

Minutes of CESE 9th Annual Meeting, Saturday, June 25, 2005

Marshall Berman, CESE president, called the meeting to order at 1 P.M. at the University of New Mexico Law School, room 2402. The gavel he used was a gift from a former CESE president, Bill MacPherson, who is now ill with pancreatic cancer.

Marshall then read the mission of CESE. It can be found at:

<http://www.cesame-nm.org/about/mission.html>

Marshall asked all those attending to briefly introduce themselves.

Leonard Duda, one of the judge co-chairs on the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) 2007 host committee, spoke next:

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) will be held in Albuquerque on May 13-19, 2007. The Intel ISEF, held annually in May, brings together over 1,400 finalists from 40 nations. It is the world's largest pre-college celebration of science. Student finalists compete for over \$3 million in scholarships and prizes. The Grand Prize consists of three \$50,000 college scholarships. Top winners in a category receive \$5,000. Since 1997, Intel has funded Science Service who provides the fair requirements and the top-level management. Founded in 1921, Science Service is a non-profit organization whose mission is to advance public understanding and appreciation of science among people of all ages through publications and educational programs.

The 2007 Intel ISEF will be one of the largest events held in Albuquerque and will generate \$8-10 million in tourism for the state. The budget for the event is about \$2.2 - 2.4 million that must be raised by the host committee. A local board of volunteers (the Intel ISEF 2007 Host Committee, <http://www.intelisef2007.org/>) supports the event and a non-profit organization, Inquiry Facilitators, serves as the official Host Committee. More than 1,000 judges will be needed to judge the projects in fourteen project categories. Most of the judges (> 80%) come from the local community.

Requirements for the judges are that they have a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent degree; or a B.A., B.S. or master's degree and a minimum of six years of related professional experience in one of 14 scientific categories used in the fair. If you are interested in being a judge at this event please contact the Judge Co-chair Len Duda at leduda@mailaps.org. In addition to judges, more than 800 volunteers will be needed to help with the events of the fair.

In addition, as part of the legacy of this event, the first annual Young Researchers Banquet will be held on November 5, 2005 to recognize the New Mexico middle and high school participants in the regional, state and international science fairs. The purpose of the banquet is to recognize these students and encourage them to pursue a career in science or engineering preferably in a university within the state as well as to raise funds for the 2007 Intel ISEF. The banquet special guest speaker is Dr. Carl Wieman of the University of Colorado in Boulder who shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2001 for the landmark 1995 creation of the world's first Bose-Einstein condensate. More information about the banquet can be found at <http://www.gotoif.org/?p=banquet>.

Next agenda item was a summary of CESE's accomplishments. Our opponents have grown in strength, Marshall said, and the separation of church and state

guaranteed by the first amendment is threatened. The Intelligent Design (ID) claims victory, even if they have lost.

In 1996, New Mexico State Board of Education member, Virginia Trujillo, invited a few of us for lunch to discuss the board's attempt to censor evolution and other concepts in modern science. Later, former state Senator Pauline Eisenstadt introduced a bill that required New Mexico science standards to align with national standards. The bill passed in the State Senate but failed in the House.

In 1998, Marshall successfully ran for a seat on the State Board of Education. He then helped to restore good science standards in 1999. He also introduced data-based decision making as an important tool in setting education policy. Test scores from the TerraNova exams were analyzed, correlating ethnicity, poverty, English speaking, and peer pressure in the classroom with achievement. Prior to Marshall's election, we also won a battle to keep biology books that covered evolution on the state textbook adoption list and to remove creationist curriculum material from that list.

In the early 1990's the creationists had morphed to Intelligent Design (ID). In 2002-03, they began to promote "teaching the evidence against evolution," and that "life is so complex, it couldn't have evolved." Recently the National Center for Science Education (NCSE) published New Mexico's history of these efforts.

Another battle fought three times was the attempted showing of Unlocking the Mystery of Life (UMOL) on KNME, Albuquerque's PBS affiliate. UMOL is an ID video crusading disingenuously as science. The first time, it took only one e-mail to pull the show. A year later there was a second attempt to air this video. KNME said they were considering it. We wrote to them and convinced them again that this wasn't science. They pulled it again. Last January, it was again on their schedule. This time we had only a week's notice. With the help of the station manager, it was canceled for a third time. The local ID group then went to the ABQ Journal and KOB-TV protesting censorship. Their goal was to establish scientific credibility. The program had been scheduled in a NOVA time slot. UMOL was later shown on commercial paid TV.

On the national level, the Discovery Institute (DI) the organization that promotes ID, contracted with the Smithsonian to air another religiously based video called Privileged Planet. The DI offered the Smithsonian \$16,000 for one showing on June 23, 2005. People across the country protested. The Smithsonian returned the money, indicating they were not sponsoring this event, but allowed it to be shown anyway.

Marshall spoke at a Humanist Darwin Day conference last February.

He then mentioned the Wedge Document, a revival of a pre-Enlightenment version of fundamentalist Christianity. Also surfacing was the problem of the evangelical's proselytizing at the Air Force Academy and belittling other religions, especially Jews. The chaplain who criticized this practice was reassigned to Okinawa, and she was not called to testify. She resigned.

Marshall and Kim attended a meeting in Berkeley sponsored by NCSE bringing scientists and lawyers together. Also attending were members of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

In Dover, Pennsylvania, the education board recently required ID to be taught, instead of "teaching the controversy." The DI decided not to testify.

CESE has a quarterly newsletter called the Beacon, edited by Nancy Shelton.

Marshall also published an article in Crosswinds, a local publication, on No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The current national Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, is now giving states leeway regarding this law.

The national press has contacted Dave Thomas, Kim Johnson, and Marshall Berman. Marshall said these interviews often last about half an hour, but only a few sentences are actually published. Vanity Fair will soon run an article on ID.

CESE filed an Amicus Brief for Cobb County, Georgia, along with New Mexicans for Science and Reason (NMSR) and the New Mexico Academy of Science (NMAS).

Marshall then introduced guest speaker, John Trever, editorial cartoonist for the Albuquerque Journal. The title of his keynote address was, "Political Cartoonists: We Distort, You Decide."

John said his father was an ordained Methodist minister and college professor, the first American to see the Dead Sea Scrolls. His father battled the fundamentalists over the King James Version, while promoting the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

He said that one can't rely just on the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls -- you need to examine the archaeological and historical context of the times. Let the evidence lead you. His father is now suffering from dementia. His mother was a concert harpist.

John began college as a math major, but later switched to political science. He said as a cartoonist he knows a little about a lot of things. He has been called conservative, but agrees with CESE on many issues. John's cartoons run in 350 newspapers. He has been at the Albuquerque Journal, one of the few family owned newspapers left in the county, for 30 years. John has been granted a great deal of independence in New Mexico, unlike some of his colleagues. He does many cartoons on NM because so few do.

Newspapers are closing down or combining to survive, and editorial cartooning is a dying profession. It is cheaper for a newspaper to buy a syndicated cartoon than to hire a cartoonist of its own; therefore, there are fewer and fewer job openings. Cartoonists often anger readers, and editors don't always like this. There are 30 times more blacksmiths than cartoonists working in this country; the number of cartoonists is about 100.

Confidence in the press is down. Some of the complaints are:

- 1) Bias. The national media is liberal, and the local media is conservative;
- 2) Distorts truth or makes it up;
- 3) Exaggerates and overplays some stories, such as the Michael Jackson trial;
- 4) Unpatriotic or elitist;
- 5) Negative and adversarial; there's a cloud in every silver lining. Trever said this is basically the job description for a political cartoonist. Jeff McNelly of the Chicago Tribune said cartoonists violate every law of ethical journalism, but often they're closer to the truth.

John presented a slide show of some of his cartoons.

He said there are many challenges for us. Educational statistics don't give a true picture, e.g., high school graduation and dropout rates. Next school year 9th graders will be tracked instead of looking at only entering seniors who graduate.

There is pressure to be politically correct and to favor multi-culturalism. The content of some science books is sloppy with the facts, too much folklore, myths, and errors. Multi-cultural committees often review science books.

The DaVinci Code is a best seller, so we have our work cut out for us.

John then took questions. Asked what influenced him, John replied other cartoonists such as Pat Oliphant, Jeff McNelly, and Mike Peters.

After Watergate and Vietnam, however, journalists wanted to make a difference and their reporting became influenced by an agenda.

Following John Trever, was Dave Thomas. He performed some of his amazing magic tricks, followed by some announcements:

1) Monkey in the Middle, reenactment of the Scopes Monkey trial, is a play to be presented at the Kimo, sponsored by the local Creation Science Fellowship of New Mexico (CSFNM). Their web site links to the IDnet-NM. This play supposedly tells the "real" story of the Scopes trial opposed to the fictionalized "Inherit the Wind" version.

2) NMSR did a radio show, called "Creationism Watch" on 1350 AM, an independent talk radio station. An anonymous donor made a contribution that will allow this show to continue for a several months.

Next agenda item was the business meeting. Jerry Shelton, treasurer, reported \$1225 in CESE's treasury. Seventy-five percent of this goes to producing the "Beacon" newsletter. The rest is spent on science fair scholarships. Marshall asked that we pay dues and make contributions.

Marshall made a motion to change CESE bylaws, Article VII, Sections 1 and 8 by increasing the maximum number of Board Members at Large from five to ten. The revised articles would become:

Section 1: Officer Positions. The officers of the corporation shall be a President, Vice President, Past President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a maximum of ten Members at Large. Each officer will also be a member of the Board of Directors.

Section 8: Members at Large. The Members at Large (no more than ten) shall be voting members of the Board of Directors. The Members at Large shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Board of Directors, which include membership and recruiting and communications to the full membership.

Lisa Durkin seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Marshall then presented the new slate of officers and board members. Kim moved that we accept the slate. Lisa seconded it; motion passed.

The new slate of officers is:

President: Kim Johnson
Vice-President: Dave Thomas
Secretary: Marilyn Savitt-Kring
Treasurer: Jerry Shelton
Past President: Marshall Berman
Board Members at Large:
Steve Brugge
Attila Csanyi
Lisa Durkin
Jack Jekowski
Dave Johnson (webmaster)
Jesse Johnson
Marvin Moss
Jonathan Weiss

Marshall then handed the gavel to Kim.

Kim said Marshall was a hard act to follow. Walt Murfin, CESE's statistician, has analyzed test scores and found that many of the problems with education are cultural and the influence of peer groups.

Another problem is the number of people in this country who believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible. It is very high compared to the rest of the industrialized world. Had it not been for CESE, NM would be teaching ID; no one else would have stopped them. We made our part of the world a little better.

There is some antagonism between the creationists and the Intelligent Design (IDer's). In Dover, PA, the Discovery Institute (DI) knows "teaching the controversy" will be much harder to defend legally than outright teaching creationism, and the DI is refusing to testify. The creationists are critical of the ID'ers because they disavow a religious connection.

Kim asked that people join National Center for Science Education (NCSE). We are fighting a defensive battle with ID. We need more parents involved. Two teachers in the state are currently teaching creationism, and one is in Albuquerque.

NMSR's radio show is proactive. When we are proactive, ID's response is usually ineffectual. If they are angered, we come out ahead.

We have been invited to suggest a proposal with NMAS for KNME. We need to get back on the inside of New Mexico education. With Governor Richardson's constitutional amendment changes, nothing in education has improved. Easy access to the system has been taken away. We can't easily talk to a cabinet level official, as we could with a state board of education representative. We need to recruit more members, especially those that will be more active, and more biologists.

Marshall announced that NMAS would be sponsoring a performance by an actor who impersonates Einstein in celebration of 100 years since the miracle year of physics, when Einstein published 5 influential papers. This play will be held at the Albuquerque Academy.

Kim moved to adjourn, and Dave T. seconded the motion.

CESE members helped themselves to refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

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