

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR SVA 2006 TO AAA

I took over as President of the SVA after the business meeting of 2005 and am serving a two-year active term and one year as Past President. The current board list is attached at the end of the report.

Society membership has declined over the last year, from 555 in September 2005 to 508 in September 2006, with an equal loss in Regular and Student memberships of 20 and 24, respectively. It is quite probable that this loss was due to a combination of the raised fees from \$25 to \$40 for full memberships, and the fact that the journal is now available to all AAA members through AnthroSource. However, this 10% drop may be rectified with some effort towards recruiting new members.

The financial situation is still poor with a continuing loss overall although it is less acute than the situation in 2005. The Visual Anthropology Review actual 11 month income (to November 30/06) seems to have been \$26,725.42 although that is \$4,137.58 less than projected (with only one month left of the year). The rest of the budget shows a November 30th year-to-date revenue of \$17,395.26 and expenditure of \$19,076.50, leaving us with a shortfall of \$1,681.24. Obviously this will change after the meeting expenses, but these are the figures I have at present. I estimate that we will be about \$4,300 short (outgo over income) by the end of the year. This is still not a good position to be in, although I agree that it is a little better than last year. I think we are doing a little better due to having more material being made available on AnthroSource due to the heroic efforts of our journal editors to get the volumes up to the present.

The AAA Annual Meeting highlights included the Section Assembly meeting at which a number of issues were raised and discussed. The bankruptcy aversion program and the change in order of the Section Assembly and AAA Executive meetings should be a helpful step. The Visual Research Conference, which was held just before the AAA meeting, was very successful with ten excellent presentations/discussions and was well attended. The Film Festival was held in a suitable room and also attracted many viewers. A record number of films were submitted to the SVA jurying process, of which only about half (40 out of 80) could

be shown at the Festival. Two noted filmmakers, John Collier Jr. (posthumous) and Gary Kildea were presented with Lifetime Achievement Awards at the San Jose AAA meetings by the Section in recognition of their contributions to Visual Anthropology. The editorship of Visual Anthropology Review also changed hands at the November meeting and we are exploring a “two editor” policy for a trial period of three years.

The internal communications of the group are quite close. We currently have an active list serve which alerts members to film festivals at home and abroad. We are connected with the CVA and International Film groups, whose material is electronically circulated to our members. The webpage has undergone significant expansion with the inclusion of video clips from winning Film Festival entries and posting of abstracts for the Visual Research Conference. The most notable change in our organizational aspect is that the retirement of Joan Williams last year was met with the recognition that it takes at least four people to do her job, and the consequent reorganization of the film jurying process. This includes an increase in film jury fees.

Our future plans include an effort to reorganize our finances to economize, so that we can afford the AnthroSource fees. This includes preliminary discussion of eliminating the hard copy of the journal, which is a very controversial proposal. Our Section is looking into some joint conference sessions in the upcoming meetings, particularly with the archaeologists, on filmic representations of indigenous cultures. We are also trying to assemble panels with a focus on the history of Visual Anthropology, since the 25th anniversary of the Visual Research Conference is coming up in two years. Our Section is considering establishing a list of Visual Anthropology programs in North America on our website in the hope that this will attract more students to the organization.

The most important item on our agenda is the financial crisis caused by the unforeseen expenses associated with AnthroSource. The SVA Board discussed going to a three-tier level of membership dues for professional, under-employed and student in an effort to raise dues for those who can afford this. I hope that the new revenue-sharing model developed in consultation with the Sections will help stem the financial haemorrhage, and if it is necessary, I hope that the long-range planning committee will take even further steps to apportion the revenues so that Sections are able to remain solvent. The idea discussed at the Section

Assembly meeting of having a mandate through voting at the Section Assembly to bring items forward or make decisions is one which we endorse, and would like to see developed. I understand that we are at the small end of the mid-range groups, but the drop in our membership is not due to a decline in interest in Visual Anthropology, but to the need to raise fees and the universal availability of journals to AAA members. Many of those with multiple memberships in the past will no longer support a variety of Sections, especially with the AAA dues rising as they have done this year. It is possible that the extra revenue going to the AAA from scaled dues could, in some way, be reapportioned to the Sections, to make up for the decline of their memberships. I have not circulated this idea to other Sections but a pro active move on the part of the AAA Executive Board might go a long way in reducing the general angst of the Sections over their financial situations.

Anne Zeller
President, Society for Visual Anthropology

SVA Board of Directors – 2006 - 2007

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