* Astrophysicist G. Siegfried Kutter and Barry wrote two articles on Big History and the IBHA for *Nature* and *Science*. They were rejected. We are still looking for a venue for them.

Networking. Barry continued to network various people with related interests in the Big History community. For example, there are several big historians engaged in mathematical modeling in Canada and Russia, so he put them in touch with each other so that they can cooperate together. He has done this in several areas, including paleobiology, literature, arts, etc.

These preliminary activities might be elaborated to work to the advantage of the IBHA.

5) Secretary's Report

To communicate regularly with members, we have regularly sent out newsletters to all IBHA members. The **IBHA Members' Newsletters** highlight the many activities, projects, and reflections that IBHA members have on Big History.

[Volume II Number 6](#) highlights the timespirals of IBHA member Karen Kudebeh and the forthcoming volume, *From Big Bang to Global Civilization: A Big History Anthology*, co-edited by Barry Rodrigue, Leonid Grinnin, and Andrey Korotayev, to be published in 2013 by the University of California Press.

[Volume II Number 5](#) highlights information about the August IBHA conference and the first in a series on graduate study of Big History, featuring David Baker.

[Volume II Number 4](#) begins with a note from our President, David Christian. We follow this with a piece on the newly launched, revised version of Chronozoom, information about the August 2012 IBHA conference, and conclude with a note on IBHA member Connie Barlow.

[Volume II Number 3](#) features Russell M. Genet of California Polytechnic State University and Cuesta College, and an Interview with William Grassie, the founder of the Metanexus Institute.

[Volume II Number 2](#) highlights The Stone Age Institute of Indiana University, Bllomington, IN and Nicholas Toth and Kathy Schick.

[Volume II Number 1](#) highlights the First Year Experience in Big History program at Dominican University of California.

[Volume I Number 6](#) highlights Michael Duffy, D'Neil Duffy, Jennifer Morgan, and James Lu Dunbar.

[Volume I Number 5](#) highlights Eric J. Chaisson and Nobuo Palette Tsujimura.

[Volume I Number 4](#) highlights Cameron Gibelyou and Barry Wood.

[Volume I Number 3](#) highlights the Center in Moscow for the study of *Big History and Systems Forecasting* as a part of the Institute of Oriental Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences).

[Volume I Number 2](#) highlights IBHA member Erika Gronek, children's Big History book author.

[Volume I Number 1](#) of the newsletter highlights Lawrence A. Husick.

The original IBHA website has migrated to a new one that will maintain membership records more efficiently. It may be accessed at <http://ibhanet.org> or <http://www.ibha.wildapricot.org/>. Certain pages are restricted to IBHA members who need to log in to view them.

Lowell urged all members to continue their participation in the IBHA through renewing their membership on-line when this is due.

3) Next *International Big History Association* Conference is to be held at Dominican University of California, August 6 – 10, 2014. Mojgan Behmand invited all IBHA members to plan on participating in the 2014 conference at Dominican.

4) By-laws adjustment.

1. Proposed amendment to the IBHA by-laws, as moved by Barry Rodrigue and seconded by Craig Benjamin:

a. "I propose to have Article 3.2 of the Bylaws changed as follows:

i. 3.2 Director Qualifications. To be eligible for election to the Board of Directors, an individual must not be an "Interested Person." For purposes of this section, an "Interested Person" is defined as either (a) a person currently being compensated by the Corporation for services rendered to it within the previous twelve (12) months, whether as a full time or part time employee, independent contractor or otherwise; or (b) any brother, sister, ancestor, descendant, spouse, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, or mother-in-law of any person described in subpart (a), or of already appointed board members."

The amendment was approved by acclamation by the IBHA membership.

5) John Mears moved that the list of candidates for the IBHA Board be accepted. The list was approved by acclamation.

IBHA Board

Walter Alvarez	Board Member, 3 years
Craig Benjamin	Treasurer, 3 years
Cynthia Stokes Brown	Board Member, 2 years
Eric J. Chaisson	Board Member, 1 year
David Christian	President, 3 years
Lowell Gustafson	Secretary, 1 year
Esther Quaedacker	Board member, 2 years
Barry H. Rodrigue	International Co-ordinator, 1 year
Kathy Schick	Board member, 2 years
Fred Spier	Vice-President, 1 Year
Joseph Voros	Board member, 2 years

6) The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.