

American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes
New Series, no. 66
April 2-3, 2009
p. 1

President Elaine Lawless called the 2009 spring meeting of the Executive Board to order at 9:10 am on Friday, April 2, 2009, in Room 320 of the Mershon Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus. Members present: AFS President-Elect Kurt Dewhurst, Tim Evans, Elaine Lawless, Carl Lindahl, Lucy Long, Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Amy Shuman, Amy Skillman, Patricia Turner, and William Westerman. Members absent: Marsha MacDowell and Guha Shankar. Associate Director Maria Teresa Agozzino was also present. Following the Executive Board's directive of October 17, 1991, this meeting was recorded on minidisk.

Lawless began the meeting by citing the need for Board members to keep Board discussions and process confidential outside the meetings of the Board. She then welcomed the newly elected members of the Board, and called for the review and approval of the minutes of the October 2008 meeting. One typographical error was noted and corrected. **Patricia Turner moved that the minutes of the October 2008 meeting be approved as corrected. Carl Lindahl seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Lawless then delivered her Presidential report. She cited Tim Lloyd and Maria Teresa Agozzino's work on annual meeting and throughout the year, and the usefulness of the pre-conference session at 2008 AFS annual meeting in Louisville. She also noted AFS efforts over the past year to advocate for academic folklore programs throughout the country; and former President Bill Ivey's work since the 2008 national election as head of the Obama-Biden transition team for the arts and culture.

Timothy Lloyd then delivered his Executive Director's report. The Society's financial position midway through FY 2009 is still a matter for concern, but our expenses have been brought into line with present revenue expectations, and it appears as though our royalty income from online access to *Journal of American Folklore* materials will increase again this year. He stressed the importance of these royalties to the Society's financial well-being, and mentioned that we should encourage those teaching folklore classes to have their students access JAF materials online rather than through printed coursepacks. He closed by mentioning that he continues to work, assisted by University of Missouri graduate student Darcy Holtgrave, on researching the possibilities for the Society to offer its members access to various forms of insurance, including health insurance. Board members stressed the importance of this project.

The meeting paused briefly at 10:40 am and resumed at 10:55 am.

Mark van Benschoten and Juliann Leedy from Rea & Associates, the Society's auditing firm, entered the meeting at this point and made a presentation of their report on the Society's financial records for FY 2008, which ended on August 31, 2008. Accompanying their report was a letter to the Board recommending several changes in the Society's financial procedures to maintain appropriate controls and oversight, which the Executive Director had worked into the following six proposals for the Board's consideration and action:

1. Any check, wire transfer, or ACH transfer over \$10,000 requires that the Executive Director inform the President in writing in advance.
2. Any check, wire transfer, or ACH transfer over \$20,000 requires the prior written approval of the President.
3. The executive director will authorize all wire transfers, keeping a record of those authorizations in writing, and the associate director will initiate them.
4. The executive director will open the mail and the associate director will enter and track checks.
5. The AFS President will be given password access to our online bank account information.
6. The Board should create a four-person Finance Committee, composed of the President, (depending upon the year) the President-Elect or the Past President, one other Board member selected from those in the second year of her/his three-year term, and an independent certified public accountant from the Columbus area. The Executive Director will provide the Committee with fiscal-year-to-date financial reports in December, March, June, and September of each year, and the Committee and Executive Director will hold a conference-call meeting after receiving each report to discuss the Society's financial performance. The Board members of the Committee and the Executive Director will make a report on Society financial performance at each Board meeting.

The auditors also recommended that the Society's accounting be moved from an accrual to a cash basis, to make the processes of regular recordkeeping and annual audit preparation simpler. However, the Executive Director recommended against this change, citing the fact that many of the Society's funders prefer—and some (including federal government agencies such as NEA and NEH) require—that we have an accrual-basis audit of our financials done each year.

After discussion of these recommendations, **Kurt Dewhurst moved that the Board accept the audit report and approve the six recommendations described above. Amy Skillman seconded the motion. The subsequent discussion led to this revision in recommendation 6: that the President, with the advice of the Executive Director, has the authority to designate the two other Board members who will serve on the Finance Committee. The revised motion passed unanimously.**

Van Benschoten and Leedy left the meeting at this point, with the Board's thanks for their work on behalf of the Society.

Patricia Turner then made a report to the Board from the 2009 Kenneth Goldstein Award for Lifetime Academic leadership review committee, which is recommending to the Board that Daniel Patterson, emeritus professor of the University of North Carolina, receive the 2009 award. **Patricia Turner moved that the Board accept the committee's recommendation. Kurt Dewhurst seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Tim Lloyd, speaking for Board liaison Guha Shankar, made a brief report on the work of the 2009 Nominating Committee, reminding the Board that they will be responsible for naming a twelfth member of the Board in 2010 after the expiration of Olga Nájera-Ramírez's term.

The meeting paused for lunch at 12:20 pm and resumed at 1:00 pm.

At 1:00 pm, Tim Lloyd and Maria Teresa Agozzino left the room while the Board met in executive session, with the recorder turned off, to discuss the Executive Director's performance. They returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this discussion at 2:10 pm, and the recorder was again turned on.

Lloyd then described the process now underway of soliciting candidates for the editorship of the *Journal of American Folklore*. Board members cited the need for a compelling vision on the part of editorial candidates, and discussed the strong possibility that the Society's present level of financial support for the operation of this editorial office would need to increase.

Lloyd also made a brief presentation of the work now underway to redesign and reconfigure the AFS web site, including the appointment of an editor for the site (John Laudun of the University of Louisiana, Lafayette), who in turn will be appointing an editorial Board to assist him. Amy Skillman noted the need for at least some members of that editorial board to be younger members of the Society.

American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes
New Series, no. 66
April 2-3, 2009
p. 4

The meeting paused briefly at 3:00 pm and resumed at 3:15 pm.

Timothy Lloyd then presented his budget proposal for FY 2010, which had been distributed to the Board, with accompanying notes, before the meeting. After discussion, **Kurt Dewhurst moved that the Board accept the director's budget proposal as presented. Patricia Turner seconded the motion, which passed with nine votes for, no votes against, and one abstention (Westerman).**

The meeting was suspended at 4:10 pm to reconvene the next morning.

President Elaine Lawless returned the 2009 spring meeting of the Executive Board to order at 9:50 am on Saturday, April 3, 2009, in Room 320 of the Mershon Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus. Members present: AFS President-Elect Kurt Dewhurst, Tim Evans, Elaine Lawless, Carl Lindahl, Lucy Long, Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Amy Shuman, Amy Skillman, Patricia Turner, and William Westerman. Members absent: Marsha MacDowell and Guha Shankar. Associate Director Maria Teresa Agozzino, and incoming Associate Director Lorraine Cashman were also present.

Tim Lloyd and Elaine Lawless then led the Board in a discussion of the progress to date toward the objectives outlined in the Society's most recent long-range plan, crafted by the Board in 2006. Most of this discussion centered on the present and future status of folklore studies in the academy, and on actions the Society and other organizations in the field might take to improve that status, including the following subtopics: the demise of some older academic programs, which is being complemented by the growth of other, newer programs; the importance of undergraduate education and the role of the Society's Teagle Foundation-funded project in strengthening undergraduate education in folklore; the importance of internship opportunities in preparing young folklorists for productive careers in the field; the need to include one-folklorist academic institutions in our considerations, since they are often the "seeds" from which larger programs will grow; the possibility of establishing an AFS committee to travel to academic programs to strategize about ways to increase each's viability; and the wisdom and feasibility of establishing a certification program for professional folklorists, or a program of financial support to send folklorists to related academic conferences for professional development.

The Board then discussed various marketing activities the Society might take on to assist academic programs, including a ranking of programs (one designed to give every program a "first" or "best" at something) or "folklore report card." It was emphasized that if we were to undertake this we would need to create an

accreditation group separate from the Board, and that folklore programs as a group would need to buy into, and participate in, the process. We should also investigate what other fields in the humanities and social sciences are doing along these lines.

Kurt Dewhurst and Tim Lloyd then described for the Board's information the "America Works" project now being discussed by a collective of public sector folklore organizations, led by the American Folklife Center. The project, as a prospectus for it notes, is "intended to illuminate US workers' values and the meaning of work by documenting the folklife, expressive culture, traditional knowledge, and creativity of today's workers, building national and regional archives of ethnographic material on work in America, and supporting public programs in diverse communities that will engage and educate workers, employers and the general public. The project will employ an integrated team of cultural workers – ethnographers, folklorists, filmmakers, oral historians, radio producers, anthropologists, and others – and will produce permanent archival records that can be used for community planning, occupational training, and future research at the local, regional and national level."

Board discussion focused on the likelihood and extent of a managerial or coordinative role for the Society in the America Works project, on the opportunity this presents for us to create work on the project for those we document, thereby creating more and better economic opportunities and new professionals in the field, and on the possibility of the Society taking a leading role in discussion of the cultural significance of occupational and workplace policy now being debated at a national level.

The meeting paused briefly at 11:05 am and resumed at 11:20 am.

Tim Lloyd then summarized the economic-impact surveys recently undertaken by the Fund for Folk Culture with public folklorists and organizations, and by AFS with academic programs in folklore. Both show a significant impact of the declining economy on these people and organizations, which has thus far been more severely felt in the public realm but of which universities will soon feel the full impact.

The meeting paused for lunch at 12:10 pm and resumed at 12:45 pm.

Tim Lloyd then described the Society's various activities to respond to the current economic downturn, and the proposal he had distributed to the Board before the meeting for a new membership category for those of low income (household income below \$25,000), with dues that would be pegged at the same level as for

student dues. After discussion, **Amy Shuman moved that the Board approve the Director's proposal for a membership category entitled "Household income under \$25,000," with dues pegged at the same level as student dues, and that all AFS members be invited to make contributions to the Society over and above their membership to help support lower-income members and keep the Society financially strong. Amy Skillman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Tim Lloyd then described the proposal he had distributed to the Board before the meeting for the affiliation of the Fund for Folk Culture with the Society. Kurt Dewhurst, former chair of the Fund's Board of Trustees, provided background information drawn from his work for the Fund and his networks in the foundation world. After discussion, **Patricia Turner moved that the Board accept the director's proposal that the Fund for Folk Culture become affiliated with the AFS. Amy Shuman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The meeting paused briefly at 2:00 pm and resumed at 2:15 pm.

Under the heading of Old Business, Tim Lloyd presented the Society's plans for future annual meetings, which are now set for 2010 in Nashville and 2011 in Bloomington. Olga Nájera-Ramírez discussed her work with Lloyd to work toward closer relations between the Society and folklore organizations in Mexico, including work to lay plans for a joint meeting of the AFS and those organizations in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Carl Lindahl reported on the recent activities of the Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston project, and their possible collaborations with the Social Science Research Council and the Gates Foundation, both of which appear much less likely than they did when he first reported on them a year ago.

Bill Westerman inquired about the progress of the folklore and health policy public policy working group, and about the process for the selection of the next public policy area for AFS work. Tim Lloyd summarized the history of this project and, after discussion, the Board designated Westerman, Amy Skillman, and Lucy Long to investigate areas for possible future public policy work and to make recommendations to the Board at a future meeting.

Under the heading of New Business, Tim Lloyd reported on the new Archie Green Public Folklore Advocacy Award being proposed by the AFS Public Programs Section. There was some Board concern about the possible overlap of this

proposed award with the Politics, Folklore, and Social Justice Section's William Still Citation. After discussion, **Kurt Dewhurst moved that the Board approve the in principle proposal for the creation of an Archie Green Public Folklore Advocacy Award, and that it encouraged the Public Programs Section to consult with the Politics, Folklore, and Social Justice Section to ensure that there will be no overlap between the two sections' awards. Amy Skillman seconded the motion, which passed, nine votes for, no votes against, and one abstention (Westerman).**

The Board then discussed the charge to, and the work of, the Society's Cultural Diversity Task Force, in the larger context of the Society's long-term (and mostly unfunded) mandates for continued diversification of the Society. There was agreement that a meeting of the Task Force's chair with the Board would be helpful.

Tim Evans then raised the issue of the Society again supporting residencies for public sector folklorists at academic programs, and, along with Amy Skillman, agreed to pursue the matter with the leadership of the Public Programs Section and of academic programs in the field.

After discussion, **Patricia Turner moved that the Board appoint Amy Skillman as the Board's representative to the Society Benjamin A. Botkin Prize Committee. Lucy Long seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Finally, the Board officially acclaimed outgoing Associate Director Maria Teresa Agozzino for her devoted work for the Society over the past two years, and wished her well as she takes up faculty duties in the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology at Western Kentucky University.

Patricia Turner moved that the meeting be adjourned. Kurt Dewhurst seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Timothy Lloyd
Executive Director

Date

American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes
New Series, no. 66
April 2-3, 2009
p. 8

Approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board:

Elaine Lawless
President

Date