
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Lee Baker

It is an exciting time to be an anthropologist of North America. Your membership in SANA is not only important for our unit; it also helps to legitimate and ratify the importance of North American anthropology to our colleagues as well as to our students. We currently have over 450 members and growing. I am very honored and humbled to be part of the leadership team of one of the most critically engaged units of the American Anthropological Association. Our program at the AAA was second to none and we each need to applaud the efforts of our former program chair, Vincent Lyon-Callo (Western Michigan), and wish Dana-ain Davis (SUNY—Purchase) the very best of luck in her efforts to organize, simultaneously may I add, the program for the upcoming spring conference and our program for the AAA meetings in San Francisco.

In the few short months that I have served as President of SANA, I received a crash course in how the AAA organizes its budgets as well as AAA's efforts to solicit "input," but ultimately mandate that each unit's publications be shuttled through the portal we all have come to know simply as "AnthroSource." The board debated long and hard whether to go along with including North American Dialogue within the portal or simply continue publishing it on our own. Thanks in large part to NAD Editor Alisse Waterston (John Jay), who serves on the committee that is overseeing the implementation of the portal project, we had valuable insight and much needed guidance in our deliberations. At this time, we have decided to go ahead and move NAD into the portal, hoping that the articles and timely content will find a niche and serve various communities within anthropology and beyond.

Currently, we have three particular initiatives that we pursue with your membership dollars: North American Dialogue, travel grants for students, and underwriting a portion of the spring conferences. We also spend a small amount on awards. Each one of these initiatives we feel are important for our efforts to extend the reach and develop the next generation of anthropologists who study North America. However, this will lead us into a budget crunch. Next year we

have budgetary shortfall of almost \$3,000, but we must sustain our viability as a unit and maintain our unit's "fund balance" Upon recommendation of our Treasure Sarah Horton (Harvard) and a rather involved discussion with the board, we will be raising our dues next year.

One of the real benefits of our section is its low dues structure. Frankly, setting dues at only \$10.00 has allowed us to boast the numbers that we have and subsequently command more space on the program. However, I have devised a new and hopefully successful way to raise dues, which I really don't want to implement. Beginning next year, we will have two categories of members. One tier will be for those who are gainfully employed and for whom \$25.00 does not impose a financial burden. Adjuncts, graduate students, retired members, or anyone else who might find a \$25.00 membership fee difficult may still select the \$10.00 option.

Please don't drop your membership in SANA. If you feel it is just too much, continue to pay \$10.00. On the other hand, signing up for the \$25.00 will help support SANA's initiatives and insure that we can have the quality of spring conferences we have enjoyed thus far, continue to support the graduate student travel grant, and usher NAD into the portal. We need your financial support and your membership. Without you. . . (Ok, enough, I am starting to sound like a NPR fundraiser).

Nominating Committee Chair Tim Sieber (UMass – Boston) has done a great job soliciting a strong slate of candidates to fill the roles of At-large Board Member and President-elect. Please vote in the upcoming elections. Also, save the date for the SANA Spring Conference: the dates are April 23-25, and the calls for papers are at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/anthro/sana/index.htm> (see pp. 18-19 this issue for more information on the SANA Spring Conference). The theme is "Containment and Transgression: Global Encounters with North America @ Twenty-first Century." Although it is currently scheduled to take place in Durham, NC, the dates directly overlap the mid-year conference of the American Ethnological Society, so we are currently studying the feasibility of joining forces with AES in Atlanta.

Everyone has been so gracious and supportive as I figure out all of my new responsibilities, but I want to extend a special thanks to out-going President Karen Brodtkin (UCLA), Out-going Secretary Tim Sieber, Publications Committee Chair Maria Vesperi (New College), Spring Conference Chair Don Nonini (UNC-Chapel Hill) and my current crew, Treasurer Sarah Horton, Secretary Elizabeth Chin (Occidental), and Program Chair Dana-ain Davis for making this transition as smooth as possible.

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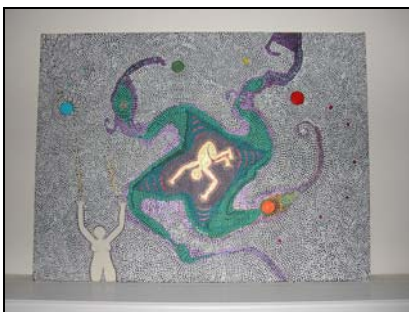
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photograph of Sam Beck's painting by the artist 2004

I am captivated by Australian aboriginal aesthetic. Much of what aboriginals have painted are maps that integrate past, present, and future on one plane, defining the space they inhabit in ways that are not easily comprehensible to minds bent and twisted by the consumption of commodities. – Sam Beck

2004 is SANA's tenth anniversary. In honor of this milestone, we reprint here the SANA Statement of Purpose:

The goal of the Society for the Anthropology of North America is to address the need for a focused voice and institutional presence for the anthropology of the United States, Canada and Mexico. Our society hopes to embrace the range of anthropological research and theory-building addressed to the region and its emerging issues. Anthropologists have been studying in these nations for over 100 years, and over 50 percent of U.S. anthropologists currently conduct research on North American issues, both urban and rural. While elements of our research tradition are addressed by applied, medical, educational, political and urban anthropology, among others, no previously organized anthropological society has focused specifically upon this region as an "area." Specialists in Europe, Oceania, Latin America and other regions have long benefited from membership in area societies. In order to place our own research findings in historical perspective and to continue developing theoretically, it is important that we acknowledge our area context and begin to analyze it systematically within broad frameworks such as ethnicity, race, class, gender, and structured inequality.

The creation of SANA is timely. Anthropologists have long focused their attention on contact between Mexico and the United States, with particular attention to the border zones. In 1993, passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement essentially "created" North America as an economic and political entity, recognizing the history of migration and trade and setting the stage for an accelerated rate of culture change.

Contemporary anthropologists who study North America are located both within and outside universities. SANA aims to meet the need for a common forum through which ideas can be exchanged, dialogues established, and networks for future academic cooperation developed. This, in turn, will sharpen the agenda for domestic research and enhance our contributions to the broader discipline of anthropology.

One of our society's concerns is to present anthropological research findings to the public. While anthropologists are actively engaged in gathering and analyzing the most current information about changes in values, economics, social institutions, and health concerns throughout North America, too little of the anthropological perspective has been readily available to decision-makers. We believe that the recognition and support afforded by our official status within the AAA can help to further the process of making theoretical constructs and research data more accessible.

In the contemporary context of North America, where issues of multiple cultural perspectives are of increasing concern, our research is likely to have an important part to play in university curricula. We believe SANA will allow anthropology to contribute more fully and effectively to curriculum development, and we regard our graduate student members as vital to this effort. Through the engagement of the profession in issues of significance, we hope to assist in meeting the social challenges of the future.