

ANTHROPOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT SECTION

State of the Section 2004 A Proposal to Raise Membership Dues from \$15 to \$20

Tom Sheridan, President

2004 was a challenging year – to put it politely – for the American Anthropological Association and its constituent sections and organizations. The lockout of its workers by the San Francisco Hilton, and the AAA Executive Board's decision to change the time and location of the Annual Meeting, torpedoed almost all of our planned events and sessions:

- The ceremony for the first Lourdes Arispe Award was postponed until the 2005 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C.
- The Public Policy Forum on the Precautionary Principle co-organized by A&E President-Elect Kelly Alley and Melissa Checker was cancelled.
- All A&E-sponsored sessions were cancelled by their organizers.

Nonetheless, A&E's Executive Board and membership responded magnificently to the challenge. A&E was one of the most active and outspoken sections calling for the AAA to reform its decision making process and to adopt pro-union policies:

- Members voted overwhelmingly NOT to cross picket lines in San Francisco and NOT to move the Annual Meeting to Atlanta.
- Thanks largely to the resources of the Council on Anthropology & Education (CAE), A&E was one of the co-sponsors of the Canterbury Convocation, the alternative meeting held at the unionized Canterbury Hotel in San Francisco on the original Annual Meeting dates in November.
- A&E officers and board members held our annual Executive Board Meeting and Business Meeting there.
- All five Rappaport Prize finalists presented their papers in our Anthropology & Environment: The Next Generation session. Following the award's new format all five finalists received \$100 to attend. Our panel of judges awarded the \$250 prize to Jill Constantino (Michigan) for her paper "The 'Wild West' of the Pacific: Peopling and Depeopling the Galapagos Islands."
- A&E member Derek Fay organized an A&E session at the Canterbury Convocation as well.
- President Tom Sheridan helped draft the Canterbury Statement, which was overwhelmingly approved by A&E members.
- In response to the Canterbury Statement, the AAA Executive Board voted to restrict future AAA Annual Meetings to unionized hotels and to create an appointed Committee on Labor Issues.

- In the Section Assembly, A&E seconded a motion by the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists to restrict the annual meetings of sections to unionized hotels (as well as all the other adopted restrictions applying to the location of AAA Annual Meetings). The motion overwhelmingly passed.

Other significant accomplishments of the A&E Section in 2004 included:

- Ever since past A&E President Pete Brocius presented his “Professionalizing Public Policy at AAA” to the AAA Committee on Public Policy in 2001, A&E has been one of the staunchest supporters of the Public Policy Center Initiative. President Sheridan attended a small working conference organized by AAA President Liz Brumfiel to draft a proposal to create Center for Human Studies and Public Policy lodged in an academic institution in the Washington, D.C. area. The planning group then contacted seven universities in the area which expressed interest in the Center. To continue its work, the planning group requested \$5,000 apiece from the Society for Applied Anthropology and the AAA. The SfAA Executive Board turned down the request, but the AAA EB voted to allocate the funds.
- Membership increased to a high of 542 in September 2004. By November, it had dropped to 516, but many other sections were reporting membership declines of 20-30% because of the controversy surrounding the Annual Meeting.
- With more than 700 subscribers, the EANTH-listserv, maintained by Adam Henne (U Georgia), continues to remain a vital venue of information exchange, discussion, and debate.
- New webmaster Sean Downey (U Arizona) is expanding and streamlining the A&E website.
- Because of some glitches in getting books to judges, the Julian Steward Award has not yet been announced, but will be soon.
- A panel of judges awarded the A&E Junior Scholar Award (\$500) to co-winners:

Hayden, Cori. 2003. From Market to Market: Bioprospecting’s Idioms of Inclusion. *American Ethnologist* 30(3);359-71. (UC-Berkeley and Girton College, U of Cambridge).

Checker, Melissa. 2004. “We All Have Identity at the Table”: Negotiating Difference in a Southern African American Environmental Justice Network. *Global Studies in Culture and Power* 11:171-94. (Dept of Anthropology, U of Memphis)

Runner Up:

Greene, Shane. 2004. Indigenous People Incorporated? Culture as Politics, Culture as Property in Pharmaceutical Bioprospecting. *Current Anthropology* 45(2):211-36. (Dept of Sociology & Anthropology, Florida International U).

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In 2005, A&E has some exciting events planned, including:

- Another conference co-sponsored by A&E's Conservation & Community Working Group entitled *Saving the Wide Open Spaces: How to Conserve Biodiversity and Sustainable Ranching, Forestry, and Farming in the American West*, organized by President Sheridan (see the A&E webpage for more details).
- A Public Policy Forum at the AAA Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. called *The Second Bush Administration and Environmental Justice*, co-organized by Melissa Checker and David Hess.
- The first annual Lourdes Arispe Award and Reception, also at the Annual Meeting.

We also are fielding a truly exceptional slate of candidates. You can see who they are, and read their bios and statements, on our website.

Future Budgets

Former Treasurer Molly Doane and I developed a proposed 2005 A&E budget of \$11,750 broken into the following categories: Awards and Honors (\$2,250); Contributions (\$500); Outreach & Training (\$5,000); Outside Office Expenses (website and listserv: \$2,000); Travel (\$2,000).

When we submitted the 2005 A&E Budget, however, Suzanne Mattingly of the AAA pointed out that our current rate of expenditures would eclipse revenues in the coming years. To partially correct the problem, the A&E Executive Board adopted several cost-cutting measures:

- Reducing the amount of the Junior Scholar and Julian Steward Awards from \$500 to \$250 apiece.
- Reducing the President's travel budget from \$1,000 to \$500.
- Reducing Outreach and Training from \$5,000 to \$4,000.

These reductions will save A&E \$2,000 a year. But if we want to remain as active as we have been in the recent past, we need to raise revenues as well. **On my recommendation, the A&E Executive Board is proposing to raise membership dues from \$15 to \$20 a year.** If our membership remains about the same, this combination of increased revenues and cost-cutting will enable us to continue to sustain budgets of about \$10,000 a year.

The A&E Executive Board wants to hear how you feel about this proposed \$5 raise in membership dues. Let's discuss it over the listserv and then take a poll.

The Executive Board is also instituting another important change in the Outreach and Training category. Previously, the two most active Working Groups – Conservation & Community and Environmental Justice – have sponsored all of our conferences, workshops, and Public Policy Forums. We will be forming a committee to develop criteria to award those funds to members on a competitive basis beginning in 2006.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with our Executive Board and all the rest of you. I hope you'll join me in a round of virtual applause for outgoing board members Pam Puntteney and Michael Paolisso, outgoing Program Chair Chris Tarnowski, outgoing Treasurer Molly Doane, and outgoing *Anthropology News* Column Editor Becky Zarger. And let's welcome incoming board members Cathy Tucker and Susan Charnley, incoming Program Chair Eric Jones, incoming Treasurer J.R. Stepp, and incoming *AN* column editor Crystal Fortwangler.

Saludos, y Mil Gracias,

Tom Sheridan