AAA Awards Committee Annual Report for 2002
February 6, 2003

preparing by Tim Earle, Chair, 2002 reviewed by Dennis Wiedman (Chair, 2003) and Kim Baker (AAA Staff Liaison)

Membership of Committee: Tim Earle (Chair), Dennis Wiedman (Chair-designate), Kate Dudley, Fran Mascia-Lees, Dawn Fischer Banks (Student Representative), and Kim Baker (AAA Staff Liaison).

Note: Membership of the committee is appointed by the AAA President in consultation with the Committee. As charged by the Executive Board, the Chair is a member of the Executive Board, one seat is designated for a student, other members are often former award recipients, and an AAA staff person acts as liaison to the office and as support person for the Committee. The normal membership term is three years; for the first time this year, as the Chair (Tim Earle) was in his third year, a second member of the Board was appointed (Dennis Wiedman) as Chair-designate to aid in transition of leadership. This practice is highly desirable and we recommend continuing it with an appointment from the Executive Board for 2004-6.

Having completed their three year terms, Tim and Fran stepped down as of the November meetings. Tim is replaced as Chair by Dennis. Two new appointments need to be made, and only one (Patricia Urban) has been made.

Recommendation of Association Awardees to the executive Board. This is the primary job of the AAA Awards Committee. In consultation with the Awards Committee, competition for the AAA Awards was announced in the Fall (on the website and in the newsletter), and a March 1 deadline was set for submission of nominations. Somewhat disappointing, we received the following number of nominations: AIME, 1; Boas, 3; Mayfield, 1; Textor, 2. Convening by teleconference on April 17, the Awards Committee made the following recommendations that were accepted by the AAA Executive Board on May 18:

Anthropology in the Media Award: John R. Rickford AAA/Mayfield Award: Randall McGuire Franz Boas Award: James L. Peacock Textor Award: Paul Stoller

These were awarded at the AAA Awards Ceremony at the Annual Meeting (November 23).

Establishment of AAA Awards Committee Operational Procedures. The AAA Awards Committee is a relatively new committee first established on January 19, 1998. One objective of this year work has been to regularize the annual cycle of work and responsibilities. Following discussions of the Awards Committee at its April 17 teleconference, an annual schedule of AAA Awards process and the functions for liaisons to the various special committee were developed (attached). These were presented to the AAA Executive Board (May 18) and accepted by them.

This year the Awards Committee liaisons to the special awards committees were as follows: Kidder (no award this year), Kimball (Dawn), Mead (Kate), and Textor (Fran). The operation of the liaisons needs to be further evaluated and regularized. Note: the liaison from the Awards
Committee to the AAA/AfAA Mead Committee serves as a full voting member of that committee.

Other Issues.

• Increase nominations for the awards. Because the number of nominations for the Association-wide awards had dropped below an acceptable level, the Committee proposed and the Executive Board accepted last year (11/28/01) the following motion:

"All committees for Association-wide Awards shall consider adopting the following procedures: Each committee shall identify approximately five individuals whom members feel should be considered for their award(s). The committee will them solicit nominations for individuals close to the potential nominee. These nominees will be treated as part of the full nomination pool that includes other nominations made according to regular procedures. These procedures should be adopted on an experimental basis and will augment (and not replace) existing procedures."

The goal is to allow committees to institute procedures to encourage nomination. The Kidder Committee has in the past used similar procedures most effectively. The Textor Committee instituted these recommended procedures, although it saw little change in results. On a two-year experimental basis, the AAA/SfAA Mead Committee has asked to retain nominations for more than one year as long as the nominees meet the qualifications for the Award. This years, the AAA Awards Committee did not act in time to encourage new applicants for 2002 awards, but in the Fall we send out one or two letters to potential nominators for each of next years Awards. In the future, processes to encourage nominations and the results of the experiments must be encouraged and monitored.

• Coordinating operational procedures of all Association-wide Awards Committees. A major need is to regularize and coordinate all Association-wide award committees. Following a decision of the AAA Executive Board at its November 2001 meeting, the AAA president is now presenting all Association-wide awards. The Textor Committee is actively revising its initial Standard Operations Procedures document to regularize its operation with other awards covered directly by the AAA Awards Committee; for the AAA Awards Committee, Dennis is coordinating the their SOP revisions. The Kimball Committee has worked most effectively in the past, although some elements of its operation should, according to the Awards Committee, be more closely coordinated. This coordination has to do with relatively minor roles that the 2003 committee can work on. The AAA/SfAA Mead Committee especially needs to coordinate its schedule with that of the AAA Awards process and discuss routines for appointment and composition of its AAA members. Membership is now at four: 2 AAA, 2 SfAA, one member serving as Chair, which alternating between the two associations. The appointment of an AAA Chair will be required in 2003.

• Face-to-face meetings. As a means to save money, the AAA has moved toward telephone conferencing for the Awards Committee. This action is reasonable, but it creates certain problems concerning the lack of direct inter-person interactions in the operation of the Committee. As a way to counter this problem, we organize a meeting of the Awards Committee at the AAA Annual Meeting. Discussions were held concerning the transition of leadership, the
Textor SOP, and the Mead Committee. This was less successful than desired. In the future, the members of the AAA Awards Committee who travel to the Annual Meetings should meet in a prearranged room reserved as part of regular scheduling.