

AAA 1997 Business Meeting Minutes

The AAA Business Meeting was held on November 20, 1997, during the AAA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

President Yolanda Moses reported on the past year of the Association. Topics included: the 1996-97 and 1997-98 Annual Meeting and *Anthropology Newsletter* themes, creation of a Commission to consider reorganization of the AAA governmental structure, a summary of the findings and recommendations of the Commission and establishment of a teaching award and workshops for K-12 teachers.

There was open discussion of the Report of the Commission to Review the Organizational Structure of the AAA.

The following resolutions were approved:

Washington, DC, Statehood

WHEREAS anthropologists have nearly a century-long tradition of supporting the human rights of indigenous peoples abroad and less-powerful subcultures within the United States;

WHEREAS anthropologists such as Franz Boaz and Margaret Mead, representing the activist tradition in anthropology, have supported humanitarian causes among Native Americans, Pacific Islanders and others;

WHEREAS thousands of anthropologists have met in Washington Hilton on alternate years for many years, injecting millions of dollars into the local economy;

WHEREAS the Society for the Anthropology of North America circulated a petition during the 1995 Meeting of the American Anthropological Association which gained some 300 signatures supporting the idea of statehood for the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS District residents, over 60% of whom are African American, are suffering under steadily deteriorating economic and social conditions in the District of Columbia;

WHEREAS rising tax burdens within the District of Columbia constitute a condition of "taxation without representation," a violation of constitutional rights;

WHEREAS the Congress of the United States reserves the right to veto laws that District residents have already adopted through the democratic process;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the American Anthropological Association supports statehood for the District of Columbia, or another democratically agreed upon measure that renders District residents the same rights to participate in the democratic process which other Americans enjoy.

Said, this 20th day of November 1997. (*Submitted by Tanya Y Price*)

Adjunct Statistics

Resolved that the American Anthropological Association solicit information from all departments included in *The AAA Guide* with regard to the employment of adjunct and part-time teaching personnel. The departments will be requested to submit figures on how many such instructors are used, for how many classroom hours and on lowest, median and highest salaries. This information will then be made available to the membership. (*Submitted by Susan di Giacomo and Joseph Gaughan*)

Lift Sanctions against Iraq

WHEREAS the United Nation's sanctions imposed on Iraq for 7 years have caused the death of a million people and resulted in chronic malnutrition among a million of the country's most vulnerable civilians, the Iraqi children;

WHEREAS collective punishment is prohibited by international law;

WHEREAS punishment of innocent people violates universal principles of human rights;

WHEREAS starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is strictly prohibited by international law;

We the members of the American Anthropological Association gathered in the city of Washington, DC, the capital of the United States, on 20 November 1997, hereby call for the immediate lifting of all the trade and travel sanctions imposed on civilians in Iraq. (*Submitted by Soheir Morsy*)

that they reach a membership of 250 within the one-year probationary period.

A group of American Indian/Native American/Alaskan Native anthropologists was approved as a new Interest Group of the AAA.

The AAA 1998 budget was adopted.

The Executive Board reviewed and discussed at length the final report of the Commission to Review the Organizational Structure of the AAA. No action was taken.

The Draft of the Code of Ethics was approved and will appear on the 1998 spring ballot for consideration by the membership.

There was discussion of the 2002 Annual Meeting site. New Orleans was given top priority for future negotiations.

The final report of the Commission on Disability was approved.

AAA Board Creates Lesbian and Gay Section

The AAA is pleased to announce that the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists was approved as a new Section of the AAA at the January 1998 meeting of the Executive Board. Current section co-chairs are Lawrence Cohen (California-Berkeley) and Lisa Rofel (California-Santa Cruz). Those interested in joining this new Section are encouraged to contact the AAA Member Services Department at 703/528-1902, ext 1.

AAA Website Cited

Lycos Top 5%, one of the Internet's best-known website directories, has named AAA's website (<http://www.ameranthassn.org>) as one of the best sites on the Web.

In its review of the site, the Lycos reviewers wrote, "The world's largest association of anthropology enthusiasts provides lots of information on the organization as well as a sizable list of annotated anthro links. The AAA does a good job of using the Web for the benefit of both members and the general public. Find information on the organization, its sections and interest groups, publications (abstracts and tables of contents), and an online directory of the headquarters staff. One of the more useful offerings is the Careers

See AAA Website on page 5

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classification. Along the same line, how can paleoanthropologists talk about hominid change through time without erecting taxonomic categories and creating names? Why is it that those who are more interested in the richness and beauty of biological variation among existing human populations (than past ones), or more interested in biological variation than cultural diversity, are denied the tools for communication and study granted all others? Has a focus on race caused more human suffering than a focus on culture or religion? Absolutely not. Infinitely more human suffering has been caused by religious persecution than racial bias, yet we are to celebrate human cultural diversity while careful-

human variation course with another perspective would probably have accomplished the same for this student if he had ever noticed it. The truth is, innocuous contemporary human variation classes with their politically correct titles and course descriptions do not attract attention of minorities or those other students who could most benefit.

[George W Gill is a professor of anthropology and former chair of the Department of Anthropology, U of Wyoming. He also serves as the forensic anthropologist for Wyoming law enforcement agencies and the Wyoming State Crime Laboratory. He has excavated and studied several hundred human skeletons from tropical

The "reality of race" depends more on the definition of reality than on the definition of race.

ly containing our enthusiasm for racial variation. I detect a bias based not on truth but on prejudice. Those of us (from all races and walks of life) fascinated by biological variation are greatly outnumbered by those more focused on cultural or "ethnic" variations. Are we a misunderstood minority in need of a political action group?

Who Will Benefit?

Students who have been the strongest supporters of my "racial perspective" on human variation have been almost invariably the minority students. The first black student in my human variation class several years ago came to me at the end of the course and said, "Dr Gill, I really want to thank you for changing my life with this course." He went on to explain that, "My whole life I have wondered about why I am black, and if that is good or bad. Now I know the reasons why I am the way I am and that these traits are useful and good." A

West Mexico, Easter Island, Peru and the Great Plains of North America, developed osteological collections that form parts of the national museum collections of Mexico and Chile and served as scientific leader of National Geographic Society's 1981 Easter Island Anthropological Expedition. His article (with Sonia Haas and D W Owsley) "Easter Island Origins: Implications of Osteological Findings" Rapa Nui Journal (1997) proposes an entirely new settlement theory for Easter Island. Gill is a fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and has served as secretary and chairman of the AAFS Physical Anthropology Section. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology and has served on its board of directors. His most recent article on the subject of skeletal biology is "Craniofacial Criteria in the Skeletal Attribution of Race" in K Reichs, ed, 2nd ed, Forensic Osteology (1998).]

AAA Website

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section, with recent job placement advertisements and an online brochure on careers in anthropology. For the general public, quality anthropology links (with descriptions) are available."

This review was published just as the AAA Advisory Group on Electronic Communications has begun its work in developing a comprehensive strategy to examine what the Association currently does and can do on the Internet and with all other forms of electronic communication. Rapid technological development requires us to imagine a wide world of possibilities for the use of electronic communications in creating forums for teaching, exchange of ideas and broad popular dissemination of anthropologists' work.

The Advisory Group would like to hear from AAA members. Send your comments and suggestions to Anthony Galt (galt@gbms01.uwgb.edu) about the current AAA website; David Hakken (hakken@sunyit.edu) about

needs for electronic communication that the AAA should assess; Edward Liebow (liebow@seanet.com) about future e-technologies the AAA should be considering; Jeanette Blomberg (blomberg@parc.xerox.com) about headoffice automation and infrastructure for e-services; Peter Peregrine (peter.n.peregrine@lawrence.edu) about databases, archiving and retrieval that the AAA could provide; and Jon Anderson (anderson@cua.edu) about on-line publications, services for members, departments and other organizations, and outreach in the AAA and in comparable scholarly societies. In addition, Carol Mukhopadhyay will form a focus group of anthropology students using anthropology websites.

The Advisory Group on Electronic Communication is interested in how the Association should approach electronic communication as a medium for scholarship, member services, departmental relations and outreach. Comments and suggestions received by March 1998 will be included in a preliminary report to the members to be published in the May 1998 issue of the *Anthropology Newsletter* and on the Association's website for additional comment.

Reorganization

Continued from page 1

sion's report was the subject of considerable debate. The result of a year-long study by a 10-member Commission, under the chairmanship of Art Gallaher (former president of the U of Kentucky), the report was released prior to the 1997 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. During the Annual Meeting, a number of open forums on the report were conducted to solicit the views of Association members. The report was also the subject of discussion at the Annual Business Meeting, Section Assembly and Executive Board meeting.

In adopting amendments to the recommendations of the Gallaher Commission's report, the Executive Board addressed each of the major concerns expressed over the course of the November Annual Meeting, about specific recommendations of the Commission.

Building on the Gallaher Commission's work, the AAA Executive Board adopted a plan whereby the entire Board will in the future be elected at-large, ie, by a vote of the entire AAA membership, in competitive elections. The plan calls for designated seats for cultural anthropology, archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, practicing/professional anthropology, a minority anthropologist and a student anthropologist. In addition, 5 open (ie, undesignated) seats on the Board will be elected from among the membership at large.

A much-strengthened Nominating Committee, elected by the membership, would have seats designated to cultural anthropology, archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, practicing/professional anthropology and a minority member. Three additional seats would be elected from the membership at large. The Nominating Committee would be charged to develop slates of candidates with strong section leadership experience, minorities and the full range of anthropological employment settings.

A section "charter" would provide individual sections with greater autonomy over their publications, membership criteria, allocation of their resources and the ranking of their submissions for the AAA scholarly annual meeting program.

Under terms of the plan adopted by the Executive Board, more of AAA's committees would be elected by the membership, including the Long-Range Planning Committee, which—following the composition of the Executive Board and Nominations Committee—would have seats designated for the 4 fields, practicing/professional anthropology and a minority anthropologist, as well as three undesignated seats elected at-large by the entire membership. Committees of the section assembly would be left to that body to determine.

One section of the Gallaher Commission's report that elicited especially strong reaction at the AAA Annual Meeting—a plan to restructure the AAA membership categories and provide the *American Anthropologist* as an Association benefit to every member—was put off for subsequent Executive Board discussion following a survey of AAA's membership.

Why a Poster?

A few good reasons to present a poster for the 1998 Annual Meeting poster sessions:

- Afford strong advantages for communicating
- Enhance dialogue among colleagues
- Provide many levels of sharing and networking difficult to achieve in the paper sessions

■ Present greater opportunities for graphic flexibility

■ Are displayed for two hours, providing many opportunities for discussion and detailed study.

To read more about posters call the AAA Meetings Department, 703/528-1902, ext 3009 or 3025, for a poster packet.



Linda Maria Small talks up her research, "Indiana Jones and the Anasazi," presented as a poster during the 1997 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. Creative, eye-catching and informative, Small's poster graphically answers the question "Why a poster?" (Photo by Chester Simpson)