Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) Annual Report

January 1, 2008-December 31, 2008

Submitted by Carolyn Sargent, SMA President

Society for Medical Anthropology
Section Officers:
Carolyn Sargent, President
Kitty Corbett, Treasurer
Ellen Gruenbaum, Secretary
Jeannine Coreil, President-Elect

Ex-Officio Members: Mark Luborsky and Andrea Sankar (MAQ Editors); Kathleen Ragsdale (AN Column Editor); Ben McMahan (Webmaster)

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Status, Activities, Accomplishments This Year:

1. **Membership.** Membership numbers have fluctuated slightly over time, but have been relatively steady since we began plotting data in 2004. Total membership in November, 2008 was 1334. This is one person less than was reported the same month in 2007. There has been a downward trend in international members, perhaps because of the recent expansion in the number of anthropology meetings of interest to medical anthropologists and held in Europe. The necessity of joining the AAA in order to participate in SMA activities may also be a factor for some international medical anthropologists.

2. **Financial Balances and Budgets:**
   
a. The financial status of the SMA is improving, due to the change in how the publication budget is handled. Total revenues and expenditures budgeted for 2008 were, respectively, $66,460 and $52,298, with a projected end of year balance of $14,162. Final numbers are not available for the year yet, but SMA is on track for an end of year balance of at least that much. As we had anticipated, we are now in a period of replenishing the assets that had been drawn upon to support the multi-year transition to online publishing.

b. The fund balance for SMA as of November, 2008 was $153,303. This amount, which will drop when final expenditures and revenues for the Medical Anthropology Quarterly are calculated, is nonetheless about $30,000 more than at the end of the same month in 2007.

c. The Medical Anthropology Quarterly (MAQ), after several years of being in the red, is now back on track, in part due to the maturation of AnthroSource and in part because of AAA’s transition from the University of California Press to Wiley-Blackwell as our publisher. Although final numbers are not available at the time of this report, in 2008 the editorial office should cost SMA about $37,000 (although it should be noted that Wayne State University provides at least that much in in-kind allocations), and other MAQ-related costs (e.g., storage, composition fees) add an additional $1000 to $1100. Revenues from AnthroSource and members’ dues appear sufficient to more than cover the publication-related costs.
3. **AAA Session Information:**

   a. **Invited Sessions** –

      Collaborations, Experiments, and Care: At the Frontiers of Science and Medicine (co-sponsored by GAD)

      Integrating “Local” and “Western” Psychotherapies: Prospects for Disciplinary and Clinical Collaboration (co-sponsored by SPA)

      Potentiality and Humanness: Revisiting the Anthropological Object

   b. **Special Event**

      From Research to Policy: Practicing Medical Anthropology Workshop

   c. **SMA Official Meetings**

      SMA Members Open Business Meeting

      SMA Awards Ceremony Presidential Address and Reception

      SMA Special Interest Group Chairs Meeting


      MAQ Editorial Board Meeting

4. **Spring Meeting Activities**

The SMA met jointly with the SfAA in Memphis, TN March 26-30, 2008. The SMA Board met for midyear discussion. The Board voted to schedule the first annual practicing event of the SMA at the subsequent AAA meeting (Motion passed). The Board also voted that in future, the President will announce all prize winners, acknowledge the work of committees, and award winners will be allowed brief statements of acceptance for the major awards (motion passed). The Board also voted unanimously that beginning with the Fall 2008 AAA meeting the Board members will chair prize committees, with additional members drawn from SMA members not on the board. No more than two board members should be on prize committees. The additional members should be selected by the committee Chair from a cross-section of the membership representing different theoretical positions and occupational situations and approved by the SMA President. Other decisions included increasing the size of the Dissertation Award Committee from three to five members, Reserving the Career Achievement Award for scholars at or near retirement, and requiring the Board to approve the winner(s) for the Practice Award and the Career Achievement Award.
The SMA Board plans to meet informally at the 2008 Spring SfAA meeting in Santa Fe.

5. The SMA Board includes a representative from the Medical Anthropology Student Association. By means of our graduate student board member, we seek to mentor students by organizing workshops and sessions in consultation with MASA. Events offering advice on such issues as employment opportunities, refining job search skills, and publishing are planned for AAA 2008 and 2009. We have also established a dissertation prize as well as two student paper prizes (one graduate, one undergraduate) in order to recognize outstanding new scholars, whom we present to the membership at our public awards ceremony.

6. The SMA holds a joint meeting every other year with the SfAA and routinely co-sponsors sessions with other sections (see #2a above). The Society seeks to engage academic and practicing medical anthropologists in workshops, sessions, and other special events at the AAA. Through our “SMA Takes a Stand” process, we encourage special interest groups to develop policy statements which are then available on the SMA website. Mechanisms for disseminating policy statements to relevant press and other media venues have been established.

Much of our outreach is accomplished via the SMA website. During 2007, the site received 1.34 hits. The average visitor visits an average of 3.36 pages and stays on the site for an average of 8 ½ minutes. Pages visited most frequently include Jobs, Academic Resources, MAQ index, and Graduate Programs. International visitors represent at least 10% of our daily site traffic. The website is managed by webmaster Ben McMahan, University of Arizona.

7. SMA awards presented at the 2008 AAA:

I. Career Awards
   a. Career Achievement Award: Mark Nichter (University of Arizona) and Lorna Rhodes, (University of Washington)
   b. George Foster Memorial Practicing Award: Arthur Kleinman, (Harvard University)
   c. MASA Mentoring Award: Joseph Dummit, (University of California, Davis)

II. Book and Dissertation Prizes
   a. Basker Prize:

   b. New Millenium Book Award:

   c. MASA Dissertation Award
      Elizabeth Carpenter-Song (Case Western U): *Lived experiences of Behavioral and Emotional Disorders In U.S. Children and Families.*
d. Edited Volume Award, CAR
Margaret Lock (McGill) and Judith Farquhar (University of Chicago). *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life.*

**III. Paper Prizes**

a. Rivers, Hughes, and Polgar Prizes
Rivers Undergraduate Prize: Alex Gertner (Princeton), “The Limitations of a Biomedical Understanding of Health in the Conception and Implementation of Housing as a Structural Intervention for HIV/AIDS in New York City”
Hughes Graduate Student Paper Prize: Ippolytos Kalofonos (UC Berkeley) “All I Eat is ARVs: The Praradox of AIDS Treatment Intervention in Central Mozambique” (Berkeley)

b. Critical Anthropology for Global Health Rudolph Virchow Award

8. **See #6 above regarding our website.** The President operates a list serve used to communicate with the membership.

9. **We are in the process of rewriting our by-laws,** which are very dated. Alan Harwood, UMass Boston, is chairing this enterprise.

10. **Other accomplishments** during the year ending December 31, 2008 include:

a. Reorganizing the SMA website

b. Amending criteria and process for determining award winners; streamlining SMA public board and award meetings based on membership survey

c. Progressing with collection of materials to comprise a procedures manual for all board positions, activities, and awards

d. Initiating a process (via the website) for listing recent technical reports and other “gray” documents such as the WHO policy on primary care to facilitate reviews of “gray literature” by SMA members

e. Publicizing new “SMA Takes a Stand” policy statement on the “Global Gag Rule”
Future Plans or Activities

1. Complete by-laws revisions

2. Develop interactive uses for SMA website

3. Establish SMA Task Force on national health insurance as put forward in SMA Presidential Address (AAA 2008) by Carolyn Sargent

4. Organize special Invited Session on militarism and war (Matt Gutmann)

5. Explore possibilities for distribution and sales of SMA insignia items

6. Continue ongoing Institutional Memory Project, headed by SMA Secretary, to formalize a process for section record keeping regarding board membership, initiatives, and Society activities.

7. Work to globalize SMA membership and international participation in AAA sessions

8. Participate in planning and holding first independent SMA meeting at Yale in fall, 2009

Chief Concerns

1. We would appreciate assistance with the institutional memory project. We have had a great deal of trouble finding materials thought to be in Smithsonian archives. Our records are extremely limited and contain major gaps. Any help or advice from the AAA would be welcome.

2. Regarding the proposed Task Force on national health, we wonder if the AAA would be interested in collaborating on a policy initiative. The SMA President (Sargent) argued for a collective and powerful (and thus far missing) SMA voice with regard to national health, and proposed an approach to influencing the public. Perhaps this initiative could involve a collaboration between the SMA and an appropriate AAA committee or policy Task Force, to generate the most effective political interventions.