

**ALA BUSINESS MEETING  
2007 CONFERENCE  
MORGANTOWN, WEST VIRGINIA**

The meeting began at 3:00 pm.

**Present:** Tomi Adeaga, Adeekoi Adeleke, Oty Agbayoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi-Soyinka, Adetayo Alabi, Igolima Amachree, Ada Azodo, Carol Beane, Stephen Belcher, Debra Boyd, Fahamisha Patricia Brown, Dale Byam, Robert Cancel, Anne Carlson, Odile Cazenave, Nwarsungu Chiwengu, Neville Choonoo, Carrol Coates, Maureen Eke, Amy Elder, Ernest Emenyonu, Marjolijn de Jager, Shannon Duggan, Ernest Emenyonu, Adeola Faleye, Elizabeth Goldberg, Daniel Gover, Tom Hale, Ken Harrow, Roberta Hatcher, Shannon Hill, Naana Banyiwa Horne, Tony Hurley, George Joseph, Anthonia Kalu, Dasongo Kapanga, Cilas Kemedjio, Catherine Kroll, Deli Layiwola, Mark Lilleht, Lokangaka Losambe, Suzanne MacRae, Joseph McLaren, Soraya Mekerta, Donald Morales, Mimi Mortimer, Laura Murphey, Frances Novack, Damian Opata, Florence Orabueze, Eustace Palmer (President), Felicity Palmer, Thelma Pinto, Abioseh Porter, Richard Priebe, Micheline Rice-Maximin, Anne Armstrong Scarboro, Janice Spleth, Kwawisi Tekpetey, Marie Umeh, Michèle Vialet, Ann Elizabeth Willey, Hal Wylie, Emmanuel Yewah,

**1. Ratification of the Agenda**

The Agenda was ratified.

**2. Ratification of the Minutes of the 2006 Business Meeting in Ghana**

After being amended, the Minutes were ratified.

**3. Matters Arising from the 2006 Minutes**

No matters arising.

**4. President's Report**

- Eustace thanked Janice Spleth for hosting a very successful conference; he also thanked the University of West Virginia for aid in funding and The Waterfront Hotel for excellent accommodations.
- He recognized the attendees from Africa and expressed the organization's happiness at Thelma's return and gratitude for Chiwengo's work during Thelma's absence.
- The ALA can report a number of important accomplishments and changes this year:

1. The organization's literary journal, *JALA*, appeared. Eustace recognized Abioseh for his work to guarantee its appearance.
2. The first Travel Award was given to Dr. Damien Opata, who was recognized at the meeting.
3. The *Newsletter* will begin publishing some of the items that used to appear in the *Bulletin*. This change required a revision of the *ALA Handbook*.
4. Dr. Carrol Coates will become the new Series Editor.

## 5. Report from the 2007 Conference Conveners

Janice reported that the Conference had been very successful and attracted 220 attendees.

## 6. Memorial for Departed ALA Members and Writers and Artists

Abioseh mentioned the followed individuals who recently passed away:

- \*Prof Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh
- \*Edward Rice, spouse of Micheline Rice-Maximin; memorialized by Anthonia Kalu
- \*Tadesse Adera
- \*Wanjiru Kihoro, Kenyan Theater Performer and Human Rights Activist
- \*Naguib Mahfouz; memorialized by Soraya Mekerta
- \*Mazisi Kunene; memorialized by Thelma Pinto
- \*Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin, Ethiopian playwright
- \*Octavia Butler
- \*Ali Farka Touré
- \*Gordon Parks, photographer
- \*Ellen Kuzwayo
- \*Bate Besong; memorialized by Ken Harrow and Ngwarsungu Chiwengo
- \*Hilarious Ambe; memorialized by Abioseh Porter
- \*Fessehaye "Joshua" Yohannes, Eritrean poet and playwright, journalist with the now-banned weekly, *Setit*, died in detention on 11 January 2007
- \*Bebe Moore Campbell
- \*Joseph Soble; memorialized by Debra Boyd
- \*August Wilson; memorialized by Dale Byam

## 7. Treasurer's Report: Tony Hurley

- Tony distributed copies of the Treasurer's Report and explained it.
- Summary: Balance forward from March 15, 2006: \$22,572.59
- Revenue: 25,206.05
- Total: 47,778.64

Expenditures:	- 19,893.60
Total:	<u>27,885.04</u>

Assets as of February 28, 2007:	
Wachovia Checking (2/28/07):	18,174.51
Wachovia Money Market (2/28/07)	9,710.53
PAX World Funds Balance (12/31/06)	<u>93,119.51</u>

**Total Assets: \$121,004.55**

The Treasurer's Report was accepted.

**8. Auditors' Reports: Adlai Murdoch/ Bob Cancel**

- The Auditors verified the accuracy of the Treasurer's Report of ALA finances.
- Murdoch recommended the inclusion of the previous year's report with each year's accounting to provide a context for comparison.

**9. 2007 Election Results:**

President: Thelma Pinto  
 Vice-President: Maureen Ike  
 Deputy Vice-President Mimi Mortimer  
 Executive Council Members: Oty Agbajoh-Laoye  
 Lokangaka Losambe  
 Anne Carlson

The motion to destroy the ballots was passed.

**10. Report on the Annuals:**

- Our Series publications are behind schedule. Robert Cancel has reported, however, that the San Diego Conference Annual is almost ready; Sangolo is working on the Madison Annual; Mimi Mortimer explained that there were too few submissions for the Boulder Conference publication; the latter Annual might be combined with the publication from the Alexandria Conference.
- Gratitude was expressed to former Series Editor, Ousseynou Traore.
- Carrol Coates, the new Editor, was introduced and welcomed.
- Ten copies of all papers presented on conference panels should be submitted to ALA Headquarters, if a member wishes her/his conference paper considered for publication; otherwise, six copies should be submitted.

Discussion:

- The number of copies of papers to be submitted seemed excessive to some members.
- It was decided that the Series Editor should consider the number of copies needed and so inform the EC.

## 11. Report on ALA Publications:

### A. *JALA*: Abioseh Porter

- Abioseh made a special appeal to graduate students to submit papers for consideration.

### B. *Newsletter*: Eustace Palmer

- Eustace explained that the *Newsletter* will take over many of the functions of the old *Bulletin*. Its purpose is to keep members current on ALA issues; therefore, it will come out four time a year.

## 12. Report on Headquarters:

- JoAnne Cornwell is requesting photos taken at the 2007 Conference for the Headquarters Archive; Fahamisha Brown reminded members to clearly and completely identify individuals in the photos and to date them.

## 13. Committee Reports:

### A. Constitutional Reform: Eustace Palmer

- Eustace announced that items for discussion at the Business Meetings will be published on the web site well before coming up for discussion at the conferences.

### B. Issues: Mark Lilleleht

- Mark reported that the Committee has been focusing on the difficulties for foreign scholars to obtain visas. He requested specific stories from the membership, since the goal is to compile as much information as possible. The Committee plans to coordinate with other organizations dealing with this issue.
- A website has been established with the different concerns of the Issues Committee listed.
- An Issues column will be published in each edition of the *Newsletter*.

- He announced that Nawal el Saadawi is seeking an immediate position at a university outside of Egypt. Ernest Emenyonu is the contact person.

**C. Awards: Anthonia Kalu**

- The Committee decided on the Fonlon-Nichols Awardee
- Kente stoles were awarded to all members whose terms on the EC Council, the Editor of *JALA*, the Treasurer, Secretary, and Convener and Co-Convener of the 2007 Conference.

**D. Finance: Folabo Ajayi-Soyinka**

- Immediate Concern: the annual cost of the Annuals must be determined because the EC is discussing whether to add a fee for them to the membership dues or to the conference registration fee. At the 2006 ASA meeting in San Francisco, the EC asked Checole Kassahun, publisher of Africa World Press and the ALA conference Annuals, for this information, but he has not provided it, as of yet.
- Life Membership Dues: after discussion with the EC, the Committee proposes increasing these dues to \$1,500 to account for inflation. This amount will be reviewed every five years.
- There is \$5,000 available for various projects proposed by the membership.
- The Committee wishes to hold a competition to sponsor mini-conferences in Africa.
- A long-term idea is to establish a paid Secretariat.
- The Committee has requested the Treasurer to investigate the implications of changing the ALA's non-tax filing status.

**E. Travel Grants: Anthonia Kalu**

- The first ALA Travel Grant was awarded to Dr. Damian Opata.
- Only members may apply for this award. There were thirteen applications, of which seven were complete and were considered.
- The Committee will award three smaller grants for the 2008 Conference.
- All information will be listed on the ALA Website.

**F. Teaching and Research: Ngwarsungu Chiwengo**

- Chiwengo distributed copies of the Committee's Report.
- The Committee proposed two panels for the 2007 Conference: "Teaching African Literature with Post-Colonial Theory" and "Audience, Text, Translation, and the Teaching of African Literature." Because of emergency family problems, the second panel had to be cancelled, and the papers were placed on other panels.

- The Committee acted on the following projects:
  1. Writing a grant proposal for an anthology of African literature for elementary and high school students
  2. Creating a Companion to the anthology to be posted on the ALA website
  3. Writing a grant proposal for an African Writers Series on less well-known African writers
  4. Publishing articles on the teaching of African literature and cinema in a special section of *JALA*
  5. Investigating possible sources of grants for seminars on the teaching of African literature and cinema
  6. Contacting publishers to request reprints of works that have gone out of print
  7. Conducting interviews at the annual conferences. To facilitate this endeavor, conference conveners will be asked to provide the Committee with a list of the artists and writers appearing at conferences to ensure that interviewers are well-prepared and to allocate program times and a room for these interviews
  8. Creating a grant to help support annual mini-ALA conferences on the continent. A \$20 voluntary donation check-of box will be included on ALA membership forms.

**G. Publications**

Already covered.

**H. Media and Public Relations: Fahamisha Patricia Brown**

- Fahamisha reiterated the need for all materials submitted to be dated and clearly marked.
- She suggested that all information about members' awards or other honors be submitted directly to ALA Headquarters.

**I. Employment: Huma Ibrahim**

- In Huma's absence, Eustace read her report from the Committee:
- Huma recommends the development of an archive of stories and statistics shared by our colleagues about various kinds of discriminations they've faced in the academy due to:
  1. what they teach
  2. whom they are, particularly, where they are from
  3. gender bias

She would like to hear how all the above, as well as hiring and firing events, were negotiated.

- The ALA should set up a panel of advocates who are supportive of those with employment problems and who have contacts and suggestions.
- There should be information regularly in the *Newsletter* to provide advocacy for job searches as well as for tenure battles.
- Every year at the ALA Conference, there should be a roundtable or panel discussing some aspect of employment in the field.
- Committee Members' additional suggestions: a survey on employment issues should be sent to the ALA membership; the ALA seems far less interested in political issues than at earlier times, but discussions of US actions in Iraq and Lebanon is appropriate for the organization; therefore, we need a roundtable on the impact of US anti-terrorism/anti-immigrant policies on visas for students, writers, and scholars of African literature and some of the accompanying xenophobic responses of students to representations of "the other" in the texts we teach.

#### **J. Heritage Project: Debra Boyd**

- Debra expressed the need for both visual and written documentation of ALA Conference events in time for the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization in two years.
- Her desire is to create a written history and, also, a visual montage to screen at the anniversary conference.

### **14. Caucus Reports**

#### **A. WOCALA: Anthonia Kalu**

- Election Results from the Business Meeting:  
Chair: Ada Azodo  
Vice-Chair: Helen Chukwuma  
Secretary: Catherine Kroll  
Treasurer: Fahamisha Patricia Brown
- Carole Beane will bring copies of her new book of poetry to the ALA Banquet for interested parties to purchase; Anne Scarborough will bring copies of her documentary on Edwidge Danticat; Debra Boyd will bring copies of her videos.

#### **B. Graduate Student: Laura Murphy**

- New Chair, Laura Murphy, announced that there were 28 people at the Caucus meeting.
- Elections:  
Chair: Laura Murphy  
Vice-Chair: Shannon Duggan  
Publications Chair: Adeola Faley
- The Committee developed the following priorities:
  1. Increasing membership
  2. Identifying graduate students in the ALA
  3. Having the Caucus meeting earlier during conferences in order to provide better mentorship of graduate students
  4. Supporting ALA membership of graduate students from Africa

**C. Francophone: Anne Carlson**

- The new Chair, Anne Carlson, reported that the Caucus held its first Francophone Luncheon at the 2007 Conference. The purpose of the Luncheon, besides collegiality, was to publicize the work of lesser-known Francophone writers, and their speaker was Côte d'Ivoire popular novelist, Regina Yaou. Roberta Hatcher translated Yaou's talk into English.
- The Caucus intends this Luncheon to be a continuing tradition.

**D. TRACALA**

- Abioseh read the Caucus report received from Wangui wa Goro who was unable to come to the Conference.
- There were no panels this year, but the Caucus is making plans for next year.
- It is conducting a membership drive.

**15. Reports from the Conveners of Upcoming Conferences:**

- **2008, Western Illinois University: Igolima Amachree**
  1. Western Illinois University, Macomb, IL will host the Conference from March 18-23, 2008. The theme of the Conference is African and African Diaspora Women Writers, Global and Cultural Identity
  2. Sefi Atta will be the Keynote Speaker; many other African writers and scholars have been invited.
  3. As far as transportation is concerned, there is the possibility of using four airports; there is a train from O'Hare in Chicago and the possibility of a shuttle from the Peoria Airport.

Discussion:



- A great deal of concern was expressed about the weather in the Mid-West in March and a number of requests that the Conveners move the Conference date forward into April. Igolima agreed that the dates are still negotiable.
- **2009, North Carolina A&T**

No bid has been received.

## **16. New Business**

### **A. Bids for Future Conferences:**

1. Lokanga Losambe has proposed the University of Burlington in Burlington, VT for either the 2009 or 2010 ALA Conference. He will begin making inquiries and preparing a formal bid.
2. Thelma Pinto announced that she and George Joseph will investigate the possibility of a South Africa location when they are in that country this summer.
3. There may also be a bid forthcoming from the University of Mississippi

### **B. Election of Series Editors for the 2007 Conference:**

Janice Spleth and Sandra Dixon were elected by acclamation.

### **C. Recognition of Outgoing ALA Officers and EC Members:**

Already done.

## **17. Other Business:**

### **A. Resolutions:**

Eustace presented the EC Resolution concerning Life Membership dues, Retirees, and protecting the ALA endowment:

We propose that:

1. Taking into account inflationary pressures, Life Membership dues to the ALA will be raised to \$1,500, payable in no more than five years. This dues rate will be reviewed every five years;
2. All members who have retired from the profession and have maintained a total of at least twenty years of paid-up membership will be recognized as Members Emeriti. Such members at that point will

calculate their membership dues according to the present sliding scale determined by income.

3. In order to protect the endowment fund, its value should never be allowed to fall below three times the total annual operating costs of the ALA.

Discussion:

- A motion was made to delete #2 of the Resolution until more discussion of it occurs. The motion passed.

**B. Announcements:**

- Irène d'Almeida announced that she has successfully prosecuted her lawsuit against the University of Arizona.
- ISOLA is asking for paper submissions for its 2008 meeting.
- There was an appeal from the members to the EC to determine what it can do to aid members with visa problems.

**C. Other**

Eustace formally transferred the Stool of Office to the new ALA President, Thelma Pinto.

**18. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.