A profound disconnect occurs in other contexts where sexual orientation is not just acceptable, but is the primary focus. The current television series, The L Word, for example, depicts lesbians in Los Angeles. Queer as Folk is a hot rental item in video stores. Entertainment is a palatable context.

Anthropologists (usually) make a practice of listening. Despite ethnographic intent, however, what people openly talk about does not always agree with what they practice. Much of what we simply observe as practice is an unspoken part of individual identity. Society works in part because self-recognition is possible; the individual can “construct” her or his identity in accordance with the self-realization that comes from many sources. When “talking out loud” about the truth of ourselves yields only political entanglements and social alienation, identity becomes a struggle for some segments of our population. As anthropologists, we can contribute to an environment where “talking out loud” can take place irrespective of any marginalized place in a society, and where words are no longer weapons of mass confusion.

Elections
SOLGA elections earlier this year gave us a new co-chair. On November 20, 2004, Tom Boellstorff stepped down and Rudy Gaudio took his place. This past year has been a challenge, and Tom has done a superb job. We also want to extend a very special thank you to Christa Craven, our other co-chair through November 2005. We will be contacting members via our listserv for nominations for a co-chair to replace Christa.

Benedict Prize Winners
Each year, SOLGA awards the Ruth Benedict Prize for outstanding anthropological scholarship on a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered topic. This year’s Benedict Prize Committee is pleased to announce winners of the Benedict Prize for both monograph and anthology. For the monograph: Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-Sex Relationships in Thailand, by Megan Sinnott (2004). For the anthology: Out in Theory: The Emergence of Lesbian and Gay Anthropology, edited by Benjamin Griliches and Benhur Nakamura.

Between 50 and 60 people attended the event, which was held in the Murray B. Emeeneau Conference Room in the university's Dwinelle Hall.

Another SLA panel was held Thursday, November 18 at the Best Western Canterbury Hotel in San Francisco. The panel, “Deaf Studies: Critical Challenges to Social Theory” was organized by Frank Bechter and Peter Graf of the University of Chicago. Participants took advantage of the venue change to reform the double-length panel into an all-day “think tank.”

“It was great,” said Richard Senghas of Sonoma State College, who attended as a member of the audience. “There were about 30 or 40 of us. The discussions afterward were excellent, and many of us went out for dinner, so the communication went on and on.”

“I really enjoyed the amount of time we got for our session,” said panelist Leila Monaghan of the University of Chicago. “It ran officially from 10 to 5 but it lasted even longer than that.”

Participants said they were pleased with the number of people who attended, who were themselves members of the deaf community. “The AAA was very supportive and paid for the interpreters,” Monaghan said.

SLA held its business meeting in Atlanta, as well as a reception in honor of Jane Hill, co-hosted by Cambridge University Press.

SLA joined a number of other AAA groups, including Center for the Anthropology of Education, Society for the Anthropology of Work, Association for Africanist Anthropology, American Ethnological Society, Society for East Asian Anthropology, Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists, Society for North American Anthropology, Anthropology and Environment Section, and the Association for Feminist Anthropology, that held some or all of their meetings in November in California to show solidarity with the union.

A number of activities were organized to help anthropologists attending the California sessions to demonstrate solidarity with the union, including joining the picket lines, and a workshop on labor rights.

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA contributing editors Jim Stanlaw at stanlaw@ilstu.edu or Mark Peterson at peterson2@muohio.edu.