

Accomplishments during the period covered

SANA had three major accomplishments or undertook three major initiatives during the calendar year 2005. First, we co-hosted a very successful conference in Merida. The Canadian Anthropological Society (CASCA) and the University of the Yucatan (UDAY) also served as co-sponsors. Coming on the heels of the meeting debacle in Atlanta, the conference provided an important outlet for the dissemination of new research findings and for scholarly conversation and debate. It also helped us to maintain our membership and extend our membership footprint, both in Mexico and Canada. Although the conference put a financial strain on our section, the board and the membership felt that the investment was well worth it, as it promoted our section, attracted new members, and increased the depth of scholarship and intellectual exchange across borders.

The second major initiative was institutionalizing our student "travel grants," by streamlining the process and increasing advertising. We named our travel grant awardees "Drake Fellows" and call the travel grant, the St. Clair Drake Fellowship. While the amount is small, usually about two to three hundred dollars, we can give about 10 fellowships out. Increasingly they are more competitive and serve as a great way to introduce graduate students who are pursuing research in North America to the organization.

The third initiative involved much discussion and not a clear consensus; we decided to take *North American Dialogue* into the AnthroSource family, while discontinuing the paper version of the document. We will be watching this carefully to see what the actual costs and perceived benefits are to our membership.

We have also continued our tradition of awarding the SANA Prize for the Critical Study of North America. Increasingly, we are getting more nominations and this prize is perceived as a major competitive prize. Since last year, 2004, we did not have an annual business meeting in Atlanta, we awarded the prize itself at the 2005 meetings, along with the two winners of the 2005 competition. Faye V. Harrison (2004 winner) along with Merrill Singer and Micaela di Leonardo (2005 winners) each received their award at the annual meeting in Washington. Finally, we have been very successful in diversifying our board and reaching and including people within the leadership structure.

Also, our website has been a great success. We currently host the website at Duke University and it is managed by an outside consultant, who we pay out of our funds.

In general, our membership has been about the same, and our fund balances are in good shape. We continue to work closely with other cognate units in and outside of the AAA to help sponsor our spring conferences as well as co-sponsor our sessions at the annual meetings. SANA is an exceedingly well run and healthy unit because of the indefatigable effort and commitment of the people who are pleased to provide both service and leadership to this organization that maintains a critical voice and promotes cutting edge scholarship, which in the end makes the AAA a more responsive and inclusive organization.

List of Annual Meeting Sessions:

The 2005 AAA Meetings in Washington D.C. featured fifteen SANA sponsored panels. The theme this year is “Bringing the Past into the Present.” Many of the panels engage this theme, and as always, the panelists represent the wide variety of topical and regional interests of our members. This year, SANA was pleased to sponsor three invited sessions, two of which are co-sponsored with the Society for the Anthropology of Work.

As you all know, the labor struggles of workers at the San Francisco Hilton disrupted our predictable annual conference routine and inspired a dialogue among many anthropologists about our own allegiances and responsibilities in relation to labor questions. The labor dispute has influenced submissions to SANA this year, putting a particular spin on the AAA annual theme “Bringing the Past into the Present.” The anthropology of work and labor, as well as the cultural politics of the United States, seem to be back on the front burner.

In fact, SANA sponsored, along with the Society for the Anthropology of Work, an invited interlocutor session on the topic of labor this year. SANA periodically organizes interlocutor sessions to feature important work by fellow-traveling non-anthropologists. This year’s session was organized by Molly Doane and Jeff Maskovsky and is entitled “Worldwide Wal-Mart: A dialogue with Liza Featherstone and Bill Fletcher on race, class, and gender warfare.” Featured speaker Liza Featherstone is an investigative journalist and author of Selling Women Short: The landmark battle for workers’ rights at Wal-Mart and Students against Sweatshops. Discussants included Leith Mullings, Neil Smith, Micaela di Leonardo, and Jane Collins. This panel is scheduled for 10am on Saturday.

Other panels where labor and work feature prominently included a SAW/SANA invited session entitled “Experiences of the everyday and the anthropology of hope,” organized by Charles Menzies and Anthony Marcus and “Rethinking Exploitation: Imagining Ethnography and Marxist Praxis Today” organized by Vincent Lyon-Callos and Boone Shear.

The state of US politics also figured prominently in papers and sessions proposed for the 2005 AAA meetings, including the invited session “What’s the Matter with the United States (with apologies to Thomas Frank.)” This panel took as its point of departure Thomas Frank’s book What’s the Matter with Kansas, which attributes the rightward shift in U.S. national politics to the rise of right wing fundamentalism on the one hand and the decline of left wing economic populism on the other. However, the panelists presented a series of ethnographically based challenges to Frank’s implication that right wing politics among the working classes are nothing more than a form of false consciousness, suggesting that this rightward shift is rooted not only ideologically but also materially. Panelists included Hilary Cunningham, Jeff Maskovsky, Sandra Morgen, Jane and Peter Schneider, and Ida Susser.

SANA also sponsored a special event entitled “In the Name of Security: Anthropology in an Era of Surveillance.” This panel was organized by Maria Vesperi and addresses the impact of the Patriot Act on the people with whom we conduct research and on the enterprise of anthropology. Participants included Alisse Waterston, Mary Anglin, David Rosen, Sally Merry, Cheryl Mwaria, and Sandy Smith-Nonini.

Other intriguing sessions with political themes included “Why the Culture War will not be covered by the History Channel: United States Culture and Change from the 1980s to the present,” organized by J.C. Saylor, and “Regimes of Power: the Contours of Neoliberalism” organized by Catherine Kingfisher.

Panels presenting new ethnographic research on topics of interest to North American Anthropologists included: Race, Poverty, and Place in North America (1-017)¹; Families we live with, Families we live by, organized by Brian Hoey; North American Experiences: Managing representation and Identity (1-053); Identity, Ethnicity, and Changing Community Forms (4-011); and Biomedicalized Bodies and the Body Politic in Philadelphia, organized by Lisa Hardy.

Our schedule also included panels concerning research and teaching methods. “Interdisciplinary Ethnography: A Roundtable Discussion” includes roundtable organizer Carrie Lane Chet, Carol Stack, Virginia Dominguez, Quetzal Castañeda, Jane Desmond and John Caughey. Other panels on methodological themes are “Student Activism as Public Anthropology” organized by Chris Carrico and “Experience-based Learning and Public Anthropology in the 21st Century” organized by Carl Maida and Sam Beck.

Future plans or activities (3-5) year time frame

In the very near future we will offer a biennial book prize. We have plans on hosting a spring conference in New York City in April 2006 on the theme of “Anthropology in an Uncertain Era.”

¹ Sessions identified by session number were organized by SANA from individual papers.