



Society for the
Anthropology of
Consciousness

2008 Annual Report

STATUS, ACTIVITIES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Membership and Dues

The October 30, 2008 report from the AAA (the most recent available) stated that SAC has 123 regular, 81 student, 15 Retired, 5 Associate, 0 Joint, 1 Life, and 1 International members, for a total membership of 226. This represents a decrease of 13 members over the previous October.

During 2008, our membership numbers ranged from a high of 242 to a low of 226. Since our member numbers usually hover just under 250, SAC now falls into the unenviable category of being a small but (apparently) "historically well-represented" section as defined by the new AAA by-laws. This means that we will constantly have to monitor our member numbers so that we stay above 225.

Due to our excellent financial situation, created by both prudent fiscal planning on our part and increased revenues from the new publishing agreement between the AAA and Wiley-Blackwell, the SAC Executive Board decided to lower dues for our student members from the previous \$15 to \$5 per year (effective Jan. 1, 2009). The dues for all other membership categories remain unchanged.

Communication with Members

To keep our members current on section activities, I mailed out a letter to all members in September 2008. This letter contained information about SAC-sponsored sessions and events in San Francisco and a Call for Papers for our upcoming 2009 Spring Meeting in Portland, OR. It also included a copy of the Call for an Editor for our journal, *Anthropology of Consciousness*.

I also use an email list of current SAC members (as of Sept. 2008) that was obtained from the AAA to "blast" out periodic emails concerning topics of interest, news, etc. to our members.

Other information (including the registration form and Call for Papers for our spring conference) are posted on our section web site.

Finances

The October 31, 2008 Statement of Net Assets showed that as of that date, SAC had Net Assets of \$32,153.99. This figure represents a healthy increase over the Net Assets of November 30, 2007 (\$19,975.21).

For 2009, we submitted a budget that calculated revenues and expenses based only on those necessary to maintain SAC's core activities – production of the *Anthropology of Consciousness*, holding SAC's Spring meeting, maintaining its website, mailing the President's letter to members, etc. With only these expenses, SAC's budget showed a profit of approximately \$10,000.

As we hoped, the transition of AnthroSource to Wiley-Blackwell has resulted in these increased revenues. We intend to reinvest at least some of this money into journal production, and possibly investing in other initiatives, such as redesigning and enhancing our website, publicity efforts to increase membership, and lowering membership dues. At this time, however, we do not know what this funding will look like over the lifetime of the current agreement between the AAA and WB. Consequently, we plan on spending these funds conservatively so that these expenditures do not have an adverse affect upon our financial situation.

Elections

In the spring 2008 elections, Stephen Glazier was elected President-Elect and Amy Smith was re-elected to the position of Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, Marlene Dobkin de Rios, Enoch Page, Hillary S. Webb, and John J. McGraw (Student Position) were elected to the Executive Committee. The President-Elect will serve one year in this position and will become the new President of SAC following the 2009 AAA Meetings in Philadelphia. All of the other officers were elected for two-year terms.

AAA Annual Meetings

The AAA Meetings in San Francisco featured the following panels that were either invited by or (co)sponsored by SAC:

- Black Atlantic and Caribbean Religions: Transnational Flows and Local Histories (organized by George Brandon, CUNY)
- Religion, Anthropology and Cognitive Science (organized by Emma Cohen, Cambridge University, with Maurice Bloch, Stewart Guthrie, and Harvey Whitehouse)
- Toward Critical, Collaborative, and Reciprocal Researches" (organized by Luke Lassiter and Caroline Brettell)
- Comparing Notes: Multi-Vocality and the Shift to Collaborative Research (organized by Jeff MacDonald)

The SAC 2008 Distinguished Lecture was presented by Lewis Mehl-Madrona, who spoke on "Aboriginal Concepts of Mind, Identity, Consciousness, and Mental Health."

Spring Meeting

SAC held its annual spring meeting at the Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT from March 19-23, 2008. The theme of the conference was: "Consciousness and Spirit". James Clement van Pelt and John Baker served as Conference Co-Chairs, and James Clement van Pelt as Site Coordinator. Approximately 50 people attended the conference, which continued our tradition of academically-oriented papers during the day and experiential events in the evening.

SAC Web Site

Although we have several changes and enhancements planned for the SAC website, these have not yet been implemented.

Anthropology of Consciousness

Our journal, *Anthropology of Consciousness*, continues to be published on schedule. All past issues of the journal are now available through AnthroSource. SAC continues to be a strong supporter of AnthroSource, but also adheres to a policy of providing members with print copies of the journal as an extra advantage of membership.

In the summer of 2008, Bonnie Glass-Coffin formally announced that she will be resigning her position as Managing Editor of *AoC* effective July 31, 2009. Following Bonnie's announcement, we initiated a search for a new Managing Editor by issuing a Call for Editor in September 2008. Our search resulted in the appointment of Hillary S. Webb, who will take up the reins on August 1, 2009. A Memorandum of Understanding between SAC and the AAA reflecting this change has already been signed.

New Logo

In 2008, SAC completed its search for a new logo to replace our venerable Medusa logo. The new design, which was approved as our official logo by the SAC Executive Board, appears on the masthead of the first page of this report.

FUTURE PLANS

Spring 2009 Meeting

Our 2009 Annual Spring Meeting will be held April 1-5, 2009 at McMenamins historic Edgefield Resort in Portland, Oregon. The theme is "Bridging Nature and Human Nature." The conference is being co-sponsored by the Association for Transpersonal Psychology.

We are currently studying options for our 2010 Annual Spring Meeting.

OTHER ITEMS AND CONCERNS

SAC remains very concerned about our membership numbers, especially now that we have (quasi-officially) been declared a "historically well-represented" section. As President, I am pleased that the Section Assembly Working Group (of which I was a part) recommended that the minimum size for section status be lowered to 200. Unfortunately, the AAA Executive Board did not agree with this proposal, and accepted a threshold of 225 instead. In spite of my ambivalence about this, I wrote an email to our membership explaining the background of our deliberations and urging them to vote in favor of the proposed AAA by-laws changes (which were adopted).

My concern about our membership numbers has now continued for several years. In spite of a variety of efforts to attract new members, our numbers remain at essentially the same level as in previous years. My conversations with other section heads indicate that many of them are also concerned about their membership numbers. This is one reason why I have been asking (since 2005!) that the **AAA create a new member category (perhaps "Affiliate Member") that would allow people outside of the AAA to join an individual Section without joining the AAA.** Although the details would need to be worked out, I am proposing that Affiliate Members could receive copies (print and/or electronic) of the publication of their section and would enjoy member rates at the annual meetings of their sections, but would not be allowed to attend the AAA meetings, would not be able to vote in AAA elections, and could not hold Section Office. I am repeating this suggestion again because of comments from heads of other sections that they too would welcome the creation of some such "affiliate membership" category.

I believe that this or some other similar step is necessary to allow sections to grow by recruiting outside of the ranks of current AAA members, thereby expanding the potential outreach of the AAA as well. Recognizing that overseeing the membership accounts of such "affiliate members" would result in

increased work for the AAA staff, I also suggest that the dues for affiliate members include a suitable amount to offset the costs of paying AAA staff to complete the necessary work.

In my last (2007) report, I addressed the large turnover that has occurred among the AAA staff over the last few years. While we have gained several new and clearly dedicated individuals, we have lost others who took with them a great deal of institutional memory. Whatever the reasons for these changes, it is my hope that they are now over. Without the AAA staff—who typically hear from sections only when things are amiss—the sections would be unable to pursue their own interests and aims.

Submitted by John Baker, President, on January 27, 2009.

Anthropology of Consciousness Section Officers (2008-2009)

John Baker, President: johnbaker@vcccd.edu
Stephen Glazier, President-elect: SGlaz1234@charter.net
Amy Smith, Secretary/Treasurer: anthroamy@sbcglobal.net

Executive Committee

Marlene Dobkin de Rios: septrion@aol.com
Bethe Hagens: bethehagens@roadrunner.com
Peter Jones: pnj@bauuinstitute.com
Jeffrey MacDonald: jmacd25@hotmail.com
Enoch Page: hepage@anthro.umass.edu
Hillary S. Webb: hillaryswebb@comcast.net
(one position is open due to Stephen Glazier's election as President-elect)

Editor for AN column

Enoch Page: hepage@anthro.umass.edu

Webmasters

John Baker: johnbaker@vcccd.edu
David Xanatos: xanatos@xanatos.com

AAA 2008-2009 Program Editor

Stephen Glazier: SGlaz1234@aol.com

Editor, *Anthropology of Consciousness*

Bonnie Glass-Coffin: bonnie.glasscoffin@usu.edu

SAC Web Site: www.sacaaa.org