ASSOCIATION OF BLACK ANTHROPOLOGISTS
2008 Annual Report Submitted by Dana-Ain Davis, Past President

STATUS, ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Overview
The ABA Executive Board includes: Dana-Ain Davis, President; Kim Simmons, Vice President and Program Chair; Kevin Foster, Past President and At-Large Member; Willie McKeth, Secretary/Treasurer; Marla Frederick, At-Large Member; Raymond Codrington, At-Large Member; Micah Gilmer and Karen Williams Student Representatives; Elizabeth Chin, General Editor; John Jackson and Deborah Thomas, Co-Editors, Transforming Anthropology. In addition Shaka McGlotten serves as AN editor.

During 2008 ABA had several projects:
The Vera Green Award, chaired by Aimee Cox
Continued fund raising for The Gwaltney Fund
The Works-in-Progress Mentoring Project, Directed by Kevin Foster and Riche Barnes

Membership and Dues
At the end of November ABA had 318 members on our membership list. They were all current with their membership with 37 expected to expire by the end of 2008.
The membership Chair, Riche Barnes Daniels did membership mailings twice – once to those whose membership would expire in April 2008 or later and then again to the ABA list-serve in an effort to get those who communicate as a part of the ABA but may not be members registered with the AAA. The list-serve proved to be a valuable way to communicate and garner supporters and members. Often people are signed to the list-serve but have not paid membership fees.

Kevin Foster and Riche Barnes also introduced the Works In Progress Mentorship Program/Session and an email was sent to the List-serve to garner both seasoned and junior scholars for mentorship (see the report submitted by Kevin and Riché on WiP). In that letter we reiterated the importance of being a member of the ABA.

In each of the letters the focus was on making sure our membership was aware of all that comes with membership including WiP, the Gwaltney Scholarship Fund, the Vera M. Green Publication Award, the website, and of course an intellectual and supportive scholarly community.

Last year for the first time in 10 years, ABA increased the dues rate for regular members to $40 from $30. The student membership rate remained the same.

Communication with Members
ABA members are kept informed of developments through the ABA listserv. From January 2008 – August 2008 the listserv was hosted by the University of Texas at Austin through the work of past-president Kevin Foster. It then migrated to Occidental College
where Elizabeth Chin is located. It was decided at the annual board meeting that ABA’s listerserv will migrate once again to a more user friendly host.

Further, the website is not update and ABA board voted to redo the website to make it more interactive.

**Finances**
The October 30, 2008 Statement of Net Asses showed that ABA had Net Assets of $35,328.69.

The 2009 budget anticipates revenues of $9,400. We expect to have expenditures that now include $400 in travel money for the program chair, $1,600 for conference expenses, $100 for phone, $100 for postage, $100 photocopying and office supplies; $200 consultants; $500 websites; and publication revenue of $4,476 (based on our apportioned revenue distribution from Wiley Blackwell).

**Elections**
The 2008 Spring elections was for Vice President which resulted in the nomination of Raymond Codrington, former at-large member, who works for the Aspen Institute.

**AAA Annual Meetings**
The AAA meetings in Washington featured the following panels:

1. Afrocentricity and the African Diaspora: Exploring the Center
2. Engaging the African Diaspora: Race, Identity and Social Change
3. Performance, Agency and the Meaning of Blackness
5. The African Diaspora and the Search for Higher Ground
6. Understanding and Negotiating Racism in Anthropology
7. Do Ya Feel Me?: Exploring Black American Gender and Sexuality Through Emotion and Affect
8. The Arts and Aesthetics of Race Making
10. Race, Gender and Engaged Research: Interrogating the Issues a Decade Later
11. Becoming Institutional Others?: Racial Tropes in U.S. Urban High Schools

12. Works-In-Progress Mentoring Sessions

Due to collaborations with other sections, ABA had three more sessions that in 2007. Further we held our first Works-In-Progress mentoring session which involved connecting Ph.D. students with “seasoned” ABA mentors to meet and discuss their respective projects. This project had 7 mentors and 6 junior scholars or Ph.D. students.

During the meetings, ABA awarded the second Vera Green Publication Award to Antoinette Jackson. The Committee composed of Aimee Cox, Gina Sanchez, Tracy Fisher and Rachel Watkins and Lynn Bolles voted to give the award to Dr. Jackson. The award is given in honor of Vera Green, first president of ABA to a junior scholar whose work links the discipline in a practical application. The recipient’s winner paper gets published in Transforming Anthropology.

Once again, ABA held its reception in conjunction with SANA, AFA, ALLA, SLACA and SOLGA.

Finally, during 2007, ABA sought to revitalize the Gwaltney Fund, an unrestricted Prize Fund established as a scholarship fund in 1999 that honors the life and intellectual legacy of John L. Gwaltney, author of *Drylongso*, who died on August 29th, 1998. This scholarship is for research and/or writing that reflects the theoretical and methodological legacy of native anthropology as demonstrated in Gwaltney’s work and will be awarded to assist young scholars (defined as ABD or those who have not held the position of Assistant Professor for more than two years), who are current ABA members at the time of application. The prize will ranges between $500 and $1,500 per year.

The original amount of the Gwaltney Fund was $2,500 and as of last year we had a balance of $3,551.42 as a result of interest income. The original stipulation was for ABA to raise enough money to create a $10,000 endowment. During 2007 a fundraising campaign brought the total up to $5,881.62. This year we held another Gwaltney Fund Campaign at the annual meeting and we are almost close to now have the amount necessary to begin disbursing funds. We began the year with $7876 and as of 12/31/08 had raised $9,472.00

*ABA Website:*

The website was designed by Marilyn Thomas-Houston with assistance from General Editor, Vernon Williams and President Dana-Ain Davis. The website was a incredible amount of work owing to the fact that we needed permission for some of the images used. The website was not as interactive nor as user friendly as we thought it should be and the board voted to do a redesign, which will be headed by Elizabeth Chin, General Editor.
**Transforming Anthropology**

Our journal, TA is available through AnthroSource. While we thought that we might reduce the cost of producing the journal by sending hard copies to regular members and electronic copies to student members, in the end the cost-effectiveness was minimal.

TA has co-editors, John Jackson and Deborah Thomas. That transition was seamless and the journal continues to be published on schedule. It is anticipated that some design changes will take place including going with four-color covers. The journal has several articles in the pipeline which means that publishing will go smoothly. However, the journal will need to find a new editor after this year. It is planned one or two of the TA editorial Board members will take up the helm in the next two years.

**FUTURE PLANS**

ABA wants to increase its membership and Riche Daniel Barnes as Membership Chair has the following plans:

Goals for 2009:

- Use the email list we get at the ABA general body meeting (those who want to be on the list-serve) to send an email encouraging people to join the section if they have not already done so. This will give us an opportunity to build upon the momentum of the Meetings.
- Send membership renewal letters at strategic points including:
  - December/January (following AAA momentum)
  - March/April (time to propose sessions for next Meetings)
  - August/September (confirmation of sessions/beginning of school-year)
- Develop a Campaign to reach Anthropology graduate students
- Develop ways to keep senior faculty invested and active
- Increase Membership

During 2009, ABA will develop a Legacy Awards that is being chaired by Janis Hutchinson. In its first year, several senior academics who have made contributions to the discipline and the association will be honored with a Legacy Award. In subsequent years, the board will nominate individuals to be honored.

ABA will begin giving away monetary awards honoring John Gwaltney. We hope the first award will be made in 2009.

**OTHER ITEMS**

One of the members’ concerns has to do with the ever-persistent threat of by-law changes that could shift ABA’s status depending on the number of members that we have. The
Executive Board in particular expressed tremendous concern about these issues and have supported the President in attempting to develop an alternative to these proposals. In 2008, I worked with the Section Assembly Working Group to develop a range of strategies, alternatives and by-law changes to ensure the viability of several smaller sections and to increase section involvement in AAA governance.