Accomplishments for 2007

Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition accomplished a number of important goals in 2007. The notable milestones for 2007 include:

- **Our primary goal for 2007 was to establish our new website.** It is up and running (www.nutritionalanthro.org) and it’s beautiful! We invested over $3000 in creating the site, which has a members-only syllabi set, book reviews, compilation of food/nutrition websites, current news, calls for papers and conference announcements, information on funding and graduate training programs, several discussion fora, a member expertise database, among many other features. The website gives us greater public visibility and provides tangible benefits to our members.

- **We changed our bylaws** in some significant ways. We removed reference to Nutritional Anthropology as a benefit of membership, since we put the journal on hiatus three years ago. We also redefined the duties of the vice president to include oversight of the website, and redefined our standing committees to better reflect their activities. We removed the position of vice-president elect, which no longer served an important function in the absence of Nutritional Anthropology.

- **Membership** has been gradually creeping upwards. We reached our nadir in March 07 with 174 members, and as of November we have 191, which represents a modest increase over last November. We are working on increasing our member numbers by contacting lapsed members, identifying new members from papers presented at the annual meetings, and offering new benefits to members (e.g. through the website). We made use of our allotted time at the AAA booth at the AAA annual meeting, and met with several potential new members.

- **Publication of our column in Anthropology News** has been consistent and of high quality under our past editor, Janet Chrzan, and our new editor, Rachel Black. Rachel has proposed some new topics for upcoming columns on field schools and the pedagogy of food studies and nutritional anthropology.

- **Our listserv (SAFN-list)** is active, and used primarily to disseminate information about publications of interest, breaking news issues, calls for papers and meeting notices, and other appropriate professional information.

- **We had robust participation in the 2007 Annual Meetings** in Washington, DC, in large part thanks to the hard work of our program Chair, John Brett. We had an AAA executive session and companion policy section (both cosponsored with Culture & Agriculture), two invited sessions, and three submitted sessions. All of the SAFN sponsored sessions had strong attendance and participation. In addition the business of the section was conducted at the annual meeting of the Executive Board, and the Business Meeting.
We hosted a keynote **Distinguished Lecture, by Dr. Warren Belasco** that was held at the conclusion of the Business meeting. The lecture was well-attended, stimulating, and demonstrated the links between the anthropology of food and nutrition and food history.

We held a well-attended **reception** before Dr. Belasco’s talk, and after the talk we had tastings of chocolates and olive oil, organized by Rachel Black and Janet Chrzan. This was very successful and we anticipate similar types of activities at our annual meetings in the future.

We had two winners of the **Christine Wilson Award** for excellence in student papers in nutritional anthropology this year, one graduate student and one undergraduate. We had many more submissions this year than in previous years and we agreed to have separate competitions in the future for undergraduate and graduate papers.

We are in **sound financial condition**. Our fund balance is only slightly lower than at the beginning of the year. This is remarkable given that we incurred two major expenses this year: the website and our annual meeting reception (along with two prizes instead of one and an honorarium for our distinguished speaker).

**Challenges and Future Plans**

- The most significant challenge that our section faces is that of low membership numbers. We have scratched our heads repeatedly about what the cause of such persistently low numbers. Food and nutrition studies are burgeoning in other disciplines and scholarly societies but apparently not within AAA. That said, we are taking steps to enlarge our membership (see above) and forge alliances with other AAA units and societies (e.g. Association for the Study of Food and Society [ASFS]). We jointly sponsored two sessions at the AAA in 2007 with Culture and Agriculture and have talked with them about the possibility of some other mutualisms.
- We have also spoken with ASFS leadership about the possibility of having a separate SAFN meeting that occurs with ASFS’s annual summer meeting. Given the overlapping memberships of SAFN and these units, these seem like productive alliances to foster. The possibility of a SAFN meeting separate from the AAA meetings, and with another scholarly food group, is another opportunity to build our membership and have our research gain new audiences.

**Comments to AAA Executive Board and Long-Range Planning Committee**

- Our comments to the EB and LRPC focus on the issue of second membership numbers. As you know, this issue has come to the fore this year as new official powers are being considered for the Section Assembly, which will require that all SA members be in good standing (i.e. at or above the 250 section membership minimum). Since we are currently below this minimum, disenfranchisement in one form or another is a real possibility. While we are working on increasing our
member numbers, we are concerned about the fate of small sections in general. Small sections like SAFN provide opportunities for greater personal involvement for their members than is possible for the largest units – and that has translated into very committed and engaged members for SAFN. It is no accident that we have had a 30 year history of dynamic meeting activities, publications, and professional activity, it is a reflection of the abilities, professionalism, commitment, and engaged scholarship of SAFN members. We hope that AAA will retain a commitment to small sections and work with us to grow and remain a vibrant part of the organization. It is worth noting that one of our greatest strengths is the sincere commitment to the four-field roots of the discipline of anthropology, and the balance between applied and foundational scholarship that typifies the actions of SAFN members.

Current Officers and Executive Board Members

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