

**American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes**

**New Series, no. 50**

**April 20-21, 2001**

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President Peggy Bulger called the spring meeting of the Executive Board to order on April 20, 2001 at 9:15 a.m. in the living room of the Davis Warner Inn in Takoma Park, Maryland.

Members present: Simon Bronner, Peggy Bulger, Norma Cantú, Burt Feintuch, Rosan Jordan, Judy McCulloh, Margaret Mills, and Jack Santino. Members absent: Betty Belanus, Diana N'Diaye, and Elliott Oring. Executive Director Timothy Lloyd was also present. As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, this meeting was recorded on audiotape.

Peggy Bulger called for review and approval of the Minutes of the October 2000 meeting. **Burt Feintuch moved to approve the minutes of the October 2000 meetings as presented. Rosan Jordan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Executive Director Timothy Lloyd gave a report on his activities over the first three months of his employment. As part of that report, he discussed the need for the Board to make a change in its investment management. Our present managers, Commonwealth Financial Partners of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, are not licensed to operate in Ohio. Moreover, our Commonwealth contact Barbara Lee is facing terminal cancer. He presented a proposal from the McCormick Group of Lehman Brothers, located in Dayton, Ohio. The McCormick Group is well known to him, and their proposal suggests that with some minor changes the Society's allocation of investments should remain the same. After discussion, **Peggy Bulger moved to accept the McCormick Group's proposal to become the Society's investment advisors. Judy McCulloh seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** The Board also instructed Lloyd to continue to investigate other options for investment management, including those that may be available to us as a member society of ACLS.

Simon Bronner then presented a recommendation that the Board establish two new Society lifetime awards as one way to help improve the status of folklore scholarship and folklore programs in the academy. The proposed prizes will be named (respectively) the American Folklore Society Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement and the Kenneth Goldstein Award for Lifetime Academic Leadership in Folklore. They would be awarded in alternating years, with the Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award being offered first in 2002. Committees of Board members and Fellows will review nominations and make award recommendations to the Board. After discussion, **Margaret Mills moved that the American Folklore Society Award for Lifetime Scholarly Achievement and the Kenneth Goldstein Award for Lifetime Academic Leadership in Folklore be approved, and that the Executive Board will review the success of these awards and the need for other awards once both awards have been given once. Burt Feintuch seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** The Board also asked Simon Bronner to confirm the Goldstein family's approval of the award in Dr. Goldstein's memory.

Simon Bronner then summarized the discussion process regarding academic issues in the field of folklore that has taken place over the past year, referring to materials the Board had seen and talked about at its January 2001 retreat. After discussion, **Simon Bronner moved that the President**

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**appoint a Task Force on Academic Issues to study these issues and to recommend Board interventions and actions, the first such report to be made at the Board's October 2001 meetings. Margaret Mills seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Timothy Lloyd then presented a public policy statement drafted by the Society's Independent Folklorists Section regarding compensation standards for folklorists working as independent contractors. After discussion, **Peggy Bulger moved that the Board adopt as public policy the Independent Folklorists Section's draft statement on compensation standards for folklorists working as independent contractors, but that the final sentence of the presented draft be dropped and that the Executive Director work with members of the Section to expand the penultimate sentence to provide more details of the expenses of operating an independent business. Norma Cantú seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Burt Feintuch then presented a recommendation from the Membership Committee, which he chairs, that the Board establish an "unemployed" or "underemployed" category of membership, with lower dues than those for regular membership. After discussion, which included presentation of information about other ACLS societies' policies regarding such memberships, **Norma Cantú moved that the Board not accept the Membership Committee's recommendation to establish an "unemployed" or "underemployed" category of membership. Peggy Bulger seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Peggy Bulger then presented the question of whether the Board ought to establish some formal means, such as a dedicated seat on the Executive Board, to ensure graduate student representation in Society governance. The issue seems not so much to be the creation of a dedicated Board seat, but need to create a way for the Board to hear about graduate student issues regularly from students' own messengers. After discussion, **Simon Bronner moved that the Board hold a discussion on student issues and concerns at every annual meeting, led by representatives of the Graduate Student Section, who will present a written agenda for this discussion to the Executive Director beforehand. Jack Santino seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Timothy Lloyd then presented a request from Society member Carl Lindahl that community scholars participating in the annual meeting receive complimentary registration. This practice is, in fact, already in place for the 2001 annual meeting. **Margaret Mills moved that community scholars participating in the annual meeting (i.e., not simply attending the meeting, but taking part in the program) receive complimentary registration. Norma Cantú seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Peggy Bulger then affirmed to the Board that she and Timothy Lloyd had come to agreement on the terms of his letter of employment, a final copy of which had previously been mailed to Board members.

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Other than the matter reported above, the Membership Committee had nothing to report.

Simon Bronner then made the report of the Nominating Committee. He distributed a list of those under consideration by the committee for nomination. There ensued a discussion of the skills and experience needed by future Board and Presidential nominees, the division of labor between President and Executive Director, and ways to make Society leadership more attractive to senior members of the Society. The Board asked the Executive Director to assemble a list of all nominees for Society office over the past twenty years and distribute it to the Board and the Nominating Committee.

Judy McCulloh then made the report of the Publications Committee, summarizing Society activities in both print and electronic publishing. Board members discussed their concern that only ABC-CLIO folklore titles of the very highest quality receive Society endorsements, and that our evaluators have the opportunity to review completed works (ideally at the manuscript stage), not just proposals. Questions were also raised about whether current JAF permissions forms extend to electronic rights.

The Board then discussed the responsibility chart prepared and distributed beforehand by Executive Director Timothy Lloyd, based in a system first introduced to the Board by consultant Mal O'Connor. After discussion, the Board reached consensus with the Executive Director on the sharing of responsibilities in these areas, which is summarized on a chart appended to these minutes (Appendix 1).

The Board then spent the rest of the first day of the meeting discussing the "Future of the AFS" plan outline for Society activities prepared and distributed beforehand by Executive Director Timothy Lloyd. The list of comments, questions, and suggestions made by the Board regarding improvements in existing Society activities or creation of new activities is appended to these minutes (Appendix 2). There was one Board action related to this discussion. **Margaret Mills moved that the Board authorize Board member Norma Cantú to present a proposition that AFS act as a marketing co-sponsor of the upcoming Puebla conference. Burt Feintuch seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting was suspended at 5:25 pm, to resume the following day.

The Board meeting began in the same location with the same participants at 9:22 am on Saturday, April 21, 2001.

Executive Director Timothy Lloyd began the presentation and discussion of the FY 2002 budget by providing historical background on several items, including subscription and membership income and annual meeting expenses.

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He then summarized two possible new initiatives that would, among other benefits, bring increased net revenues to the Society: a partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation for the ethnographic evaluation of one of the Foundation's community development projects, and a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage for the management of a program on Ohio folk cultures at the 2003 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

The Board discussion that followed indicated positive feelings toward the potential Casey Foundation partnership, and concerns that the proposed Smithsonian Institution partnership would become too great a drain on the human resources of the Society's director. It was not clear to all Board members that this was the best use of the Director's time. The Board expressed its at least tentative interest in both potential partnerships, and instructed the Executive Director to continue conversations with both partners and to prepare a more detailed prospectus and budget for the Smithsonian project which clearly focused the Director's time on creative curatorial work, provided Smithsonian support for the costs of all lower-level Festival and AFS work.

The Board then discussed the Society's service of providing advisory letters as part of petitions to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service for P-3 visas for foreign artists. The Executive Director had recommended that in FY 2002 the Society increase its charge for providing such letters from \$50 to \$100. **Margaret Mills moved that the fee the Society charges for providing INS advisory letter be increased from \$50 to \$100, effective immediately. Burt Feintuch seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The Board then discussed other mission- and activity-related, and income and expense matters relating to the proposed budget, including membership development, the Society endowment campaign now in the planning stages, the number of Executive Board meetings each year, member satisfaction with AAA-provided services, and the value of the Society's subsidy of the folklore volume of the annual *MLA International Bibliography*. During these discussions, **Margaret Mills moved that Board Leadership Fund contributions for FY 2001 be used to increase participation at the Anchorage annual meeting. Norma Cantú seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**Margaret Mills moved that the FY 2002 budget presented by the Executive Director be approved as presented, with the additional instruction to the Executive Director to provide a more detailed prospectus on the proposed Smithsonian Institution partnership. Norma Cantú seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The Board then moved to new business. Norma Cantú raised the issue of the proposed Americo Paredes Prize, which the Board had discussed at previous meetings. Board discussion raised the issue of whether this was more appropriate as a Society prize or a prize from a Society section or group of sections. The Board instructed the Executive Director to meet with Cantú and Diana

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N'Diaye on this matter and to bring a recommendation for action to the Board at its next meeting.

Simon Bronner raised the issue of non-Society members becoming members of Society sections, which current AFS policy allows them to do. After discussion, Margaret Mills moved that the Society require that only AFS members could become members of AFS sections. Rosan Jordan seconded the motion. After further discussion, Mills and Jordan withdrew their motion. The Board instructed the Executive Director to report at its next meeting on the number of section members who are not Society members, and the total number of AFS section memberships.

Jack Santino raised the occupational issues described in recent communications from folklorists Winnie Lambrecht of Rhode Island and Bill Westerman of New Jersey, whose employers are instituting workplace practices that would place significant obstacles in the way of their carrying out their work as folklorists. The Board instructed the Executive Director to prepare a short note of support to send to Winnie Lambrecht.

Judy McCulloh raised the issue of communicating the Board's points of view on the Society's present financial situation, and its relation to the Society's mission, goals, and activities, to the membership at large. The Board instructed the Executive Director to prepare an article for the August *AFS News* setting forth these issues, and to share it with the Board before publication.

Burt Feintuch raised the issue of creating organizational memberships in the Society. The Board discussed what the benefits of such a category of membership might be.

**Simon Bronner moved that the meeting be adjourned. Burt Feintuch seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy Lloyd  
Executive Director

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Date

**Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the April 20-21, 2001 Executive Board Meeting**  
**Responsibility Charting Exercise**

With a new executive director's position now in place, with broader authority than the previous executive secretary-treasurer's position, the Board and director need to create agreements for the sharing of responsibility. The purpose of this exercise was to begin to create those agreements.

To begin with, for every decision there are four possible roles:

- A the person or group must approve the decision
- R the person or group is responsible for studying the situation, gathering and analyzing information, and making recommendations for action
- C the person or group must be consulted before the decision is made, but has no veto power
- I the person or group must be informed after a decision is made but before it is publicly announced

In the exercise, Board members and Executive Director discussed potential decisions to identify what each of us believe our roles, and those of AFS committees, editors, and other volunteers ought to be. Our goal was to work through to shared agreements of how we will share responsibility in each area.

At its conclusion, this exercise resulted in agreements, designed to be added to over time, that about shared responsibilities under five major headings, as presented in the following chart.

<b>Area/Decisions</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Executive Director</b>	<b>Committees, Etc.</b>
<b>Annual Meetings</b>			
Selection of cities, sites, times	C	A, R for research	
Selection of program themes	A	C	R (program committee)
Creation of new program elements, formats, events	C, I	C	A
<b>Publications</b>			

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Design of web site	C	A	C (electronic publications subcommittee, publications committee); R contractors)
Contracts for electronic publications activities	C	A	R, C (publications committee, electronic publications subcommittee)
Publication and distribution method for <i>AFS News</i>	C	A	C (publications committee)
<b>Finance</b>			
Selecting investment advisor	A	R	
Setting investment policies	A	R	
Approval of budget	A	R	
<b>Marketing</b>			
Creating membership materials	I	A	C (membership committee)
Changing member Benefits	I	A	C (membership committee)
Designing promotional campaigns	I	A	C (membership Committee)
<b>Initiatives</b>			
Developing new programs and partnerships	C	A, R	
Fundraising for new programs and partnerships	R: Is Involved	A, R: Leads	

**Appendix 2 to the Minutes of the April 20-21, 2001 Executive Board Meeting**  
**Executive Board Discussion Points about Society Activities**

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## **General**

A way to set necessary priorities among activities: What can we do better than anyone else?

## **Partnerships and Audience Building**

Add connections outside the Society to expand our constituency  
Create relationships with commercial partners and sponsors (the History Channel does it)  
Use regional studies conferences as opportunities to make vernacular culture presentations  
Create folklore "SWAT" teams to serve as activist representatives from folklore and AFS to other fields and societies  
Create folklorists' presence and gatherings at other meetings  
Prepare *AFS News* piece inviting ideas for collaboration  
Keep an archive of good and bad press re folklorists, the field, and the Society

## **Annual Meeting**

An earlier deadline for proposals would allow more time for program committee work, give the Society more time to promote the meeting, and create a bridge from one meeting to the next, since people attending one meeting might well be preparing their proposals for the next one  
Increase the intellectual quality and variety of meeting presentations:  
a more critical proposal review  
E-mail sessions: call for topics, active recruitment of participants, electronic submissions, web distribution before annual meeting, discussions at meeting  
NEA TAG support for top-notch speakers and fall (and possible spring) meetings  
Focused sessions on larger projects within the field  
Public intellectuals or other figures (e.g., Robert Bellah, Barbara Ehrenreich, Studs Terkel, Steven Ambrose, Murray Horwitz)  
Present two "big book" authors—one a folklorist, one not—with two folklorists as discussants; make this session "Exhibit A"  
Use the idea of "social capital" as a generator of discussions  
Give the program committee a broader authority to shape theme presentations  
Themes as criticism of established paradigms; zones of destabilization  
Annual meeting presentations should problematize and/or answer "why" or "so what" questions; answers to those questions ought to be required in abstracts  
Present, over several years' meetings, sessions on major international issues (e.g., World Intellectual Property Organization draft on the protection of traditional knowledge)

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Create meeting presentation formats encouraging non-academic discussions—roundtable sessions, poster sessions, etc.  
Improve the appearance and increase the advertising in annual meeting program books  
Send programs to attendees and others beforehand as pr  
Record annual meeting presentations for sale

### **New Program Ideas**

Create annual spring meetings that reach out; that bring people to us; folklore should seize the high ground  
Coordinate and lead multi-disciplinary meetings  
Take the Collections in Crisis symposium on the road  
Create NEH-funded summer teacher institutes and seminars: could AFS provide administrative staff support to faculty leaders?  
Use Ohio State University (location of AFS executive director's office) as a locus for multi-year seminars  
AFS as conduit for Rockefeller Foundation multi-year fellowships