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Report on the 2009 ANHS Members Meeting

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REPORT ON THE ANHS MEMBERS MEETING

MADISON, WI OCTOBER 2009

The 2009 General Member Meeting of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Research was held at the annual South Asia Conference in Madison, WI at 5:30 pm on 23 October 2009.

LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER PRESENTATION

The first order of business was a brief presentation by Anup Maharjan and Candice Michalowicz of the National Capital Language Resource Center. They are promoting the teaching of South Asian languages to school age children in informal programs around the US. They asked those present to notify them of any programs teaching Nepali language so they can provide the programs with resources and link them into the network of such programs that they are creating. They can be contacted at info@nclrc.org or at the organization's website: www.nclrc.org

NEW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS

President Lawoti then introduced the new members of the Executive Council, Megan Adamson Sijapati, P.P. Karan, and Mary Cameron, and the two new officers, Treasurer Geoff Childs and Secretary John Metz. He thanked the outgoing Council members Anne Rademacher (Secretary), Susan Hangen (Treasurer), and Mark Liechty for their important contributions.

HIMALAYA

A written report from Arjun Guneratne, the editor of our journal *Himalaya*, who was absent, was presented, outlining the progress that he, his assistants at Macalester, and Barbara Brower at Portland State had made over the previous year. Volume 27 had recently been mailed to subscribers, and Volume 26 would be mailed by mid November. In 2010 his office would complete and mail Volumes 28 and 29, and this would bring the journal up to date so the volume number and year of publication matched. In addition, the journal has formalized its system of peer reviewing articles, which will enhance *Himalaya's* value to scholars of the region. The Editor encouraged members to submit articles and to pull together groups of related articles for special issues. Dedicated panels at the South Asian or other conferences often facilitate this process. President Lawoti thanked Arjun for the huge progress that he had made with our flagship journal. He also paid tribute to Barbara Brower's many years editing the journal and transforming it into its current expanded format. During these years Barbara bore a double burden as journal editor and financial administrator for the organization.

DOR BAHADUR BISTA PRIZE

Next on the agenda, President Lawoti and Geoff Childs discussed the results of the competition for ANHS's Dor Bahadur Bista Prize, the award given to the graduate student who had submitted the most outstanding paper on the Himalaya that year. They announced that there had been very few submissions this year and that none had been of sufficient quality to justify the award. To expand submissions, the Executive Council has decided to offer a monetary prize to the winner and to contact established scholars to encourage them to have their students compete.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Since retiring Treasurer Susan Hangen could not attend, President Lawoti and Kim O'Neil gave a brief review of the organization's financial status. Kim O'Neil's work as bookkeeper has been a great help in organizing our finances and in building a structure with which to manage them in the future. Kim reported that ANHS has \$25,000 in its accounts, \$14,000 of which is in checking. She consolidated all of the organization's records into one Quickbooks database, and this will allow the Treasurer to produce quarterly reports on the organization's financial status. She has also been working with Milan Shrestha, ANHS's webmaster, to create an email listserv for professional communications. The email list will facilitate notifying individual and institutional members of their dues or journal subscription fees.

Another significant advance is to update the organization's legal status: e.g. we had never filed the name change from Nepal Studies Association to ANHS with the Internal Revenue Service. Mahendra thanked Susan and Kim for these crucially important accomplishments. In addition, he praised Milan Shrestha for the beautiful website he has created for the organization. This site will allow us to publish recent information about the organization, like approved minutes from meetings, fellowship application information, information on the Dor Bahadur Bista award, etc. We are also posting all back issues of *Himalaya* on the website, except for the two most recent issues.

CAORC APPLICATION

One of ANHS's most significant accomplishments of the year has been to apply to become a member of the Council of American Overseas Research Centers. John Mock led the Executive Council in preparing the application. Becoming a CAORC member brings the organization and its members many benefits. First, additional monies may be available to the organization. Second, membership requires that we have an office in the host country, which will provide an air-condi-

tioned workspace, a research library and study center to researchers. Third, the in-country staff help visiting researchers secure visas, create contacts with local scholars, provide help with logistics like finding housing, organizing seminars, and arranging meetings with government officials, and coordinating visas and travel arrangement.

Unfortunately, our application was not accepted for several reasons which we are in process of addressing so we can reapply in 2010. The primary reason given by the CAORC committee was our lack of a permanent office or staff to facilitate researchers in the region. President Lawoti arranged a partnership with Social Science Baha (SSB) this summer whereby Social Science Baha will provide ANHS with office space, and ANHS will hire a staff person to help visiting scholars on our behalf and to work part time for SSB. A second issue to resolve is that CAORC would like us to offer fellowships to scholars. The Executive Council decided to establish a \$1000 fellowship for US post-doctoral scholars beginning in 2010. We are working out the final details, but will announce the fellowship in early 2010. Finally, to fulfill a major goal of ANHS, we have begun a series of seminars that our members will offer in Nepal through SSB. These seminars will be free to local scholars, except for a nominal fee to cover administrative costs, tea, and snacks. Hence, the Executive Council encourages all of us who travel to Nepal to plan to make a presentation on their research. This can vary from a 1-3 day seminar to an afternoon workshop. Please let Mahendra know when you are going, and he will have our Kathmandu staff person and the Social Science Baha arrange the logistics and promotion of the seminar.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

It has become clear that the organization's Constitution needs amendments to streamline its operations. The Executive Council is working on these and will submit them to a vote next year. One example of a small but significant change is to allow voting via email rather than mailed hard copy, as the constitution now requires. A second is to define the spe-

cific tasks of the journal's editor so that they are distinguished from those of the organization's administration and financial operations.

RECRUITMENT DRIVE

The Executive Council intends another recruitment drive in order to get lapsed members to rejoin and to convince potential members, be they scholars or Himalayan enthusiasts or libraries, that our rejuvenated ANHS can help them in their work in the Himalaya. To do this, ANHS needs your assistance. We have a very convincing message to promote: *Himalaya* is getting back on schedule, we are working to become a member of CAORC, and we are expanding our activities including establishing an office in Kathmandu, offering fellowships, and organizing a prize for graduate student research. Some of the ideas we want to pursue with respect to expanding our membership include contacting graduate programs, notifying institutional members, and contacting institutions that have Himalayan connections and are potential institutional members. We will form a Recruitment Drive Committee that will be composed of both Executive Council and regular members. We are preparing a model letter that members can personalize and send to potential members. Contact Mahendra for further details.

FUTURE MEETINGS

We will meet again next year at the South Asian Conference meeting in Madison, but we agreed to have our 2011 meeting at Macalester College in St. Paul as a part of the regional meeting of the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs. We urge you to begin to consider panels for the 2010 and 2011 meetings now. Notify the Executive Council of your plans, so we can help arrange the panels so they are not scheduled at the same times.

President Lawoti ended the meeting at 6:50.

John Metz
Secretary (2009-2010)