Annual Report December 2002- November 2003

Anthropology and Environment Section,
American Anthropological Association

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President, 2001-2003

The A&E section has maintained fairly stable membership, hovering around 500. This is noteworthy in that we do not provide a publication for members. Our communications are instead based on the Internet. Consequently, we have a fairly ample budget which we've been able to use to help develop working groups, workshops and conferences, awards for scholarship, and support for the AAA Public Policy Institute initiative. We carried over $9,486.20 from the previous year. We are likely to carry over roughly that amount next year.

The budget for 2004 was approved by the Executive Board and the AAA at last year's annual meeting. One important change was the provision of a modest share of travel expenses for the student member-at-large and the program committee chair to attend the annual meeting ($500 each). Another was to increase website development and management to $1500 while retaining $500 for the person who moderates and maintains eanth-l, the listserv at the University of Georgia that is a proxy for our own. We had also allocated $500 to a Public Policy Award, for the second year (we did not have it this year, and thus $1000 is available for next year's award). As will be shown later, we agreed upon changes to the 2004 budget that will enable the implementation of a new Rappaport Student Panel (reducing the existing Rappaport student paper prize to $250 from $500 and budgeting $500 to provide $100 each towards AAA travel to 5 student panelists). We have adjusted the "Outreach and Education" category to absorb the extra $250 involved. We also approved a one-time allocation of $200 for a major event surrounding the first biannual Lourdes Arizpe Public Policy Award (we already allotted $500 for FY 2004 and have a $500 carryover from FY 2003, making the total $1200). This money comes from our "surplus" (which we have been careful not to reduce below our expected annual revenue level)

The A&E helps support a "listserv" based at the University of Georgia, eanth-l@uga.edu, as the basis of communication with members and others about matters of mutual interest, with the part-time assistance of Josh Lockyer, a graduate student at that institution. We also maintain a website, http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/ej/jpe/anthenv/ , at the University of Arizona, with the part-time assistance of a web-master, currently Sheri Seminski of Rutgers University. We find that the listserv and web-site are extremely important modes of communication and only regret that the AAA's own e-mail list for our section has too many errors and omissions to be useful in communicating with members.

Two of the four areas identified as of particular interest to A&E members have developed with A&E support: a Conservation and Community Working Group and an Environmental Justice Working Group.

The Conservation and Community Working Group has its own electronic e-mail list aecc-l@listserv.ura.edu. In September 2002 A&E joined with Culture & Agriculture to hold a
conference at the University of Georgia, co-organized by Pete Brosius and Kendall Thu. That meeting was followed by a very successful training workshop in Conservation and Community held at the November 2002 AAA meetings, led by Diane Russell, Paige West, and Wendy Weisman:

"This three-hour workshop is designed for students, professors and practitioners who want to enhance their ability to design, implement and garner funding for anthropologically-oriented research in conservation. We feature four leading experts in community-based conservation: ethnobotanist Janis Alcorn (formerly of Biodiversity Support Program); lawyer and anthropologist Owen Lynch (Center for International Environmental Law); anthropologist Mac Chapin (Center for the Support of Native Lands), and anthropologist Alaka Wali (Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago). Our trainers will demonstrate and discuss tools and strategies that include how to collaborate effectively with indigenous, local and transnational conservation efforts, community mapping, supporting local environmental law institutions, and funding your project."

The Conservation and Community Working Group did not hold a special workshop in 2003. However, its members were involved in a conference organized by Pete Brosius at the University of Georgia which brought together biologists and anthropologists working in the field of conservation.

In 2003 the Environmental Justice Working Group, led by Kelly Alley and Melissa Checker, sponsored a workshop at the November 2003 AAA meetings in Chicago. It was called "Crossing the Divide: Anthropologists and Effective Environmental Justice Policy Intervention." The goal was to bring together professionals and anthropologists to discuss their own environmental justice issues and problems. They discussed experiences and strategies for contributing to public policy initiatives and collaborating across academia, professional fields, and grass-roots organizations.

The A&E section has one invited session at the annual AAA meetings. The 2003 session was "Conservation as Science, Discourse and Practices of Control: Conflict with Indigenous Peoples." In addition, the program committee, led by Christopher Tarnowski, reviewed many other sessions, helping to ensure a large number of high quality sessions that focused on environmental questions.

Our section was very active in supporting candidates for positions in the AAA, particularly the Public Policy Committee, continuing the initiative of previous A&E presidents, particularly Peter Brosius, who together with Kendall Thu continues to lead efforts to create a viable Public Policy Institute within the framework of the AAA. We strongly recommend that this remain high on the list of priorities and goals for the Long-Range Planning Committee, the Executive Board, and the AAA. The A&E section donated $1000 to the Public Policy Committee to help its planning effort in this regard.

The A&E section has been particularly active in developing and implementing awards for scholarship in the area of anthropology and the environment. In addition to the long-standing Rappaport prize for the best graduate paper in the field, we now have a "Junior Scholar Award,"
for the best refereed journal article by a junior (pre-tenure) scholar (first awarded in 2002); the Julian Steward Monograph prize for the best environmental anthropology monograph (first awarded in 2003); and, beginning in 2004, a public policy award that is named after Lourdes Arizpe. At the 2004 AAA meeting there will be a special reception on the program to launch this award. Pam Puntenney has chaired the committee that is designing the award and seeking an endowment for its continuation.

An important change has occurred in the design and administration of the Rappaport prize for the best graduate student paper. Starting in 2004, we will invite graduate students to submit abstracts to our Program Committee which will be reviewed for possible inclusion in a Rappaport Student Panel, at the AAA annual meeting. The 5 student panelists whose papers are chosen will be awarded $100 each to attend the meeting; the program committee and others on the executive board will work with them as well to prepare their papers in advance. The best paper will receive the Rappaport student paper prize (which will have been reduced to $250 from $500), but all 5 will have had the distinction of participating in the panel as well as the mentorship of members of A&E.

At its annual business meeting, the members of A&E also approved a resolution drafted by Peggy Barlett, which asks the AAA to consider the following resolution:

"that all anthropology general textbooks include elements of environmental literacy:

An understanding of the roots of environmental degradation

Personal responsibility approaches to sustainability

The political economic of industrial society and its relationships to environmental quality, public health, and sustainable ecosystems

The responsibility of the college or university (grounding environmental values in place)

The model is the earlier work of AAA in getting information about race and gender into textbooks.

Respectfully submitted,

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