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AFRICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
RADISSON HOTEL LA JOLLA, SAN DIEGO, CA
April 04, 2002 : 07:00 - 09:00

Present : Kandjoura Dramé (President), Elisabeth M-Boyi (Vice President), Bob Cancel, Kapanga Kasongo, Eustace Palmer, Helen Nabasata Mugambi, Jo Anne Cornwell, Naana Banyiva Horne, Ambroise Kom, Koffi Anyinefa, Abioseh Porter, Sonia Lee, Turzylne Tira Allen, Anne Adams [proxy for Carole Davis], Debra Boyd [proxy for Joyce Hope Scott], Ada U. Azodo.

The President called the meeting at 7:15 A.M. The following agenda was presented and discussed.

AGENDA

1. Adoption of Agenda
2. Ratification of Minutes
3. President's Welcome and Update
4. Vice-President's report on Elections
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Conveners' Preliminary Report
7. ALA Bulletin: Editor's Report

1. Adoption of the agenda. The agenda was adopted at unanimous vote.

2. Ratification of the ALA Minutes of the meetings at the ASA conference held in Houston, Texas, November 15-18. Members requested that the names of all on the publication committee be supplied. The minutes were adopted pending these corrections.

3. President's Welcome and Update. Dramé gave an overview of the ALA work during the last twelve months. He particularly underlined the difficulties arising from the passing away of ALA members and African writers. Names included Léopold Senghor, Monggo Beti, René Philombé, Sunday Onozie, Lennuel Johnson, Adededji, Wale Olugunmi, Nina Mba. He got these names from various sources such as individual messages and the ALA bulletin. He sought advice from the executive members on finding an easier way to get information and the proper way to pay tribute to the deceased. Anne Adams suggested that, as in the past, the association ask around for names of the deceased members so that proper tribute be paid to them at the appropriate time. An efficient way would be the circulation of an open list for members to

supply names of the deceased and/or stepping forward to pay tribute to them by contacting the Vice-President who will coordinate the entire event.

4. Treasurer's Report and Conveners' Preliminary Report (Bob Cancel). The materials are in the hands of the auditors and will be available at the next meeting. The association is in good standing. We have about 200 participants at the hotel and the number of 300 will be reached. Bob Cancel encouraged people to attend the banquet. Thomas Maphumo will play. The poet Jack Maphanje is the recipient of the Fonlon-Nichols Award. Mr. Nichols has already sent \$ 750 and Cancel asked the council to top off, as a usual practice, to \$1000. The issue of unplanned accommodation to some African participants was discussed. Cancel was asked to charge differently guests coming from Africa for registration. Adams said that at the ALA conference in Ithaca, the room was provided to take care of such circumstances. As an African association, we need to be sensitive to such cases. Suggestions for resolving this issue were floated and included the setting up of a discretionary fund, intervention from the Executive Council, providing a university facility (or local arrangements) when available, appeal to individual members for help. Council members felt that for efficiency, we ought to have a policy such as waiving the registration fee for members traveling from Africa, or charge a symbolic (nominal) fee with a minimal amount. To take effect, wording is needed to present it at the Business Meeting: "Conference registration for members coming directly from Africa to the conference be fixed at \$10.00. The fee will be waived for (members) students coming directly Africa."

The issue of discretionary fund ought to be coupled with the possibility of fund raising. Sponsorship from the members might be another way of providing funds. There was a debate over the setting up of discretionary funds, one for emergency situations, and another for the conveners' operating budget. It could take the form of a savings account meant for use only when needed. The debate touched on the matter of outside sponsorship such as government agencies or grant institutions. In the end, it was the feeling of the Council that conveners could earmark \$1000 for such emergencies given the fact that the ALA is essentially a conference organizing body. Therefore, it would seem only proper to defer this responsibility to the conveners, let them build their own discretionary fund for contingencies. Should the ALA earmark any amount, a contribution in the range of \$2000 would be proper. Emergencies ought not to include any unplanned acts or surprising demands. The issue needs some revisiting for crafting an acceptable proposal for the Business Meeting.

5. Election, Vice-President (Elizabeth Boyl). She confides to the council the continued drop of volunteerism for members to serve. Finding willing colleagues is getting harder and harder. In Elizabeth's case, it was not until late in

the process that she was able to fill the slates. Phillip Noss and Cathy Noss helped in the counting of a total of 130 ballots. Some ballots missed the deadlines set for sending in votes; others had only one vote instead of the minimum number required. Ballots were counted as such. Here are the results

Vice-President: George Joseph: 59 Janice Mayes: 68
Secretary: Spleth: 76; Okafor: 51
Executive members: Chiwengo (93); Kennedy (70); Belcher (58), Gabara (50) Little (50), Hatcher (44).
Treasurer: Bob Cancel. He ran unopposed.

The council debated the growing low ballooning the organization is facing and ways to increase greater participation by the membership. Jo Anne Cornwell mentioned that the low numbers are also the result of delayed membership renewals as elections run concurrently with the renewal season. Only paid up members are to receive ballots. A reminder in December on the importance of renewal and election may rekindle membership participation. Anne Adams reminded the executive council the importance of having nine (or at least six potential) candidates to run for the next election. The situation is getting harder when deferred especially in contacting potential candidates at later times. Rejections, indecisions, and statement solicitation put undue burden on the election organizers. Other impediments include the times of meetings of the executive council, lack of institutional support and time conflicts. The President asked the council to explore possibilities to assist the members in various capacities. Incentives and strategy would include reduced registration fee at the ALA meetings, fee payment to the ASA conference, reminding members at the Business Meeting, discontinue meetings at the ASA, the President or Vice-President could send letters to home institutions (President or department) requesting support to executive members, asking ex-members and ongoing members to stand. The Business Meeting could spare time to explain to new members possibilities to serve. The President thanked the Vice-President for producing such good results in difficult circumstances.

6. ALA Bulletin : Editor's Report (Abioseh Porter). Porter confided to the council that it takes time to run the bulletin. The Vice President, the Secretary, and the Director of the Headquarters Jo Anne Cornwell have been instrumental in the success of the bulletin. The President encouraged the council to heed to Porter's call in responding as quickly as possible. Jo Anne Cornwell suggests that assistance from the graduate students is available. Members should be reminded that this is part of the contribution to the profession. The President advised to look at the possibility of having an associate editorship or a small

body of colleagues to assist. The Directorship of the headquarters (associate editor) could provide officially that assistance.

The President adjourned the meeting at 9:05 A.M.

**AFRICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
RADISSON HOTEL LA JOLLA, SAN DIEGO, CA
April 05, 2002: 07:00 - 09:00**

Present : Kandiora Dramé (President), Elisabeth M. Boyi (Vice-President), Bob Cancel, Kapanga Kasongo (secretary), Eustace Palmer, Helen N. Mugambi, Jo Anne Cornwell, Naana Banyiva Home, Ambroise Kom, Koffi Anyimefa, Abioseh Porter, Sonia Lee, Tuzylina Tia Allen, Anne Adams [proxy for Carole Davis], Debra Boyd [proxy for Joyce Hope Scott], [Ada U. Azodo, Richard Priebe, Faiza Shareen]

The President called the meeting at 7:10 A.M. The following agenda was presented and discussed.

AGENDA

1. Report on the ALA conference in 2003, Alexandria-Dayton: Professor Faiza Shareen
2. Bid for ALA conference at U-Wisconsin at Madison, Aiko Songolo
3. New Bids
4. Report on the ALA Annals

1. Report on the Richmond Annual (Richard Priebe). Priebe said that the preparation of the selected proceedings was going smoothly. Three people have been working on them: Louis Tremaine, Angelina Overvold, and Richard Priebe. Preference went to papers reflecting the theme of the conference. In order to have the proceedings coming out promptly by the 2002 ASA meeting, the editors strictly respected the deadline. The final copy to the series editor is scheduled to go by the summer 2002. As a general observation, the editors noticed that the number of submissions has declined, mainly because of the urge to publish in refereed journals. A total of fourteen papers will make the bulk of the proceedings with major addresses being automatically included. To a peripheral question on the publication with Africa World Press, the President said that he did not have fresh information until he would meet with Chicole to discuss related issues. Priebe said that the issue of late submission is detrimental to a smooth selection and rules have to be tightened up: deadlines, themes, and membership... Low submissions might also be due to a higher number of outlets today than a few years ago. The pressure to publish in quality journals especially for young colleagues might explain the decline. The fear is that at this rate, we might be going for the disappearance of the proceedings or at least a radical change. Compounded to this difficulty is the fact that sales have declined in face of library cuts and a sustained move to electronic forms. Priebe

suggested that moving to this latter format might be a way out. The issue warrants further discussion within the realm of the Research and Teaching Commission.

2. Report on the ALA conference in 2003, Alexandria-Dayton: Professor Faiza Shareen. According to her report, since the ASA conference in Houston, the prospect for going to Alexandria was looking better and better. Planning on both tracts, the conference has been set for March 20 during the University of Dayton Spring Break. Edward Said has accepted to be the keynote speaker as it will be the 20th anniversary of the publication of Orientalism. The official opening of the Library of Alexandria is April 20th 2002, and Shareen has been invited with a group of African Americans. That will be the opportunity to look at the accommodations. Arrangements with a travel agent will be in the range of \$700 for a round trip. She has looked at accommodations both in Alexandria and in Dayton. Should Dayton be the choice and in order to remain within the allocated budget, the university will be the site of some conference meetings while hotels will serve for both accommodation and other meetings. Shareen believes that we should go ahead with Alexandria preparations because: 1) There seems to be an end in view to the unrest in the Middle East. 2) The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been going on for the last fifty years. It might be prohibitive only if the conflict widens. 3) Other organizations have held conferences up to two weeks ago. 4) The State Department has not issued a ban on travel to Egypt. 5) An African American research center in Cairo has been contacted for advice; so far they have not discouraged the preparation. 6) The anti-American feeling is against American foreign policy. Shareen's only concern is the challenge to plan the conference in two places. Her suggestion is that the bulk on her energy be put on Alexandria with a backup plan for Dayton. As a matter of fact, Shareen is working on the assumption that the conference will take place in Alexandria with a window open for an alternative should the situation become prohibitive. Nevertheless, such a switch will inevitably entail financial loss. Questions to Shareen focused on the mechanism to decide, travel planning, polling the membership and gauging their feelings, the potential US involvement in Iraq, security concerns, deadlines for decision. Palmer moved that the Executive Council recommend to the Business Meeting that we continue the preparation to hold the 2003 conference in Alexandria March 19-22; if circumstances warrant change of plans, that the University of Dayton be an alternative site. Nana B. Horne seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Bid for ALA conference at University of Wisconsin at Madison. Aliko Songolo has put a bid to hold the 2004 conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with supporting documentations and financial planning from

various internal constituencies. A committee has been set up to oversee the conference. The venue is appropriate especially as it is the 30th anniversary of the ALA.

4. Teaching and Research Committee has been in flux and there is a need to set it back on track. It needs reorganization and to be re-energized in the light of new pedagogy and recent innovations. Dramé asked Sonia Lee to head the committee. For the sake of efficiency and for having been involved with both, Lee believes the ALA ought to split these two activities. As far as teaching is concerned, a wide scope including high school programs can be planned as topics to focus on. The teaching committee includes Irene D'Almeida, Joelle Vitellio, Charlie Sugnet, and Pat Alden. The committee's work could coincide with the assignments of the ALA headquarters especially its Outreach Extension. The executive committee suggested that, in order to avoid a duplication of committees, that there be two subcommittees, one focusing on teaching, and the other one on research. Some of the discussions could find place in the bulletin for the wide public including teachers. Newsletters could serve as the relay circulating both in hard copy and in electronic form.

5. The President submitted to the council two issues from the Treasurer of adding \$250 to the Fonlon-Nichols fund and paying for the room of two African scholars who showed up at the San Diego ALA conference announced and apparently in financial difficulty. For the Fonlon-Nichols, the committee that oversees the endowment ought to take up this issue unless an external contribution comes in. Humanitarian intervention came up for discussion, with suggestions for either creating an infrastructure to that end, or giving up the idea altogether. It was the consensus that the Executive council cannot honor these requests in the fashion formulated.

6. Deputy Vice-President. There was a discussion concerning the election and the heavy burden on the President and the Vice-President. After further discussions, there was a motion to create the position of Deputy Vice-President. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The motion reads as follows: First, the candidate who receives the second highest number of votes in the election for Vice-President becomes Deputy Vice-President. The Deputy Vice-President will assist the President and Vice-President in their duties and is a voting member of the Executive Council. Secondly, in the event of a vacancy in the office of the Vice-President, the Deputy Vice-President will become the interim Vice-President for the remainder of the Vice-President's term. He/she may run in the next elections."

The President adjourned the meeting at 09:15. A.M.

**AFRICAN LITERATURE ASSOCIATION
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
RADISSON HOTEL LA JOLLA, SAN DIEGO, CA**

April 06, 2002: 07:00 - 09:00

Present : Kandiora Dramé (President), Elisabeth M. Boyi (Vice President), Bob Canceel, Kapanga Kasongo (secretary), Eustrace Palmer, Helen N. Mbugambi, Jo Anne Cornwell, Naana Banyiwya Horne, Ambroise Kom, Koffi Anyineta, Abioseh M. Porter, O. Traore, Irene d'Almeida [proxy for Sonia Lee], Tuzyline Tita Allen, Anne Adams [proxy for Carole Davis], Debra Boyd [Joyce Hope Scott], [Ada U. Azado, Ousseynou Traore, Aliko Sangolo, Tejumola Olaniyari]

The President called the meeting at 7:10 A.M. The following agenda was presented and discussed.

AGENDA

- 1. 2004 ALA conference bid**
- 2. Reports of committees**
 - a. Human Rights
 - b. ALA Headquarters
 - c. ALA awards
 - d. Publications
 - e. Teaching and Research
 - f. Constitutional Reform: Discussion of vacancy

The President called the meeting at 07:10.

1. The 2004 ALA conference bid. Aliko Songolo & Tejumola Olaniyari. Madison would like to organize the conference for the 30th anniversary of the ALA and the 40th of the Department of African Languages & Literatures. The program of the African Studies will be the co-organizer. Songolo's term as director of this program expires in 2004. He gave an historic overview of the experience of the university in its involvement with African studies. In recent years, the scope has widened to include other languages such as French and Spanish. The program has about 70 faculty members. There is documentation of financial pledges that for the time being goes beyond the \$40,000 required. The financial support from within is earmarked. Madison has an important African population of about 1,000 people in a city that counts 200,000. The conference will take place on campus. Help will come from people who have experience from previous organizers such as Edris Makward and Daniel Kunene. Contacts have been established with Richmond and Lawrence converters. Once the bid is accepted, various subcommittees will be set up.

a. The President introduced the new ALA General Series Editor Ousseynou Traore. Traore will give a full report at coming meetings of the next ASA conference.

b. ALA Headquarters Report. Jo Anne Cornwell showed a sample of the ALA newsletter. It could serve at the link between the members and the Headquarters. It will explain the organization, its main functions, accomplishments, and projects. It would serve to disseminate information faster and more often. She asked the council's feedback before presenting it to the wide Business Meeting. It could be issued twice or thrice a year. Questions gravitated around the production, the mailing, the name, the purpose, the financial aspect, the format, and the content. Cornwell updated the council on the revision of the handbook that aims at incorporating all the constitutional changes that have been enacted in the last few years. The work is still in progress and she provided copies for feedback. Other documents to be included are stipulations for organizing conferences abroad, information related to caucuses, information for conveners. Given the fact that her pleas for information and feedback went unheeded, the President suggested the setting up of a committee to work in order to update the handbook that would include the ALA Bulletin Editor and the General Series Editor. Each officer is asked to look at his/her functions and update accordingly the committee.

c. Awards. Conveners were given permission to give an award to a graduate student for service. The Business Meeting had requested that the committee work out a smoother way of awarding.

d. Publication committee. There is a need for the ALA to have its own publication. Several proposals came up including the creation of an ALA journal in hard copy through a publication house, the creation of an electronic journal, or turning the ALA Bulletin into a journal. The President encouraged the third path given the fact that what the bulletin has become substantially documented and Porter could help upgrade it to that next notch. Dramé has put an application for an electronic journal under the editorship of the ALA Bulletin. Discussions on this evolution touched on the link with the newsletter, the quality of articles, the Annals, the public to serve, the academic status of the journal, the frequency of publication, the cost (the Bulletin costs about \$11,000 a year).

e. Teaching and Research Committee. In the absence of the chair, the President gave what he knew from the reports to the executive council.

f. Constitutional Reform Committee. The committee made a few suggestions that will be circulated among the members in the near future.

The president adjourned the meeting at 9:10 A.M.