President Byers opened the meeting and asked for a moment of silence for the recently deceased members of the Society. They are: Jean Corner, John Fletcher, John B. Graham, Tibor J. Greenwalt, Harold Klinger, Bert La Du, Sergey Nazarenko, Jennifer Pinkham, Theodore Reich, John Robb, Theodore F. Thurmon.

He then welcomed new directors: Michael Boehnke, Charis Eng and Mary-Claire King. Stephen Warren who was on the board as editor of the AJHG will now be the 2006 President. Cynthia Morton who retired from the board will now be the new editor of the Journal. He thanked retiring board members Diana Bianchi, Bronya Keats, Cynthia Morton, Dave Valle and Jan Friedman, who will be replaced by Dan Van Dyke as the new treasurer. He also thanked the ASHG administrative office for all of its help during his tenure as president.

SECRETARY’S REPORT - David Nelson, PhD

Nelson reported that the minutes from the business meeting in Toronto had been available on the website for several months. He asked for a motion to approve those minutes. A motion was given and seconded. There were no objections.

Nelson thanked the 2005 Nominating Committee members chaired by Miriam Blitzer. They are: Dawn Allain, Judith Allanson, Thomas Gelehrter, Douglas Marchuck, Val Sheffield, Huntington Willard and Joann Boughman, ex officio. The slate of candidates included Wylie Burke, President elect, Michael Boehnke, Charis Eng, Muin Khoury, Mary-Claire King, Brendan Lee and Anthony Wynshaw-Boris. Since moving to electronic voting, return rate has increased to 30 percent of the membership.

As of October 15, there are 7,021 paid members. This number includes over 1,300 trainees and 1,200 Overseas Affiliates. There is an 8 percent decline from last year’s figures. More than 500 members have not paid their 2005 dues and 2,000 have let their dues lapse in the last few years. The board is curious as to why they haven’t renewed their memberships and will be surveying these members in the next year. The good news is that there is a steady influx of new members; over 1,000 have joined this year. Meeting attendance in Salt Lake City is slightly less than last year’s attendance in Toronto. Abstracts are down (Toronto 3081 and SLC 2513) and Nelson encouraged everyone to come to New Orleans in 2006.

TREASURER’S REPORT - Jan Friedman, MD, PhD

The investment portfolio with TIAA/CREF is doing well, about the same as in 2004, and on track compared to other index funds.

The 2005 budget is tracking well. Revenue and expense are both lower than budget and the actual is projected to come within $3K of budgeted figures. Meeting income is lower than budgeted; exhibit and ad income is $80,000 higher than budgeted.

The 2006 budget is not looking good. The total revenue is projected at $80K higher than budgeted, but the expense is projected to be $420K more, resulting in a deficit. The space rental for SLC was $108K compared to $233,360 for New Orleans. Audiovisual is also much higher in 2006, $320K compared to $276,513 for SLC. The two meeting bottom lines are vastly different: a profit of $218,197 for 2005 and a deficit of $33,670 for 2006. Friedman reported that the Board voted to raise meeting fees as follows:
Member preregistration: $265 to $300
Non-Member preregistration: $410 to $450
Student preregistration: $65 to $90
Nonmember Student preregistration: $145 to $170

Onsite registration fees will go up proportionally.

Exhibitor fees, already raised by $100 will be raised $50 more.

Fund Balance

The fund balance projected for 2005 is $2,926,230 or 73% of annual expense, but for 2006, the budgeted amount is $2,732,460 or 60% of annual expense, a significant decline.

EDITOR’S REPORT - Steve Warren

Warren thanked retiring associate editors (Joan Bailey-Wilson, Harry Deitz, Eleanor Feingold, Bruce Korf) and welcomed the new editors (Terri Beaty, Nancy Cox, Brendan Lee and Matthew Worman). He reported that circulation is down nearly 8 percent partly due to a shift in membership, but the Journal’s institutional circulation, although down a bit, has remained very steady. He noted that the Journal remains highly cited with an impact factor of 12.3. Among journals that publish primary literature in human genetics, AJHG is number 2 after Nature Genetics and remarkably among all journals that publish primary research, AJHG is number 30. Over the years the impact factor for the Journal has risen dramatically and the Journal is now recognized as very important in the field. Warren reported that submissions have gone up to over 1,200. He explained that when submissions go up but the number of pages remains the same, the acceptance rate drops. The acceptance rate is now 14 percent but is expected to be 17 percent by the end of the year.

The time from submission to rejection is 11 days and has remained fairly steady over the past few years. The time from submission to acceptance is about 65 days. This interval includes revision time taken by authors. When UCP receives an accepted electronic manuscript they can put it up for e-publication within 21 days, an improvement over last year.

A new option added this year is early access to the preprints. Now, when a paper is accepted by the editorial office it is sent to the UCP and a PDF version of that author’s paper will be posted on the website so it can be immediately accessed during the time that it would normally be formatted for print. This results in getting those papers out much more quickly instead of waiting for the final version.

Finally, Warren thanked Kathryn Garber, Deputy Editor, and Theresa Gillman, Managing Editor. He said that it has been a real privilege being the editor and that he has learned a great deal about human genetics. He then introduced Cynthia Morton as the new editor of the Journal.

The New Editor’s Report - Cynthia Morton

She thanked Warren and his staff for all of the help they have provided during the transition period.
Morton introduced the new staff members: Robin Williamson, Deputy Editor; Katherine DyReyes, Managing Editor; and Susanne Peterson, Assistant. She informed the membership that the Editor’s office is now based in Boston and can be reached at ajhg@ajhg.net.

She reviewed upcoming plans including development of a series of perspective essays in human genetics by some senior members called on to write on various topics. There will be a page of Society news where readers will be able to learn about activities more often than once a year at the annual meeting. This page will be edited by Joann Boughman. Morton went on to say that there will be a few formatting changes and a new cover that will feature photographs of seminal moments in human genetics. On the cover there will be a quiz each month to see if readers recognize the experiment. The answer will be inside the front cover. She hopes it will be a way to educate the younger people in the Society who were not yet in the field when some of these moments occurred. She encouraged members to send her suggestions of favorite experiments and thanked those who already had contacted her.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT’S UPDATE - Dr. Joann Boughman

Boughman reviewed some of the major policy and political initiatives especially those surrounding the genetic nondiscrimination bill. She reported that the Senate version of HR 1227 passed unanimously in the spring. And, in the House, for the first time, not only is the bill assigned to all of the appropriate committees, but there is a new major sponsor, Representative Judy Biggert, a Republican from Illinois. Boughman said there are currently 151 co-sponsors of the legislation, 60 of whom are from the Republican Party. However, more congressional support is needed. Consequently the Society office may be sending out another email asking members to contact their legislators. The Coalition for Genetic Fairness, chaired by Sharon Terry of the Genetic Alliance, has led these activities, and for the first time there is a real possibility that passage of the bill will happen in 2006.

ASHG is also working with FASEB on the enhanced access program from NIH. Because PubMedCentral is the repository for the AJHG, the Society is already in compliance with the current open access climate. As Warren mentioned, the authors’ preprints are posted online immediately, but anyone who is an NIH funded investigator, knows that in a separate process they are requested to submit their accepted manuscript to PubMedCentral directly. Currently, there is a 2.3 percent compliance rate indicating the scientific community needs to do better.

Boughman reported that one of the Society’s long range issues is to increase NIH funding. The soft landing from the doubling effort was not realized. Instead, the NIH budget will probably be cut. The Society, along with FASEB, is working diligently but the best that may be hoped for is a year long continuing resolution for the entire budget so for the moment nothing would be cut. The ASHG board is engaged in this process, and the spring Board meeting will be held in DC. Plans are to bombard the "Hill" with visitors. Board members will be meeting with several of the representatives with one of the goals being to identify several long-term champions for the cause. Boughman believes that it is unwise to depend on only a handful of legislators to carry this goal forward.

Family History Projects

Boughman reported that ASHG is a partner in the Surgeon General’s Family History Day, which appropriately is Thanksgiving Day, a day when families get together. The Society is
also involved in a collaborative effort with the Institute for Cultural Partnerships and the Library of Congress on the development of family history tools that are beyond the geneticist’s usual medical pedigree. These tools incorporate a more storytelling/folklore approach to family history taking, which are very user friendly. The ASHG is also involved with the CDC in its further enhancement of their family history tool. In addition to this, ASHG has a grant with the CDC that funds its current CDC/ASHG fellow, Ridgely Green, who is working on the process of expanding the current adult onset disorders family history to incorporate pediatric diseases. The Society will soon be recruiting another CDC fellow and may have the opportunity to increase its grant to include two ASHG/CDC fellows placed at the CDC. For the last five years, the Society has had a policy fellow with NHGRI, and it has proven to be an extremely valuable experience. This year, the ASHG fellow, Derek Scholes, has already received his placement on the hill on the Senate side with Senator Edward Kennedy on the HELP committee.

Genetic Alliance Advocacy Program

Boughman informed the membership of the First Annual Genetic Alliance Advocacy Program whereby 15 advocates were invited to the Salt Lake City meeting. This program allows advocates to learn about human genetics in the context of their own disease interest and encourages interaction with the scientists who may be working on their particular area of interest. The advocates were extremely engaged in the program and both sides look forward to developing this program further.

FASEB/ASHG Career Resources

ASHG, with the assistance of the FASEB Career Resources Department, has developed a much stronger ASHG career resources program on-line. The new website allows employers to post jobs and with help of Career Resources at FASEB can review numerous CVs of potential employees.

New ASHG Director of Education

Boughman informed the membership about Kenna Shaw, PhD, the new ASHG education director. Shaw is working hard on the development of the mentor network and other K-12 initiatives. She is intent on making it a very easy process for the mentors and teachers to be able to teach genetics throughout all of the classrooms in the US and Canada.

SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE - Kathy Hudson, PhD

Members of the committee are: Kathy Hudson, chair; Wylie Burke, co-chair; Sylvia Au; Carolyn Bruzzzinski; Elizabeth Cameron; Timothy Caulfield; Louis Elsas; Eric Johnson; Angela Schueuerle.

Hudson stated that one of the principal responsibilities of this committee is to put together two social issues sessions at the annual meeting each year. This year the two were (1) Use of the Constructs of Race and Ethnicity in Genomic Research; and (2) Genetic Information: Is Knowledge Power? The committee will soon be in the process of soliciting proposals for next year. She encouraged members to submit proposals either through the ASHG website or directly to her. She also informed the membership that the committee is trying to find new active members for the five vacancies that will be available in 2006. She said that if anyone is interested, a nomination with a bio should be sent to her.
Hudson reported her desire to make the committee a valuable asset to the Board of Directors and to the ASHG members. Over the next several months, the committee will be developing at the request of the Board, a set of principles about advertising and access to genetic testing -- the issue of direct to consumer and direct to physician advertising of various genetic tests. As the committee takes on new topics it would be very interested in the input of members and would like to survey them about social issues that are important to them.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE - Tony Wynshaw-Boris

Members of the committee are: Anthony Wynshaw-Boris, chair; Christopher Amos; David Beier; William Gahl; Elizabeth Hauser; Jeffrey Long; Marcy MacDonald; John McPherson; Hope Northrup; Mary Norton; Margaret Pericak-Vance; Richard Spielman; Katherine Schneider; Lisa Shaffer; Constantine Stratakis.

Wynshaw-Boris reminded the membership that the theme of the meeting was "Realizing the Promise of the Human Genome Project". He said that if one looks at all the awards this year and the introduction of the HapMap project, everything seemed to have magically aligned with the theme of "realizing the promise".

He said that after last year's meeting in Toronto, the Board sent out survey questions to the attendees. Based on those answers, the committee decided to keep the cross topic sessions and to introduce a new plenary historical session. The committee evaluated over 85 proposals for the 21 invited sessions and he expressed his appreciation for all the member participation in writing those proposals. This tremendous response is the major reason the committee had chosen an excellent set of invited sessions.

Last year in Toronto there were 3,160 abstract submissions. This year it was 2,513. Last year's attendance was 4,985; this year it is 4,350. Although down from last year, the number of registrants still met our expectations. He thanked the Program Committee members for all their hard work and introduced next year's chair, William Gahl. New members of the Committee for 2006 are: Leslie Biesecker, David Goldstein, Susanne Gollin, Jeannie Lee, Michael Lovett.

The 2006 New Orleans Meeting - William Gahl

Gahl mentioned that the theme of the 2006 meeting will be "Regeneration". The ASHG will contribute to that regeneration and one way is by putting on an excellent meeting. He reminded everyone that the members are the people who make the meeting by submission of their abstracts and invited session proposals. The Committee will take recommendations with respect to talks for the historical sessions and for the distinguished speakers. symposium as well. The meeting will take place in an area of town that has not been affected by the flood.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE - Susanne Haga

Members of this committee are: Susanne Haga, chair; Elizabeth Balkite; Siobhan Dolan; Judith Fridovich-Keil; David Gale; Susanne Gollin; Paula Gregory; Neil Lamb; Howard McLeod.

Haga put out a call for new members for this Committee and thanked Paula Gregory, Neil
Lamb, and David Gale for their tireless commitment to the Committee and to several lifetime members who keep coming back to help.

She said that the Society awarded 13 MD/PhD travel scholarships this year and she hoped that at least one or two of them would be won over to the field of genetics. In addition, 30 Katrina scholarships were given out in the amount of $1,000 each. All members got the email about the relief fund that is available on line.

She reported on the all-day high school student/teacher workshop that occurred on the Tuesday of the meeting. Two-hundred and nineteen students and teachers attended. She has already received feedback from the teachers and the students that they thoroughly enjoyed the day. The annual trainee/mentor luncheon occurred on Wednesday. The students, who are always looking for new mentors, really enjoyed the access to the mentors.

Kenna Shaw began her work with the ASHG on August 1. She has identified all of the educational standards for K-12 in all US states and all provinces in Canada. This on-line database will be made available not just for our members, but for science teachers across the country. One will be able to search for specific standards for any grade. It is considered the first phase of the project and the second will be to identify activities that mentors can use to teach a particular grade in a particular region. This phase will also highlight areas that need specific activities to be developed. Activity development will be part of the third phase -- to make sure that each grade level in each state will have some kind of activity for both teachers and mentors to use. Shaw has also updated and revised the educational resources page of the ASHG website. The new url address is www.genednet.org. It's up and accessible but it is just the first edition; by next spring it will be fully active. Her goal is to expand the utility of the mentor network not just on DNA day, but to enable geneticists to meet with students and teachers all year round.

Haga reported that the I&E Committee not only has expanded its efforts on K-12 education, but would like to broaden its focus to undergraduate education as well. This could be accomplished through partnering with US community colleges. The goal would be to improve awareness in the field of genetics among undergraduate teachers and enhance their relationship with the Society. Plans are under discussion to host an undergraduate workshop at next year's meeting.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HUMAN GENETICS SOCIETIES - Judith Allanson, MD

Allanson said that the last couple of years the Federation has had a productive interaction with the International Genetic Alliance, with one of the by-products being the advocacy program that Boughman mentioned earlier in her report. A position paper on the mutual benefits of this collaboration is underway and when completed will be placed on the ASHG website. One of the main interests of the Federation is the International Congress of Human Genetics to be held in Brisbane from August 6-10, 2006. She encouraged members to visit Booth 721 in the Exhibits Hall where information and brochures describing the event can be found. She described the schedule of meetings and focused on one session led by Victor Penchaszada on "genetics in developing countries", which is being sponsored by the March of Dimes. Quite a few countries will have an opportunity to present papers specific to their environment. Out of that it is hoped that a position paper will be developed. There will be 10 student fellowships sponsored by the Society at $2,000 each. In 2016, the International
Congress will be in Yokahama, Japan.

Old Business

Byers discussed the reasoning resulting in the creation of the ASHG Development Fund. He told the membership that its purpose is to fund new interest areas and support educational initiatives. This year, along with GSA, money has been placed into the education program, which is viewed as a very important next step for both societies to become more active in raising the genetic literacy of the general population. In addition, the Board has placed $20,000 toward enabling new trainees to attend international meetings.

NEW BUSINESS - Dr. Steve Warren

Byers stated that the next meeting will be in New Orleans and the Board is still negotiating with the dates. It is currently scheduled for Oct 10-14, 2006 but there is an overlapping conflict at that time with the Society of Neuroscience. They will be holding their meeting in Atlanta from October 14 -18, which has created a conflict with exhibitors who also want to attend the ASHG meeting. It will take another couple of weeks until the new dates are known and will be announced on the website. (STAFF NOTE: The dates have been since changed to October 9 - 13.) The ASHG Administrative Office will continue to monitor the situation in New Orleans and inform members of new developments.

There was a very spirited discussion among Board members about New Orleans. It was decided that given the theme of "regeneration", the Society's responsibility is to contribute to the regeneration of New Orleans by holding the meeting there. In addition, the Board would like to involve the membership in some outreach programs while there. It was suggested we could provide books about science to help re-establish the school libraries, or we could spend a day helping "Habitat for Humanity" build homes. Another thought was to bring old lap tops and distribute them to schools. Byers welcomed any suggestions about how to further contribute to the economy of New Orleans. Both Tulane and LSU sites were devastated and the graduate program is in need, so the Board developed a program for displaced students and postdocs. As of today, the Society has paid $1,000 each to 31 students and it hopes that the members will contribute to the Society's "Katrina Relief Fund" as well as to the "Development Fund".

There was a question from the membership expressing concern that the ancillary meetings that have already committed to hotels in New Orleans, may be in a bind if ASHG changes the dates of the meeting. Byers acknowledged her concern and assured her that the Society would work with them to help minimize this potential conflict if there is a shift in dates. Byers encouraged people to contact Elaine Strass, executive director, if there are concerns.

A representative from Affymetrix (a strong supporter of ASHG events) asked the board if it had considered moving the meeting to a new location. The rep expressed concern that there is a rather large possibility the attendance would decrease considerably primarily for safety reasons since the meeting will be held during hurricane season. She suggested there be a poll of the membership as to their intentions regarding attendance. Byers assured her that the Board had a long conversation with the convention bureau representatives, and is convinced that the city and the convention center will be ready for the meeting. The convention center was not affected by the breaking of the levees. Byers said that it was his (and the Board's impression) in talking informally with many members that people were very positive in their attitudes toward attending the next meeting in New Orleans. The
Affymetrix representative suggested that the convention center/hotels have shuttle buses available just in case another hurricane occurs so attendees can be reassured of getting out of the city in the event of a catastrophe. Byers said the convention center has assured the Board that there will be alternatives and an exit strategy to get out of the city if need be. All of the hotels now have contingency plans as well. Byers reiterated that the hotels are now full, have been substantially rebuilt and the hotels for now have set aside 25% of their capacity for workers. They have all also guaranteed that the convention center will be re-open April 1st with a meeting of 20,000 attendees and all of the hotels are guaranteeing that those meeting attendees will have access to full service. He anticipates a better facility than previously expected and the best meeting ever.

A motion was moved and seconded for adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,

David Nelson, Secretary
Jane Salomon, media manager
Elaine Strass, Executive Director