Minutes from the Ethnography Division Business Meeting, NCA
Convention, Friday, Nov. 5.

Carolyn Ellis, Chair, called the meeting to order. She began by expressing enthusiasm for the new division that many members felt and heard throughout the conference.

Jim Gaudino visited our meeting and made several points:
♦ We currently have 218 (UPDATE?) members
♦ We need to get, then maintain, 300 members. If we fail to maintain 300 members by 2002, the division will become a commission.
♦ A task force chaired by Bill Balthrop will examine the structure of NCA. He said that some units are expressing discontent about the process, and that some feel marginalized because they don't have 300 members and cannot maintain representation on the Legislative Council.
♦ Scheduling conflicts at the conference occur when units program over 19 panels. Each unit has up to 19 program slots, and if a unit goes over that (as we did with 25), then there will be conflicts.

Carolyn continued the meeting by turning to things that we need to do and decide:
♦ We need to increase and maintain membership at 300.
♦ She recommended that the division wait to develop by-laws until we have more information about what does and does not work.
♦ She proposed the following written proposal for electing officers: 1. That we continue electing officers at the business meeting; 2. that starting in 2000-2001 the division chair (in consultation with other division officers) appoint a three-person nominating committee (designating one person as chair) who will come up with a slate of officers for each position; 3. that candidates must be contact and agree to serve; 4. that the candidates give a one-to-two minute speech at the business meeting; and 5. that voting be by secret ballot. The membership then elected Buddy Goodall as the 2000-2001 vice-chair elect
♦ She made the following written proposal regarding election of the secretary/newsletter editor:
1. that the sec/news ed position be for a term of two years; 2. that we ask Stacy Holman Jones to continue for a second year. Both motions passed.

Nick Trujillo gave a report about planning the 1999 division programs. He reported that there were 16 panel proposals and 33 papers submitted. He asked readers to rank, rate, and indicate yes/no/maybe for each paper or panel. Based on these ratings and rankings, he put together a ranked list of 25 panels. Raymie McKerrow had reported that he might have to cut all programs over 20, so Nick decided not to cut any fearing that if he cut some, McKerrow might cut others that were ranked high enough to merit consideration. Nick reported that McKerrow ultimately found room for all programs and accepted all submissions. That meant that the division accepted every submitted panel and paper. Nick reported that this might be too inclusive, and that the division should consider whether we want to accept everyone or cut some so that we can schedule fewer people on panels to give them more time to present their work.

Nick concluded with the recommendation to have a Top Paper panel. It was presented as a motion to the membership, and we approved the motion. Nick said he will work with Ron Wendt, next year's program planner, on a method to insure that the Top Papers panel reflect top ranked and rated papers.
Ron Wendt reported on the preconference on Ethnography and Consumption that occurred on the Wednesday before the convention off-site, at the Illinois Beach and Resort. He said that there were 12 participants, and that they had a great experience. Bud Goodall will work with Ron in organizing that preconference (see the preconference announcement in this newsletter).

Ron also reported on the program planner’s session on next year’s convention theme, “The Engaged Discipline.” He advised us to think about panels which embrace as well as critique the potential implications of this theme. He also encouraged us to develop innovative forms for panels, including roundtable discussions.

Carolyn commented on division's budget (which is about $150 until we get our membership up to 300), and that it cost about $125 to produce and distribute the newsletter. She also reported that our division can have representation on NCA committees such as the Nomination Committee and the Committee on Committees, and if anyone was interested in serving on these committees to let her know. She also reported that NCA will begin an electronic journal.

Dear fellow skeptics,

First off, let me say that I am truly humbled by and appreciative of the fact that I have been chosen to be Vice Chair for this most radical Division of NCA. I say "radical" in the most positive sense of the word: Alternative, critical, exceptional, creative, and insightful. I am so convinced that Ethnography is The most stimulating enterprise in our Discipline that I went out and got a new tattoo which reads: "MAKE THE FAMILIAR STRANGE AND THE STRANGE FAMILIAR" (the quotation marks hurt the most).

Second, I want to apologize to the two scholars who submitted papers to the Ethnography Division of NCA and whose names and addresses were lost due to a "clerical error" (read: I screwed up). To those two authors I say: Please read the program in this newsletter and write me a very nasty letter.

Last, I want to thank each and every person who submitted projects, panels, and papers to our Division. The quality of scholarship that has come across my desk is, to say the least, impressive and inspiring.

Very jazzed about what we do, Ron Wendt, vice chair

Preconference:

"Engaging the Spirit in Our Field/work: Spirituality, Communication, and Ethnographic Practices"

November 7, 5-10 p.m. and November 8, 2000, from 9:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m., at the Baby Island Lodge on 2947 S. Saratoga Road, Largely, WA, (Whidbey Island, 1 hour north of Seattle).

Ethnographers and other interested communication researchers currently exploring the idea of "spirituality and communication" are welcome to submit paper/performance abstracts, roundtable
program ideas, and suggested activities dedicated to our preconference theme. For initial conference planning purposes we anticipate three "general sessions": position papers, fieldwork practices, and plans for future research and growth, though the planners are open to experiential or community-based engagement activities. Our purpose is to share/create work that focuses on why, how, and to what ends our ethnographic practices have uncovered, privileged, stumbled upon, or otherwise encountered spiritual phenomena, as well as what those encounters have to add to/challenge our personal, social, and professional understandings of "communication." Deadline for submissions is 1 June 2000. Contact conference coordinator Melanie Mills via email at cfmbrn@eiu.edu for information on cost for lodging and transportation options.

WRITING THE NEW ETHNOGRAPHY, by H.L. (Bud) Goodall, Jr. is the 7th (and most recent) book in Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner's series ETHNOGRAPHIC ALTERNATIVES, published by AltaMira Press (part of Roman and Littlefield). The book is aimed as an introductory text for qualitative methods and ethnography courses. Anyone interested in ordering books from the AltaMira Press series should visit the new website location at romanlittlefield.com, order there, and receive a 15% discount on all titles when the shopping cart rings up the total.

The Couch-Stone Symposium took place on January 26-30, 2000 at the Dolphin Beach resort on St. Pete Beach, Florida. The Symposium was organized by Carolyn Ellis and Art Bochner who were ably assisted by Spencer Cahill and Donileen Loseke. The University of South Florida served as the host University. More than 250 people, representing Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States (as well as nineteen different disciplines), attended the symposium. Obviously, SSSI has become both multi-disciplinary and international in scope. It also reflects what Mary and Ken Gergen called "the qualitative revolution" in the social sciences.

The theme of the Symposium was "Ethnography for the Twenty-First Century: Alternatives and Opportunities." Consequently, the Symposium featured numerous "alternative" forms and perspectives on ethnographic representation including ethnodrama, media/digital storytelling, personal narrative, autoethnography, audio and video documentary, unscripted, emergent conversation, literary, video, and artistic forms of representation, memoir, and pressure-cooker projects. Mary and Ken Gergen presented the first keynote talk, an integrated conceptual and ethnographic performance that focused on "Representation as Relationship." A second keynote lecture was given by Arthur Frank who focused on "Illness and the Interactionist Vocation." The featured performance, a stunning enactment of "Handle With Care: An Ethnodrama About Living With Metastatic Breast Cancer," was presented by Ross Gray, Jan Livingston, Christina Sinding, Mary Sue Douglas, and Patricia Bower." Based on Gray's
> qualitative research, the performance involves participation from several
> cancer survivors whose stories are embedded in the script. Audience
> reactions to the performance were filmed at the Symposium for broadcast on
> Canadian Public Television.
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> In addition to these stimulating and evocative presentations, the
> Symposium included programs on "Ethnography and Spirituality,
> Ethnographies of Race, Feminist Ethnography, Wounded Storytelling, Gay
> and Lesbian Identity Work, Ethnographic Aesthetics, Dis/Enchantment by
> Academe, and a free-flowing, open conversation session on "Stories that
> Conform/Stories that Transform." Of course, plenty of time was set aside
> for informal chats, beach walks, and having fun. Music was provided by
> the Quivering Rhythm Hounds and Carolyn and Art were seen still quivering
> on the dance floor after midnight. Plans have been initiated to publish a
> book based on the conference.
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> Cheers,
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> Art Bochner