

Evolutionary Anthropology Society

Mary K Shenk, Contributing Editor

President's Report 2006

By Eric Alden Smith

### **State of the Society**

Membership in EAS appears stable, and our finances are secure. As of September 2006 (the latest figures available as of this writing) we had 326 members, all of them dues-paying and 125 of them students. It is imperative that we keep our membership above 250, because this is the cut-off for AAA section status and the perks thereof (particularly allocation of sessions at the annual meetings). Since our student membership has dropped by 35% over the past year (while non-student membership has risen by 7%), we need to pay particular attention to recruiting and retaining student members. Please spread the word about EAS to all who might be interested in your department and circle of friends and colleagues.

Our financial resources are modest but steadily increasing. Revenues come from a portion of the dues we charge members (\$5 for students, \$10 for others); the AAA keeps all of the non-section membership fees and meeting registration fees, plus a portion of the section membership fees. Nevertheless, our coffers stand at nearly three thousand dollars (as of Sept. 2006), an increase of \$1350 over the previous twelve months. While we do want to maintain a "cushion" for unexpected expenses, we seem to have the wherewithal to increase our expenditures. We currently expend \$500/year on our two awards, \$300/year for the AAA party, and a few bucks for miscellany. At the Nov. 2006 board and business meetings, we discussed possible additional initiatives, including travel awards for students and foreign scholars presenting at EAS sessions, and a book award. These suggestions met with wide approval, but no final decisions have yet been made.

### **AAA meetings (past and future)**

The AAA meetings this year in San Jose featured three EAS-sponsored sessions selected by the 2006 EAS Program Committee (Pat Draper, Lee Cronk, and Frank Marlowe). Presentation submissions (n= 30) exceeded supply (n=21, limited by the AAA to 7 per session, including the poster session), so the Program Committee had to make some difficult choices. Discussion at the business meeting revolved around how to balance the selection of submissions of organized sessions (which often have more coherence) against individual-paper submissions (which draw on a broader and perhaps more junior set of EAS members). Members were urged to consider submitting organized sessions to the AAA Program Committee directly, including sessions co-sponsored with other sections (particularly ones that might not be utilizing their poster sessions) and to the Presidential Sessions selected by the AAA PC in an early competition. This year, EAS members were successful in getting a Presidential Session on the program, at no cost to the EAS session allocation. Those interested in doing so for the 2007 meetings are urged to begin planning now, as proposals (session abstract and a list of participants) must reach the 2007 AAA Program Chair by January 15. Please contact me (easmith@u.washington.edu) for guidance on this.

A highlight of the meetings for many was the well-attended EAS party on Saturday night, graciously hosted by John Patton and Brenda Bowser.

### **2006 Awards Announced**

We had many eligible candidates for both awards this year. The judging panel (Mike Alvard, Jane Lancaster, and Pat Draper) attended all poster and oral presentations, and selected the following winners:

Best Student Investigator Award: Jeremy Koster (poster presentation on “Explaining non-optimal foraging decisions by indigenous Nicaraguan hunters”)

Best New Investigator Award: Aimée Plourde (paper presentation on “A costly signaling model of the origins of prestige goods”)

Each will receive a \$250 prize and a nice addition to his or her vita.

### **Upcoming elections**

EAS has biennial elections coming up in Spring 2007. We will elect 3 new board members (2 for 4-year terms, and 1 student member for a 2-year term) as well as a President-elect (to serve for 2 years prior to assuming EAS presidency). A Nominations Committee consisting of Lee Cronk (LeeCronk@rci.rutgers.edu), John Patton (johnpatton@fullerton.edu), and student member Siobhan Mattison (smc56@u.washington.edu) is developing a list of nominees. If you wish to nominate yourself or anyone else for these positions, please contact one of the above no later than February 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition, the positions of EAS Contributing Editor and that of Secretary/Treasurer also turn over in 2007 (by EAS Board appointment), so anyone interested in serving in these 4-year positions should contact Cronk, Patton, or me in the next several months. EAS has accomplished much in its short existence, but continued vitality depends on fresh infusions of altruism (or is it costly signaling?).

*Contributions to this column are welcomed and may be sent to [mshenk@unc.edu](mailto:mshenk@unc.edu). EAS columns are archived at [www.evolutionaryanthropologysociety.org](http://www.evolutionaryanthropologysociety.org).*