

and Cosmopolitanism in Northern Brazil," organized by John Collins (CUNY Queens C) and Keisha-Khna Perry (Brown U). This panel emphasized the connections between the need for theory and the urgency of social and political transformations, and Bahia's role in shaping ethnographic methods and anthropological knowledge. It did so by focusing on the production of evidence and experience in one of Brazil's most impoverished yet culturally dynamic regions in relation to different ethnographers' engagement with Bahian communities and the demands of, and movements within, ostensibly cosmopolitan theory.

We invite our members to continue organizing panels for the next AAA meeting that will take place in Philadelphia.

### A Parting Word

My tenure as the SLACA contributing editor comes to an end with this column and I have to state without hesitation that it has been a very stimulating and challenging experience. As a cultural anthropologist that has been working mainly among lowland South American Indians, and more specifically among the Yanomami Indians of the Upper Orinoco in the Venezuelan Amazon, managing this column has allowed me to expand my horizons not only on current social and political issues experienced by indigenous peoples but also on other social realities and anthropological themes concerning the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean, or what has been called the Americas. Regularly exchanging information with scholars from the US and Latin American and Caribbean countries, being aware of the political transformations that have affected the nations and their people at the beginning of the century, and being conscious of the impact of globalization at the local level (or what has been referred to as "glocalization") in the Americas constituted some of the routines carried out while I was the contributing editor.

Three years ago, several SLACA members formally proposed in our business meeting to de-territorialize the concept of Latin America, shifting from a geographical area to a people-focused orientation. In doing so the section not only changed the name and the title of its journal by including the Caribbean, which had been marginalized from the holistic idea of Latin America, but also reconceptualized its whole idea of the Americas. This new wider perspective has been displayed in the contributions received for this column and I would like to highlight this intellectual effort in the production of knowledge that has renewed discussions on cultural borders, transnationalism, politics of identities and social inequalities in the Americas.

As a culmination of this engaging experience I would like to thank our past-president Gabriela Vargas-Cetina and the members of the SLACA Executive Board for the period 2006–08, with whom I undoubtedly had a great time. It

was a pleasure to work with you. I would also like to welcome our new SLACA president, Ramona Pérez, and her new team. To them, my best wishes.

*Please send news and commentaries of interest to new contributing editor Annelou Ypeij (J.L.Ypeij@cedla.nl).*

## Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists

DAVID L R HOUSTON, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### Yes, We Have No Agendas

The news following Election Day was mixed. The change in administration is a clear signal that many difficult issues previously off-limits might now be considered. This does not mean, of course, that change will happen. It does mean, at least, that these issues are now open to consideration, open for discussion. Too often, change happens very slowly, but when discussion and debate can take place, it seems to stand a better chance. For those whose lives are entwined with LGBTQ concerns, it seems an appropriate time to consider how best to address long-held concerns. The question we might ask is how best to prioritize that discussion. Given the sheer number of pressing problems, what might be an agenda? Do we even have "an" agenda?

### Marital Bliss or Something's Amiss

Proposition 8 was defeated in California. This came as a surprise to many given both the nature of the constituency and that other matters such as the economy dominated the minds of voters. Analysis of the defeat was extensive but offered no decisive strategy that might change future outcomes. What seems abundantly clear is that same-sex marriage is a politically challenging issue; a great number of people still find it difficult to accept. It is not simply a matter of religious right interests. The culture wars of the past several election cycles are not over, but have diminished in the face of other more pressing problems.

A small but growing voice wonders if marriage is the answer at all. Should *all* non-religious unions be civil unions, with the same rights flowing therein as now are conferred to married couples? Is it about the legitimacy conferred by the *process* of marriage, or is it about that "bundle of rights"? This is not a simple question to untangle, and it is far from clear whether or not the voters in places like California would support this kind of change.

### Put ENDA on the Agenda

Marriage equality is not the single item on the list. The recent change in language for the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) drove home the point that there is still a troubling gap between social acceptance and fair treatment in the workplace. What will it take to get an ENDA that is open, inclusive and

well-balanced? Although Congress made the decision to remove the sections of this bill that would have offered some protection in cases where gender expression was at stake, it is not at all a forgone conclusion that such protections can't be revived.



### Blood in the Streets: Homeless and Queer

In 2006, a shocking 23% of LGBTQ youth were homeless, many forced to leave home simply because of their sexual orientation. Their own families could not tolerate their continued presence in the home. Unlike ENDA or Proposition 8, this particular matter speaks to many different kinds of problems. The fundamental and painful issue is that so many underage members of our population have no place to live and thus will turn to whatever they can find in order to get by. Less obvious is the distressing number of parents who harbor sentiments that can have such troubling effects on their children. These are workers, voters, mothers and fathers—the *very same people who vote for ballot items like Proposition 8*. This means that *in addition* to turning out their own kids, *in addition* to fostering a social problem, *in addition* to ensuring that some other person will have to pay for this decision in the form of higher taxes, these same people will make decisions about life in their own communities that are likely to be stacked against the larger LGBTQ population.

These issues are only the tip of the iceberg. LGBTQ persons must deal with countless other obstacles daily. The list of problems is long, and few have answers. How do we prioritize issues? Anthropology contributes to the process by enhancing our understanding of both the people that voted down Proposition 8 and those that stripped out parts of ENDA. The same taxpayers who fund homeless shelters and public schools might be able to accept the idea that neither queer nor straight youth should be out on the streets, and decide to fund social support networks that could eventually preclude such domestic tensions. To tackle these issues, we need to consider carefully what's on the agenda.

*Join us. SOLGA wants you! Visit [www.solga.org](http://www.solga.org) for news, mentors, listserv and more. Please send any comments, suggestions and ideas for new columns, or just say "hi" to David Houston at [dlrh+an@uvm.edu](mailto:dlrh+an@uvm.edu).*

## Society for Linguistic Anthropology

JAMES STANLAW AND MARK PETERSON,  
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

### Report on the 2008 SLA Business Meeting

*By James Stanlaw*

The annual business meeting of the SLA, held last November at the AAAs, proved once again

to be an exciting evening (even before the cash bar opened). Yes, business meetings *can* be exciting, especially if there is lots of good news.

Secretary-treasurer Angela Reyes began with the best report an organization can have: “[Our] net assets grew to \$36,677.03. This has been the trend over the past several years. We continue to be in solid financial shape.” Besides the SLA not investing in Wall Street, Reyes said the biggest reason for this wind-fall was the new publishing arrangement with Wiley-Blackwell for the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology (JLA)*. Before, the *JLA* cost the society about \$10,000, but it is now expected to be a yearly source of revenue of the same amount. It is not yet clear if this is a permanent gain, or an artifact of the switch of presses. Says Reyes, “Everyone is very cautious and suspicious.” SLA President J Joseph Errington added, “If indeed we do make money of the kind we are told we will ... get ready to use your imaginations [on how to spend it next year] if in fact it does happen!” But the major source of SLA revenue continues to be membership dues (about \$15,000). Membership has remained steady for the past year, with 438 regular members, 6 life members and 220 student members (an increase of 20).

*JLA* editor Paul Manning reported that the journal continues to do well. Forty-nine papers were submitted and 13 published, so the *JLA* reached its goal of a 75–80% rejection rate. Quipped Manning, “Naturally, if we reach 100% that will be totally excellent!” There was also a marked improvement in turnaround time in reviewing manuscripts: about 2.8 months (with a projected goal of maintaining the current 2.2 months for next year). Joe Errington also recommended that members cite papers from the journal and encourage their students to download them from AnthroSource, as download statistics are included in the fund allocation model.

One of the most important changes this past year was the development and expansion of the SLA website (<http://linguisticanthropology.org>). SLA digital media editor Kerim Friedman spoke to the wisdom of *not* hiring an external web consultant, as was initially suggested at the last business meeting. The current site is functional, user-friendly and web-standard-compliant, something other section sites often are not. Said Friedman, “[We’ve] changed the status of the SLA from being a secret society to being something people can actually find on Google.”

Friedman talked of various digital strategies for promoting linguistic anthropology online, if nothing else as an antidote to the constant presence of Steven Pinker as the only language maven in the popular media. The Executive Board proposed—and the membership supported—creating a new position: digital content editor. This position would pay \$1,500 per year and entail a few hours a week maintaining the SLA site. Examples of things that the new editor could do would be

to link to the SLA site to Facebook or other linguistic blogs and online social networking tools. Anyone who might be interested in this position should contact Friedman at [kerim.friedman@oxus.net](mailto:kerim.friedman@oxus.net).

In a report forwarded by SLA Program Chair Kira Hall, the SLA received the following for review for the 2008 AAA meeting: 32 panels of 234 papers (of which 30 sessions were accepted and three invited), 34 individual papers (all rejected), and five posters (four accepted). The rejection of all the individual papers and continued time conflicts of concurrent linguistics panels are issues that will be brought up to the AAA later this year. SLA’s deadline for 2009 AAA sessions is March 1. Please contact Kira Hall ([kira.hall@colorado.edu](mailto:kira.hall@colorado.edu)) if you wish to submit or review.

There were three SLA prizes awarded this year. The student prizes were reviewed by Paul Garrett and Janina Fenigsen. The undergraduate essay award went to Lauren Deal (George Washington U) for “‘Fat Birds and Intercostals:’ Ideologies of Science and Poetry in Del Canto Singing in the Washington National Opera.” The graduate prize went to Alejandro Paz (U Chicago) for “The Circulation of Rumor: Gossip, Evidentiality, and Authority from the Perspective of Latin Migrant Workers in Israel.”

Esteemed member Jane Hill—and former president of the AAA, the SLA, and the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas—presented the 2008 biannual Sapir Prize. Also on the committee were Laura Ahearn and Joe Errington. Of the 15 books submitted, one was a clear winner. As Professor Hill said in her presentation, “Asaf Agha’s *Language and Social Relations* stood out ... as a work of genuinely lasting significance; the sort of book that may be seen in the future as defining a watershed in our field.”

*Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA contributing editors Jim Stanlaw ([stanlaw@ilstu.edu](mailto:stanlaw@ilstu.edu)) or Mark Peterson ([petersm2@muohio.edu](mailto:petersm2@muohio.edu)).*

## Society for Medical Anthropology

KATHLEEN RAGSDALE, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

### Making it Matter: Taking Anthropology from Research to Policy

*By Carolyn Smith-Morris (Southern Methodist U)*

Anthropological findings do matter, but many within the SMA agree that we don’t always share our findings with enough of the “right” people, such as key advocates or policymakers, to make a difference. In response to its most recent membership survey, the SMA Executive Board hosted a special event at the AAA meeting 2008 in San Francisco titled “From Research to Policy.” The event was designed to support applied and practicing anthropology,

encourage members to more broadly disseminate their findings in non-academic venues, and promote transdisciplinary dialogue and partnerships.

“From Research to Policy” featured practicing medical anthropologist Kim Koester of the AIDS Policy Research Center at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies (CAPS) at UC San Francisco, and her CAPS colleague Wayne Steward, a social psychologist with an MPH in epidemiology. Models stemming from Koester and Steward’s research examining the effects of the Ryan White Program in HIV care and treatment have been used by policy advocates and members of Congress to identify favorable policy options for the program and HIV care and treatment.

Koester and Steward began the workshop with a presentation on the dynamics of their successful collaborations, including the ability to identify when anecdotal, ethnographic cases are most powerful and when broader population-based models are needed. “I’ve identified myself as the APRC’s ‘story teller,’” says Koester. “This perspective can be incredibly powerful and useful at times. Other times, my perspective is quickly side-lined in favor of ‘hard’ data.” Together, detailed ethnographic stories and population-based statistics give advocates their best chance of making an impact.

Koester and Steward are conducting in-depth interviews with HIV/AIDS program officials in California administering the funding and programs to evaluate the impact of changes in the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act. They write:

Nearly 140,000 Californians have been diagnosed with AIDS since the epidemic began, of which an estimated 59,000 are still living. Since its inception, the Ryan White CARE Act has constituted an important source of support for services in California. The Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Modernization Act redesigned the formulas used to distribute funds to cities and states. California was fortunate that the new formulas resulted in small net gains to the State and most of its cities. (A notable exception was San Francisco, which lost over 31% of its combined formula and supplemental Part A awards.)

The Act contains a sunset provision that eliminates the Ryan White Program on October 1, 2009, unless Congress votes to extend it. As such, reauthorization discussions will occur in the coming year. This legislative process may result in further changes to the formulas or new requirements in how monies are spent.

The CHRP Visioning Change Initiative [Koester and Steward’s research initiative] seeks to create a statewide consensus statement that would identify California’s needs and potential ways to address those needs. This statement can inform the 2009 reauthorization process and serve as a proactive statement to help guide policy proposals that may