

**Minutes of the ASA Environment and Technology Council Meeting
August 16, 2002**

Present: Loren Lutzenhiser, Phil Brown, Steve Couch, Carole Seyfrit, Angela Mertig, John Bellamy Foster, Rick Scarce, Lori Hunter, Tom Rudel, Harry Potter, Susan Roschke, Tammy Lewis, Margarita Alario, Ken Gould.

The Chair, Loren Lutzenhiser, called the meeting to order at 7:00AM. Secretary-Treasurer, Ken Gould reported on the Section's budget. He reported estimated annual expenditures of \$2,750, from projected revenues totalling \$3,230 resulting in a \$480 increase in net assets. The Treasurer noted that revenues are dependent on membership numbers that determine dues income as well as ASA allocations to the section. The Section awarded \$200.00 to the winner of the Olsen Student Paper. The Secretary/Treasurer also requested a higher volume of nominations for the Distinguished Contribution Award, and suggested posting a list of past recipients in the section brochure.

The Chair welcomed new Council members John Bellamy Foster and Margarita Alario.

Section newsletter editor, Susan Roschke suggested that section officers write a brief description of their positions for publication in the newsletter. 1-2 page article submissions were also requested. Rick Scarce suggested that graduate students be encouraged to submit pieces for the newsletter.

Reporting for the Telecommunications Committee, Rick Scarce indicated that maintenance of the section web site could be turned over to a graduate student.

It was noted that the Outstanding Student Paper Award will be presented to Andrew Jorgenson of the University of California-Riverside, and that the Outstanding Publication Award will be presented to Gene Rosa.

The Chair noted that the section has a high turnover in membership, and that we are really a section of 300. The collaborative session organized with the section on Social Movements was noted. Membership swapping with other sections was suggested as a means by which to inflate our numbers. A lively discussion of section membership numbers and the relative merits of having greater numbers of sessions ensued. Some council members questioned the need for sustaining the 400-member threshold for extra sessions, noting that there may be an inverse relationship between quality and quantity of papers presented. The irony of the Environment and Technology section's belief that growth is good and more is better in terms of its own self-interest was explored. The Chair noted that more sessions allows for a more coherent grouping of the papers. It was noted that the section does not receive enough papers to fill its roundtable sessions. Phil Brown suggested that we organize thematic roundtable discussions with out the presentation of papers. Council agreed that this might be a productive use of the roundtables slot. Council reached no resolution on continuing the section's commitment to sustain a 400-member roster.

The 2003 meetings in Atlanta were discussed briefly, and Council members were encouraged to

seek out opportunities for collaboration with other sections.

Discussion then returned to the relationship between the section and journals (following up on last year's council discussions). Arthur Mol's international environmental sociology journal was noted as one option for a formal section journal. Phil Brown, Steve Couch, Lori Hunter and the Chair comprised the committee that explored the possibility of a formal relationship with Organization and Environment. They reported that ASA policy is that the ASA must control and own section journals. John Bellamy Foster offered that the informal relationship between the section and the journal is fine, and that a formal relationship that included ASA control would not be in the best interest of Organization and Environment. It was suggested that Arthur Mol make a case for a formal relationship with his journal in a newsletter article.

The Council discussed the NSF 10 year agenda and the lack of social science representation on the committee. It was noted that Tom Dietz encouraged the section to provide comments. The ASA rejected those comments, indicating that sections are prohibited from taking policy positions. Some discussion of the actual value of having an American Sociological Association ensued. It was noted that ASA did adopt a draft resolution on Ashcroft and access to public information. Ken Gould indicated that the ASA is decreasingly effective at promoting the professional interests of its members, noting the invisibility of the discipline in public discussion of the previous year's sociopolitical events, and the ASA's lack of response to those events. A number of other Council members expressed dissatisfaction with the ASA. Carole Seyfrit stated the need for sociologists to shape NSF social science research questions.

The meeting concluded with a number of individual announcements.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth A. Gould,
Secretary-Treasurer