Annual Report of the American Ethnological Society

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Status, Activities and Accomplishments this Year

1. Membership: 1,870 members
   Comments: Membership is slightly down this year. This may reflect broader trends in the economy, although it is difficult to be sure.

2. Financial Balances:
   a. section: $170,518.67 (ending 11/30/08)
   b. journal: $7,593.43 (ending 12/31/08)

3. AAA Invited Sessions, Co-Sponsored Sessions and Special Events
   a. Invited Sessions (co-sponsored):

      “Expeditions: Anthropology and Popular Culture, Reinventing First Contact.” Co-sponsored with SVA.

      “The Insecure American.” Co-sponsored with SANA.

      “Racial Passing and Performance in the 21st Century.” Co-sponsored with ABA.

      “The Nice thing about Relations is that Everyone Has Them” (panel in honor of Marilyn Strathern). AAA Presidential Co-sponsor.

   b. Special Events:
      “Among Xavante Friends,” a film tribute to David Maybury-Lewis.

      “The Human Costs of the Iraq War,” a panel discussion with veterans, led by scholars investigating the human impact of the war.
4. Spring Meeting Activities: The AES hosted a highly successful and well-attended meeting in April of 2008 in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina. The theme of the meeting was, “Democracy, Disorder and Discontent.”

5. Mentorship Efforts.
--We encourage panel organizers to involve graduate students in AES panels.
--We reserve a percentage of panels at the AES meetings for graduate students.
--We draw upon our graduate student representative to canvass the National Association of Student Anthropologists, so as to keep the Section leadership informed about the needs and concerns of students.
--We sponsor workshops at the AAA meetings on publishing in the American Ethnologist.

6. Additional Outreach Efforts. AES was significantly involved in the discussions that led to the changes in AAA governance that were approved by the AAA membership during 2008. An AES representative participated in the Section Assembly Working Group that helped draft new by-laws. An AES representative currently sits on the Section Assembly Executive Committee. One of AES’ primary goals throughout this process has been to give all sections, but especially the smaller ones, a greater voice in AAA governance. We are especially concerned about finding ways to include the concerns of historically marginalized groups.

7. Awards Presented on Behalf of AES. AES sponsors three awards: the Senior Book Prize, the Sharon Stephens Award, and the Elsie Clews Parsons Prize. We will next offer awards during 2010.

8. Status and Use of Section Internal Communications. AES has its own website. The site is currently under re-design, and will be re-launched later this year.

9. Changes in Bylaws or Governance Structure. AES made no changes to its bylaws of governance structure during 2008.

**Future Plans and Activities During the Next 3-5 Years.**

1. Broadening/Increasing AES Membership. We have made no specific efforts to try to increase our numbers. We have, however, discussed ways of ensuring that AES continues to exercise a role of intellectual leadership in the discipline (see point 3, below). We believe this is the most effective way of maintaining the strength and vitality of our organization.

2. New Forms of Scholarly Communication. AES has no plans to create new forms of scholarly communication. As noted above, we are in the midst of re-designing our web-site.

3. Other Projects Under Discussion. It is the view of AES that the social sciences are at something of a crossroads. As global political and economic relations go through a major period of restructuring, the interests of the organizations that sponsor the production of social science knowledge are also transforming in important ways. The long-time sponsors
of the social sciences are now actively cultivating the development of novel forms of expertise they regard as useful in addressing the most pressing problems of the current era. Despite the importance of these changes for the future of the discipline, they remain poorly understood. AES is discussing ways of focusing greater attention on these processes.

4. Collaborations with Other Sections, Interest Groups, or Outside Groups. As noted above in point 6 of the previous section, AES has been extensively involved in helping restructure AAA governance so that smaller sections, and sections as a whole, have a more direct role in decision-making processes. We will continue to work with all sections and interest groups in the years to come in order to continue this process of democratization and inclusion.

**Our Chief Concerns.**

1. Issues for Discussion by the Section Assembly Leadership. It is our belief that the value of the various sections of the AAA, and the value of the publications that they produce, cannot be adequately measured by the use of a formula. The attempt to use accounting methods (whether these are based on numbers of downloads, membership, revenues, or whatever) to distribute revenues from AnthroSource to the Sections is therefore seriously misguided. It has already generated efforts on the part of many sections to “game” the current system—to devise ways of increasing downloads, for example, so that a section may receive additional funds from AnthroSource. We believe that the Section Assembly should discuss alternative ways of deciding on the distribution of revenues from AnthroSource.

2. Issues to be Raised with the AAA Executive Board. In addition to the issue raised in the previous point, we believe that the Executive Board should consider reallocating some of the Association’s revenues so that scholars and activists from outside the discipline, and from the outside the US, can more easily participate in the activities of the AAA (especially the annual meeting).

3. Issues to be Raised with the AAA Staff. There are no issues we wish to raise with the AAA staff.