

Council Meeting Minutes

ASA Section on Environment and Technology

New York, NY, August 11, 2007

Present: Stella Čapek, J. Timmons Roberts, David Sonnenfeld, Thomas Rudel, David Pellow, Beth Caniglia, Bill Markham, Lori Peek, Kari M. Norgaard, Rebecca Altman. *Absent:* Stephan Scholz. *Other:* Robert Brulle.

1. The Chair, Stella Čapek, called the meeting to order at 8:30 pm. The chair submitted her report. In her remarks, she summarized her efforts to have more dialog with the Section on Community and Urban Sociology, including organizing a joint session at the 2007 ASA meetings.

She also reported on continuing efforts by herself and other section members to assist ASA staff in 'greening' the ASA and its annual meetings. **ASA has invited the section to participate in a small "Greening the ASA" working group** to work with the organization's executive officers to continue such efforts. Initial members include Lauren Heberle (chair), Stella Čapek, Bob Brulle, Sally Hillsman, and Janet Astner. Stella will continue to work on this effort even after completing her term as section chair. Some particulars discussed included an educational, "measure your ecological footprint" booth at future ASA meetings; articles in *Footnotes*; greater use of electronic conferencing to reduce air travel; and increased use of alternative transportation to ASA meetings, such as special Amtrak packages for conference attendees; and having a Climate Change Teach-In Day. Next meeting is planned via telephone conference call in September. **Other interested individuals are welcome to join this group!**

Stella also brought up issues of continuity and mentorship on the Council, by-laws consistency and implementation, and the Section's effort to be attentive to gender and other diversity issues on our program (all noted in her report). In addition, she reminded the Membership Committee about an earlier intention to survey our membership to find out more about what they value about the section, and the committee expressed interest in pursuing this. Last but not least, Stella thanked all the council members and officers for taking on the work of the Section.

2. Tom Rudel submitted the Nominations Committee report. Elections will be needed in 2007/08 for five new officers, including chairs of the Nominations, Policy and Research, and Publications committees, the Council Member-at-Large, and Student Council Member. He solicited suggestions for nominations for these positions. **Please submit nominations for these positions to Tom at <rudel@aesop.rutgers.edu>.**

3. The Chair-Elect, Timmons Roberts presented his report, including the 2007 Section Sessions, which he organized, plans for future ASA annual meetings, and discussions of the Boguslaw Award Committee, which he chaired.

The Section continues efforts to diversify participants in its paper sessions. It was moved, seconded, and agreed unanimously by the Section Council that "*It shall be the policy of the ASA Section on Environment and Technology to encourage session organizers to actively seek diversity of panel participants based on race and gender.*" This resolution will be put before the Section Business Meeting for a sense of the members of the Section.

Timmons also reported on discussions he had had with incoming Chair-elect, Bob Brulle, regarding possibilities of mid-year mini-conferences including electronic/ online conferences. The Boguslaw Award Committee, including also Andrew Szasz and Scott Frickel, decided to not give the award this year, in part due to having only one entry. They had an extended discussion about possibly passing on the award to another section, such as the Section on Science, Knowledge and Technology (SKAT).

In response to this and other concerns about the timing and guidelines for section awards (see below), **the Council decided to set up an Ad Hoc Committee to Review Section Awards and By-laws.** Council members who volunteered to serve on this committee include David Pellow, Chair of the Policy and Research Committee; David Sonnenfeld, Secretary-Treasurer; Beth Caniglia, outgoing Chair of the Membership Committee; and Kari Norgaard, Council Member-at-Large. The awards will be reviewed along with relevant sections of the Section By-Laws; current ASA section award policies will be taken into account.

4. Secretary-Treasurer, David Sonnenfeld, submitted and summarized the report on the Section's budget. The section began the year with reserves of \$5,081. It received \$2,058 in income from ASA. Projected expenses for the 2007 meetings were approximately \$3,133. Leaving a projected after-conference balance of approximately \$4,000. Income was down a little bit from last year, perhaps due to an increase in the percent (30%) of student members. Expenses were up from last year, largely due to the high costs of even a shared onsite section reception.

5. David Pellow submitted the report of the Policy and Research Committee. He reviewed the Committee's activities during the year, including arranging for the co-sponsorship of a film-maker's showing of the film, *Green, Green Waters* in conjunction with the ASA meetings. He discussed the awarding of the section's Outstanding Publication Award (to Brett Clark and Richard York, Univ. of Oregon) and Marvin Olsen Student Paper Award (to Norah MacKendrick, Toronto Univ.). Some ambiguities persist regarding the terms of the Outstanding Publication Award, as reflected in the Section By-laws and in the practice of the Policy and Research Committee. David will help sort this out as part of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Section Awards and By-laws, mentioned above.

6. Beth Caniglia submitted the Membership Committee Report. She reported that as of May 31, the section had 393 members, 30 percent of whom are student members. The committee also has had discussions on whether the section should 'adopt' a journal, a subscription for which might be provided along with section membership – albeit at an increased cost.

7. Bill Markham submitted the Publications Committee report. He reports that Stephan Scholz has agreed to continue as newsletter editor for at least one more year. There was considerable discussion regarding the Section's use of both its website and other online media, particularly Discussion Forums. There was a general feeling among Council Members that the website could be substantially enhanced, and that the section could and should make greater use of online media. Students might be interested, for instance in a Section-sponsored, environmental sociology student listserv or forum. **The Council agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Section's Website and Use of Online Media.** Participants include Bill Markham, Chair of the Publications Committee; Timmons Roberts, Chair; Bob Brulle, Chair-elect; and Kari Norgaard, Council Member-at-Large.

8. Lori Peek discussed the activities of the Teaching and Training Committee. The committee has put together a listing of environmental sociology graduate programs on the section's website. Additional entries are welcome and invited. In addition, the committee has published several articles on teaching and training in the section newsletter. It has a number of suggestions for future activities by the

committee (see committee report). The Climate Change Teach-In Day discussed earlier in the meeting was identified as a possible activity for the Teaching and Training Committee for the coming year.

9. Rebecca Altman presented a recap of her efforts as Student Representative on the Council. These included submissions to the section newsletter and attempting to engage students in various aspects of the section. To more greatly highlight the work of student members, and to increase the value of the section to students, Rebecca proposed a regular, annual listing of student members' dissertations and theses in the section newsletter, and a special fall section of the section newsletter on graduating student "Members-on-the-Market".

10. Timmons Roberts gave a brief report of discussions he has had with Bob Brulle, Chair-elect, about working to strengthen the policy-relevance of the section's activities. They have discussed, for example, the possibility of initiating a series of newsletter special issues with authored opinions on various environmental sociology topics of policy relevance.

11. In the "Other Business" section of the meeting, **Beth Caniglia proposed carrying out an oral history of the section**, particularly as a number of the section's founders have been retiring from academia. There was broad enthusiasm and support for this idea.

The council adjourned at approximately 10:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

David A. Sonnenfeld
Secretary-Treasurer