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Domestic claims for publications that are not received must be made within six months of the publication month. Overseas claims must be made within one year.

Please note that the United States Postal Service does not forward publications. To ensure uninterrupted delivery, your address must be updated at least five weeks before the new address goes into effect. Address updates may be made online at www.africanstudies.org or in writing to the Secretariat at ASA, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, Douglass Campus, 132 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1400. If a publication is returned, the ASA will suspend all future mailings until the new address is received.

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Letter from the Executive Director...

Welcome to the April/July *ASA News*. ASA activities continue unabated - the largest Program Committee in recent history is completing its proposal review and the Local Arrangements Committee is hard at work preparing for the Annual Meeting; award and prize committees are considering nominations and applications; and journal editors are preparing the ASA's publications. Though the ongoing nature of these activities might suggest smooth sailing, energetic efforts are negotiating strong currents, both anticipated and unexpected, with the goal of producing quality results. One such current is the vacancies of the Office Manager and Publications and Information Coordinator positions. The vacancies, however, also provided the opportunity to restructure the Secretariat, and I am happy that the Publications and Information position shortly will be filled, along with a new position for a program manager. The ASA is tremendously fortunate to have had the considerable professional contributions of Kimme Carlos and Maggie McLaughlin on staff during this transitional time. This joint edition of the *ASA News* is also more cost effective given the delay in producing the April issue.

As San Francisco draws nearer, I am pleased to report that the new features of the Annual Meeting online system, especially the reminder emails, appear to have greatly facilitated the process of submitting an Annual Meeting proposal. The system has become increasingly user-friendly, with pop-up screens that guide the user through to the submit button. Last year, a good number of proposals were completed but not submitted, and the Secretariat contacted each of these individuals to enable them to submit their proposal for review by the Program Committee. In addition, members may now volunteer online to serve as a chair or a discussant. As a result, members who wish to participate without submitting a proposal can still lend their expertise to the program, thus enhancing the professional stimulation that is a hallmark of this event. The system also provides a style manual to assist in preparing paper, panel, and roundtable titles and the Annual Meeting name badges, and Letters of Invitation to secure visas and funding to attend the Annual Meeting can now be requested online. These latter, seemingly mundane details mean that the time that in the past has been devoted to extensively proofreading the preliminary program and to filling last-minute Letter of Invitation requests can now be more profitably devoted to ensuring that other aspects of the Annual Meeting run even more smoothly than before.

Watch the ASA website for the preliminary program, which will be available in July. Please note that any changes to the preliminary program will not appear on the website; they will be incorporated into the final program that will be distributed onsite in San Francisco.

I would like to share a joint statement from Executive Director, Bill Davis and me about the overlapping annual meetings this year with the American Anthropological Association:

"AAA and ASA have a standing agreement to prevent, where possible, a conflict in the dates of our Annual Meetings. Since both organizations typically

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schedule annual meeting dates several years out, we have been able to achieve that objective in recent years.

This year's unfortunate scheduling conflict is a result of a shift in location and dates for AAA's 2006 Annual Meeting caused by the continuing labor/hotel management dispute in San Francisco.

With the dispute anticipated to remain unsettled during the original dates set for AAA's meeting in San Francisco, AAA's Board was forced to relocate its 2006 meetings to San Jose.

Unavoidably, the only dates available in San Jose conflict with the ASA's planned 2006 meeting.

The ASA's contract, concluded in 2003, is with a hotel that has expressed support for labor's requests and is thus exempt from the labor boycott.

AAA greatly regrets the overlap in our 2006 meeting dates and has been working with the ASA to facilitate member participation in both Annual Meetings.

AAA and ASA have agreed that a registration badge for either meeting will allow reciprocal entry to the other. Both AAA and ASA value their members' participation in each others' meetings and look forward to successful Annual Meetings in 2006."

Many of you have noticed additional improvements to the ASA website, www.africanstudies.org. Attention has been devoted to making as much information as possible as easily accessible as possible through the website. A key component of the website is ASA ONLINE, which allows members to engage in a broad range of real time activities, from updating an address and affiliation, to making contributions to the endowment and the 50 Year Anniversaries Fundraising Campaign, printing as many receipts as necessary for the payments that have been made.

The website also provides an overview of the ASA's Board of Directors, Committees, By-Laws, and member ethical guidelines, as well as a wealth of information about the Annual Meeting, ASA awards and prizes, and ASA publications, including advertising and mailing list rental rates and updates about ASA journal and ASA News publication dates. The website also provides reciprocal links to Coordinate Organization websites.

I hope that you will turn to these resources again and again, and that you will find them a useful tool for promoting the ASA to colleagues.

In the near future, members will also be able to participate in electronic surveys. This quantitative feedback will be an invaluable complement to the qualitative responses that are communicated on Annual Meeting evaluation forms and responses to messages from the Presidents and from the Secretariat. Member feedback is key to any organization's health and vitality and I am sure that some of you will recognize your own suggestions in the policies and procedures that the Board of Directors adopts on behalf of the collective membership.

In addition, ASA members will be able to cast their ballots for the ASA Vice President and Members of the Board of Directors electronically beginning this year, marking another milestone in the ASA's technological advances. Elections are available online for current ASA members, who may click on the "Elections" link at the top/bottom of their member record. Members who reside in Africa will be mailed a paper ballot and will have the option of voting online or by mail. The online link will remain available on each member's individual record until September 1, which is the deadline for receiving all electronic and mail votes. Please remember to vote if you have renewed your membership, and please renew your membership if you would like to vote!

As the ASA approaches the first of its two "50 Year" celebrations - of its founding in 1957 and its first Annual Meeting in 1958 - please remember that financial support is key to enabling the ASA to do the important work that it does. **The revenue from your membership dues, Annual Meeting registration, and endowment contributions are virtually the sole sources of support for the ASA's operating budget.** The ASA's first-ever participation in the Combined Federal Campaign this year has also yielded modest contributions from employees of the US Federal Government, who may select to donate to a wide variety of causes. Happily, the ASA is eligible to participate in the CFC again next year. Please join in these efforts, advocating for the ASA as vigorously and giving as generously as you can to build an even more solid foundation for promoting African studies for the next 50 years - and beyond!

Update on the ASA's Higher Education Initiative

In 2001, the ASA launched an initiative on "African and North American Higher Education: New Partnerships and New Directions." Funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, the initiative resulted in two commissioned research papers, "Challenges Facing the Development of African Higher Education," by Dr. Akilagpa Sawyerr, Director of Research, Association of African Universities and "Higher Education in Africa: Partnerships - Hopes and Challenges," by Joel Samoff and Bidemi Carrol, Stanford University. The initiative sparked dialogue across a broad range of fields and interests

and complemented in important ways the work of the Partnership on Higher Education. Of special note was the creation of the African Higher Education Resource Directory of higher education institutions in Africa in collaboration with Michigan State University.

Over the past year, the ASA has been working to build upon and extend the higher education initiative by developing a new collaborative project around the theme, "Globalizing Area Knowledge: African Studies and Higher Education in Africa." The Rockefeller Foundation generously