

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2002

Report of the President and Executive Director

In the fall of 2002, AFS will be bringing to an end the management agreement it has had with the American Anthropological Association since the late 1970s. The AFS Executive Director's office will take on the annual meeting and member services work previously handled by AAA staff, as well as several other responsibilities, and University of Illinois Press will begin publishing the *Journal of American Folklore* for AFS in 2003.

For many years, our working relationship with AAA has served us very well by giving us portions of the time of trained specialists in many areas of association management and programming. But in recent years, the costs of financing this relationship—and, not coincidentally, the deficits incurred by the Society each year—have increased to the point where the Executive Board needed to consider alternatives.

What did we learn through this process of researching alternatives? First, that we can realize significant financial savings by doing more of our own work ourselves. Savings are important. These measures, and others just approved by the Board, will help us bring our annual budget into balance, thereby helping to preserve our organizational health and financial strength.

But savings alone are not enough. We also need to keep the quality of our existing programs, publications, and services at least as high as at present. We need to take active steps to build a larger, more diverse, and more involved membership; and we need to build a stronger institutional identity by presenting a more familiar and identifiable face to our members. We have also made a commitment to build a stronger external identity for the field through active marketing and communications.

In short, we have reached a stage in our organizational development where it is appropriate for us to make significant changes in the way AFS is run. The set of changes the Society's Executive Board has made will move us toward resolution of our budget crisis-in-the-making, and will create a true executive office for the Society to put us in a stronger position to respond to our other challenges.

What are those changes? As I mentioned, the AFS executive office will take over responsibility for annual meeting and member services work, including maintenance of the AFS member database. (AAA staff will complete work on the 2002 annual meeting and the 2002 volume of the *Journal of American Folklore*, and will continue managing our membership system until fall 2002. AAA may also continue to do our accounting work next year, though this work, too, may be contracted to another provider.) The Board has entrusted the *JAF* to the University of Illinois Press, which submitted the strongest by far of the six proposals we received from potential *Journal* publishers.

The executive director's office will be taking over responsibility for the production of the print version of the *AFS News* and the content and maintenance of the AFSNet web site, which is now being redesigned to incorporate new and useful elements for our members and, especially, for public education about our field and the work folklorists do.

The AFS executive office will also begin to serve as a marketing and media office for the Society, using the redesigned AFSNet web site, its contacts with other societies and associations (ACLS, NHA), and AFS members' own media networks, and building a

small number of relationships with national media (e.g., *New York Times*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*).

AFS will also continue to be active in programming and fund-raising work to seek out and create new means of support for folklorists, for the field, and for the Society. In doing so we'll be following through on the objectives of our long-range plan, and on the priorities you expressed to us in our recent member survey (see the summary report of survey findings in this issue of *AFSN*.)

For example, working with partners within the field, by May 2003 we plan to prepare a proposal for an NEH-funded, AFS-sponsored 2004 summer seminar for college teachers, designed to bring folklorists into engagement with scholars in other humanities and social science fields on critical cultural issues (e.g., "tradition in modern life," "the public domain," "documentation and intellectual property"). This may become an annual or regular AFS project. We'll be soliciting possible partners and seminar themes later this year.

In the public domain, AFS has also begun work under contract as a partner in the American Folklife Center's Veterans History Project, and will be subcontracting with AFS members to serve as leaders of community-based workshops on ethnographic interviewing. (By the time you read this, we'll be requesting applications from interested folklorists.)

This will create a *very* full plate for the director's office. We will increase the our capabilities to do all this work by a partnership with Ohio State's Center for Folklore Studies, through which CFS will provide AFS with a portion of the time of its staff to assist with annual meeting, membership, and web site work, and AFS will contribute modest financial support that the CFS can use to assist graduate students and for other activities.

This is a very exciting time for AFS. Soon, when you have a question about your membership payment, you can call one of us. We'll be planning our own annual meetings, creating a more useful and compelling web site, increasing our own financial strength, and finding new ways to support and promote folklore research, scholarly communication, and public education. We're certain that there will be glitches as we transfer responsibility from AAA to our own shoulders and take on new tasks at the same time, so we'll ask you in advance to bear with us during the upcoming transition. It will be more than worth it. Thanks, as always, for your counsel and support.

Jack Santino
Timothy Lloyd

Report of the 2002 Annual Meeting Program Committee

The AFS 2002 annual meeting in Rochester was a remarkable success. Over 650 people registered for the meeting, making it the largest annual AFS gathering in history, except for the 1988 and 1989 AFS Centennial meetings in Cambridge and Philadelphia, respectively.

At the meeting's opening ceremony on October 16 at the Strong Museum, Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr., officially welcomed the Society to Rochester and AFS President Jack Santino presented the following Society prizes:

AFS Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award: W.F.H. Nicolaisen, University of Aberdeen; formerly of the State University of New York at Binghamton

Benjamin A. Botkin Prize (for outstanding achievement in public folklore): Robert Baron, New York State Council on the Arts and Nick Spitzer, University of New Orleans

Zora Neale Hurston Prize (for outstanding student work in African American folklore): Antony Cherian and Mark Westmoreland, University of Texas

Américo Paredes Prize (for outstanding engagement with the communities one studies, and encouragement of students and colleagues to study their home communities): William A. Wilson, retired from Brigham Young University and formerly of Utah State University

Santino also announced that Linda Dégh of Indiana University will receive the 2002 Chicago Folklore Prize for *Legend and Belief: Dialectics of a Folklore Genre*.

Other meeting highlights included:

Plenary addresses by AFS Past President Peggy A. Bulger, Director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress (“Looking Back, Moving Forward: The Development of Folklore as a Public Profession”) and Geoffrey Batchen, City University of New York (“Ere the Substance Fade: Photography and Memory”)

Three special workshops, one on digitizing ethnographic collections, one on audio recording, and one for K-12 teachers on incorporating folklore into the curriculum

Special “behind-the-scenes” tours by staff curators of the collections of the Strong Museum (American material culture and decorative arts) and George Eastman House (photography)

Performances and demonstrations throughout the meeting by some of New York State’s finest folk artists

A rousing Saturday night dinner, dance, and party at St. Dimitria’s Macedonian Orthodox Church, featuring tables full of Macedonian foods and performances of “sacred steel” African American gospel music, Macedonian music and dance, and rhythm and blues

A very large number of community, international, minority, and student folklorists received support to participate in the annual meeting, and the meeting was strengthened by their presence.

Martha Cooper (New York City), Marek Czarnecki (Avon, Connecticut), Eniko Farkas (Ithaca, New York), John Fuyume (Seabrook, New Jersey), Andrew Golebiowski (Cheektowaga, New York), James Lane (Crisfield, Maryland), Ruby Marcotte (Corinth, New York), Grace Ann Netti (Auburn, New York), Karna Singh (Brooklyn, New York), and Randy Wilson (Big Creek, Kentucky), received community scholar stipends provided by the Fund for Folk Culture and the AFS Public Programs Section

Yvonne Atkinson (California State University, San Bernardino), Florence Calhoun (Alexandria, Virginia), Michelle Commander (Tallahassee, Florida), Tamika Edwards (Louisiana Division of the Arts), Leander Jones (Kalamazoo, Michigan), Jereann King (Warrenton, North Carolina), Scheri Smith (Nashville, Tennessee), and Nancy Yan (Ohio State University) received Gerald A. Davis Fund travel stipends from the Society

Mbugua Wa-Mungai (Kenya) Nina Vodopivec (Slovenia), Augusto Ferraiuolo (Italy), and Steve Roud (United Kingdom) received international scholar travel stipends from the Society

Jillian Gould of the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Erica Haskell and Maureen Loughran of Brown University, Tatiana Irvine, Sally Van de Water of Western Kentucky University, and Jamie Yuenger of the Wisconsin Arts Board received student travel awards from the AFS Public Programs Section

The Society received generous support from a number of sources to make the activities of this annual meeting possible: the New York State Council on the Arts, the Fund for Folk Culture, the AFS Public Programs Section, the Theater Development Fund, the New York Folklore Society, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Strong Museum, the Eastman School of Music, the Visual Studies Workshop, and George Eastman House. Our deepest thanks go to them all.

Robert Baron and Ellen McHale, co-chairs

Report of the Editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*

The field office for the *Journal of American Folklore* has now been at the University of Missouri under the editorship of Elaine Lawless for its second year. The University continues to provide exceptional institutional support, including an office, computer, computer support services, printer, mailing, office supplies, phone/Ethernet, a managing editor, two quarter-time graduate student assistants, and a graduate student intern—thanks to the generous support of the English Department Chair, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Provost's Office. In addition, Editor Elaine Lawless recently persuaded the University to increase its support yet again—offering a larger office on the University campus, a second computer, a second printer, more computer support, and increasing the FTE appointment of the managing editor, LuAnne Roth, from quarter time to half time.

The current *JAF* staff (LuAnne Roth, Managing Editor; Jackie McGrath, former Associate Editor; David Todd Lawrence, Associate Editor; and David Allred, Assistant Editor; and Lisa Rathje Taylor, Editorial Assistant) has worked hard sending to press all articles and special issues inherited from the former Editor, as well as processing new submissions. Except for a delay resulting from the combination of Issues 457/458, the journal is now back on schedule. Beginning with Volume 116, Issue 459, *JAF* has relocated its publishing services from the American Anthropological Association to the University of Illinois Press—a move that will undoubtedly bring improved services for *JAF* and its constituents.

The review editors for *JAF* remain the same as last year: Book Review Editor, Moira Smith (Indiana University); Sound Review Editor, Peter Narvaéz (Memorial University of Newfoundland); Film Review Editor, Daniel Wojcik (University of Oregon); and Exhibits Review Editor, Betty Belanus (Smithsonian Institution). The journal continues to implement the new section, "Dialogues," devoted to scholarly responses to articles previously published in *JAF*.

During the past year, the *JAF* staff prepared for publication 18 articles inherited from the former Editor, including three special issues in Vol. 115--Issues 454 (James Macpherson and the Ossian Epic Debate), 455 (Toward New Perspectives on Bauman's *Verbal Art as Performance*), and 456 (Folklore in Canada). In addition to these inherited special issues, *JAF* also finished Issues 457/458 containing 8 papers (7 articles and 1 note) that were recently accepted. Because the aforementioned special issues used a disproportionate amount of *JAF*'s annual page allotment, issue 458 as planned was too small for it to be machine-bound. Hence, Issues 457 and 458 were combined to avoid hand-binding costs.

From September 2001 to September 2002 the *JAF* staff received 32 new submissions, accepted 17 (10 articles and 7 shorter notes or dialogues), and rejected 26 articles (16 rejected outright and 10 rejected with option to revise/resubmit). Note that many of those accepted were submitted during the previous report year. Currently, there are 18 articles (12 articles and 6 notes/dialogues) "in process" under various stages of publication with UIP for special issue 459 (Creolization, inherited from previous Editor) and issues 460 and 461 (all new material); and 9 articles "in process" that are under external peer review.

JAF continues to successfully employ an anonymous review process, implemented last year, whereby the identity of both authors and external reviewers are kept confidential. Finally, the staff continues to solicit articles from AFS members and other scholars whose work is appropriate for *JAF*. Our accumulation of promising articles "in process" assures enough exciting material at this time to publish through the year 2004.

Elaine J. Lawless

Report on the AFS 2002 Member Survey

In order to articulate our goals, and to plan the most productive work toward them, it is critically important that the Board has accurate and timely information about AFS members, their professional status, and their perspectives on the Society's present and future activities. Our most recent member survey—carried out in December 2001

and January 2002, and the first such survey in five years' time—was created to fill that need. Our thanks go to the 257 of you—about 25% of our membership—who submitted responses (221 online and 36 on paper) to the survey.

Most of what follows summarizes the results of this recent canvassing. Before that, though, let's look at the larger picture. Assuming that those who responded constitute a representative sample of the Society—and the number of responses suggests that we can be confident this is so—the Society the survey responses describe looks like this:

1. The membership of the AFS is aging, evidenced by the relatively high average age of members, the fact that many members received their various degrees some time ago, and the relatively advanced rank of AFS members working in academe. This aging trend is not being balanced by a comparable number of incoming younger members.
2. This is a membership of more-than-average organizational loyalty: well over half of those responding have been members for 10 years or more.
3. The membership of AFS is less culturally diverse than it was five years ago.
4. Although most AFS members continue to work in academe, almost half (44%) work primarily in the public sector, generally defined, and a small number hold both public and academic positions.
5. The primary benefits of membership to members are access to current research and methodology, and a set of what we might call “solidarity” benefits: the opportunity to express professional identity, build professional and personal relationships, and the like. These intangible, community-creating and community-building benefits are what keep people members in the Society. (For your information, this result is exactly the same as that found for all 64 American Council of Learned Societies associations in a 2001 survey.) As a result, almost all members (87%) define themselves as folklorists at least some of the time, and about 4 in 10 do so all the time.
6. Following from that sense of benefits, members continue to regard the *Journal of American Folklore* (access to research and methodology) and the annual meeting (access to research and methodology, and the Society's annual in-person gathering) as the Society's most important present activities, though many respondents suggested possible improvements in both.
7. However, members believe that the most important new activities for the Society are those related to outreach, either to scholars and practitioners in related fields or to the public.

These patterns have already helped the Board consider decisions about Society actions. The fact of our aging membership implies (accurately, we believe) that there are a significant number of graduate students and young professionals well below the average age of 47 who are involved in the field but not in the Society. This suggests that for

folklorists of younger ages, membership in AFS is less important than for older folklorists, or that the Society seems less relevant to younger professionals than to older ones. These younger professionals are the Society's future, and it is critically important that they become a more active part of the Society. We are now planning several efforts—primarily by creating a better AFS, but also by making more effective solicitations—to build and retain membership among graduate students and young professionals.

The same is true of the diversity of AFS membership, which if anything appears to have declined since the time of our last survey. Here, too, better outreach will need to be combined with the offering of a more active and energetic Society. As a way to achieve this goal, we plan to use our annual meeting—our most effective and lively public presentation—as the key element of multi-year partnership-building work with institutions (such as Atlanta's historically Black colleges and universities mentioned above in the 2005 annual meeting article) that serve the minority scholars and practitioners we want to reach and include.

And finally, we are taking steps, as outlined in the lead article of this issue of *AFSN*, to add into AFS's repertoire new outreach activities to other fields and the public.

These are certainly not the only conclusions that can be drawn, or possible actions taken, from the survey results. We will continue to work through the response data over the next several months, and encourage you to share your own reactions with us. Thanks again to those of you who took the time to share your information and opinions.

SUMMARY REPORT OF SURVEY RESPONSES

1. Demographics

[Average] Age? 47.1 years

Gender? F: 56%
 M: 44%

Culture/Ethnicity/Race?

44 different responses, predominantly Anglo/Caucasian/WASP/White (152 total responses); African American (4), Asian/Pacific Islander (3), Chicano/a/Latino (1), Native American (2)

US State or Other Country of Residence?

Top 10 states: Pennsylvania (16 responses)
 California (15)
 Indiana (14)
 New York (14)
 Maryland (11)
 Ohio (8)
 Utah (7)

Virginia (7)
 District of Columbia (5)
 Florida (5)

9% from outside the US

2. Education

Almost all respondents followed some part of the BA/MA/PhD track. 59% of bachelor's degrees were earned before 1980; 30% before 1970.

70% of master's degrees were earned before 1990. 63% of doctoral degrees were earned before 1990.

Four most frequently cited undergraduate fields: English (75 responses), anthropology (35), folklore (19), history (17).

Four most frequently cited master's fields: folklore (91), English (39), anthropology (20), American studies (11).

Four most frequently cited doctoral fields: folklore (84), anthropology (18), English (17), American studies (11).

3. Employment

Are you employed at the present time?

Y	88 %
N	10 %
No response	2 %

If you are not employed, are you retired or unemployed?

Retired	15 (58 % of those unemployed)
Unemployed	11 (42 % of those unemployed)

Is your employment related, at least in part, to folklore?

Y	68 %
N	10 %
No response	21 %

Is your folklore-related employment full- or part-time?

FT	50 %
PT	20 %
No response	30 %

Category of employer(s):

Arts organization	10 %
Community development organization	2 %
Cultural organization (humanities, museum, etc.)	15 %
Independent folklore organization	5 %
Self-employed (freelance, consulting)	<u>12 %</u>
Subtotal "Public Sector"	44 %
University or college (administration)	10 %
University or college (faculty)	<u>46 %</u>
Subtotal "Academic"	56 %

Eight respondents indicated that they held both public and academic positions.

For university faculty respondents (N=117) only:

Department? 66 different responses

Departments with more than 1 response:

English	33 responses
Anthropology	17
Folklore	8
American studies	6
Music	6
History	3

Academic rank?	Assistant	17 %
	Associate	17 %
	Full	35 %
	Other	31 %

Tenured? Y 52 %

Adjunct? Y 16 %

Back to all respondents:

Years in current position or current mix of positions: 12.1 years/average

Approximate salary in 2001 from folklore-related work: \$ 38,537 average

Average annual salary from folklore-related work, 1997-2001: \$ 36,989 average

4. Professional Identification

Do you identify yourself as a folklorist?

Y	38 %
N	10 %
Sometimes	49 %
No response	3 %

If you answered N or Sometimes, how (or how else) do you identify yourself professionally?

135 responses, 105 different (23 said anthropologist, 8 ethnomusicologist, 5 English, 4 American studies)

Do your colleagues identify you as a folklorist?

Y	40 %
N	11 %
Sometimes	44 %
No response	5 %

5. Other Society Memberships

Hundreds of different responses

Top five societies mentioned: American Anthropological Association (36 mentions)
 Modern Language Association (21)
 Society for Ethnomusicology (16)
 American Studies Association (14)
 Vernacular Architecture Forum (8)
 All others well below 10

6. AFS Membership and Participation

How long have you been an AFS member?

>1 year	4 %
1-5 years	20 %
6-10 years	19 %

10-20 years	27 %
20+ years	30 %

How important is your membership in the AFS for each of the following?

Percentage of respondents answering “very important” or “somewhat important”:

To keep abreast of research and methodology	93 %
To express my professional responsibility and identity	86 %
To establish, develop, and sustain my professional relationships	85 %
To see people with whom I want to have a personal or social relationship	80 %
To represent my field to the larger public	74 %
To provide an opportunity for reading and discussion across disciplines or in more than one field	74 %
To make presentations at AFS annual meetings	62 %
To contribute actively in support of my profession	49 %
To publish my work in the <i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	43 %
To involve or acculturate my students in the field	41 %
To improve my teaching skills	40 %
To help in finding employment	33 %

When have you engaged in these AFS activities or used these AFS services?

Percentage of respondents indicating engagement in or use of activity or service:

Obtained information from the AFSNet web site or a section web site	93 %
Read the <i>AFS News</i> or the newsletter of an AFS section	83 %
Voted in AFS elections	83 %
Referred to a print or on-line member directory	82 %
Read the <i>Journal of American Folklore (JAF)</i>	80 %

Attended the AFS annual meeting without being on the program	56 %
Made an individual presentation at an AFS annual meeting	49 %
Organized a session at an AFS annual meeting	44 %
Used AFS resources to locate info re ethical standards for the field	40 %
Submitted items for one of these newsletters	38 %
Used AFS resources to locate a fellowship or grant opportunity	36 %
Published a review in <i>JAF</i>	34 %
Served as a member of an AFS committee	28 %
Published an article in <i>JAF</i>	26 %
Nominated someone for an AFS prize or section prize	18 %
Made financial contributions to AFS, over and above membership dues	14 %
Served as a chair of an AFS committee	14 %
Received an AFS prize or section prize	13 %
Served in an editorial capacity for <i>JAF</i>	12 %
Nominated someone for an elected AFS position	12 %
Served in an elected AFS position	10 %

7. American Folklore Society Present and Potential Activities

Please indicate [up to three] present Society activities you believe are the most important.

Percentage of respondents answering that a present activity was among the “most important”:

Annual meeting	82 %
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<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	77 %
<i>AFS News</i>	40 %
AFSNet web site	39 %
Section activities	28 %
Annual meeting travel stipends	15 %
Prizes	5 %

If the AFS planned to eliminate one of its present activities, which would you recommend for elimination as of least importance to you?

40 % did not respond; number (not percentage) of responses as follows:

Prizes	55
<i>AFS News</i>	18 (most of these suggested incorporation into the AFSNet web site)
Section activities	13
AFSNet web site	11
Annual meeting travel stipends	11
<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>	6
Annual meeting	0
Other	29 (most said "Wouldn't change anything," "Don't make me choose," etc.)

Would your employer provide financial support for you to attend the AFS annual meeting if you did not present a paper or participate in the program in some way?

Y	27 %
N	50 %
N/A	23 %

If your answer was N, would this lack of support keep you from attending the annual meeting?

Y	58 %
N	42 %

If the AFS, in trying to achieve its mission, could change one thing about the way it operates now, what single change would make the greatest positive difference?

131 (51%) no response; 126 (49%) other responses, quite varied.

Please indicate the potential AFS activities [up to three] that you believe will be the most important in helping the Society reach its mission.

Percentage of respondents answering that a potential activity was among the “most important”:

Create an AFS media office to actively promote the field	34 %
Produce additional multidisciplinary meetings on critical cultural issues, designed to place folklorists at the center of major cross-discipline conversations	32 %
Expand the AFSnet web site to become a more active site for information exchange within the field and for public education about folklore and folklorists' work	31 %
Advocacy concerning regional, national, and international cultural issues	30 %
Create engaging, innovative materials for folklore courses, both Introductory and advanced	30 %
Create teams of folklorists to make effective long-term connections with related fields and disciplines	30 %
Serve as applicant organization, project manager, and coordinator for folklorists' initiatives; e.g., "think tanks" to encourage the most creative new scholarship, a series of NEH teacher institutes or summer seminars, coordinated national documentation activities, public education projects	28 %
Develop AFS services (financial support, meetings, mentoring, networking) to encourage the production of scholarship	28 %
Carry out a major initiative to market our field to targeted audiences, including culturally diverse audiences, to increase AFS membership	23 %
Develop new publications to serve new needs	13 %

Create teams of folklorists to make effective long-term connections with communities of color and relevant cultural institutions	12 %
Transform the existing annual meeting	10 %
Produce additional meetings on specific topics within the field	8 %
Other alternatives: 228 (89%) no response; 25 responded; no consensus	