1. **Status of Activities and Accomplishments**

The Society for Visual Anthropology has had an active year in terms of its Visual Research Conference, AAA invited sessions and special events, its webpage, and its public discussion via the List Serve. The Visual Anthropology Review is on track and we are very pleased with the new editorial team.

Membership has dropped by about 60 people since 2005 but over 2007, it seems to have stabilized at about 500 members, even showing an increase over last year. It is possible that the new membership fees for the AAA have offset the losses possibly caused by increases in section membership dues.

The overall financial balance for 2007 is more positive than the situation last year. On paper, we have quite a healthy balance but the expenses for the last issue of the journal, and the meeting expenses have not yet been deducted. The Treasurer suggests that our increased membership dues and increased fees for the Film Festival have added to our profit line, and that increased revenues from AnthroSource may also be contributing factors. I use ‘may’ frequently because without firm figures on publication expenses and revenues it is hard to be sure. However, we seem to be holding our position and fears of bankruptcy are receding. The October 30, 2007 budget shows net assets of $52,326.37 with year-to-date revenue of $20,789.20, and almost no general expenses. Publication expenses stand at $10,922.87. As mentioned, this covers only one issue of the journal so that expense can expect to double, as planned for in the budget. I have to say I am very confused that the 2008 forecast budget allocates only $2,040 to fields that currently have a budget allocation of over $23,000. The changeover to the new revenue system and a quarterly accounting system for the journal will be extremely helpful in budget forecasting.

The AAA meeting highlights included the Special Events panels on Ethics and Examples chaired by Jonathan Marion which engendered considerable lively discussion and may be repeated. The Visual Research Conference was held just before the AAA meetings with nine exciting interactive presentations over two days. This year, a majority of papers were presented by students whose new ideas and fresh approaches can always enliven discussion. The group of about 40 participants was
able to provide a lot of feedback to the presenters, which is one of the unique and valuable aspects of this conference. The Film Festival was more successful than ever at this meeting, with a suitable room close to the other sessions. In spite of increased fees, we had a record number of submissions and 46 of these were screened. The Awards ceremony, at which Joan Williams was presented with a lifetime achievement award, attracted more than 100 people, and 10 film awards were presented. The inclusion of incoming Presidents at the Section Assembly meeting was an excellent innovation, providing the new officers with background on many of the issues facing the Executive. I was personally disappointed in the failure of the proposed E.B. amendment to go forward, but assume work on that issue will continue.

As we do not have spring meetings, the use of our List Serve is a very important communication forum for our members and it is active in soliciting members’ opinions and fostering discussion on visual issues, as well as informing us of film festivals and conferences around the world. The website was heavily used last year with over 80,000 hits per month. We expanded its capacity and are including clips of award-winning films on it, as well as information about resources in visual anthropology. The webmaster is changing to a non-Board position for a trial run, since it is a very demanding job on its own. We are heavily into planning next year’s program and hoping to include a session on the history of ethnographic films. This year, we had a double invited session with the American Ethnology Society.

There are no bylaw changes contemplated at present.

2. Future Plans or Activities (3-5 year timeframe)

In terms of future plans, we would like to re-establish some workshops in Visual Anthropology at the AAA since these have been lacking for several years. Also, we are working hard at encouraging more students to become active in the organization. With an increasing acceptance of visual media as a legitimate publication venue, more promotions and programs with a focus in this area seem to be developing. The contribution of the AAA in encouraging departments to include visual work as a basis for tenure and promotion is greatly appreciated.

3. Other Items (including chief concerns, etc.)

The chief concern of the section is still the financial situation. We seem to be solvent but until the financial statements are available, with expenses clearly indicated, it is difficult to forecast the outcome of our various measures to reduce expenses and increase income. The changeover to Wiley Blackwell is seen in a very positive way by our membership, and as President, I can only hope that the financial situation stabilizes and all the AAA sections can be maintained. I am also strongly in favour of having section representation on the E.B., as is the incoming President, and we both hope that the
difficulties expressed at the 2007 Section Assembly meeting can be overcome.

In summary, there was a feeling of optimism in the membership at the end of 2007 meetings that we had turned the corner and we hope to see improvements in the future.

Anne Zeller  
*President, SVA 2006-07*
SVA Board of Directors – 2007 - 2008

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