

Annual Report: Culture and Anthropology Section 2006

The main activities for the year consisted of the 2006 meeting program, publication of the journal Culture & Agriculture, and agreement on a new strategy for the use of our listserv and website.

1. Accomplishments during the period.

1. a. Membership continues to decline, from 262 in September 05 to 244 in September 06. We have 284 on our published list on the website, which reflects our listserv less about five people who do not want their contact information publicized.

1.b. Finances. These also continue to be worrisome. As of the annual meeting in November, 2006, the treasurer reported that C&A will draw down its balance for 2006 somewhere between \$500 and \$1200. We currently have about one year's operating budget in savings-reserves. We do not, however, anticipate a forced folding of the journal. We expect to keep the journal afloat until AnthroSource flows enough cash to make the journal more self-sustaining. At its meeting in November 2006, the Executive Committee agreed not to burn CDs for members for the 2006 editions (which have not yet gone out).

1. c. Meeting Activities. In addition to the Business Meeting and Executive Committee meeting, there were seven panels, two of which were invited sessions. Two of these originated from discussions at the last business meeting (2005), and two others were logical follow-ups to the sequence of panels we had in 2005 on peasant (household agriculture) persistence. Attendance was good and participants were satisfied with the way the quality of the papers and the discussions. It helped that there was only one relatively serious time conflict in the schedule.

The Executive Committee meeting was well attended. As previously, discussion was mainly devoted to the impact of AnthroServe on our membership and finances, but this time we adopted a somewhat different approach. Viewing AnthroServe as essentially a public good, we decided we need to concentrate on providing other types of services to members. The consensus was that the main thing we had to offer was scholarly collegiality and support, centering on the website and the meeting panels. We also had considerable discussion of the problem of replacing James McDonald as editor of Culture and Agriculture. And connecting both these topics we recognized that we needed to focus on budget planning and the budget process as a central planning activity, and not just a peripheral matter to be left the interaction between the treasurer and the AAA. We would attempt to develop a fiscal year plan that include a budget plan.

In the following business meeting, we reviewed these discussions but spent a large part of the time planning for the 2007 program. The conclusions are described below.

1.d. Website development. In January, 2006, we added sections on the Section to the Culture and Agriculture website, which had previously been devoted entirely to the journal. This included a list of members. We already had been maintaining a listserv.

1. e. The most important outreach is our journal. All the planned numbers for 2006 are published, and the volumes for 2007 are completed and ready. We consider that quality of publications has

been steadily increasing, although it has taken a very large investment in editorial effort to assure it. In consequence, quality of submissions is also increasing. Being in AnthroServe should help.

The other main outreach activity is the column in the *Anthropology News*. Barbara Dilly has been doing this for over three years, and needed to concentrate on academic activities more central to obtaining tenure at her university. Accordingly, at the 2005 business meeting we arranged for her to pass the position on to a person who volunteered from the floor. This worked for about five months, but that person has disappeared. At the Business meeting, we agreed that we would have an editor and co-editor. Lois Stanford and Ron Rich agreed to serve.

1. f. We have no plans to change the bylaws, but we have a continuing problem implementing the two-year term requirement in the case of the President Elect. We have also appointed a student member of the Executive Committee—Ryan Thomas.

2. Future Plans

2.a. Website: We will redesign the website to make a Section website with an equally prominent gateway to section information and journal information. With the advice and help of Michael Fischer, who is managing the SAS (interest group) website, we would also convert from a conventional html upload-download technology to a wiki-style of technology. Ron Rich volunteered to donate his time to managing the website. Jim Macdonald said that UTSA could continue to host it, and that he after he left the editorship of Culture and Agriculture he would be able to help. Michael Fischer and Murray Leaf will work with Ron to provide the materials. In the budget discussions, we will allocate about \$50.00 a month for student assistance.

Additional functions discussed for the website included:

- summaries of articles of interest in sources members are not likely to encounter—and not on Anthrosource.
- lists of other websites. Several people mentioned an excellent website at Cornell with links to many syllabi.
- a list of more senior anthropologists willing to read papers and provide comment for students and younger scholars, seeking to get published. This is a concrete version of the mentoring idea that was discussed at the last meeting, but that did not materialize.

2.b. Panels for AAA 2007. Lisa Markowitz has agreed to remain on as Program Chair for one more year, even though her term as member-at-large expires this year. Glen Stone will act as backup, in preparation for taking it over for 2008. Ideas were sought at the Business Meeting regarding ways we might share panels with other Sections, especially invited slots. Suggestions for panels, with those agreeing to coordinate them, included:

- Fair Trade panel (Sarah Lyons)
- Energy Farming (Glen Stone)
- General theory and its implications (Murray Leaf)
- Food social movements (Ryan Thomas)
- Politics of local versus global food production (Ryan Thomas)
- Farm policy (Lisa Markowitz).

We also discussed the possibility of a policy panel including Washington based politicians, a panel that would including archaeologists, a possible AAA plenary session (involving policy

and politicians). One idea for a policy-focused was to use the newly elected Democratic senator from Montana, Jon Tester, who is also an organic farmer. We could ask him what kind of information the legislature needs to explain the issues he is concerned with, and have other panelists to respond with their views of what kinds of information or analysis we actually do supply—and how the two might be better articulated.

Another possible policy/political person was Tom Harkin, of Iowa. Senator Harkin was in the House of Representatives from 1974 to 1984 before being elected to the Senate, and is a leader in representing concerns of farmers not only in the United States but world wide—seeing the connections between local farm issues and international ecological, environmental and labor issues. Either of these should be done with the AAA policy group as a joint AAA C&A policy panel. Lisa Markowitz will try to identify someone t

2. c. We need to develop, with the AAA, a way to invite non-AAA members to participate in panels without having to pay registration fees.

2. d. We have established a search committee to identify the replacement for James McDonald as editor of *Culture and Agriculture*. It is headed by Glen Stone. Ben Blount is ex-officio member of the search committee as incoming President.

3. Other items: we need to work with the AAA Section Assembly to devise a way to rewrite AAA rules to allow people to participate in sections who do not consider themselves and anthropologists and do not want to pay AAA dues. By the same token, we need to find ways to allow non-AAA members to participate in panels without having to register for the conventions.

Submitted 29 Jan 07

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Murray J. Leaf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Murray J. Leaf
President, Nov 2004- Nov 2006