**Association for Humanist Sociology, Inc.**

**Midyear Board Meeting**

**Washington, D.C., May 31-June 1, 2013**

**Board Members Present:** Alan Spector, Stephen Adair, David Embrick, Corey Dolgon, Johnny Williams, Rebecca Hensley. Deborah Burris-Kitchen was unable to attend May 31st, but was present on June 1st.

Minutes taken by Rebecca Hensley.

**Previous Minutes:** Board members considered and approved minutes from Board meetings at the Annual Meeting in November, 2012. Williams/Dolgon. Passed.

**Vote Counting:** Board members counted and tallied all votes received for this spring’s election. A total of twenty-five members in good standing voted as follows:

**President for 2015:** Kathleen Fitzgerald

**Vice-President of Publications:** David Embrick

**Vice-President for Membership (fulfilling last year of vacated 3-year term):** Johnny Williams

**Nominations Committee (3 positions):** David Tabachnick, Dawn Tawwater, Karen Tejeda

**Secretary:** Rebecca Hensley (confirmed)

**Resolution 1:** Supporting the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. Supported 23/2.

**Resolution 2:** Calling for the U.S. government to discontinue military and economic support of

Israel and to support instead the right of return for Palestinian refugees, full equality for

Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the end of occupation and colonial rule. Supported 23/2.

Motion to approve ballot. Embrick/Williams. Passed.

**Necessary Shift in Positions:**  Since Shawn Bingham and Janine Schipper have given notice that they are stepping down as Co-Editors of *Humanity and Society*, David Embrick (who is also Program Chair for the Annual Meeting in October, 2013) has agreed to take the position as Editor, vacating his elected position as Vice-President of Publications. Corey Dolgon has agreed to serve as Vice-President of Publications until at least the election in the spring of 2014.

**Other Needed Positions:**  The Board discussed making Kasey Henricks (one of David Embrick’s students) the new Graduate Student Liaison, a position with access to an annual budget of $1000. This funding has been used in the past to pay for the graduate student reception at the AHS Annual Meeting and to provide housing for one or more students in the hospitality suite at the meeting, among other things. The Board also discussed the need for a Social Media Manager with access to an annual budget of $500. The Social Media Manager would establish and oversee the AHS website, the Annual Meeting Facebook event page, the implementation of a new AHS listserv for news purposes among members, and perhaps a twitter account.

Motion to establish Social Media Manager position appointed by Vice-President of Publications and having access to an annual budget of $500. Dolgon/Adair. Passed.

Brief summary of items from reports:

**President’s Report.**  Alan Spector discussed negotiations with Key Bridge Marriott, including their agreement to lower the cost of parking to $10/night and provide internet service without charge for conference attendees staying at the hotel. Alan also discussed plans for including a Thursday morning bus trip to Harper’s Ferry, where participants could tour the town and have lunch before returning, but he left more detailed discussion of the 2013 Annual Meeting for the following day.

**Vice-President of Publications’ Report.**

Newsletter: David Embrick reminded the Board that Saher Selod (Editor of the Newsletter) is still trying to solicit photos from the Annual Meeting in October for the Summer Newsletter, as well as other submissions. The Board discussed whether the Newsletter should continue to be mailed as a hardcopy to members, since it can appear on the AHS website and go out to an AHS listserv as an email. Some members prefer a hardcopy, however, so it was agreed to keep providing a hardcopy for all members until January, 2014, but to begin asking on the membership form whether a given member specifically prefers to receive a hardcopy. Only those requesting it on their membership form will receive hardcopies of newsletters after the issue sent out in the Fall of 2013.

Journal: Janine Schipper has requested that the twelve boxes of journals in her office be removed at once. Corey Dolgon will take them for the time being and ship some out to whoever’s going to a conference in the future so they can be used as promotional materials. The Board discussed concerns about the Journal going out recently with only two to three articles rather than four to six. Questions raised included who is on the editorial board and what are the term limits? The Board discussed including graduate students, younger members, and/or newer members as long as they have already published and understand the necessary processes and considerations.

Website: The Board agreed that the AHS website can be more effectively used with the focused attention of a technologically savvy Social Media Manager. There could be links to *Humanity and Society*, the newsletter, the Facebook event page for the Annual Meeting, and an awards page. There could be a link just for graduate students and one for prospective members, with a form allowing new members to sign up and pay their membership dues online. Members could register for the Annual Meeting and pay the registration fee online. Donations could be accepted on the website. And resolutions supported by the membership could also appear, allowing prospective members and others to know what makes AHS unique.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Chuck Koeber was unable to attend, so he sent his report as an attachment to an email that also elucidated some of his concerns for the financial solvency of the organization, given its number of members. The starting budget in 2012 was $58,108 and the Ending Balance was approximately $40,764. It should be noted, however, that two one-time expenditures helped to create the shortfall. The first was a payment of $5,545 to Sage, who will now produce and distribute *Humanity and Society* and administer and collect revenue from subscriptions. While this new arrangement means that AHS will only incur an estimated expenditure of $875 per year to cover the cost of hard copies of the journal for its members, it also means that we will no longer realize any income from the journal either. The second one-time expenditure was the purchase of two projectors, screens, and necessary cables to avoid the significant cost of renting such equipment from hotels at Annual Meetings. Since the Board had previously decided to keep a limited account open at Bank of America so that AHS could accept online payment of membership dues and conference registration fees, the process to set up online payment acceptance capability is going forward at this time. However, the bulk of AHS funds have been moved to the Wichita State University Campus Credit Union, a smaller and more socially responsible financial institution located where Chuck can easily handle AHS business. At such a time as a different Treasurer is named, the funds may be moved appropriately.

As AHS Treasurer, Chuck recommended:

* Considering the increase of membership dues to offset our lessened income
* Considering the increase of Annual Meeting registration fees that more accurately reflect the cost of the conference
* Keeping hotel charges down until it can be ascertained how many attendees and how much revenue can be expected each year
* Organizing a book sale for the Annual Meeting
* Encouraging member donations to the Frank Lindenfeld Memorial fund, as they were lower than the award itself in 2012

**Nominations Committee Report:**  Jeffrey Torlina handled putting the ballot together this spring because Rebecca Hensley was on it to be confirmed for Secretary. Now that Rebecca’s been confirmed, Jeffrey will take over as Senior Chairperson on the Nominations Committee and Rebecca, as Secretary, will be responsible, instead, for attending the Nomination Committee’s breakfast meeting on the first full day of the AHS Annual Meeting in October to charge the members with their duties. Johnny Williams has already agreed to run for a full 3-year term as Vice-President for Membership after he completes the current year vacated by Ray Muller, so the Nominations Committee members won’t have to seek nominations for that position. They will, however, need to seek nominations for AHS President for 2016, Vice-President of Publications, and two open slots on the Nominations Committee.

Board adjourned at 8:45 p.m., Friday, May 31st, and re-convened at 8:00 a.m., Saturday, June 1st.

**President-Elect’s Report:**  Stephen Adair outlined his process to vet various venues for the Annual Meeting for 2014, which will be in Cleveland, Ohio. His choice, based on financial, location, and personal service considerations, is the Wyndham Hotel in the Theater District (also near the Warehouse District). The room fee for attendees will be $120/night. The meeting will be in the second week of October. Stephen said he still needs to clarify what the hotel package will include and how far out the hotel will hold registrations. Corey suggested negotiating further on the room price, if possible, and asking former Presidents what they learned from their experience. Positively Cleveland (a promotional agency) has volunteered to print and mail brochures about the conference, featuring local information.

**President’s Report on Plans for 2013 Annual Meeting:** Alan presented a mock-up of a glossy 4-color poster to advertise the Annual Meeting. He could have a limited number printed in an 11” X 17” format for a very reasonable price through his university. The Board agreed that it would be an effective marketing tool, especially since the AHS website and the Facebook event site for the meeting could be listed on the poster. Alan hopes to email a usable pdf within two weeks and have the finished product out to members within a month. The current deadline for abstracts is July 15th, but Rebecca suggested that no due date for submissions appear on the poster so potential presenters won’t be discouraged from submitting because of a due date that will, in fact, be flexible. The room cost for conference attendees staying at the Key Bridge Marriott will be $129/night with free internet, but the fees for food are exorbitant, being charged by the person. Burris-Kitchen suggested that we should order food for about half the number we expect to attend as hotels typically seem to provide more than enough food.

Basic plans for the conference schedule currently include the opening Board meeting on Wednesday night, the bus trip to Harper’s Ferry on Thursday morning, a reception at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday night (possibly in the penthouse overlooking the D.C. area), the Friday noon Activist Café/lunch, and a reception at 5:00 p.m. on Friday evening, followed by the Friday night keynote address. Saturday’s schedule will include the AHS Business Meeting and a reception in the early evening, followed by the Presidential address. The Board’s closing meeting will be Sunday morning.

Questions raised included:

* Should AHS subsidize hotel rooms for students?
* Should low income people/students be able to waive registration fees?

Motion to require conference presenters to be AHS members. Williams/Adair. Did not pass, but it was agreed that $25 should be added to the conference registration fee for non-members.

**Awards as a Tool for Member Recruitment:**  The Board discussed how members can be more effectively recruited by increased use of the social media, including the AHS website. It was then suggested that participation (such as serving on committees) engages and ultimately retains members, and that bestowing awards recognizes and encourages, which also helps to retain members. AHS already gives two awards annually: the Humanist Sociology Book Award and the Frank Lindenfeld Outstanding Student Paper Award (given to a student who has written a paper advocating for more humanistic workplaces). Presently, each award is decided by its own committee. The Board determined that AHS could add eight additional awards with the addition of three committees as follows:

* Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award (general topic, awarded by the same committee that awards the Frank Lindenfeld Outstanding Student Paper Award)
* Outstanding Paper Award (published or unpublished, awarded by the same committee that awards the Humanist Sociology Book Award)
* Social Justice Award (one each to a graduate student, an AHS member, and a non-AHS member, awarded by a new committee drafted for the purpose, accompanied by a plaque and a small cash donation to the social justice organization of the recipient’s choice)
* Lifetime Service Award (to an individual who has distinguished him/herself in service to AHS, awarded by a new committee drafted for the purpose)
* President’s Award(s) (awarded by the standing President at the Annual Meeting during the President’s address)
* an honorific award of appreciation to the outgoing President from the President-Elect when the gavel is passed at the end of the President’s address at the Annual Meeting

These awards would have to be considered and passed by the membership at the 2013 Annual Meeting. If they are passed, the membership form could be modified to ask new and renewing members if they are willing to serve on one or more of these committees.

Alan asked whether he might be permitted under current AHS guidelines to give a President’s Award at the 2013 Annual Meeting. According to the Constitution, however, without a membership vote establishing such an award, he can only give an award worded to say that it is from him (for work consistent with humanist values) rather than from AHS.

**Vice-President for Membership’s Report:**  Johnny Williams has begun emailing past members and conference attendees reminders to renew, if they have not already done so. He requests that membership forms should be included in the conference packets in October. And, by then, conference attendees will be able to renew their memberships for 2014 online. Johnny intends to send out membership forms by snail mail in mid-December to those members and former members not in attendance at the Annual Meeting and any other members who have not yet renewed. Then, he will email renewal reminders to all those on his list until they either renew or request that he cease. Johnny believes that visibility (especially through strong use of social media and the internet) is crucial to increasing and retaining membership levels.

Motion to change membership dues amounts as follows:

Students/those earning $24,999 or less $25

Those earning $25,000 - $49,999 $50

Those earning $50,000 - $74,999 $75

Those earning $75,000 - $99,999 $100

Those earning $100,000 or more $125

Dolgon/Adair. Passed.

**Fundraising:**  A brainstorming session on raising funds to offset the cost of the Annual Meeting listed:

* Publishers pay to set up book tables
* Local venders may donate cash if AHS will use bags or other promotional materials
* Progressive Investment representatives pay for space for a booth at conferences
* Private schools sometimes sponsor graduate students’ attendance

**Regional Meeting:** About forty-five individuals attended the AHS Regional Meeting at Stonehill College in a suburb of Boston, MA. In the morning, there were two presentation sections, offering three sessions each. Lunch was followed by three panels on teaching (one on race, one on service learning, and one on global issues in the classroom). And there was one poster session. A registration fee of $25 covered approximately half of the $1000 cost of the meeting. Due to the success of this first regional meeting, the organizers have already chosen Holy Cross for next year’s northeast regional meeting. Rebecca intends to poll her departmental colleagues to see whether or not they would support a similar regional AHS meeting at Southeastern Louisiana University in the spring of 2014.

Motion to accept all reports. Williams/Dolgon. Passed.

Meeting adjourned.