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RAPA and Risk

Dalton G. Paxman, Kristin S. Shrader-Frechette
& Thomas G. Field, Jr.

Some readers may have noticed a change to the inside front cover of the previous issue of *Risk* indicating that it has become the official journal of the Risk Assessment and Policy Association (RAPA). Here, we describe how RAPA came to be and the journal became affiliated.

The New Hampshire conference that generated the papers comprising this issue was critical to RAPA's formation. The multidisciplinary group that met last fall found the lively exchanges to be highly stimulating and quickly concluded that there was a need for more — and for a professional society that combines an interest in critical evaluation of risk assessment methodologies with an equally strong interest in the use of risk assessment in policy making. Having risk policy as its main focus, RAPA was born.

Since the Concord conference, initial founders have worked with dispatch to create an organization to further their interests in risk policy and have outlined a diverse list of objectives:

- To promote multidisciplinary research on the theory and practice of risk assessment and management;
- To foster intellectual exchange among researchers, risk assessors and policy makers;
- To encourage public involvement in risk assessment and management;
- To examine the use of risk assessment in legislative, regulatory and other policy deliberations; and
- To study the use of risk analysis in decision making.

Because the goals of RAPA follow the editorial priorities of *Risk* as previously established, formal collaboration seems natural and promises to be highly fruitful for both the relatively new journal and the nascent, but quickly growing, society.

With members of the RAPA Board (listed at p. 164), we hope to foster an intellectual climate in which all members can reap the greatest benefits. Consistent with its already diverse membership, we also hope to provide an open forum for professionals representing the widest possible range of expertise — social sciences, journalism, economics, law, philosophy and languages, as well as biology, engineering, medicine, public health, operations research and other traditional risk assessment disciplines. We encourage readers from government, industry, the media and academia, as well as those from the general public, to join in ensuring a diverse foundation that will enable RAPA to prosper.

Besides affording an opportunity to submit papers and participate in exciting and inexpensive conferences, membership includes subscriptions to *Risk* and to *RAPA News*. We are eager to have your suggestions for making the most of the rewarding professional opportunities that the new society promises and for encouraging frank, lively exchanges about risk policy.

A membership form appears at page 114 of this issue. Modest dues make RAPA membership a bargain! We are determined to keep costs as low as possible. Please join us and take an active role in promoting enthusiastic and ground-breaking interactions among widely diverse citizens who share a common interest in risk assessment and policy.

Please send news items, suggestions and comments, to the newsletter. Also, please send manuscripts to *Risk*.

When you join RAPA, also be sure to vote on when and where it should hold its first all-society meeting. We very much look forward to seeing you there!

