

Please send any comments, suggestions, ideas for new columns or other material to David Houston at dhrh+an@uvm.edu.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

MARK ALLEN PETERSON AND JOHN STANLAW,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

About 25 linguistic anthropologists attended the SLA's business meeting Friday, December 17, to discuss the changes in the organization and to plan ahead for forthcoming meetings.

The SLA fared better than some other sections this year, said Leanne Hinton, SLA president. Approximately one-third of the SLA's 18 sessions were held in Atlanta, while one-third had to be canceled due to the change of venue. The final third were held in Berkeley, CA, on the original dates set for the meetings (see the column in the Jan 2005 AN for details).

Contrary to earlier calculations by the AAA, Hinton said, the SLA turns out not to be in financial difficulties. The organization showed a \$2,000 surplus in the treasury at the end of the fiscal year, in spite of the increased journal costs caused by the shift to the University of California Press and the digitalization required for the new AnthroSource facility. "We are in relatively good shape," she said.

President-elect Joel Kuipers was introduced, and other officers announced. Betsy Rymes will remain secretary treasurer. Niko Besnier and Bambi Schieffelin will be members at large, and Kathryn Woolard will chair the nominations committee.

Next year's AAA program schedule will be handled by Stanton Wortham, who was program chair in 2003. Hinton urged canceled sessions to reapply, and also called for themes from members. Three that were suggested were "Endangered Languages and Education," "Education and Minority Languages/Dialects" and "Theorizing Language Endangerment."

Asif Agha, who was program chair for the ill-starred 2004 meeting, has assumed the editorship of the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. He replaces Mary Bucholtz and Elizabeth Keating.

Agha joined the outgoing editors in calling on members to submit to *JLA*. Between January and August of 2004, only 12 manuscripts were submitted. While the quality is high—seven of these were accepted—this is a relatively low rate of submission, especially given the size of the organizations and the large number of excellent papers presented every year. Hinton pointed out that average turn-around time is only 3.8 months.

The Edward Sapir Book Prize was awarded to Skaay, Ghandl, and Robert Bringhurst for the multi-volume series "Masterworks of the Classical Haida Mythtellers." Certificates were issued for Bringhurst, as well as for the descendants of Skaay and Ghandl, who originally told these tales to anthropologist John Swanton at the turn of the last century.

An honorable mention was given to Dennis Tedlock.

No SLA student prize was awarded this year. Seven papers were submitted and vetted by mem-

bers-at-large Niko Besnier and Bambi Schieffelin, but none were deemed sufficiently outstanding to be awarded the prize. There will be another competition for 2005, and Hinton encourages students to send in their papers. The papers are due by March 15: details can be found on the SLA website, at www.aaanet.org/sla/prizes.htm.

Judith Irvine asked the members whether the section should plan what it wants to do for 2006, when the AAA returns to San Francisco and possibly to an unresolved labor dispute.

Several members argued that the split venue had actually made the meetings better both in California and in Georgia by making the panels more leisurely, and wondered whether efforts could not be made to create a more relaxed atmosphere in 2005. "Frankly, I enjoyed the civility and conversation," said one. Ken Ehrensall responded that organizers simply need to "rig" their panels so as to plan extra time into them, perhaps by leaving one slot open for discussion.

Jane Hill pointed out that there was no reason to think labor dispute issues would not arise in Washington DC next year. She suggested that the president-elect, who teaches at George Washington University, seek alternative venues in Washington in case something were to arise. Kuipers pointed out that space in Washington DC is in high demand so that "it's difficult to find space in DC in an emergency." [As it happened, a month after the meetings the Unite Here Local 25 union in DC ratified a 3-year contract with local DC hotels—including the Wardman Park Marriott where AAA is scheduled to meet in next year—making a strike unlikely].

The question was raised as to whether the members would prefer to meet separately from the AAA should a labor dispute arise in future meetings similar to the one that so drastically affected this year's meetings. The membership voted yes by a large majority, while acknowledging the difficulties such a practice would raise.

The meeting was followed by a lavish array of food and beverage sponsored by Cambridge University Press in honor of Jane Hill, Regents' Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics at the University of Arizona, recent recipient of the prestigious Viking Fund Award, and just now ending her long-time editorship of Cambridge's journal *Language and Society*.

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA contributing editors Jim Stanlaw at stanlaw@ilstu.edu or Mark Peterson at petersm2@muohio.edu.

Society for Medical Anthropology

NANCY VUCKOVIC AND JANELLE TAYLOR,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

A Note of Thanks

Many thanks to Betsy Brada (U Chicago), exiting webmaster for the SMA website (www.medanthro.net). Betsy was responsible for initial website

architecture, as well as for maintaining and updating the site. Welcome to the new SMA webmaster, Lauren Wynne (U Chicago).



SMA Call for Panel Proposals

By Lesley Sharp (Barnard C) and Carolyn Sargent (Southern Methodist U)

As one of the largest sections of the AAA, the SMA receives an impressive array of panel and paper proposals. The review process is complex and involves numerous steps, where proposals are screened by the SMA and the AAA Board. The volume of material submitted is exhilarating, offering clear evidence of medical anthropology's significance within the discipline; it nevertheless also heralds an inevitable increase in the number of proposals that are turned away. How, then, to write a winning proposal? We offer the following friendly tips for success for panels, followed by brief comments on individual submissions.

Read (and reread) submission instructions. This is no trivial matter. (See the Jan AN, pp 24-25, or visit www.aaanet.org/mtgs/mtgs.htm for details.) A failure to follow the guidelines can insure that even the most compelling proposal will fail. Panel organizer(s) must take their oversight role seriously. Strangely, each year the SMA receives at least a few incomplete proposals; incomplete submissions, although received by the April 1 deadline, run the risk of being immediately discarded.

How "WOSO" is the Panel? Considering Worth, Originality, Substance and Organization. Neither the SMA executive board, nor its program committee (hereafter PC), sets internal thematic priorities for the annual meeting. Instead, the SMA promotes variety and inclusiveness. Nevertheless, PC members rely on certain basic rules of thumb as they scrutinize submitted materials. Is the panel's theme clear? Do the papers define a cohesive whole? How intriguing is the panel? Is there a sense of originality, or timeliness, to the panel's theme, or are the papers simply revisiting tried and true (and over-worked) ideas? Are the papers limited to descriptive details, or do clear theoretical questions or arguments shape the panel's concerns? Internal networking is certainly an important part of many panels, but remember that these are public events. Will the panel draw an audience? Who might wish to attend, both inside and beyond the confines of medical anthropology? And, finally, is SMA the best home for the submission?

Time is of the Essence. Small is Beautiful. Each year, the PC receives a few proposals plagued by inefficient use of time and space. For one, it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify double sessions. Before submitting double panels, organizers should think carefully and critically about the panel's purpose and membership. Could the same ideas be conveyed in half the time? Some single panels likewise suffer from disorganization. Slotted for 1.75 hours, a single panel typically includes only one 15 minute break (if any), and a maximum of two discussants. If the organizer(s) intend to provide an opening statement, this should occupy a full time slot. All time slots are