

Report on the April 2004 Council Meeting

On April 3, 2004, the AMS Council met in Washington, DC. As usual with its spring meeting, a major item of business was the nomination of candidates to stand for office in the AMS Elections, and the Council nominated people to run for the Board of Trustees, Vice President, and Member at Large of the Council in the 2004 elections. The list of those nominees for the 2004 Elections will be distributed to AMS members in September and will be published in the September issue of the *Notices*. In addition, the Council nominated James G. Glimm and Ronald J. Stern to run in 2005 as candidates for the post of AMS President Elect.

The Council also conducted some standard business by approving the establishment of one prize committee, a minor change in charge to another, and an expansion in the charge of the Human Rights Committee.

The Council reacted to a threatened embargo on papers from scientists in embargoed countries. A September 2003 ruling of the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control seemed to limit how American publishers could deal with scientific papers from such countries. Subsequently a number of publishers, scientific societies, and scientists expressed concern about the potential to interfere with the free exchange of science, which is a principle that is widely promoted throughout the world. During the week of the Council Meeting, the U.S. State Department gave hints that the rules limiting the publication of such papers were about to be reinterpreted in more favorable ways. Nevertheless, Council members expressed their belief in the value of reaffirming the free exchange principle, and the Council adopted the following statement:

The American Mathematical Society believes that science is universal and that it relies on co-operation and exchange throughout the world. The Society is committed to the principle that scientists must have free access to each other and to scientific information. For these reasons, all publication programs of the Society continue to consider each submission without regard to the nationality or the national origin of its authors. We believe this is consistent both with the above principles and with current law.

As a repeat of an item initiated in April 2002, the Council devoted a portion of this meeting to a general discussion of one of the matters it oversees. This year's topic was membership, which also was the subject of the Society's focused planning effort in 2003. Resource materials were distributed prior to the meeting, and members were asked

to concentrate on two primary issues: (1) how to retain nominee members and (2) whether to make some part of the archived *Notices of the AMS* a benefit available only to members. There was extensive discussion. Executive Director John H. Ewing outlined how nominee members are tracked at present and explained why accurate tracking is difficult. Council discussed proposals about various periods in which the *Notices* would be available online only to members and indicated support for having some kind of evident member benefit. No actions were taken.

Finally, Executive Director Ewing reported on the state of the AMS. His report was published in the August 2004 issue of the *Notices*, pp. 818–23.