Prepared by Gracia Clark, President

In general, the AfAA is holding steady and moving forward on several key projects, though more slowly than had been hoped. Our regular membership remains just over 300, so our dues income is also steady. The number of student members has grown, from 91 to 114. Although students only pay $5, still that is a good sign for the future. For the last two years, our expenses have stayed within our income, and our assets have actually increased slightly. Some of our new initiatives would have involved deficits for a couple of years, but since they have taken off more slowly than anticipated, the projected expenses also have been delayed.

Our most reliable activities have been at the AAA meetings. We usually have a good set of invited and reviewed panels, and this year was no exception. Maria Cattell has been our program chair for several years, but she has recruited David Turkon as her successor. They will organize the program together this year, preparatory to his taking over. Our distinguished lecture has also had quite a good turnout in recent years. Despite the AAA difficulties this year, the timely topic and reputation of Mahir Saul drew a respectable audience. The change of venue prevented us from having a board meeting or formal membership meeting at AAA, but President-elect Bennetta Jules-Rosette was able to hold an informational meeting for those attending. Attendance at the business meeting, as last year, was much improved by having it continue right after the distinguished lecture.

We are also seeing a change of editors for the AAA newsletter column, which Michael Lambert handled very ably for several years. He has recruited Jennifer Coffman, who started with the January 2005 issue. Michael Lambert also took care of our website, but it will now be updated in combination with the work on our membership email list.

Like Carolyn Martin-Shaw (our membership chair) last year, I tried to enlist student assistance to set up an email list that could be updated annually. The first student assistant hired proved rather unreliable and inexperienced, so much of those funds remained unspent in 2004. At present the list functions minimally for announcements, but corrections and updates are difficult. A new recruit for 2005 has more experience and should get farther along. Meanwhile, AAA informed me recently that they can send an email
to all our members or lapsed members as a "blast" email, on request infrequently. I will take advantage of this in 2005 and also evaluate whether the new Anthro Commons might prove more effective for member communications.

For the last several years we have tried without much success to award a travel grant, to sponsor an African anthropologist to present at the AAA meetings. The publicity we have done, through personal contacts and lately through PAAA (Pan African Anthropology Association), has generated only a couple of applicants, and they have not been people whose abstracts were accepted for the program. One obstacle seems to be how far in advance abstracts must be submitted. Another is that the allotted funds cover the plane ticket, but not the associated lodging and registration expenses, which themselves are beyond many personal budgets.

Since this budget line remains in our budget for the next two years, we plan to modify the travel award to further our budding relationship with PAAA by inviting one of the PAAA officials to attend the AAA at our expense. This was done ad hoc in 2003, by inviting David Bogopa, the then President of PAAA. This led to much more effective communication with PAAA, as well as giving their officers a better idea of what our meeting is like.

There was a concerted effort in 2004 to begin closer cooperation with PAAA by organizing a joint board meeting at their own annual meeting, held in early August in Ghana. We funded air tickets for several of their board members to attend, but none of our own board members were there. I was not even able to attend myself, because my flight on Ghana Airways was caught up in their bankruptcy. This led to a reassessment of what kind of joint activities have sufficient mutual interest. A memo of understanding, still to be confirmed by the AfAA membership, initiates a more basic level of cooperation with PAAA, starting with mutual publicity for meetings, websites, and publications. PAAA are also part of the initiative for a World Council of Anthropology Associations that AAA is working on. This aims to eventually provide reciprocal membership, at which point we could offer them free AfAA membership. PAAA officers also expressed interest in future training workshops, for example in grant writing or applied anthropology, if we can get outside funding. In 2005, there will be another push to have AfAA members attend the next PAAA meeting, in Cameroun, where further projects may be formulated. AfAA members voted to approach the AAA board with a proposal to offer a few free AAA memberships for African expatriates recently arrived in the US, which we could complement with free
AfAA memberships. Sheila Clarke-Ekong, our continuing treasurer, volunteered to work on this but would appreciate assistance. The members also voted in favor of organizing an article prize, since several relevant book prizes already exist. This would be awarded to the best article published in African anthropology each year. In 2005 board members will select judges and set a procedure for starting this cycle.

The implementation of the new AAA web portal raised again the possibility of mounting a publication series, for example of working papers or notes from the field. It was decided to consider this further once the initial stage of digitizing AAA publications has been completed and new projects will be accepted. For 2005, we will experiment with using the new Anthro Commons as a platform for AfAA announcements and member commentary, to gauge what kinds of material might be useful to post.