

Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) Annual Report
January 1, 2006-December 31, 2006
Submitted by Marcia C. Inhorn, SMA President

Section Officers: Marcia C. Inhorn, President (minhorn@umich.edu); Arachu Castro, Secretary-Treasurer (arachu_castro@hms.harvard.edu)

Board Members: Joao Biehl; Robbie Davis-Floyd; Douglas Feldman; Craig Janes (Past President); Helen Lambert; Vinay Kamat; Thomas Leatherman; Lesley Sharp; Elisa Sobo; Catherine Timura (Student Representative)

Ex-Officio Members: Pam Erickson (MAQ Editor); Janelle Taylor (AN Column Editor); Lauren Wynne (Webmaster)

Retiring Board and Ex-Officio Members (as of 11/17/2006): Joao Biehl; Arachu Castro; Pam Erickson (MAQ Editor); Craig Janes; Helen Lambert; Lesley Sharp; Janelle Taylor (AN Column Editor)

Incoming Board and Ex-Officio Members (as of 11/18/2006): Kitty Corbett (Treasurer); Ellen Gruenbaum (Secretary); Alan Harwood; Suzanne Heurtin-Roberts (NIH Liaison); Mark Luborsky (MAQ Co-Editor); Lenore Manderson; Kathleen Ragsdale (AN Column Editor); Andrea Sankar (MAQ Co-Editor); Carolyn Sargent (President-Elect); Carolyn Smith-Morris

1. Status, Activities, and Accomplishments (2006): The Society for Medical Anthropology (SMA) had an extremely productive and dynamic year in 2006. Major accomplishments included:

- a successful spring meeting jointly convened with the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) in Vancouver;
- initiation of the Medical Anthropology Students Association (MASA) to serve SMA student members;
- inauguration of the SMA New Millennium Book award;
- a fund-raising campaign for the existing Eileen Basker book prize;
- introduction of three new editors for SMA publications;
- formation of a Science Technology and Medicine (STM) special interest group;
- development and dissemination of position papers on child health and tobacco policy;
- development of a new on-line, global medical anthropology directory; and
- completion of an SMA member survey, with more than 800 medical anthropologists responding.

A major focus of discussion during 2006 was whether to hold independent SMA meetings, like other large AAA sections (eg, AES, SPA, AAPA). The SMA survey indicated considerable support for an independent meeting, although many practicing medical anthropologists urged the continuation of the biannual joint SfAA-SMA meetings. Based on member feedback, the SMA board decided to continue the SfAA-SMA joint meetings (next scheduled for spring 2008), but to plan for an inaugural stand-alone SMA meeting in spring 2009, probably at the University of Michigan, the home institution of the current SMA President. Other SMA activities and accomplishments during 2006 are as follows:

1a. Membership Numbers: SMA membership dropped slightly (by 2.6%) from November 2005 (1,331 members) to November 2006 (1,296). During 2006, the high was 1,357 in March, with a low of 1,291 in August. (December figures are not yet available.) The average of the first 11 months in 2006 was 1,317. In 2002, SMA membership peaked at 1,519. Attempts are being made to return to those membership levels, particularly through increased student and international membership. To that end, two major efforts were undertaken in 2006: (a) formation of MASA (see above), chaired by the SMA student representative and focusing on skills-based workshops and special events at SMA meetings; and (b) development of a directory (see above), reaching not only SMA members, but medical anthropologists outside of North America. The directory, accessible in 2007 through the SMA website, will involve collection of information through a standardized template developed by the SMA board in 2006. Once launched, it will be searchable by key

word. Ideally, both of these developments will be perceived as direct benefits of SMA membership and will serve to bring new members into the organization.

1b. Financial Balances (SMA and MAQ):

SMA: The financial balance for the SMA's Basker Prize (maintained as a separate fund) was \$10,436 on November 30, 2005 and \$12,975 on November 30, 2006. SMA funds, however, show significant reductions due to AnthroSource, which has proven much more costly than originally forecast (see section 3b). SMA net assets were \$123,498 on January 1, 2005; \$153,670 on November 30, 2005; \$119,655 on January 1, 2006; and \$89,983 on November 30, 2006. Funds for AnthroSource appear to have been pulled from the SMA account at the end of 2005. In 2006, SMA transferred significant assets to AAA to cover the costs of AnthroSource. When annual fiscal year reports are finished by AAA in March, an updated SMA treasurer's report will be prepared. Revenues for 2006 appear to be below the anticipated projection of \$70,725; as of the end of November, they were \$62,257 (\$8,468 short of projections). Lower numbers of regular members than anticipated accounted for the bulk of the difference; this situation may improve with accounting of November and December memberships (since some members renew at the time of the AAA meeting). Expenditures at the end of November were \$91,929, so the projected deficit (i.e., draw-down on assets) for 2006 will be at least \$29,672. Expenditures were on target as of the end of November, but when December figures are tallied, we anticipate that we will have exceeded the budget projection of \$94,155 for expenditures. We expect that once December expenses are calculated and dues revenues are transferred to the publication budget, the end of the year will show the SMA in considerable deficit.

MAQ: SMA provided MAQ with a budget of \$50,039 to run the editorial office during 2006. These funds were used to pay the salaries of the Managing Editor and Editorial Assistant, as well as postage and telephone costs. The University of Connecticut provided the remainder of the operating expenses, including a one-course teaching reduction for the MAQ editor each semester. MAQ publication costs exceeded the annual budget by \$20,558 for calendar year 2005. As of September 30, 2006, revenues were less than the amounts budgeted by \$34,668, and expenditures were close to projected amounts. Final figures should show a slight improvement, given communications from AAA regarding improvements in AnthroSource income as of December 2006.

1c. AAA Meeting Highlights (San Jose): The SMA program at the San Jose meetings included a AAA presidential session on "Embodied Danger: The Health Costs of War and Political Violence." The SMA program co-chairs received 7 proposed invited sessions (3 accepted); 22 proposed organized sessions, all recommended; 70 individual abstracts, organized into 10 sessions; and 9 posters, organized into 2 sessions. Papers covered a wide variety of themes, with a focus on health aspects of globalization. One well-attended session honored the work of UC-Berkeley medical anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes. MASA held workshops on grant writing and public speaking, and a special event called "Meet the Editors," featuring all the major North American medical anthropology journals. At the SMA Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony, the presidential address, "Medical Anthropology at the Intersections," highlighted the interdisciplinary potentials of the field. Prizes awarded, including the inaugural New Millennium Book Award for the best work in medical anthropology on a topic other than gender and health (as covered by the Basker and CAR awards), were:

- **New Millennium Book Award:** Adriana Petryna for *Life Exposed: Biological Citizenship after Chernobyl*
- **Eileen Basker Memorial Prize:** Michele Rivkin-Fish for *Women's Health in Post-Soviet Russia: The Politics of Intervention*
- **Rivers Prize (Undergraduate):** Hayder Al-Mohammad for "Excremental Encounters: The Case of Basra and the Anthropology of Excrement"
- **Charles Hughes Prize (Graduate):** Elise Andaya for "The Gift of Health: Cuban Medical Practice, Socialist Morality and the Post-Soviet Economy"

- **Steven Polgar Prize (Best Article in MAQ, 2005):** Vincanne Adams and co-authors Suellen Miller, Sienna Craig, Nyima, Sonam, Droyoung, Lhakpen, & Michael Varner for “The Challenge of Cross-Cultural Clinical Trials Research: Case Report from the Tibetan Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China” (v.19, no.3, pp.267-289)
- **Career Achievement Award:** Arthur Kleinman
- **George Foster Memorial Prize in the Practice of Medical Anthropology:** Spero Manson
- **MASA Mentoring Award:** Mac Marshall
- **CAR Most Enduring Edited Collection** (Council on the Anthropology of Reproduction): Linda Layne, Editor for *Transformative Motherhood: On Giving and Getting in a Consumer Culture*
- **CAR Best Current Edited Collection:** Carrie Douglass, Editor for *Barren States: The Population Implosion in Europe*
- **CAR Graduate Student Prize:** Heide Castaneda for “Pregnancy, Race, and Citizenship: Undocumented Migrant Women in Berlin, Germany” and Elise Andaya for “Reproducing the Revolution: Local Practices and Global Politics in Prenatal Care in Havana, Cuba”
- **Rudolph Virchow Professional Award** (Critical Anthropology of Health Caucus): Charles L. Briggs for “Critical Perspectives on Health and Communicative Hegemony: Progressive Possibilities, Lethal Connections”
- **Rudolph Virchow Student Award:** Seth Holmes for “Oaxacans Like to Work Bent Over: The Naturalization of Social Suffering among Berry Farm Workers” and Alexa Dietrich for “Corrosion in the System: The Community Health By-Products of Pharmaceutical Production in Northern Puerto Rico”

1d. Spring Meeting Highlights (Vancouver): As noted above, the SMA meets biannually with the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), with the SfAA determining the meeting location, space, and making all other local arrangements. In April 2006, the joint meeting was held in Vancouver, British Columbia, with 2 Vancouver-based SMA board members co-chairing the SMA program committee. The committee approved proposals for 26 (including 3 double) volunteered SMA sessions, as well as 22 sessions created from individually submitted abstracts. In addition, an SMA double plenary session on “Reproductive Disruptions” was followed by a well-attended reception, sponsored by SFU and introducing the new MAQ co-editors. MASA was also formally inaugurated in Vancouver, with a “Meet the SMA Presidents” event featuring 5 out of the 6 most recent presidents. Because of the strong SMA presence, the Vancouver meetings were the largest out-of-country meetings organized by SfAA. More than 1/3 of all Vancouver sessions, whether reviewed by the SMA or not, addressed health topics.

1e. Internal Communications (Website and Listserves):

Website: More than 800,000 people have visited the SMA website since its inception. From January 1-November 16, 2006, the site received 257,218 visitors, roughly 60,000 more the same period in 2005. Monthly visitors exceeded 20,000 even during the slowest month, with more than 30,000 visitors during the 2 busiest months. This represents a 10,000-person/mo increase from 2005. The SMA website has clearly become a frequently used and valuable resource for medical anthropologists and others interested in the subfield. In 2007, a decision will be made about migrating the SMA website to the redesigned AAA website, with a new webmaster likely in charge of that effort.

Listserves: SMA participates in two listserves: a) an H-Net MEDANTHRO listserv maintained by a group of medical anthropologists from a variety of universities. The purpose of this listserv is to inform those who join about news items of relevance to medical anthropology; and b) an SMA membership listserv constructed at the University of Michigan and maintained by the current SMA president. The latter listserv was used effectively in 2006 to post updates on SMA activities and events, member deaths, fundraising donation requests, and to circulate the SMA member survey.

1f. Outreach Efforts: 2006 was a very busy year for SMA's external outreach to policymakers and media outlets, and internal outreach to SMA members and foreign medical anthropology affiliates.

SMA Takes a Stand: SMA has an active Policy Committee, with seven working subcommittees. In 2006, the subcommittee of the Council on Infant and Child Health and Welfare developed a policy statement supporting US ratification of the international treaty on child rights. The policy statement was placed on the SMA website for comments, and revisions were made based on member feedback. Following SMA board approval, this policy statement is now featured on the website and will possibly be published in MAQ in early 2007. A press release is being developed for distribution to media. A similar policy statement on tobacco control is reaching the final stage of approval, and statements on the global gag rule, Darfur, and depleted uranium in Iraq are being developed.

SMA Member Survey: Following animated board discussion in Vancouver about the future of an independent SMA meeting, the board decided to develop a survey instrument to assess members' attitudes on this and other subjects. With significant board input, board member Vinay Kamat designed the survey, which consisted of 20 questions and took 5 minutes to complete. The survey was launched on September 13, 2006 and closed on November 13, 2006, with 3 announcements via the SMA and AAA listserves. More than 800 members began the survey, with 714 completing it, 82% of whom were SMA members. The major finding indicated considerable support for a future independent SMA meeting, with exactly two-thirds of respondents indicating that they were likely to attend such a meeting, especially if held in the late winter-spring. Additional feedback on the SMA website, listserves, MASA, and SMA prizes was collected. More than 200 qualitative recommendations were made for SMA board consideration. The results of the survey will be discussed further at the next board meeting in July 2007.

Fundraising Campaign: A fundraising campaign to supplement the Basker Prize endowment was launched in July 2006, with a letter requesting donations sent to all former Basker prizewinners, then to the entire SMA membership. As of November, \$1,900 was raised, with most of the 21 donors being former Basker prizewinners. Currently, the Basker endowment generates an income of only around \$450/yr, which means that the prize at its current level (\$1,000) is not secure without supplementation from other SMA funds. Following the rather unsuccessful fundraising campaign, the SMA board has decided to reduce the Basker Prize amount to its previous level of \$500, making it comparable to the other major SMA awards.

1g. Changes in Bylaws or Governance Structure: In the 2006 elections, SMA members voted to approve a change in the SMA by-laws. As a result, the conjoined SMA Secretary-Treasurer position has been divided into two positions, with Kitty Corbett elected Treasurer and Ellen Gruenbaum elected Secretary for 2007. This division of labor reflects increasing SMA activities in the realms of fundraising (treasurer) and the preservation of SMA's organizational history (secretary).

2. Future Plans or Activities (2007-2012)

2a. Projects Underway: On July 20, 2007, the SMA board will meet at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor to discuss and develop the following projects:

- Inauguration of a MASA Dissertation Award, to be administered and judged by the SMA board;
- A 20th anniversary celebration of the Eileen Basker Prize in gender and health, to be held at the 2007 AAA meetings in Washington, DC, and involving an invited panel on "Gender, Feminism and Health: The Basker Prize 20 Years On," as well as a reception for past prizewinners;
- A memorial for recently deceased former MAQ editor Gay Becker;
- Migration of the SMA website to the redesigned AAA website;
- Development of historical materials (including at the Smithsonian archives) on the SMA;
- Plans for a spring 2009 SMA independent meeting, the first in the history of the organization.

2b. Collaboration with Other Sections and Groups: SMA currently has 13 active special interest groups, two of which (Global Health and Emerging Diseases, Critical Anthropology of Health) officially merged in San Jose. SMA is currently developing collaborations within AAA between CASTAC and SMA's newly developed Science Technology and Medicine (STM) special interest group, which met in San Jose for the first time with about 40 members of SMA and CASTAC in attendance. Additionally, former SMA board member Suzanne Heurtin-Roberts has been asked to join the SMA board as an ex-officio liaison to the NIH, where she is employed as a medical anthropologist. Future plans are underway for selected SMA board members and NIH grant-holders to meet with the NIH leadership in Washington at the time of the 2007 AAA convention. Given changing NIH politics and the reduction in behavioral research funding, this meeting is considered very important and timely.

2c. Plans for Membership or Publications: In 2006, a proposal was made for an SMA-sponsored student publication in medical anthropology and STM. The proposal was turned down at the Vancouver board meeting, given concern over the costs and the narrow focus of the publication. An SMA student publication was also deemed a low priority by SMA survey respondents. At the end of 2006, MAQ moved from U Connecticut under Pamela Erickson's editorship to Wayne State U under the co-editorship of Mark Luborsky and Andrea Sankar. Cost-savings will be realized due to strong institutional support from Wayne State and the employment of a locally based managing editor. In fall 2006, Janelle Taylor, SMA Column Editor for *Anthropology News*, helped to recruit her replacement, Kathleen Ragsdale, who has already begun soliciting article ideas for 2007.

2d. Plans for Making SMA More Inclusive: SMA hopes to better serve medical anthropology students and to reach out to international medical anthropologists, as noted above. We have dynamic projects underway in both of these areas. In addition, the SMA Nominations Committee has put together a diverse slate of candidates for the 2007 ballot, prioritizing inclusion based on gender, race, and sexual orientation.

3. Other Items

3a. Issues and Recommendations for Long-Range Planning Committee: An issue has arisen in 2006 about whether to archive or destroy boxes of old MAQ files. Although SMA past-president and institutional historian Lucy Cohen has urged movement of the files to the AAA archives at the Smithsonian, there are space restrictions, and the disposition of these files remains uncertain. The AAA Long-Range Planning Committee needs to consider expanding the AAA archive space, so that the institutional memory of organizations such as the SMA can be adequately preserved.

3b. Issues and Recommendations for AAA Executive Board: The major issue facing the SMA and most other AAA sections is the financial uncertainty associated with AnthroSource. As of November 2006, AnthroSource had significantly contributed to the \$29,672 loss of SMA net assets. SMA still has enough in reserves to last several years, but the unexpectedly large and very rapid diminution of SMA's assets may become a threat to our viability as an organization, including our future plans for innovative awards and programming. Once MAQ is fully online via AnthroSource, it is possible that significant number of our members may not rejoin, especially given that ours is the AAA section with the highest dues (\$68 professional, \$30 student). Per the findings of our SMA member survey, MAQ is perceived as the major member benefit. Current projections by AAA suggest that AnthroSource should reach a break-even point by 2007-8, and will begin to bring in revenue by 2011. There are indications that these projections may be realistic. At the end of November 2006, the number of subscribers to AnthroSource had exceeded the target for the 2006 calendar year, and revenues were 95% of projections, suggesting that revenues for 2006 exceeded what was anticipated. These findings may lend credence to the long-term projections that show AnthroSource beginning to generate revenue within a few years. In the meantime, we are concerned and cautious about the financial health of SMA. Thus, we urge the AAA Executive Board to provide us with frequent and careful assessments of both the costs and revenues associated with AnthroSource, so that we can plan our activities based on accurate financial projections.