Anthropology and Environment Section

Annual Section Report,
from Janis B. Alcorn, A&E President

Status, Activities and Accomplishments this past year of 2008

This was a busy year for the A&E Section. Membership stayed fairly constant, averaging 540 members, and ending the year with 566 members.

Financial account was positive - starting the year with $17,845 and closing at the end of November (before AAA November meeting costs had cleared) with $26,476.

A&E sponsored or co-sponsored twenty-four sessions at the Annual AAA meeting in San Francisco, with thanks to A&E Program Chair Ben Colombi. The AAA accepted all of the sessions submitted by A&E. Panels covered research on resilience, political ecology, climate change, conservation, environmental justice, landscapes, biodiversity, gender relations, human rights, and activism. With logistical help from Amanda Moore, A&E held another superb social this year at the Cantina restaurant.

A&E co-sponsored a AAA Invited Presidential Session, “Pulse of the Planet - Human Rights, Environment and Social Justice in the 21st Century.” Attendees at that session spilled out into the hallway. We’d like to thank Barbara Rose Johnston and Gregory V. Button for laying out the issues and facilitating a dynamic discussion after analytical comments from discussant Sally Engle Merry.

Next year’s theme ”The End(s) of Anthropology“ should be a productive frame for building A&E panels, workshops, public policy forums and high table discussions. Please consider organizing sessions that experiment with ways to communicate and engage with colleagues.

A&E gave out six Awards this year. All award are described with guidelines on our EANTH website (www.eanth.org).


Five graduate students were selected to present their papers on the Rappaport Graduate Student panel which was managed by Board member Nora Haenn -- Guntra Aistars, Cindy Isenhour, Yu Wang, Troy Wilson and Eial Dujovny.
Eial Dujovny won the Rappaport prize for his paper, "The Deepest Cut: Political Ecology and Marginalization in the Dredging of a New Sea Mouth in Chilika Lake, Orissa, India." Rappaport prize judges included Jerry Jacka, Katja Neves-Graca, and Julie Velasquez-Runk.

Fifteen proposals were submitted for the Small Grants Awards for Collaborative Problem Solving this year. Four proposals were awarded $750 each. The winners were Catie Burlando for "Facilitating the dissemination of Pikangikum Elders' vision for the future of the Whitefeather Forest Initiative in northwestern Ontario"; Maria Gutierrez and Ian Fry for "A Guide to Land Use, Land-use Change and Forestry under the UNFCCC"; Cristy Watkins for "Karujubu Sub County Fuel Energy Conservation Project in Uganda"; and Linda D'Amico for "Journalism workshops with Periodico INTAG Making Connections between Human Rights and Conservation in Ecuador". The panel judges were the three past presidents of A&E - Tom Sheridan, Kelly Alley and Bonnie McCay.

Our major A&E wide effort over the past year was the Greening AAA Initiative to bring AAA in line with other organizations efforts to address Global Climate Change by modifying their actions to reduce Carbon emissions and other environmental impacts. Amanda Himmelstoss (sophomore at Barnard/Columbia) led the effort to draft the A&E Greening AAA Committee report, under the guidance of Committee Chair A&E President-Elect Paige West. We'd like to thank all of our members for contributing to the Report which was submitted to AAA Executive Board and Section Assembly with formal cover memos recommending a series of actions be taken by AAA. To complement that effort, the A&E board also submitted a resolution for "Greening the AAA" at the AAA Business Meeting which, due to lack of 250 person quorum, became an informal session. Nonetheless, the level of broad AAA support for the motion (none against with only ten abstentions) provided important political support encouraging the Executive Board to take greening actions. On the following day, the Section Assembly voted unanimously to recommend AAA hire a consultant to review AAA current practices and make specific recommendations to the Executive Board. Upon that recommendation which was carried to the Executive Board by the new Section Assembly Convenor, Mary L. Gray, the Executive Board then agreed to hire a consultant in 2009. Realistically, this may take up to three years to implement, so A&E Board are committed giving our members reports on progress. We appreciate our members' support and inputs for this joint effort.

A&E members' interests and ideas were shared in a roundtable discussion hosted the Committee on Practicing, Applied, and Public Interest Anthropology (CoPAPIA), one of AAAs newest committees which was created to: (1) foster the reciprocal relationship between anthropological theory and practice; (2) establish liaisons with appropriate Sections; (3) develop recommendations for training and
professional development; (4) collaborate with a range of AAA sections; and (5) facilitate the broadened recognition of the value of applied and practicing anthropology beyond the discipline.

**Future Plans or activities in the next 3-5 years**

At our A&E business meeting, members voiced interest in an initiative to promote getting A&E voices into the public policy realm through op eds and other means, including contributions to "Counterpunch" and features on AAA press room site, as recommended by Barbara Rose Johnston. Suggestions were also made to organize a mentoring workshop for young professionals at the AAA meeting in 2009 in Philadelphia, and Seth Murray volunteered to lead this initiative.

The A&E Board is proud of A&E achievements in 2008, and we look forward to another round of fine nominations for awards, submissions for the Rappaport panel, the small grants competition and and board positions in 2009.

We have our own website and sought that more material and photos be to Sean Downey (sdowney@mail.arizona.edu) webmaster for our website www.eanth.org. Members participate in our active EANTH listserv managed by Adam Henne.

The A&E Board extends many thanks to outgoing members Nora Haenn and Darron Collins, and welcomes new members Lisa Gezon as Senior at large board member, and Andrew Mathews as Junior at large board member.

We are seeking nominations for a new Anthropology Newsletter Editor. For the mean time, please continue to contact Laura Ogden at laura.ogden@fiu.edu to discuss column ideas or submit contributions. Laura has done a wonderful job as editor, and is ready to help a new editor to transition into the job.

**Chief Concerns and Issues not previously noted:**

We continue to be concerned that the "greening AAA" initiative move forward as quickly as possible, in order to reduce AAA’s carbon footprint in light of the urgent need for all offices and organizations to take decisive action to stop and reverse Global Climate Change.