

American Folklore Society, Executive Board Minutes
New Series, no. 78
March 13-14, 2015
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President Michael Ann Williams called the spring meeting of the American Folklore Society Executive Board to order at 9:36 am on Friday, March 13, 2015, in Room 320 of the Mershon Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus. Members present: President Michael Ann Williams, President-Elect Kay Turner, Brent Björkman, Norma Cantú, Maria Carmen Gambliel, Lisa Gilman, Maggie Holtzberg, Maggie Kruesi, Executive Director Tim Lloyd, Jeff Todd Titon, Diane Tye, Carolyn Ware. Members absent: Pravina Shukla. Associate Director Lorraine Walsh Cashman and Administrative Associate Rob Vanscoyoc were also present.

As per the Executive Board directive of October 17, 1991, the proceedings of this meeting were recorded.

Michael Ann Williams welcomed incoming President-Elect Kay Turner, and new Board members Norma Cantú, Lisa Gilman, and Jeff Todd Titon, and asked them to introduce themselves.

After review of the draft minutes of the November 5, 2014, meeting, **Brent Björkman moved that the draft minutes of the November 4, 2015, meeting be approved as presented. Carolyn Ware seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Michael Ann Williams then delivered the President's report, citing her work to encourage material culture and vernacular architecture scholars and scholarship back into the Society (including Santa Fe annual meeting sessions, negotiating for the participation of folklorists in historic preservation policy dialogue at the National Park Service, her participation in the Society's China-US initiatives, and the "leadership intensive" project for young and mid-career professionals in the field that the Western Kentucky University folklore department plans for 2016, and the Presidential address she will deliver at the Long Beach annual meeting in October 2015.

Tim Lloyd then delivered the Executive Director's report, beginning with a presentation of the Society's non-profit tax return forms 990 and 990-T for 2014. After discussion of these returns, **Norma Cantú moved that the Board approve the Society's 990 and 990-T tax returns for calendar year 2014 as presented. Maggie Holtzberg seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The Executive Director's report continued with a summary of the Society's National Folklore Archives Initiative project, on which we are awaiting second-phase funding news from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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The Board then moved ahead in its agenda to a series of reports by various Society committees, preceded by a brief summary by Executive Director Tim Lloyd of the composition and responsibilities of the Society's standing and *ad hoc* committees.

First, review committee member Carolyn Ware delivered the report of the 2015 AFS Lifetime Scholarly Achievement Award committee. After discussion, **Carolyn Ware moved that the Board approve the committee's recommendation that Elaine Lawless and Elliott Oring jointly receive this prize in 2015. Maggie Holtzberg seconded the motion, which did not pass, with eight votes against and three abstentions.**

The Board then continued to discuss the issue of whether the major Society awards should be given to only one recipient each year, which was the crux of the previous vote. After further discussion, **Maggie Holtzberg moved that the Board approve the committee's recommendation that Elaine Lawless and Elliott Oring jointly receive this prize in 2015, that future review committees will be strongly encouraged to recommend only one recipient each year, and that unsuccessful nominees for the major lifetime Society awards will remain in consideration for a total of five years. Maggie Kruesi seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

The Board took a short break at 11:00 am and returned to its agenda at 11:15 am.

The Board then undertook a discussion of the labor-management situation at the Westin Long Beach hotel, site of the Society's October 2015 annual meeting. Executive Director Tim Lloyd introduced Ms. Catherine McKemie, director of Global Accounts at ConferenceDirect, who has worked with the Society for more than 15 year to coordinate our site research and hotel contract negotiation work for the annual meeting. Ms. McKemie took part in the Board's discussion of this matter.

Tim Lloyd began by summarizing the situation for the Board's information.

AFS has recently learned that a demonstration by the UniteHere labor organization (which represents hospitality-industry workers, primarily hotel housekeeping and food service employees) has begun outside two Long Beach hotels, including the Westin Long Beach, the site of our 2015 annual meeting. UniteHere has informed us that they want the Westin Long Beach to allow a worker vote on the unionization of the hotel's housekeeping and food service employees. Thus far there has apparently been little direct communication

between the union and the hotel about this matter. However, it does appear that the union and hotel prefer different systems for a vote on unionization, and that each believes that the system proposed by the other is detrimental to a free and fair election. UniteHere has asked us, as it is asking all organizations planning to meet at the Westin, to boycott the hotel by not holding our annual meeting there.

The contracts we sign for our annual meeting, typical of convention contracts in general, stipulate financial penalties to AFS if we withdraw from the contract. These penalties represent the hotel's lost sleeping-room and meeting revenue from AFS and from our members who would have attended the meeting and stayed at the hotel, and they increase as the meeting date approaches. If we were to withdraw from this contract now, we would be liable for financial penalties totaling \$99,000; if we withdraw after mid-July, those penalties would increase to \$132,000.

Therefore, the staff recommended that the Board vote on a resolution to:

- 1) Maintain our plans to hold our 2015 annual meeting at the Westin Long Beach
- 2) Remain in contact with the hotel and union to urge them to resolve the issues between them as soon as possible
- 3) Begin an ongoing process of providing information to our members about this situation and about AFS's response

At present, AFS has signed contracts for our annual meetings in 2016 (Miami) and 2017 (Minneapolis). These contracts contain the same language as in our contract for Long Beach this year: they allow us to withdraw from the contract without penalty in the case of strikes but not in the case of non-strike labor disputes.

Accordingly, the staff recommended that the Board also resolve to:

- 4) Discuss with our 2016 and 2017 annual meeting hotels the renegotiation of our contracts to provide AFS with greater flexibility in similar situations
- 5) Whenever possible, incorporate similar language in contracts for our annual meetings for 2018 and beyond
- 6) Give preference to unionized hotels in our annual meeting site searches for 2018 and beyond, and include information about this preference in the requests for proposals we distribute to the convention industry as we search for sites

After extensive discussion, **Maggie Kruesi moved that the Board approve this six-part resolution recommended by the staff. Maggie Holtzberg**

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seconded the motion, which passed with nine votes in favor, one opposed, and one abstention.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:30 pm. The meeting reconvened at 1:30 pm.

The Board then returned to the review of reports from Society committees. Review committee member Diane Tye then delivered the report of the 2015 AFS Kenneth Goldstein Award for Lifetime Academic Leadership committee. After discussion, **Carolyn Ware moved that the Board approve the committee's recommendation that Simon Bronner receive this prize. Brent Björkman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Carolyn Ware then presented an update to the Board on the Society's annual meeting-focused mentoring project for younger members of the Society and field, providing a history of the project, a summary of the activities that are planned for the Long Beach annual meeting in October 2015, and the committee's suggestions for future efforts. After discussion, **Carolyn Ware moved that the Board approve a proposal that the Mentoring Committee be regularly constituted of three members serving three-year terms, one of whom is named to the committee each year and one of whom rotates off. Norma Cantú seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Executive Director Tim Lloyd then briefed the Board on the work now underway toward the summer 2015 move of the Society's executive office to the campus of Indiana University.

The Board took a short break at 2:30 pm and returned to its agenda at 2:45 pm.

Executive Director Tim Lloyd continued the previous discussion by summarizing the very productive scholarly communications partnership between the Society and the Indiana University Library, and the possibilities for future collaborations between the Society and the Indiana University Press, now relocated to the Indiana University Library and with a new director who has a strong interest in reconnecting the Press with the field of folklore studies.

President Michael Ann Williams then gave a progress report on work at Western Kentucky University's Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology to take over the editorship of the *Journal of American Folklore*. The transition of the editorial process and contents of the *Journal* from the University of Wisconsin and Western Kentucky University is well underway. Western Kentucky's first issue will be delivered to the University of Illinois Press in summer 2015, and will appear

shortly after the beginning of 2016.

The Board concluded its deliberations for the day at 3:30 pm, to reconvene the next morning.

The Board returned to order at 10:00 am on Saturday, March 14, 2015, in Room 320 of the Mershon Center on the Ohio State University campus in Columbus. Members present: President Michael Ann Williams, President-Elect Kay Turner, Brent Björkman, Norma Cantú, Maria Carmen Gambliel, Lisa Gilman, Maggie Holtzberg, Maggie Kruesi, Executive Director Tim Lloyd, Jeff Todd Titon, Diane Tye, Carolyn Ware. Members absent: Pravina Shukla. Associate Director Lorraine Walsh Cashman was also present.

The Board began its deliberations by conducting its annual review of the Executive Director's performance. Before this discussion began, the Executive Director updated the Board on the new personnel arrangements that will be required by AFS's relocation to Indiana University. The annual review of the Executive Director's performance was conducted in Executive Session, with only voting members of the Executive Board present. During this session, the Executive Director and Associate Director left the room and the recorder was turned off.

The Board ended the executive session and continued with its agenda at 11:25 am, at which time the Executive Director and Associate Director returned to the room and the recorder was turned back on. President Michael Ann Williams reported on the Board's executive-session discussion, and commended the entire staff for its work.

Associate Director Lorraine Walsh Cashman then made a presentation to the Board on the AFS web site, noting the three levels of site contents—the front end (accessible to all), group pages (accessible only to group members), and the back end (accessible only to site administrators)—and citing the difficulties of effectively encouraging regular contributions to, and comments on, the *AFS Review* and the Folklore Wiki from Society members.

The Board broke for lunch at 12:10 pm. The meeting reconvened at 1:10 pm.

Executive Director Tim Lloyd then presented the staff's budget proposal for fiscal year 2016 (September 1, 2015-August 31, 2016). After questions and discussion, **Norma Cantú moved that the proposal be approved as presented. Carolyn Ware seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Under the heading of Old Business, Executive Director Tim Lloyd reported to the Board on the staff's work to implement the "sister society" relationship with the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore that the Board had discussed with the ISEF leadership in November 2014, and Brent Björkman updated the Board on the Public Program's Section's Advocacy Toolkit project.

Under the heading of New Business, the Board undertook a discussion initially prompted by President-Elect Kay Turner about more effectively publicizing the Society's work and achievements, as well as those of our members and of institutions in the field.

Diane Tye moved that the meeting be adjourned. Lisa Gilman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:19 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

October 14, 2015

Timothy Lloyd
Executive Director

Date

Approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board:

October 14, 2015

Michael Ann Williams
President

Date