Annual Report from AES to the AAA, 2003-2004
Submitted by Catherine Lutz

1. Accomplishments during the year:

Membership:

Our membership numbers have continued to fall over the last several years. This year they dropped from 2,429 to 2,300 in the period from Nov. 03-Nov. 04, and had been at 2,580 as recently as Sept. 02. We are very concerned with this, and have worked in a variety of ways to stem the tide. This includes work on an extensive new website (see below), efforts to reach out to graduate students through appointing a graduate student representative who has been networking with students around the country and constituting a separate board focused on services students would like to see the AES provide, and continuing successful work to redesign the American Ethnologist. We also note that the antiquarian title of the Society will always require extra marketing work, particularly when the Society for Cultural Anthropology represents such a clear general reference to the interests of those in sociocultural anthropology.

Spring Meetings:

The 2004 AES meetings, chaired by Councillor Gertrude Fraser, were held in Atlanta, GA April 24-26, together with the Society for the Anthropology of North America. Titled "Crisis," the meetings asked participants to reflect on the idea that societies are or see themselves in some extraordinary and problematic relationship to history or temporality. The conference invitation read:

"In the U.S., people are currently expressing a heightened sense of crisis. The anxiety is sometimes reflected in the view that irrational external forces have turned against ordered political, economic, cultural and moral landscapes. What are the multiple readings of crisis and its outcomes in the many settings, societies, sites, media and genres through and in which Anthropologists write, teach, engage in fieldwork, take stances in public discourses and represent the worlds of the anthropologized subjects, identities, routines, rites and orders which come under our investigatory frameworks? What does an ethnological framework offer in the way of conceptualizations, definitions, descriptions and analyses of crisis and its experiences, expressions and manifestations?"

The combination with the Society for the Anthropology of North
America was an intellectually very fruitful one. For the AES component, there were 27 organized sessions with 109 individual papers and three plenary sessions. Although our attendance numbers for AES alone were disappointing, the joint meetings were well attended, with the keynote and plenary sections being particularly successful, drawing large numbers and lively participation of panel and audience.

The keynote address was given by John Clarke, a historical sociologist from the Open University in Great Britain, and was entitled Changing Welfare, Changing States. It was followed by a panel discussion by four anthropologists. Another keynote was given by Micaela di Leonardo on Global Inequalities, War, and the American Scene. A Plenary Session on Women in Global Crisis featured comments by Ida Susser, Catherine Lutz, and Carla Freeman.

Publications:

Under the editorship of Virginia Dominguez, the American Ethnologist has continued to be a very exciting, new format journal. It is larger in size, updated in look, and much more various in form and content. Ordinary book reviews are now all on the web, while review essays are printed in the journal itself. In either case, book titles are listed in the AE table of contents. We made these major changes in the journal to provide a better service to our members, as well as to try to prevent subscription rates from continuing to fall. We remain concerned and vigilant on the question of how our revenues will be affected by the recent inauguration of AnthroSource.

Virginia has been able to accomplish significant economies while expanding what the journal does, and this despite the fact that her University has been able to give relatively little financial support beyond some salary support. Changes in the journal have resulted in fresh interest in the journal by authors; submission rates were up dramatically (approximately 20%), including many submissions in the important categories of senior anthropologists and scholars from outside the United States (at 25-30% of total submissions).

This year also marked the beginning of publication of the journal by the University of California Press, beginning with the February 2004 issue. The AAA and the AES signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Press to take over publication of the journal in May of this year. While we obviously expect advantages to the Society and the journal with this move to a professional publisher,
there were significant delays in how the Press did its work with the first several issues. The initial problems seem to have been solved over the course of the year. The Press recommended and we instituted a small rise in the rate charged institutional subscribers for the journal.

The Board asked Virginia, per our bylaws, to continue on as Editor for another three years, or through June 30, 2007.

AAA Meeting Activities:

Matti Bunzl programmed this year's AES Sessions at the AAA Meetings, planned for San Francisco. They included 22 AES sponsored sessions on a range of topics from "Reforming the Socialist Citizen: Ethnographic Accounts of the Science of Postsocialist Statecraft and Governmentality" (Organizers: Andrew Asher and Junjie Chen) to "Lives Beyond Interview: Ethnography and Modalities of Life Narrative" (Organizers: Helena Wulff and Kirin Narayan) to "Landscapes of Origin in the Americas" (Organizers: Jessica Christie and John Saller). They also included two panels with innovative formats, including a panel organized around conversations with Emily Martin and a version of the Author Meets Critic panel for the 2003 AES Sharon Stephens First Book Award Winners.

When the meeting was changed from San Francisco to Atlanta, we surveyed our panelists over whether or not they would be attending the Atlanta meetings, and gave each of them the option of presenting in Atlanta, presenting in the Canterbury, presenting at our spring meetings to be held in San Diego, or being grandfathered into the 2005 AAA program. Many panels selected the former option. Unfortunately, this will mean a very limited set of openings for new offerings this coming year, but it seemed the only fair way to deal with the crisis created by the shift of venue for the meetings.

Given that most of our board members could not attend the meetings in Atlanta, we held our board meeting by route of a 2 hour collective phone call on Friday evening, November 19, 2004.

Book Prizes:

The AES gives its book prizes every other year, and this was an off-year.

2. Future plans and activities:
Finances and Spring Meeting Reorganization:

Although AES remains a financially sound organization, we are still concerned with the problem of maintaining our basic operations and balancing our budget. Already mentioned has been the drop in our membership and during the last year (Nov. 03 to Nov. 04), *American Ethnologist* subscribers dropped from 1,029 to 967, something that may be attributed to electronic access, the revenue stream from which we have yet to be able to reliably anticipate. The revenues from our journal are those on which most of our activities rely.

Nonetheless, we have decided to continue with yearly spring meetings, regarding these as an important contribution to members. We have decided to modify the schedule, however, offering a spring meeting two out of every three years. We plan to alternate those meetings with the meetings of the Society for Cultural Anthropology, and hold a joint meeting with them in the third year. We await formal approval from the SCA board. With adequate publicity, good thematic choice, cooperation with other sections and advance planning, we anticipate that the meetings can be maintained within our budget.

AES Website:

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment this year has been the inauguration of a significant new website for the AES, established and maintained by enormous efforts on the part of Aaron Fox. We purchased a domain name, www.aesonline.org, to make it easy for people to find their way to the site, although people can of course also navigate there straight from the AAA website. The original minimalist website continues to be partially hosted at AAA, while Columbia University is hosting the new, linked website. Aaron has done a spectacular job, with the intent of developing the organization's democratic structure, allowing for the broadest participation by scholars and the wider circulation of knowledge beyond the limits usually set, at least beyond the meetings, by personal networks or departments.

The website includes information on all Society activities, including program and registration information for our spring meetings, book prize submission information and past prize winning book award statements, as well as *American Ethnologist* book reviews, searchable by author, title, reviewer, date of publication or date of review. The exciting possibilities for connecting text and web-based
publishing of scholarly material is demonstrated by the article "Doing Anthropology in Sound" by Steven Feld and Donald Brenneis which has just appeared in American Ethnologist 31:4 (November 2004). The special web supplement includes an extremely elaborate, rich, and expanding set of soundscapes related to the article as well as many links to important ethnographic recording projects and supplemental readings.

Aaron Fox has also set up a series of Online Forums on topics from Books and Publications, Fieldnotes and methodology, Politics and Policy, and the Sociology of Online Communities to Calls for Collaboration, University and Graduate Student Life, and discussions on putting together panels for the spring AES and winter AAA meetings. We will be hosting and helping AES members to create web-based supplements to the articles and books they publish. With two books already up and beginning to be treated in this way, members are invited to submit any book or article with multimedia content - including video, audio, photographs, or documents - that enhance the writing.

Spring Meetings 2005:

This Spring's AES Meetings will be held in San Diego from April 7 - 10, 2005. They are being run jointly with the Society for Psychological Anthropology. The theme of the meetings is "Anxious Borders: Traversing Anthropological Divides."

Kenneth George organized the meetings for AES and he has developed several innovative program features. These include Invited Keyword Panels in which two senior anthropologists and several graduate students come together on discrete keywords. These include Vincanne Adams and Paul Rabinow on Audit Cultures, Charles Briggs and Michael Silverstein on Communication, Matti Bunzl on Modernity, Aaron Fox and Steve Feld on Voice, Gertrude Fraser on Reality Shows, Hugh Gusterson on Terror, Michael Herzfeld and Andrew Shyrock on Cultural Intimacy, Webb Keane and Matthew Hull on Objectification, Annelise Riles and Hugh Raffles on Means and Ends, and Mayfair Yang and Esra Ozyurek on Secularism. There will also be a Keynote Lecture by Ashis Nandy on "Living with Oneself: Memories and Anti-Memories of a Genocide", an AES Special Lecture by Jane Guyer, "Between Rationality and Prophecy," and an AES Presidential Address by Catherine Lutz, "Empire is in the Details." Anna Tsing will read from her new book, Friction, and there will be a Forum with American Ethnologist Editor Virginia
Dominguez on the theme of "Experimenting."

Given that the AAA resolution on meeting in union facilities was not yet in effect when the meeting was planned, the meeting is being held at the non-union Catamaran Hotel. We notified our members of this via email and via our website, and listed several relatively nearby unionized hotels should they prefer to stay there.

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