

American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes

New Series, no. 59

October 19 and 23, 2005

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President Michael Owen Jones called the annual meeting of the Executive Board to order at 1:10 pm on October 19, 2005, in the Boardroom of the Renaissance Atlanta Hotel Downtown in Atlanta, Georgia. Members present: Carole Carpenter, John Dorst, Bill Ellis, AFS President-Elect Bill Ivey, Alan Jabbour, AFS President Michael Owen Jones, Dorry Noyes, Sandy Rikoon, Elaine Thatcher and Steve Zeitlin. Members absent: William Wiggins, Jr. Executive Director Timothy Lloyd was also present. As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, this meeting was recorded on audiotape.

Michael Owen Jones introduced the board and called for review and approval of the minutes of the March 2005 meeting. **Bill Ivey moved that the minutes of the March 2005 meeting be approved. Sandy Rikoon seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Michael Owen Jones then made the President's report, referencing the printed version of this report which will appear in the December 2006 *AFS News*. He cited the improvements in annual meeting production that have taken place in the last year, including shifting most annual meeting communication to e-mail, videotaping selected annual meeting sessions, and the creation of a student travel stipend program. He went on to recommend that the Society undertake a campaign to solicit documentary materials from past AFS meetings that may be in members' hands.

Jones then announced the recommendations for the four prizes the Society will award at this annual meeting. The Benjamin A. Botkin Prize committee recommended that James Leary of the University of Wisconsin receive this year's prize. The Zora Neale Hurston Prize committee recommended that Scott Edmondson of UCLA receive this year's prize. The Américo Paredes Prize committee recommended that Enrique Lamadrid of the University of New Mexico receive this year's prize. The Kenneth S. Goldstein Award for Lifetime Academic Leadership committee recommended that Roger D. Abrahams, *emeritus* of the University of Pennsylvania, receive this year's prize.

In the discussion of Society prizes that followed, Board members focused on matters of prize policy and on the need to effectively solicit more nominations for each prize. **John Dorst moved that the Board establish the policy that at least two nominations for a prize must be received for the prize to be offered in a given year, and that all AFS prize nominations remain active for two years past the year in which they are made. Elaine Thatcher seconded the motion. After further discussion, the motion was defeated, ten votes to none.**

Board members agreed that a single strong nomination should not be passed over in a given year. **Carole Carpenter moved that all AFS prize nominations**

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remain active for two years past the year in which they are made.
John Dorst seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The Board went on to discuss AFS prizes further, and there was consensus that the prize award process in general needs to be made more inclusive and proactive. Sandy Rikoon offered to investigate the ways other societies operate their prize and award committees.

Executive Director Tim Lloyd then made the director's report, summarizing the Society's financial performance for fiscal year 2005, which ended on August 31, 2005. Unaudited figures showed that the Society had net income for the year of approximately \$35,000, a more positive result than we had anticipated. During the same year, the value of the Society's cash reserve account grew from \$350,000 to \$387,000, and the endowment fund grew from \$8,000 to \$67,000 because of present gifts to the planned giving program. Finally, the total of future pledges and present gifts to the quiet phase of the planned giving program has grown from \$183,000 to \$524,000. Lloyd will make the first public announcement of the planned giving program, and of this total of quiet phase pledges and gifts, to the membership at the annual business meeting on October 22.

Lloyd discussed several other subjects in his report. Brent Björkman started work as the AFS associate director on September 1, 2005. The 2008 annual meeting will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, and negotiations are underway to hold the 2009 annual meeting in Boise, Idaho. The Society is negotiating an agreement with the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization in Oxford, England, to take over publication of the *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* as an annual volume, to be titled *Jewish Cultural Studies* and to be provided to all members of the Society's Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Section as a benefit of membership. Beginning with the 2006 volume, the Society will no longer distribute the bimonthly *AFS News* in hard copy. Work on the Society's various special projects—the Veterans History Project contract with the Library of Congress, the NEH-funded James Madison Carpenter critical edition project, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded ethnographic thesaurus project—is proceeding according to or ahead of schedule.

President-Elect Bill Ivey then announced that the Society had recently received a \$49,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to plan and lead a meeting of representatives from the fields of folklore, oral history, and ethnomusicology to discuss the changing relationships of these fields with the academy. The meeting will take place at Vanderbilt University in spring 2006. This project is a first step toward the goal of improving the status of folklore in the academy that Ivey had announced as a priority were he to be elected President.

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The meeting paused briefly at 2:35 pm, and resumed at 2:53 pm.

New Journal of American Folklore editors Harris M. Berger and Giovanna P. Del Negro of Texas A&M University then joined the meeting and discussed their editorial policies, procedures, and plans for their five-year term as editors. They are exploring the possibility of including color images in the *Journal*, and they indicated that they would be approaching the Board in spring 2006 with a request for increased financial support of the *Journal's* editorial office. The Board indicated its support for their work.

Berger and Del Negro left the meeting at this point.

The Board then discussed several questions of membership development, including ways to build student membership and retain senior members past their retirement, but took no actions.

At 3:50 pm the Board entered into executive session to discuss the new contract for the executive director's employment through 2010 that had been drafted by the director, Bill Ivey, and Sandy Rikoon. The executive director left the meeting at this point, and the recorder was turned off.

At 4:24 the Board returned to open session and the executive director rejoined the meeting. **Michael Owen Jones moved that the proposed 2006-2010 contract for the executive director's employment be approved as presented. Bill Ivey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting was paused at 4:30 pm, to resume at 8:30 am on Sunday, October 23.

President Michael Owen Jones reconvened the annual meeting of the Executive Board at 8:30 am on October 23, 2005, in the Boardroom on the 25th floor of the Renaissance Atlanta Hotel Downtown. Members present: Carole Carpenter, John Dorst, Bill Ellis, AFS President-elect Bill Ivey, Alan Jabbour, AFS President Michael Owen Jones, Dorry Noyes, Sandy Rikoon, Elaine Thatcher and Steve Zeitlin. Members absent: William Wiggins, Jr. Executive Director Timothy Lloyd, Associate Director Brent Björkman, and Barbara Lloyd, Associate Director of The Ohio State University's Center for Folklore Studies, were also present. As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, this meeting was recorded on audiotape.

Michael Owen Jones opened the meeting by bidding farewell and expressing the Board's gratitude to departing Board members Carole Carpenter and John Dorst, and to Barbara Lloyd for her services to the Society during our transition to self-management. The Board presented gifts to Carpenter, Dorst, and Lloyd.

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Barbara Lloyd left the meeting at this point.

Dorry Noyes then introduced the topic of international scholarly communication in folklore. She and the AFS staff are pursuing the goal of an H-Folk listserv for international scholarly communication in folklore, to be coordinated by an international committee and operated by the H-Net listserv administration at Michigan State University.

To make this listserv truly international, we are pursuing the possibility of operating it as a partnership including AFS, the SIEF (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore), the ISFNR (International Society for Folk Narrative Research), and the FSAC (Folklore Studies Association of Canada). This listserv should be edited outside the US: possible central editorial locations include the University of Tartu, Estonia, or the National Folklore Support Centre in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

The Board then discussed the eventual costs of this endeavor, which are unclear at this point, and the need for a plan for the proposed partnership among societies. Michael Owen Jones asked Noyes and Lloyd to pursue this matter further and to report back to the Board at its next meeting.

At 9:12 am, Teresa Hollingsworth of the Southern Arts Federation, co-chair of the 21005 annual meeting committee, joined the meeting for a discussion of the AFS annual meeting planning process from the local perspective. This included field trips, the addition of a Saturday night concert rather than the traditional dinner/dance, and an overview of the work of the local planning committee as they worked throughout the year. Following this presentation the board responded with positive feedback for the 2005 program and heralded the planning group working to set the meeting's thematic content. Noyes also relayed that the international visitors she spoke with were happy with panels and the diversity of presentational themes.

Bill Ellis shared his concern that section meetings are often hard for members to get to due to the many things going on throughout the lunchtime hour. Executive Director Tim Lloyd replied that this is a concern often expressed and relayed that several sections are starting to think about inviting their own speakers and presenters into their meetings. Ellis suggested that many section business meeting matters could and should be taken care of prior to the meeting, perhaps on-line.

Carpenter commented on the positive response to the Folklore Fellows-sponsored reception for students and the welcome and orientation breakfast for new attendees and stipend recipients.

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The meeting was paused at 9:42 am, and the group reassembled at 10:05 am. Hollingsworth left the meeting at this point.

Wisconsin folklorists Anne Pryor and Rick March then joined the meeting to report on the planning for the 2006 annual meeting in Milwaukee. Their group had two thematic ideas for the fall meeting, Diasporas and Homelands and Creativity (Individuals in Tradition). The downtown Milwaukee area is accessible and pedestrian-friendly.

Pryor and March left the meeting at this point.

Under the heading of old business, Steve Zeitlin asked whether the History and Folklore Section is interested in supporting the idea of an AFS historian. Executive Director Tim Lloyd indicated that they are.

Steve Zeitlin then discussed the recent work of the Society's task force on the cultural impact of the war in Iraq. The task force did not come back with a report in the year's time allotted to them. He suggested that part of the reason for this was that the Society did not provide the members of the task force with the resources to do their job effectively. The Board might consider putting money into commissioning reports, as needed, on larger social issues or processes to which folklorists can make a contribution. Sandy Rikoon recommended that this take the form of an ongoing attention to a variety of issues, and should not just involve immediate responses to emergency situations.

In further discussion concerning the promoting our field, Elaine Thatcher added that since we, as a society, have voiced concerns about the marginalization of our discipline we should be issuing press releases as these opinions are formed. Sandy Rikoon added that there should be thought to briefing legislators as well.

Ivey expressed his attraction to an electronic folklore issues watch list but suggested that the elements and mechanism that surround its construction must be well thought out. He suggests this issue may be best addressed by creating a think tank.

Steve Zeitlin next expressed his concern on the continuing issue of the diversity of the Board's membership. **Zeitlin moved that the Board propose an amendment to the *AFS Bylaws* giving the Board the authority to appoint up to two of its members in addition to those elected by the customary annual election process. Elaine Thatcher seconded the motion.**

After discussion, Zeitlin and Thatcher agreed to withdraw their motion. Executive Director Tim Lloyd will work with them to prepare changed *Bylaws* language for the Board's consideration at its next meeting.

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Elaine Thatcher then spoke for independent folklorists and asked the board to revisit income-based dues system and issues surrounding implementation. Executive Director Tim Lloyd responded that he was currently working on investigating this concern and would have something substantial to report at the next Board meeting in spring 2006. Sandy Rikoon added that he would also like to put a discussion of minority fellowships on the agenda for the spring board meeting that includes a traveling fellowship to different universities.

Michael Owen Jones moved to adjourn the meeting. Alan Jabbour seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Lloyd
Executive Director

Date

Approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board

Bill Ivey
President

Date