

**MINUTES OF THE ALA BUSINESS MEETING
AFRICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
MACOMB, ILLINOIS, APRIL 26, 2008**

The meeting began at 3:10 p.m.

Present: Adeleke Adeeko, Moradewun Adejunmobi, Oty Agbayoh-Laoye, Folabo Ajayi, Bose Ayeni-Tsevene, Ada U. Azodo, F. Odun Babogum, Fahamisha P. Brown, Robert Cancel, Anne Carlson, Kassahun Checole, Michele Chossat, Helen Chukwuma, Carrol F. Coates, JoAnne Cornwell, Joyce Dixon-Fyle, Irene d'Almeida, Aaron Eastley, Amy Elder, Adeola Faleye, Wangui wa Goro, Olabisi Gwanna, Ken Harrow, Tony Hurley, Rebekah Hurt, Huma Ibrahim, Marjolijn de Jager, Phebe Jatau, Toyin Jogede, George Joseph, Larry Jost, Anthonia Kalu, Kasongo Kapango, Keiko Kusunose, Regina Kwakye-Opong, Renée Larrier, Lokangaka Losambe, Mark Lilleleht, Bernth Lindfors, Joseph McLaren, Donald Morales, Dana Nard, Jean Ouedraogo, Felicity Palmer, Sandra Richards, Mahriona Rofheart, Irene Salami-Agunlsye, Halima Sekula, Pam Smith, Michèle Vialet, Patricia Jabbeh Wesley, Joy Wrolson

1. Ratification of the Agenda

The Agenda was ratified.

2. Ratification of the Minutes of the Business Meeting of the 2007 ALA Conference

The Minutes were ratified.

3. Business Arising from the 2007 Minutes

No business arose.

4. President's Report

- **Recognition of 2008 Conference Conveners**

1. Thelma celebrated the major accomplishments of the 2008 ALA Conference. She mentioned the ceremony awarding of the Fonlon/Nichols Prize to Professor Ike; the Awards Dinner where Professor Kofi Anyidoho was named 2008 Distinguished ALA Member and Kasahun Chicole was honored for twenty-five years of publishing.

She moved that the assembly recognize the hard work of the 2008 Conveners; the Motion passed.

2. She was pleased to see the most recent ALA publications, *JALA*, the ALA literary journal, and the *ALA Newsletter*; Thelma congratulated Abioseh Porter, Editor of *JALA* and JoAnne Cornwell, Director of ALA Headquarters, respectively.
3. ALA Travel Awards for 2009 will be announced later.
4. She concluded that the ALA must be doing well, judging from the attendance at this conference and the fact that we have

possible bids for four future conferences. These bids will be presented during this Business Meeting.

5. The issue of moving the ALA Headquarters from San Diego will also be addressed later. Thelma thanked JoAnne Cornwell for her many and varied contributions as Headquarters Director.

- **Recognition of Outgoing EC Members**

Thelma moved that the assembly recognize the service of Mark Lilleht, Keiko Kusunose, and Becky Ayebia Clarke; she said Eustace Palmer should be recognized but, although his term as President is over, he definitely should not stop helping the EC.

The assembly recognized their service.

- **Report on Elections of New Officers and EC Committee Members**

1. Those elected are:
 - Vice President: Folabo Ajayi Soyinka
 - Deputy Vice President: Anthonia Kalu
 - EC Members: Greg Thomas
 - Mohamed Kamara
 - Adeleke Adeeko
2. The motion to destroy the ballots passed.

- **Series Editor's Report: Carrol Coates**

1. Carrol reported that he has conversed with the former conference conveners whose Annuals are outstanding, and he and they will work together to produce the volumes in the near future.
2. Authors should submit one print copy of their essays along with one electronic submission to the convener of the conference where they presented.

Discussion:

- Thelma asked if anyone would volunteer to help Carrol Coates; the conference conveners would have the first opportunity.
- Huma Ibrahim was elected by acclamation.

- **Standing Committee Reports:**

1. **Treasurer and Auditors: Tony Hurley and George Joseph and Ben Lindfors**

- Tony passed around the Treasurer's Report of last year's ALA revenues and expenditures and explained it.
- In summary, ALA revenues for this period amounted to \$54,209.71; expenditures to \$29,526.84; assets as of March 31, 2008 (Wachovia checking, account activity not yet cleared, Wachovia Money Market, and PAX World

Funds Balance): \$97,482.79. Total assets amounted to \$127,165.66.

- Tony informed the assembly that he intends to rotate out of the office of Treasurer and encouraged members to think of a replacement.
- Ben Lindfors reported that he and George Joseph found the ALA books in good order; George concurred.

Discussion:

- A question arose concerning the effect of stock market fluctuation on ALA investments. Tony replied that the advice he was given was to do nothing at this point, the policy followed by former Treasurer, Bob Cancel.
- There was a question about The Ohio State University failing to provide promised copies of *RAL*. Tony replied that he was advised to contact *RAL* about this matter. He reminded the assembly that *RAL* subscriptions do not remain in the ALA treasury.

The Motion to accept the Treasurer's and Auditors' Reports passed.

2. *JALA* Editor: Abioseh Porter

- Abioseh remarked that he has consulted about twenty-seven ALA members to use their expertise in various areas to help him read manuscripts.
- Previous production glitches have been taken care of.
- The EC decided to support Mark Lilleleht as *JALA* Webmaster.

3. Finance: Folabo

- Folabo proposed that membership fees be raised, except for African students studying in Africa; the dues would be reviewed every five years:

0-\$20	\$20
\$20-\$45	\$50
\$45-\$75	\$75
\$75	\$100
Institutional	\$100
- She further proposed that the ALA give our Series publisher, Kasahun Chicole, an amount up to \$4,000 direct subsidy for future volumes of the Annuals, on the condition of his providing the EC with a detailed inventory of production costs.

Discussion:

- There was a question about the reason for membership fee increases. Folabo replied that it is because of the increased cost of ALA activities.
- Another questioner asked what discussion there had been between the 2008 Conference Conveners and the ALA Treasurer. Tony noted that the EC has no control over conveners.
- It was asked why ALA membership was required for presentation at the Conference when it wasn't enforced. Tony assured the assembly that such a discrepancy would not happen at the 2009 Conference in Vermont. Bob Cancel observed that this problem is also linked to the deadline for publishing names in the conference program.
- The dues proposal passed with one abstention; the subsidy to publish the Annuals also passed.

4. Issues: Mark Lilleleht

- The technical problems with the Issues Committee website will be resolved soon.
- A Resolution on Somalia is being provided to members at this Business Meeting for consideration.
- The Issues Committee will provide classroom resources on sex trafficking to anyone who requests it.

Discussion:

- George Joseph raised the issue of human rights in the area of sex trafficking. He asked if the ALA shouldn't respond to this situation.
- JoAnne Cornwell asked that we document this situation.
- Others suggested contacting the NAACP, ACLU, and Southern Poverty Law Center to gain information.
- Carrol Coates said that the ALA should not take an active role in this issue.
- It was agreed that we need to document the veracity of all issues before taking an active role about them.

5. Awards: Oty Agbajoh-Laoye

- She requested nominees for the Fonlon/Nichols and Distinguished ALA Member Awards for 2009

6. Travel Grants: Anthonia Kalu

- She announced that the Committee granted three awards of \$500 each for members from Africa to attend the 2008 Conference. The recipients were: Adeola Faleye, drama/African language orature, Abafei Awolowo University, Nigeria; Vusi Benedict Mchunu, independent

scholar, translations/poetry, South Africa; Iniobong Uko, literary criticism, focus on gender, University of Uyo, Nigeria.

- \$500 is not enough for this award because of travel costs from Africa. The EC agreed to increase the funding to \$1,000 for each of the three grants.
- Anthonia noted that members send in nominations for the 2009 awards and that the application information is on the ALA Website.

7. Publications: Anthonia Kalu

- Dr. Carroll Coates has begun as the Annuals' General Editor.
- She promised there will be a fuller report next year.

8. Teaching and Research: Ngwarsungu Chiwengo

There was no report.

9. Publicity and Media: Fahamisha Patricia Brown

- Fahamisha asked members to get in touch with her to publicize their activities and to involve their university media officers.

10. Revenue Enhancement: no Chair

There was no report.

- **Ad Hoc Committee Reports:**

1. Heritage Project: Debra Boyd

Debra requested that members provide her with photos they wish to be included in the 35th Anniversary celebration.

2. Employment: Huma Ibrahim

Huma announced that Natasha Vogel will be the new Chair of this committee.

- **Future ALA Conferences;**

2009: Lokangaka Losamba

Lokangaka passed out flyers for the Conference and gave a Media presentation on the University of Vermont at Burlington; the theme of the Conference is "Africa and Blackness in World Literature and the Visual Arts"

2010: Irene D'Almeida

Irene presented a bid from the University of Arizona, Tucson for April 7-11, 2010; she gave a media presentation. The Motion to accept this bid passed.

- **Caucus Reports:**

- **WOCALA: Ada Azodo**

- Ada reported that the Caucus membership is upwards of 100.
 - The WOCALA Luncheon was very well attended; Akachi Azigbo was the speaker.
 - The present Secretary, Carol Kroll, and Treasurer, Fahamisha Patricia Brown, will continue in their posts.

- **Graduate Student: Laura Murphy**

- Laura said that the Caucus membership is growing.
 - The Caucus held mixers at both the ASA and ALA and plan a publishing panel at the 2009 Conference.
 - It intends to solicit papers from graduate students in order to present a Graduate Student Essay Award at the 2009 Conference.
 - Rebecca Hunt is the Caucus' international liaison.
 - The Caucus, also, now has a Face Book presence.

- **TRACALA: Pamela Smith**

- Pamela remarked that TRACALA had a very successful launch at a luncheon meeting at this year's Conference, despite the expected Key Note Speaker being unable to attend. Daniel Kunene was honored as the 'father' of ALA's interest in translation as a serious concern at its conferences.
 - On the Conference Program, the caucus presented two panels, a roundtable, and a reading of *Things Fall Apart* in 8 different African languages.

- **Francophone:**

- New President, Jean Ouedraogo, acknowledged out-going President, Anne Carlson.
 - The Francophone Caucus held a very successful Luncheon with Alek Baylee Toumi as the invited Keynote Speaker. Another Luncheon is planned for the 2009 Conference.
 - The Caucus coordinated with TRACALA to present a public reading of Toumi's work in French and English.
 - The Caucus hopes to draw works from the French film festival in Montreal to screen at the 2009 Conference.
 - The new Officers are: Vice President: Samuel Zadi
Secretary: Michele Shores
Treasurer: Michele Vialet

5. New Business:

- **Headquarters Move:**

Thelma asked the assembly to thank JoAnne for her service as Headquarters Director and for the newly redesigned *Newsletter*. Eustace moved that the Headquarters be established at William & Hobart University in the fall; George explained the EC recommendations for the needs of the Headquarters.

The Motion passed.

- **Constitutional Amendment: Maureen Eke**

Maureen introduced the Amendment concerning filling unexpected EC vacancies and moved that it be accepted.

The Motion passed.

- **Emeritus Dues: Maureen Eke**

Maureen presented the following Motion submitted by Stephen Arnold to the EC for consideration at the Business Meeting:

“On retirement from his/her professional position, any member in good standing with twenty or more years of paid membership will automatically become a Life Member in the African Association. The member will continue to receive annual dues notices, and while it is hoped that the member would continue to support the ALA through annual contributions, the member may at this point ignore the notices but remain a member in good standing by indicating such a wish in writing.”

She also present the Motion as amended by the EC:

“On retirement from his/her professional position, any member in good standing with twenty or more years of paid membership will automatically become an Emeritus Member in the African Literature Association. For such members, payment of annual dues will be optional.”

The amended Motion passed.

6. Other Business:

- **Remembrance of Scholars/Writers in African Literature who passed since our last conference:**

Abioseh Porter spoke for Hilarious Ambé and Bate Besong; JoAnne Cornwell, Irene D’Almeida, Ken Harrow, and Tony Hurley spoke for Aimée Cesaire; Abioseh Porter and Eustace Palmer spoke for John Conteh-Morgan;

Ben Lindfors spoke for Cyprian Ekwensi;
 Folabo Ajayi Soyinka spoke for Oyinka Ogumba, and joined
 Adeola Faleye in a dirge;
 Ben Lindfors and Abioseh Porter spoke for Oyekan Owomoyela;
 Ken Harrow spoke for Sembene Ousman.

- **Resolutions of the EC:**

Mark Lilleleht passed around copies of the Issues Committee Resolution calling upon the ALA President to write to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the State Department Special Representative to Somalia, John Yates, the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, and the Congressional Black Caucus

“to reverse its policies that have made [the US] complicit in [Somali] devastation and to constructive re-engage and actively support the rebuilding of a Somali civil society that defends the rights of all.”

Discussion:

Ken Harrow spoke in favor of the Resolution and presented additional recent history about the Somali situation.

The Motion passed unanimously.

- **Announcements:**

1. **Call for Papers for the 2009 Conference:**

Lokanga Losamba reminded members to submit proposals for panels and papers for the Conference.

2. **Announcements from the Floor:**

There were no announcements.

7. **Motion to Adjourn:**

The members moved and passed a Motion to Adjourn; the Business Meeting ended at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Amy Elder,
 University of Cincinnati

