27 January 2009

To: AAA Executive Board & Kathy Ano, AAA Liaison  
From: Tom Leatherman, Awards Committee Chair

Re: report from the 2008 AAA Awards Committee

I. Actions at the Spring EB Meeting

The Awards Committee (Wendy Ashmore, Frederic Gleach, Lisa Markowitz, Tom Leatherman, and Linda Zigenbein) met by teleconference prior to the AAA spring EB meeting to evaluate the nominations for the AAA/Oxford undergraduate teaching award, the Boas Award, the Anthropology in the Media (AIME) award, and to review and act on the recommendation of the Textor Prize committee and the Kidder Award committee. We also discussed recommendations from the SfAA for the Mead Award for 2009.

At the 2008 Spring Executive Board Meeting a series of 7 recommendations from the Awards committee for AAA awards and changes to the Mead award were presented to and approved by the AAA EB.

1) AAA/Oxford University Press Prize for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching of Anthropology in anthropology: Paula K. Clarke

2) Boas Prize for service to Anthropology: George Armelagos

3) Anthropology in the Media award (AIME): James McKenna

4) The Textor Prize committee received only two nominations and decided to make no awards for 2008.

5) The recommendation of the Alfred Vincent Kidder Award Committee: David C. Grove

6) The recommendation of the Solon T. Kimball Award for Public and Applied Anthropology Committee: Rosita Worl

7) Recommendations for a number of changes in the Margaret Mead Award based on a letter sent to AAA by Tom May of SfAA (letter is attached to this report). The recommendations stated in the ‘May’ letter for the most part simply put into words the selection process already in place. Two substantive changes were part of the recommendations that were approved by the EB: 1) that the committee be composed of members with “training and experience sufficient to the task” and should not include a student member; and 2) that the deadline form submissions be moved to March 15 (or a similar spring date).
II. Actions at the Fall EB Meeting:
In Fall 2008 two members of the awards committee (Leatherman and Markowitz) served
on the Margaret Mead Award Committee. The committee selected Daniel Jordan Smith
as the 2008 Mead Award winner. The recommendation of the Mead Award Committee
was approved by the AAA EB at the EB meeting on Saturday, November 22, 2008. This
year the Mead Award was not announced at the AAA Annual Awards Ceremony, due to
the fact that the executive boards of SfAA and AAA failed to act on the recommendation
of the Mead Award Committee until after the awards ceremony.

I shared with the Executive Board a letter from Nancy Parezo (chair of the 2008 Mead
Award Committee; letter attached) that outlined a. number of concerns and
recommendations concerning the Mead Award The letter included several specific
recommendations (and some point for discussion) regarding the timing of submissions,
the selection criteria, and means of enhanced publicity of the award. There was only 5
minutes allocated to discussion of these recommendations. Therefore, several of the
easier recommendations were passed by the EB and the remainder referred to the new
Awards committee chair for further discussion and action after consulting with the SfAA.
The AAA EB had already passed recommendation 1 but approved “in spirit”
recommendations 1, 2, and 3 regarding the timing of submissions and selection. I say “in
spirit” because these are recommendations directed to the SfAA board more than AAA
board and exact dates might be changed slightly in consultation between the two boards
(and depending on the action of the SfAA board). Recommendations four and five were
supported but because the EB felt that they were stating the process more or less already
in place, there was no formal motion. Recommendation six was passed as a motion to the
EB – that the Mead Award Winner must have the Ph.D. and that this should be made
clear in the call for submissions. Recommendations regarding enhanced publicity were
supported in general and left to the new Awards committee chair. There was a brief
discussion on whether the Mead Award Winner should hold the Ph.D. in Anthropology
or whether individuals with degrees in other related disciplines would be accepted. There
was clearly no consensus and some clear difference of opinion regarding this point, and
further discussion was deferred to a future date. 1
October 23, 2008

To: SfAA and AAA Executive Boards
From: Margaret Mead Award Selection Committee: Lisa Markowitz, John Massad, Tom Leatherman, Nancy Parezo, (Chair)

Re: Board discussion issues for improving the selection of the Mead Award

During our discussions about the selection criteria and process for the Mead Award, we have noted a number of areas that we think would clarify the selection criteria and make the process work better.

We would like to bring these forward to the board for discussion and possible action:

1. **Timing of submissions**: Currently the materials are submitted to the SfAA office in June and received by the committee members soon thereafter. Each book deserves and is given an in-depth reading. Given our summer research activities, this requires several months of effort. As a result we can barely make the October deadline for board consideration in November. In addition waiting for a decision by the SfAA board at their November board meeting, which occurs after the AAA board meeting, leaves no time for the AAA to properly announce and celebrate the winner. This means that there is a loss of publicity for anthropology and for both associations.

   - **Recommendation one**: Move the date for receiving the nomination materials from June 15 to March 15 each year, following the SfAA annual meeting. This date shall be effective for the 2009 competition.
   - **Recommendation two**: Have the Mead Award committee provide their recommendation to the SfAA president and secretary by August 15, at the latest, for board consideration. At this time the committee recommendation should also be provided to the AAA board.
   - **Recommendation three**: Move the board decision from November at the semi-annual board meeting to an email decision in September so that the SfAA board decision can be given to the AAA board before their November meeting and so that proper publicity can be generated at the AAA annual meeting. The Mead
award report should then be placed in the consent agenda for the November SfAA as past activity since the last board meeting.

2. **Selection criteria:**

A. Through communication with the SfAA board and based on the January 8, 2008 communication between Tom May and William Davis, it has come to our attention that the Mead Award has inadvertently turned into a book award. According to our understanding it was never meant to be solely a book award but one that should consider service and other forms of public engagement. In order for this to happen, the board needs to encourage more diverse nominations.

- **Recommendation four:** Consider changing the language in the competition announcement (see below) to encourage people to submit materials other than simply books.
- **Recommendation five:** Ask the nominator to speak about the individual’s whole career, especially efforts to ensure that a broad, concerned public understands anthropological endeavors with regard to important issues, not only the book or other materials that are included in the nomination. There should be evidence of extensive public engagement, not only the writing of a book.

B. In addition, we received a book from a PhD student in sociology this year. We notice that there is no wording in the Mead competition announcement that a PhD is required, but we infer from other statements that it is the intent of the SfAA and AAA boards that the recipient should be a young scholar, whose career is within ten years of receiving a doctorate in anthropology.

- **Recommendation six:** Add the words PhD required so that we do not receive books from graduate students (see below).

C. This year the committee had a long discussion without agreement as to whether the Mead Award is intended only to commemorate a credentialed (PhD) anthropologist who follows in the footsteps of Margaret Mead or an individual, regardless of discipline, who uses anthropological methodologies, interpretive frameworks and answers research questions and issues in a manner that is anthropological in nature.

Some of the committee members argued that the award is ONLY for anthropologists and should only be given to an anthropologist, in part because it is one of the few ways by which the discipline gains public exposure and we should be celebrating anthropological achievement. Another member argued that anthropology has always been interdisciplinary in nature, always valued interdisciplinarity and that we should value that scholars from other disciplines are fruitfully using our intellectual paradigms and methodologies. This shows that anthropology has been successful in very basic ways. (Franz Boas and Elsie Clews Parsons did not have anthropology degrees yet contributed markedly to the field. In the past we have given Mead Awards to individuals who did not
have anthropology degrees but were conducting significant anthropological work). In short, should the Mead award be an exclusive or inclusive award competition.

If the former is the intent of the board, the announcement should be changed to reflect this fact and books written by scholars in other disciplines should be vetted by the SfAA main office and not distributed to the committee members.

The committee would like clarification of this issue from the boards.

- **Discussion Item**: Should the Mead Award be limited only to individuals with PhDs in anthropology and who are practicing anthropologists/professors or should the Mead Award be open to any young scholar …who “interprets anthropological data and principles”?

D. Last year we had an issue with a submission that many individuals on the boards found methodologically inappropriate or unethical. It was a resubmission from the year before but unfortunately none of the committee members were informed of this fact. We would like such information passed on to us in the future, especially because the board would not have approved a recommendation if the book had been selected by the committee.

- **Recommendation seven**: Add a statement that the Mead nominee should meet the highest ethical standards as outlined in the AAA and SfAA code of ethics (see below).

- **Recommendation eight**: Procedural issue: If a submission has been found to be lacking in integrity or failed to meet the highest qualities of ethical standards, such as nondisclosure or deception to research subjects, this submission should not be given to the committee the next year but removed from the pool of applicants.

3. **More publicity for the Mead award.**

The committee had a very fruitful discussion about how both the AAA and the SfAA could further publicize the Mead Award and honor the awardee. In addition to solving the timing issue mentioned above to allow publicity to be accomplished before the fall AAA annual meeting we would like to make the following suggestions.

- **Suggestions for discussion**: The speeches given by the winner at the SfAA annual meeting are truly noteworthy. Unfortunately individuals who are not at the awards do not get to hear them. We suggest that the award acceptance speech go up on:
  - The SfAA website
  - The AAA website
  - Be printed in the *Anthropology Newsletter* and in the *SfAA Newsletter* and possibly in *Practicing Anthropology*
The speech could also be supplied to AP or other appropriate news organizations and a press packet with information on the recipient and the award nomination summary be prepared by the Mead committee. This could help the publicity department of each association.

- Have the winner from the previous year give a workshop at the AAA meeting on writing for the public or public activism, anthropology that matters, for student, or a workshop on how to help turn anthropological research on critical issues into scripts that policymakers will understand and use.

- Have a press conference for the winner at the AAA or SfAA meetings.

**MEAD COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENT**

Suggested changes in RED:

Margaret Mead, for years among the best known women in the world, was also the best known anthropologist. She had a particular talent for bringing anthropology fully into the light of public attention. The Margaret Mead Award, initiated by the Society for Applied Anthropology in 1979, and awarded jointly with the American Anthropological Society since 1983, continues to celebrate the tradition of bringing anthropology to bear on wider social and cultural issues.

The Margaret Mead Award is presented to a young scholar for a particular accomplishment such as a book, film, monograph, or service, which interprets anthropological data and principles in ways that make them meaningful and accessible to a broadly concerned public. The award is designed to recognize a person clearly associated with innovative research and/or successful practice and public engagement in anthropology. The awardee's activity will exemplify skills in broadening the impact of anthropology - skills for which Margaret Mead was admired widely.

Nominees for the 2009 award must have received the Ph.D. degree in anthropology after January 1, 1999 (ten years or less ago). Each application must include the nominee's curriculum vitae, 2 letters of recommendation describing the applicant's accomplishments and documenting his or her impact on relevant publics beyond the discipline, and four copies of the book, film, or materials documenting extraordinary service in terms of public engagement.

Nominees' contributions in total will be judged using the following criteria: (1) intellectual quality (including theoretical sophistication, methodological appropriateness, and research integrity), (2) clarity, accessibility, and understandability, (3) the extent or depth of impact, and (4) breadth of impact. The selection committee consists of two persons appointed by the Society for Applied Anthropology and two persons appointed by the American Anthropological Association.

Please send nominations and four copies of supporting materials to the Margaret Mead Selection Committee at the following address: Society for Applied Anthropology, P.O. Box 2436, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-2436. Phone: (405) 843-5113; FAX (405) 843-8553; E-mail info@sfaa.net.

Deadline for receipt of materials is March 1, 2009. Supporting material will not be returned unless specifically requested.
The 2009 Award winner will be announced during the 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association. Presentation of the Award plaque and stipend will be made jointly by the SfAA and AAA during the ……

Attachment 2)
January 8, 2008

William Davis
Executive Director
American Anthropological Association

Dear Bill,

We discussed in our meeting in June of last year several possible revisions of the procedures for the Margaret Mead Award which is jointly sponsored by SfAA and the AAA. We agreed to present these suggestions to our separate boards and, upon approval, move to implement them.

I have attached a statement which was reviewed and approved by the Board of the Society at the Fall Meeting on December 1, 2007. This statement incorporates all of the important items on which we agreed. Would you please submit this to the AAA Board at your earliest convenience and for consideration at their next meeting. Would you also notify our Office when the AAA Board has reached a decision.

Please contact me if you have any questions or wish additional information.

Best wishes,

Tom May
Executive Director

Encl.
Cc – Board of Directors, SfAA
Setha Low, President