

2017 Treasurer's Report- Board Meeting
Society for the Anthropology of Religion
Submitted by Lauren Leve
11/30/17

I'm pleased to report that SAR is solvent. But we have slowly been losing money over the last few years.

Overall Finances

*We began the year with **\$64,384**. Between January 1 and September 30th, we added **\$19,261** in revenue and subtracted **\$14,290** in expenses (as of 9/30), bringing the total SAR funds to **\$70,355** as of September 30th. [So we're ahead by slightly under \$5000. But have lost \$8000 over the last two years – we had \$78,002 as of 9/30/15]*

That income is primarily from membership dues and registration fees for the spring meeting in San Diego. Membership had brought in **\$6,156** as of September 30th, and registration fees from the meeting, **\$10,605**. The meeting was well attended, with approximately ??? registered participants. We also got an unexpected **\$2,500** from AAA, which basically represents a distribution of AAA profits from publication contracts (so we share in the general wealth created by the sections that publish).

My expectation is that we'll add another **\$1,998** or so in membership money by the end of the year, bringing our 2017 revenue up to about **\$21,260** (of which **\$10,656** or so will be income from membership and publication-sharing, and the rest came from the biennial meeting).

As the numbers suggest, we had a successful spring meeting in New Orleans (thank you, Adeline, for all your hard work to make it happen and your efforts to rein in costs!). We saved a lot of money because it was held in New Orleans and Adeline took advantage of free space and equipment from Tulane (these are usually our highest expenses associated with biennial meetings). By the numbers, we spent **\$15,140** on the meeting in total, with the major expense being \$9,175 on food and beverages; and also including \$1,482 in contract services and AAA staff labor costs; \$2,400 on the Rappaport speaker and Presidential Panelist travel subventions; and \$1,794 on other costs (mostly related to entertainment/receptions). We lost a little bit of money on the meetings (meeting-related income was \$10,605 so we overspent by about \$4,500). But this kind of loss is not uncommon for AAA subfields on conference years.

That said, we've also had a lot of expenses this year, main connected to the Spring Meeting. Again, as of September 30th, we'd spent **\$16,313**. The main meeting expenses were food and space, equipment rental, and expenses related to the

Rappaport speaker and the Presidential Panel. We also split the costs of a disability accommodation with AAA (final cost to us: **\$1190**). When we add expenses connected with this AAA meeting (Geertz and Student paper prizes and food), which I expect will be about **\$3470**, we will be looking at total 2015 expenses of about \$19,783. So this will leave us about **\$2200** in the red.

Membership

As of September, SAR had 475 members (353 professional, 121 students, 1 life member). This is down about 15% from last year, when there were 551 members at the same time of year (and down from 2015 when there were 531). Don't know if it's across the AAA in general. May be something to keep an eye on.

For reference: AES – down 11%; SCA and Middle Eastern Studies down 17% respectively, SAC down 21% -- although some sections are also growing... (SLA, CSAS, ALLA). Overall more down than up in sections, although AAA stayed about the same (lost only 20 people).

2018 Budget

For 2018, I've budgeted **\$8300** in expenses. This includes the Geertz and Student paper prizes, food and space at next year's AAA, and the president's travel costs to AAA. Hoping it will be less – dispute about spring meeting costs and AAA salary and benefits (*never charged, now charged \$1600+ -- down to \$925, which still seems a lot to me. But this is a new system so we'll see.*)

Based on membership numbers in June, when I had to submit the budget, I'm expecting about \$8160 in membership-based revenue. If my estimates are precise, this would leave us with a very slight loss (\$140). Good idea to think about revenue building activities (that also add value, adding to membership and our operating budget)

Dues

We voted to raise the dues by \$5 for Professional members two years ago (to \$20), and to reduce them slightly (from \$10 to \$9) for students. This leaves the cost of SAR membership solidly in the middle of the range of other sections without journals. We could consider raising them again, to \$25 for professional and/or \$10 or \$15 for students. However, I'd suggest leaving them as such for another year and wait to see what happens with membership and expenses overall given the new AAA cost/accounting system.