

## **American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes**

**New Series, no. 60**

**April 28, 2006**

**p. 1**

President Bill Ivey called the annual meeting of the Executive Board to order on April 28, 2006, at 8:05 am in the Executive Boardroom of the University Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio. Members present: Diane Goldstein, Bill Ellis, Alan Jabbour, Bill Ivey, Dorry Noyes, Sandy Rikoon, Dan Sheehy, Kay Turner and Steve Zeitlin. Members absent: Michael Owen Jones and Elaine Thatcher. Executive Director Timothy Lloyd and Associate Director Brent Björkman were also present. As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, this meeting was recorded on audiotape.

Ivey began the proceedings by welcoming the board and by going over the meeting process. He encouraged this meeting to be “full,” with the input of the AFS staff a welcome component of the proceedings, and offered that our prime priority and responsibility is strengthening the health and well-being of the society. Ivey then asked members of the Board to introduce themselves, giving their affiliation and present research or professional interests.

Ivey then called for a review and approval of the minutes of the October 2005 meeting. **Alan Jabbour moved that the minutes of the October 2005 meeting be approved as presented. Sandy Rikoon seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Tim Lloyd began his Executive Director’s report by passing out and explaining to the board the AFS annual audit for fiscal year 2005, which ended in August 2005. This audit incorporates what is known as a “clean opinion”: a statement that Rea and Associates, the accounting firm carrying out the audit, found that our recordkeeping accurately reflected the Society’s financial standing.

Lloyd then introduced the idea of AFS taking over its own day-to-day accounting work. The work of our present accountant has been unsatisfactory in some respects, and we could recognize a cost savings if we did this work ourselves, and retained Rea and Associates to provide quarterly reviews of our work. **Bill Ellis moved that the Board approve the Executive Director’s proposal that the Society staff take over full responsibility for day-to-day accounting and financial record-keeping beginning in September 2006, and retain an accounting firm to undertake periodic reviews of AFS bookkeeping procedures and records in addition to the annual audit. Alan Jabbour seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Ivey then recommended that so long as AFS was not directly providing health insurance for its employees (both the executive director and associate director are now covered by their spouses’ health insurance policies), AFS should compensate staff for the difference in premiums between individual health insurance and self-and-spouse health insurance. The Board indicated its agreement with this recommendation, and asked the executive director to put it into practice.

**American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes**  
**New Series, no. 60**  
**April 28, 2006**  
**p. 2**

Lloyd continued his director's report, including an overview on the topic of current *Journal of American Folklore* subscriptions in print and electronic formats and a summary of plans underway for the 2006 annual meeting in Milwaukee.

The meeting paused briefly at 10:31, and resumed at 10:45.

Associate Director Brent Björkman made a report on his work toward developing a year-round professional development and mentorship program for AFS. Over the past four months, he has interviewed members of the society to find out the variety of professional needs that these members believe are crucial for a healthy and growing organization, and the ways in which AFS could design and carry out a program of professional development activities throughout the year and throughout a person's career, in addition to the growing number of professional development workshops AFS has been conducted at annual meetings. Björkman has consulted with a cross section of members, including students, senior members, new professionals, public folklorists, and independent folklorists.

The issues that were paramount in importance for public folklorists included: the replacement of senior public folklorists, many of whom will be retiring in the next 10-15 years; concerns for the preservation and upkeep of local, state, and regional public folklore archives; and the rapidly changing world of technology that influences both the current ongoing collection and fieldwork process as well as the dissemination of educational public programs as part of organizational outreach. For members of the academy, surveyed senior members and student members welcome the idea of creating a mentorship program where long-standing members could share their folklore knowledge with those just beginning their folklore careers.

Over the next few months, Björkman will be continuing this consultation process, and he and Lloyd will ultimately create a written overview of these programming ideas that will serve as a summary of the society's professional development goals as we begin to seek funding partners for this work.

Board members recommended that Björkman continue this process of consultation, focusing in the upcoming months on the needs of academic folklorists. Based on Björkman's presentation, the board suggested several additional ideas: bringing together senior and student members by creating a "take a student to lunch" event at the annual meeting, using senior/student pairings to introduce the importance of the business meeting to younger members, and inventing ways to build longer-term relationships between younger and senior folklorists.

Sandy Rikoon then presented a report on the Society's 2006 Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award. He announced that Don Yoder has been recommended as the recipient of this award. **Alan Jabbour moved that the Board accept this recommendation. Diane Goldstein seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Rikoon continued on this topic by recommending that more detail for

**American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes**

**New Series, no. 60**

**April 28, 2006**

**p. 3**

the award's application process be communicated to the membership, and he presented a document suggesting improvements in the nomination solicitation process and materials. In addition, he suggested that the Board might discuss the possibility of implementing an open nomination process for the award as part of the business meeting.

The meeting paused for lunch at 12:00 pm and resumed at 1:05 pm.

The Board began the afternoon session with its annual review of the Executive Director's performance. This discussion was held in executive session. Lloyd and Björkman left the meeting at 1:05 pm and returned at 1:20 pm.

Lloyd then presented a proposal for a proposed *AFS Bylaws* change regarding the composition and diversity of the Executive Board. AFS nominating committees have recommended that the Board design ways to ensure that the Board becomes more broadly representative of the Society's present and desired future membership. After working on this matter with Board members Steve Zeitlin and Bill Ivey, he recommends that, to reach toward this goal, the Board propose to the membership that a subsection (f) be added to Article IV (Officers), Section 1 of the *AFS Bylaws*, reading:

“The Executive Board shall also have the authority to appoint to the Executive Board, every three years, one (1) Society member drawn from a stakeholder group within the Society of priority to the Board, for a term of three (3) years.”

**After discussion, Bill Ellis moved that the Board approve proposing this *AFS Bylaws* change to the membership in the 2006 election. Dorothy Noyes seconded the motion, which passed, 8 votes to 1.**

Lloyd recommended that the first group we should look to for helping to determine potential individuals for this appointment is the nominating committee.

Lloyd then presented the FY 2007 budget proposal and notes. **After discussion, Sandy Rikoon moved that the FY 2007 budget proposal be approved as presented. Bill Ellis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting paused at 2:33 pm and resumed at 3:00 pm.

Under the heading of old business, Lloyd presented an overview of how AFS's current dues structure, and summarized work he was undertaking to research the possibility of other dues structures, including ones based on income, or one which included special categories for low-income people. At this time he has no recommendations to make, but he will continue looking into this matter. Goldstein voiced the issue of fluctuating exchange rates and the fees paid to AFS by its international members. Turner added that we might usefully take into account the “full” cost of being a member, including AFS membership and the costs to travel to and participate in the annual meeting.

**American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes**

**New Series, no. 60**

**April 28, 2006**

**p. 4**

Several Board members recommended that AFS continue to devote a great deal of continued attention and effort to expanding the number and value of member benefits.

Margaret Yocom, co-convenor of the AFS Folklore and Creative Writing Section, has been pursuing a closer institutional relationship between the Society and the Association of Writers and Writing Program. Lloyd recommended that the Board name her the Society's liaison with this organization. **Bill Ivey moved that the Board appoint Margaret Yocom as the AFS liaison to the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. Kay Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The Board then began a conversation on AFS's policy and position statements. This discussion included the distinction between statements of policy and of position, the need to design a better system for receiving proposals for such statements from the membership, the question of AFS sections taking positions apart from the larger Society. the process for crafting uniform policy and position documents, and the best way to communicate and disseminate these statements, once approved, to our membership and to larger audiences. As part of this discussion, Sandy Rikoon distributed a set of proposed guidelines and procedures for the policy statement process. Lloyd offered to work with Rikoon, Ivey, and Zeitlin to draft a short paper on "positions," "policy," and "engagement," including relevant procedures and guidelines, and to distribute it to the Board before the fall meeting.

Sandy Rikoon then introduced a recommendation that the Board propose another change in the *AFS Bylaws* in the 2006 election: that Article 4 (Officers) of the *AFS Bylaws* be changed to read (proposed new text in italics):

"The purposes of the Society shall be to stimulate and encourage interest and research in folklore in all its aspects; to aid in the dissemination of the results of such research; to promote responsible application of such research in the broad variety of settings in which folklorists work; to publish and distribute publications, reports and journals; to serve as a bond among those interested in the study of folklore; *to advocate for and assist the teaching of folklore and the establishment of folklore curricula and programs at all age levels in all educational contexts*; to enhance the professional well-being of the Society's members; and to engage in such other activities as are consonant with the foregoing purposes."

**After discussion, Bill Ivey moved that the Board approve proposing this *AFS Bylaws* change to the membership in the 2006 election. Steve Zeitlin seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**Alan Jabbour then moved that the meeting be adjourned. Kay Turner seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

**American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes**  
**New Series, no. 60**  
**April 28, 2006**  
**p. 5**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Timothy Lloyd  
Executive Director

Date

Approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board

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Bill Ivey  
President

Date