



21 Sept 2016

Dear SAC Members,

It is my pleasure to reach out to our members with several big pieces of news about SAC. I would also like to solicit your feedback on where we might go from here as a community. This is the first of what will be biannual letters from the SAC Board and President. We hope that you find this communication useful, and invite any contributions that you wish to share.

The world around us is changing rapidly. Mail lists and printed letters have been replaced largely by digital media. Websites and social media are the new hub for communities, and SAC has taken several steps to place our organization at the forefront of this new era. We have taken the design and management of our web presence into our own hands, resulting in a more personalized new website and Wordpress blog.

Visit the website at [www.sacaaa.org](http://www.sacaaa.org)

The blog can be accessed from the website, or directly at <https://anthropologyofconsciousness.wordpress.com>

While visiting you will notice that the blog has several content categories: Announcements, AOC experientials, Member highlights, Conference papers, and AOC Journal. These categories allow us as an organization to do more than we ever have before. SAC has a long tradition of scholarship, but we also strive to create a space for sharing and discourse around people's experiences (no matter how strange they may be). Long ago experientials were part of the AOC Journal. We are bringing this back, and adding to this dedicated online spaces that highlight what our members are doing. The Conference paper category is another way of getting your work noticed independent of the AOC Journal. The final category, AOC journal, shared the table of contents and abstracts for the journal with links to articles. Please take this opportunity to help develop the content in these categories. Submission can be sent to

our new Social Media Chair, Sydney Yeager. [sydneyyeager@gmail.com](mailto:sydneyyeager@gmail.com). Currently Sydney is managing content as we develop a Social Media team to manage our online presence.

In time, members will be able to submit content directly as well as engage each other in dialogue through a new online platform that we are developing for release in 2017. This platform will be an open access platform with the content categories in the blog transferred to a dedicated website. In the meantime, you can go to our Facebook page to engage the community: <https://www.facebook.com/anthropologyofconsciousness/>

The website, blog, and Facebook page are the new face of SAC to the world. Taking advantage of communication technology, our reach is now truly global. At the same time, we will maintain our mailing system (for those not interested in new systems), emailing out occasional letters and keeping all core SAC news available on the main website.

With our new capacities, the question now is “What kind of presence do we want to have?”

For the past two years the board has discussed our stance, and we feel the best way to answer that is to ask you. Is SAC a purely academic organization, or is there more to us that we wish to make a statement about? Consciousness is a big topic, and we are one of the oldest organizations to have examined it. Yet we remain a small voice. Do we want to reach further? Do we want to take an activist stand?

There are two ways you can contribute. First, at the upcoming AAA and 2017 SAC conferences we will host a dialogue about this subject as part of our business meeting. Please speak up. Secondly, you can make your ideas known by contributing to our blog. In the digital media era, identity can be whatever we want it to be. We have core values as an organization, but we are also diverse. The only way to show that to the world is to make yourself known, so please submit materials for SAC to publish online and in our journal.

Once we have heard from the membership, the SAC board will be rewriting our bylaws to reflect our new stance and the policies that need to be in place for that vision. The new bylaws will be made available online for any members wishing to know more about how we work or the responsibilities of any position they are considering running for in elections. If you want to be more involved, let us know by joining one of the board subcommittees (or start your own). We especially need volunteers to help us with social media, so if you like to post stuff related to consciousness please let Sydney know.

The final piece of news for you comes after much commentary on the spring conferences. We all love retreat locations. Inclusive semi private conferences in a place of great natural beauty are a preference, much better than the typical hotel with a ballroom full of uncomfortable chairs (sorry AAA). Yet these retreats are also costly. For three years we held the conference at McMenemy's in Portland Oregon, and we lost money every time. After much consideration, we have come up with a plan to rotate conference locations biannually. One year will be a retreat style conference, and the other a partnership with an organization that serves both of our mutual interests. Through these biennial partnership conferences, we can do more to integrate with other organizations, which will help bring in new members and create opportunities to share our collective wisdom.

In 2017 we begin this rotation with an incredible partnership with the California Institute for Human Sciences ([www.cihs.edu](http://www.cihs.edu)). CIHS is widely known for its cutting edge research into the field of energy medicine with a device called **AMI**, which is an apparatus to measure the function of the meridian points invented by **Dr. Hiroshi Motoyama**. Please visit their website for more information on the institute. The call for papers will be sent shortly. This will be our first subtle energy themed conference. Exciting!

For this year's American Anthropological Association 115<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Minneapolis, MN, from November 16-20, SAC is sponsoring two sessions focusing on evidence and consciousness from two different perspectives.

The first session, *Perceiving the Improbable: The (Hard) Evidence of Consciousness* (Weds, Nov. 16, 4-5:45 pm, Room 0475) seeks to bridge subjective and “hard science” frameworks in relation to consciousness. This panel hopes to embrace this “suspension of disbelief” mantra of anthropologists. We hope this panel will offer brisk dialogue about the intersection of “hard” and “soft” ways of understanding.

The second session, *Propaganda and Evidence* (Sat, 4-5:45pm, Room 1060) focuses on how power structures and material culture interact with the consciousness of large groups of people. Inspired by the circus-like, propaganda filled American presidential election (which will have occurred a week prior to the conference), this panel will explore the various ways people are influenced by “facts” and how those “facts” are manipulated – both in the way they are presented and the way they are interpreted.

In addition, our keynote speaker for the SAC business meeting is Stanley Krippner (Sat, 7:45pm-9:00pm, Room 1175), renowned scholar of transpersonal states and dreaming.

To conclude, SAC has been very active in these times of transition. We have an amazing board full of energy and enthusiasm helping to bring a new reality forward. We invite you to join us by speaking up and sending in content for us to publish. We thank you all for being part of the SAC community, and look forward to seeing you at the AAA and SAC Spring meetings.

Respectfully,

Bryan Rill, PhD

SAC President