Evolutionary Anthropology Society
2008 Annual Report
Patricia Draper, President

EAS Board, November 2008 forward
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Status, Activities, and Accomplishments

2008 was our third year as a regular section of the AAA. In this year we organized invited sessions (paper and poster). We held board and business meetings and published a column in Anthropology News. We held no elections in this year as no board members were rotating off.

Elections: EAS will hold elections in Spring of 2009. We have a slate of two candidates for president-elect and two candidates for each of two board member positions. The Nominations Committee includes Lee Cronk, chair, and Elizabeth Cashdan and David Nolin.

Membership: The membership in EAS is 350 as of November 2008. Of these 198 are regular and 152 are students. Our membership is essentially holding steady in comparison with the membership (363) at the same time in November of 2007. In 2008 our student membership constitutes 43% of membership, which represents an increase in the student proportion compared with 2007 (33%). Our board has been concerned to raise student membership and we are gratified to see this increase and hope to maintain it.

Finances: Our revenue comes entirely from the $5.00 and $10.00 fees we charge students and non-students, respectively.
We end the year with $3,933.00. As we indicated in last year's Annual Report, when we realized an increase of close to $2,000.00 compared with the previous year, we hoped to find suitable projects to support with our funds. This year we notified our student members that we would offer a $150.00 travel stipend for any student whose paper appeared on the AAA 2008 program. Fourteen students applied for this travel stipend, accounting for the $2,100.00 expense listed above in the category of Development & Promotion. In future years, if student applications for travel stipends increase, we will necessarily reduce the amount we offer.

AAA meeting: At the AAA meetings this year in San Francisco, CA, we presented two sponsored sessions, one poster session and one session co-sponsored with Biological Anthropology.

Sponsored session: Current Research in Evolutionary Anthropology, Part I, organized by John Patton. Contributors were Christopher von Rueden, Wesley Allen-Arave, Ulrich Reichard, Eric Schniter, Mary Shenk.

Sponsored session: Evolutionary Perspectives on Health and Nutrition, organized by Brooke Scelza and Dawn Neill. Participants were Brooke Scelza, Deborah Schechter, Colette Berbesque and Frank W. Marlowe, Donna Leonetti, Bobbi Low, Rob Quinlan and Heather Bonander and Mike Alvard.

Co-sponsored session: Middle Childhood in Comparative Perspective: Evolutionary and Cultural Approaches, Ben Campbell, organizer. EAS members presenting in this session were Karen Kramer, David Lancy, Mark Flinn, Ben Campbell and Alan Mann.

Our poster session: Current Research in Evolutionary Anthropology, Part II, organized by Mike Alvard. Participants were Carolyn Hodges, Cameron
Griffith, Thomas Flamson, Jonathan Stieglitz, Mathew Bridges, Sarah Mathew and Robert Boyd, and Rebecca Bird.

Reception: As is becoming a tradition, our section had a reception on Saturday evening of the November AAA meetings. The event was hosted by Mike Alvard. We estimate approximately 80 people attended the party.

2008 Awards: This past year we had a larger number of presenters who were potential award winners in comparison with last year. There were a total of 12 people, composed of students and young investigators, who were eligible. The Awards Committee, composed of John Ziker, Mary Shenk and Bill Irons, selected the following winners from among the EAS-sponsored paper and poster presentations:

Christopher von Rueden, University of California, Santa Barbara. (vonrueden@umail.ucsb.edu) best student paper. “The Roots and Fruits of Male Social Status in a Small-Scale Amazonian Society.”

Dawn Neill, California Polytechnic State University. (dbneill@calpoly.edu) best young investigator paper. “Roti or Ramen: Urbanization and Dietary Intake of Urban and Rural Indo-Figian.”

Each winner received a check for $250.00.

Changes in Bylaws or governance structure. None

Future Plans

• We are very pleased that our student membership has increased, proportionately, as mentioned previously (although our total membership remains constant). We believe these increased student numbers from the general membership were in part responsible for the larger number of students who participated in EAS sponsored and reviewed sessions in 2008. Further encouragement may have been due to posting an announcement of our student travel stipends on the EAS website. We plan to continue offering a travel stipend to students whose papers are accepted into the AAA program, though if necessary we will reduce the monetary award, commensurate with the yearly budget. Our policy has been to award the travel stipend after the annual AAA meetings, not in advance.

• We also hope we can offer travel stipends to scholars coming from abroad and who are presenters in our sponsored sessions.

• We would like to increase our membership. We recognize that several other AAA sections, such as Biological Anthropology and Society for Anthropological Sciences, have interests that coincide with our own. We have made contact with the SAS and through a comparison of membership lists, have determined that there is an overlap of about sixty persons who belong to both EAS and SAS. In previous years we have discussed working with other
sections to co-sponsor sessions. The BAS and SAS groups are good candidates and we are working to identify others.

- We realize that many people who submit abstracts to the AAA program do not understand the different routes whereby paper or poster abstracts may be evaluated. We think we can correct this deficiency via improved wording of the yearly call for abstracts, via an Anthropology News column devoted to this subject and by mentoring from board members and experienced EAS members.

- We do not currently have a Section-sponsored journal or publication and do not plan to develop one. We have a good ongoing relationship with the journal, Human Nature. Jane Lancaster (EAS member) and editor of Human Nature has agreed to give special consideration to at least one of our EAS sponsored sessions. The editor invites the organizer of a chosen session to submit the papers to Human Nature’s review process. This arrangement has already resulted in several issues in Human Nature composed of our members’ papers. Winners of our Best Papers Awards are also invited to submit them for publication in Human Nature.

Chief Concerns: EAS President’s Addendum

About the AAA mechanism for notifying successful abstract submitters of their inclusion in the upcoming program: For some reason, the AAA group that makes the final decision about which sessions and papers to accept for inclusion in the coming annual program, does not routinely communicate these results to the organizer of the relevant session, nor to the officers of the Section which is sponsoring, co-sponsoring or reviewing a given session. Instead, the individual abstract writers appear to be the ones who are consistently and officially informed by the AAA. Unless this person (the paper presenter) relays this information to the Section’s program chair, and unless the session chair relays the information to the Section officers, (particularly the Section president) there is no good way for any of the Section officers to know what individuals will be presenting in Fall meetings. There is not an orderly process whereby all of this information is forwarded (filtered up) up to the Section officers in a timely way. It is important for Section officers, particularly the Section President, to know as soon as possible who the Section-related presenters are going to be and what the day and time of their presentations will be.

The reason Section officers need to have this information are many and will vary with the particular Section. In the case of EAS, our practice is to give awards to students and young investigators for “best papers.” In order for individual presentations to be judged, someone must alert the Section’s Awards Committee as to who the eligible
presenters are and how they and their papers or posters are to be found by day, time of day and meeting room in the upcoming annual meeting.

The AAA website provides a preliminary program in the fall. However, the preliminary program gives the titles of sessions but not full information about the paper presenters’ names, the names of their co-presenters, nor their paper titles.

This past fall, when I made repeated requests to the AAA staff for this kind of information (names of individual presenters, titles of papers, together with their session identification), I did not get it. I finally got some information about the scheduling of my Section’s events (not names or presenters or paper titles) only to discover that two pairs of our sessions were scheduled simultaneously! [This problem (unrelated to my primary topic in this addendum) was eventually resolved.]

In sum, the AAA staff and the AAA program committee have the information about who will be on the coming program, but that information is not made available in an organized way to the Section officer(s) (President as well as Program Chair). All or most successful sessions, whether sponsored ahead of time by a Section, or later in the abstract review process, are tagged by the AAA as to what section is the sponsor or reviewer. In addition, the AAA knows the facts of Section names and Section officers. Therefore I assume it would be relatively easy for the AAA staff to link this information and forward it to the relevant Section Officer. I recommend strongly that this step be included by the AAA program committee and related AAA staff.