

Society for the Anthropology of Religion Annual Report 2006

Ellen Badone, President

1. Accomplishments

Membership

As of November 2006, the SAR had 436 regular and 182 student members, for a total of 618. Our membership has increased from a total of 558 in November 2005, and 559 in November 2004.

Finances

The SAR is in a healthy financial position, with assets of \$30,538 as of November 2006. Expenses from the annual meeting have not yet been deducted from this amount.

Elections

In the spring 2006 elections Stephan Palmié of the University of Chicago was elected as President-Elect of the SAR. Ellen Schattschneider of Brandeis University was elected as Treasurer. Pamela Klassen (University of Toronto) and Melissa Caldwell (University of California, Santa Cruz) were each elected for two year terms as members of the Executive Board. Charles Hirschkind (University of California, Berkeley) was re-elected to the Executive Board for a second two year term. Jennifer Selby, Ph.D. candidate at McMaster University, was elected for a two year term as Student Representative on the Executive Board.

AAA Annual Meeting

The SAR sponsored, invited or co-invited a total of 18 sessions at the 2006 AAA meetings in San José. To date, this is the largest number of sessions we have organized for the annual meetings. All sessions were well attended, as were the Business Meeting and Cash Bar reception on Saturday, November 18. Thanks to our Program Chair, Charles Hirschkind.

Spring Meeting

Our biennial spring meeting will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, April 13-16, 2007. The meeting will be held at the Wyndham Phoenix Hotel, a unionized hotel. The meeting theme is "The Re-Enchantment of the World?" Program Chair is Simon Coleman (University of Sussex), and the Program Committee includes Beth Conklin (Vanderbilt University), Charles Hirschkind (University of California, Berkeley) and Ellen Badone (McMaster University).

Internal Communications

Our listserv address is sar@weber.ucsd.edu and Jon Bialecki (Reed College) moderates the listserv. Jon has agreed to continue as Communications Manager for the SAR although his term as Student Representative on the Executive Board is now finished. With the help of Sam Himes at the AAA office, Jon has also moved the SAR website to the www.aaanet.org address, and has been updating the website regularly.

Outreach

Michael Lambek (University of Toronto) continues to serve on the AAA Governance Commission, and we have nominated our founding president, Thomas Csordas (University of California, San Diego) for election to the AAA Executive Board. We have actively solicited the participation of members of the American Academy of Religion in our Spring 2007 meetings, by publicizing the meetings through AAR section listserves, and by inviting AAR members to participate in the Plenary Panel for these meetings. One of our new SAR Board members, Pamela Klassen, is also an active member of the AAR.

2. Future Plans

An additional volume will appear in 2007 in the SAR sponsored book series, "Contemporary Anthropology of Religion" published by Palgrave-Macmillan and edited by Robert Hefner (Boston University). Robert is actively seeking new manuscripts, especially from senior authors. We continue to discuss issues with the publisher such as the simultaneous publication of hardback and paperback releases.

At the 2006 AAA Meetings in San José, the SAR announced the inaugural competition for the Clifford Geertz Prize in the Anthropology of Religion, which seeks to encourage excellence by recognizing an outstanding recent book in the field. The inaugural prize will be awarded at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting in November 2007. Andy Buckser (Purdue) is current chair of the Prize Committee.

3. Other Items

Our freestanding meeting in Phoenix, AZ may prove to be more costly than our previous meeting in Vancouver, BC (spring 2005), partly because we have chosen, in line with AAA policy, to hold the meeting at a unionized hotel. In addition, since many of our members now need to use LCD projectors for Powerpoint presentations, we will have to rent this AV equipment, which is more expensive than traditional overhead and slide projectors. We hope that we will be able to offset costs of the meeting through registration fees.

Although the SAR does not have a journal and is therefore not affected the transition to electronic dissemination of journals via AnthroSource, we are nonetheless concerned that many of our sister sections within the AAA are facing severe financial difficulties as a result of this transition. We feel that the survival of the sections is integral to the AAA and we encourage the Executive Board to take measures to ensure the ongoing vitality of all sections.