

## **Association for Political and Legal Anthropology**

Submitted by John Bowen, APLA President, February 6, 2007 (For the Period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006).

**Mission** APLA is committed to promoting the critical anthropology of politics and law within anthropology, across disciplines, and in the broader public sphere.

**Activities** During the reporting period, APLA published two issues of its journal, the Political and Legal Anthropology Review (PoLAR), held its annual student paper prize competition, welcomed new Board members, and published columns in the Anthropology Newsletter. We expanded our graduate mentoring activities, invited panels for the AAA meetings, and held several roundtables.

**Finances** APLA's revenues come primarily from membership dues, and we are pleased to report that APLA membership continues to climb at a modest pace, from 473 in September 2005 to 511 in September 2006 (337 regular, 172 students, and 2 life). Reporting an increase is meaningful against the background expectation that the move to AnthroSource would lead to a decline in sections membership for journal-producing sections.

We expect to have received about \$13,300 in membership dues for 2006 (against projections of \$12,500). As of September 2006 we had transferred \$12,592.33 to PoLAR, leaving us a deficit of \$2,532 (as of November 2006), (about the same deficit as reported for 2005). Our other expenses are low: honoraria and prize money for students (\$500-600), student travel (\$800), and meeting food and space (\$800). We have saved money by holding the board meeting off-site, and have used the savings to pay for the student meals at mentoring sessions.

Our net assets were \$20,564 in January 2006, had declined to \$18,031 by September, but last-minute membership dues are expected to have brought it back by January 2007 to a bit over \$19,000.

Our costs for financing PoLAR have run below the initial projections, but revenues from digital subscriptions have run *far* below projections: \$5,352 for PoLAR in 2006 as against the projected \$12,927. Current projections have us in the black by December 2008. If these new projections hold (and they did over their initial year), we will emerge from the transition with a positive bank balance.

Although any new venture involves changes and risks, and we enthusiastically support AnthroSource, we have found it very difficult to obtain consistent and clear reports from the AAA about the changing outlook, and about reasons for expenses, and differences between projected and realized revenues. Even with experienced editor, treasurer, and other officers, the AAA staff changes and the generally poor overall system of communications in place (with two separate AAA committees) has not worked well. We look forward to the reorganization planned for 2007.

We have held dues relatively constant since 2000 and in 2006 voted to keep them at \$30.

**PoLAR** Annelise Riles of Cornell University served as Editor for her fourth year and published two issues (on time, as always), the journal's volume 29. The Spring 2006 issue featured a symposium on "Environment, globalization and sovereignty, and both issues featured our new "directions" section with interviews and dialogue.

PoLAR's individual subscriptions have increased with the APLA membership increases (virtually all such subscriptions are the result of APLA membership). We expect institutional print subscriptions to slowly decline as libraries turn to AnthroSource, and indeed they did, from 106 in 2005 to 101 in 2006. The journal is now available in full-text form on Westlaw and Hein Online. We urge AnthroSource to continue its efforts to have PoLAR included in the Lexis/Nexis database. This availability increases readership of anthropology articles by legal students, teachers, and professionals.

PoLAR has been able to remain under budget through tight control of costs but also by virtue of Cornell University's subsidies in the form of salaried personnel, space and real costs. We are concerned that when devising the new formulae for distributing AnthroSource costs and revenues, the AAA will take into account these cost subsidies, the responsible management of the journal, and its unique scholarly role.

APLA has secured a smooth transition to the next editor: Elizabeth Mertz (U of Wisconsin Madison School of Law) will assume duties as editor for the Spring 2008 issue of the journal.

**Elections and Officers** John Bowen served in his first full term as President during 2006, and serves until the close of the AAA meetings in 2007, when Bill Maurer will begin his two-year term as President-elect. Mindie Lazarus-Black and Mark Goodale served the first years of their terms as Board members, and James Holston and Elizabeth Krause the second years of their terms; Elizabeth also agreed to chair the Nominations Committee, and Mark the Student Prize Committee. Susan Coutin served as Treasurer, and Madeline Adelman as Secretary; both rotate off at the close of the 2007 meetings. Elizabeth Faier continued as Program Chair. Elizabeth Krause and Daniel Goldstein were AN Editors. Carie Little Hersh worked with Jason Cross as Graduate Student representative and planned the AAA Meetings mentoring activities.

**AAA Meetings** At the 2006 meetings, we sponsored 22 sessions, the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate of section participation, and we greatly expanded graduate student involvement in panels and other activities. Alongside our invited and sponsored sessions, we expanded our round tables and mentoring workshops from 2005. We held a roundtable on political anthropology, and four sessions, held at nearby restaurants, to mentor graduate student members of APLA, each with 3 faculty and 6 students. These were divided by general theme: law and the state, political processes, and public policy, the last in collaboration with IGAPP, plus a special session on careers with Sally Merry. These were all judged highly successful and will be continued; we also plan to try out one or more new types of sessions at the 2007 meetings.

**Student Paper Prize** Tomi Castle won APLA's annual student paper contest in 2006 and Amy Porter was runner-up. Tomi received a scholarship toward travel to the 2006 AAA meetings and a prize, and her paper will be published in PoLAR in the fall 2007 issue.

**AN Column** Elizabeth Krause continues as editor of the *Anthropology Newsletter* column.

**Continuing Activities in 2006** Our major challenges for 2007 are (1) assuring a smooth transition of the journal, (2) exploring efficient ways to host an independent APLA web site, and (3) continuing to expand our membership, particularly through mentoring activities for graduate students.

**Issues for the AAA Leadership** The key issue for all sections is assuring greater transparency, better communication, and smoother transitions to AnthroSource. APLA is on solid financial ground and should weather the transition, but this issue is our greatest shared problem.

We would like to work with the AAA staff in exploring web resources beyond AnthroSource.

***Names and Email Address of Officers During the Reporting Period***

John Bowen, President pro tem (for June Nash) through 2005; President through 2007,

[jbowen@wustl.edu](mailto:jbowen@wustl.edu)

Susan Bibler Coutin, [scoutin@uci.edu](mailto:scoutin@uci.edu)

Madelaine Adelman, Secretary, [mad@asu.edu](mailto:mad@asu.edu)

Mindie Lazarus-Black, Board Member, [mindielb@uic.edu](mailto:mindielb@uic.edu)

Mark Goodale, Board Member, [mgoodale@gmu.edu](mailto:mgoodale@gmu.edu)

James Holston, Board Member, [jholston@ucsd.edu](mailto:jholston@ucsd.edu)

Elizabeth Krause, Board Member, [ekrause@anthro.umass.edu](mailto:ekrause@anthro.umass.edu)