

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF BIOMECHANICS

NEWSLETTER

No. 1

February 1976

FOREWORD

This Newsletter has been prepared to acquaint researchers in biomechanics with some recent discussions concerning the possible formation of an American Society of Biomechanics.

BACKGROUND

Several times during the past two to three years it has been suggested that there exists a need for a national association for those active in the field of biomechanics -- an association for the exchange of ideas and information among the many people now working in the numerous areas to which biomechanics is currently applied.

There are, of course, several regional and national associations -- the American College of Sports Medicine (A.C.S.M.), the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (A.S.M.E.), and the Orthopaedic Research Society (O.R.S.) to name a few -- which regularly or occasionally schedule meetings devoted to topics in biomechanics. These, however, are generally attended only by those people associated with the parent field -- sports medicine, mechanical engineering, orthopaedics, etc. As a result, there is relatively little opportunity for the kind of exchange between people working in different areas of application that would so clearly be of benefit to all concerned.

To obtain expressions of opinion concerning the formation of a national society to remedy this situation, letters were sent to all U.S. pre-registrants for the Vth International Congress in Biomechanics in Jyväskylä, Finland, inviting them to attend a meeting during the Congress. (It is perhaps symptomatic of the existing communication problem that a meeting in Finland should seem the best place at which to get American workers in biomechanics together!)

This meeting duly took place on July 2, 1975, and was attended by twenty-two people "representing" the following fields -- computer science, ergonomics, engineering, physical education, physical therapy, physiology and rehabilitation medicine. Following extensive discussion, the meeting voted unanimously in favor of three resolutions, namely

- (1) that steps be taken to form a national society of biomechanics;
- (2) that Dr. James G. Hay (University of Iowa) be appointed chairman pro-tem of an organizing committee; and
- (3) that Dr. Hay be given power to act in the matter of inviting people to serve on that committee.

Although not the subject of a formal motion, it was also generally agreed that any such new society should be completely autonomous -- that is, it

should not be linked to any existing body such as A.C.S.M., A.S.M.E. or O.R.S. Close affiliation with any one group would, it was felt, discourage the active participation of potential members not directly associated with that group.

Since the meeting in Jyväskylä, an organizing committee consisting of representatives from five different areas of biomechanics activity and a secretary has been assembled to consider what steps should be taken towards the formation of a national society. The members of this committee and the areas represented (or the position occupied) are Dr. Richard A. Brand (orthopedics), Dr. Don B. Chaffin (ergonomics), Dr. F. Gaynor Evans (anatomy), Dr. James G. Hay (physical education), Dr. Albert B. Schultz (engineering), and Dr. Gary L. Soderberg (secretary).

The first meeting of the organizing committee was held at the O'Hare Hilton Hotel, Chicago, on January 15th. The remainder of this Newsletter is devoted to a synopsis of the discussion which ensued and the positions which were reached at that meeting.

#### PURPOSE

The prime function of the proposed American Society of Biomechanics is to bring together biomechanics researchers from diverse fields of application for the purpose of exchanging information of common interest. (Note: The term, biomechanics is used here in accord with the definition proposed by Hatze, viz.,

"Biomechanics is the study of the structure and function of biological systems by means of the methods of mechanics")

#### ACTIVITIES OF THE SOCIETY

The single most important activity of the proposed society will be the organization and conduct of regular research meetings, probably on an annual basis. The first of these meetings is tentatively (very tentatively!) scheduled for October, 1977, at a Midwest venue yet to be decided.

The publication of an informal Newsletter to keep members abreast of Society activities is also proposed. The publication of a research journal is not envisaged at the present time. Instead, it is proposed that, once the Society becomes established, an approach be made to the officers of the Journal of Biomechanics with a view to having that publication become the official Journal of the Society.

#### MEMBERSHIP

Several categories of membership are envisaged. Of these, the two main categories would be for Active Members and Associate Members. The minimum requirements for Active Member status might include (a) formal training and/or experience in biomechanics research, and (b) an established record of publication in reputable journals (or equivalent) dealing with biomechanics research.

<sup>1</sup> Hatze, H. (1974) The Meaning of the Term 'Biomechanics' Journal of Biomechanics 7, 189-190.

The corresponding requirements for Associate Membership might be (a) demonstrated interest and (b) active involvement in biomechanics research. The Associate Membership category is intended to cater for graduate students and other individuals who exhibit special interest and promise of future development in biomechanics research.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that what has been outlined above concerning the purpose, activities, etc., of the proposed society represents only the present thinking of the organizing committee on these topics. If the support from potential members is sufficient to warrant proceeding further with the formation of the society, all these matters will eventually be brought before a general meeting for discussion, amendment and/or modification. In the meantime, the work of the organizing committee would be greatly facilitated if readers interested in membership in the A.S.B. would (a) complete the enclosed Information Sheet and return it to the Secretary (b) alert others in the field to the possible formation of the A.S.B. -- additional copies of the Information Sheet are included for the use of colleagues who may be interested and (c) express their views regarding aspects of the society's activities which have been referred to in this Newsletter or regarding other aspects which are of concern to them. These expressions of opinion may be directed to the Secretary or, if preferred, to a member of the organizing committee. (The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Organizing Committee are listed below, for this purpose.)

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