American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
October 25, 2003
Madison, Wisconsin

Present: Chandra De Silva, Sharon Hudson-Dean, Dennis McGilvray, Jonathan Walters, Susan Reed, Liyanage Amarakeerthi, Asoka Bandarage, George Bond, John Mensing, Daniel Bass, Jeffrey Samuels, Brad Clough, Margo Kleinfeld, Guy Welbon, Deborah Winslow, Pat Peebles, Hal Schiffman, J.S.S. Gyatso, Charles Hallisey, Neena Mahadev, Jeanne Marecek, John Rogers

Approval of the Minutes. The minutes of the 2002 Annual General Meeting were approved.

President’s Report. Jeanne Marecek announced several activities for the upcoming year including the postdoctoral Fellowship Program, stipend funding available for members attending the International Sri Lanka Studies Conference in Matara in November 2003, and the January 2004 workshop in Colombo on the ‘43 Group. She announced that AISLS is now an affiliate of the AAS, which provides program time at the AAS Annual Meeting. In 2003, AISLS sponsored a panel discussion on H.L. Seneviratne’s book, The Work of Kings. At the AAS 2004 meeting in San Diego, a discussion will be held on Steven Kemper’s book, Buying and Believing: Sri Lankan Advertising And Consumers In A Transnational World. The Executive Committee is seeking nominations (including self nominations) for scholars who might participate in the panel.

Language Stipends. Jeanne Marecek announced that funding is available for any member or graduate student member (including individuals from member institutions) for language study in Sri Lanka. Scholars can be reimbursed up to approximately $300 for tutoring or courses in Pali, Sinhala, Tamil or Arabic. AISLS has a list of tutors available. There is a rolling deadline for applications, and there is no citizenship requirement for these stipends.

Graduate Student Travel Grants. Jeanne Marecek reported that five travel stipends of $200 were awarded to students presenting papers at the 2002 Madison conference. The Board of Directors had recommended increasing the amount of the stipend to $250 and making the travel grants available as long as funding permits. The general membership approved these recommendations.

Hal Schiffman discussed the website of the South Asian Language Resource Center and stated that the SALRC was soliciting proposals for projects that would create Sinhala language instruction materials for the Internet. Information about this funding opportunity is available at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/salrc.

Fellowships. The winners of last year’s fellowship competition were Alan Keenan, Deborah Winslow, and Mark Whitaker.
Treasurer's Report. John Rogers reported for the Treasurer, Mike Woost. The audit of the books has been completed through December 2002. The fiscal year was changed to the calendar year. The management letter from the auditing firm stated that our books are kept in accordance with standard accounting procedures. Chandra de Silva stated that the Colombo accounts had been audited locally.

Membership Report. Deborah Winslow reported on the membership. There are now 89 members, including 13 institutional members, 13 student members, 60 regular members and 3 institutional members in arrears. New members included 1 new institutional member (University of Washington), 4 new student members and 13 new regular members. Regular individual memberships have increased from 44 to 60 members, and student memberships from 11 to 13 members.

Library. John Rogers reported on the Colombo library collection. The collection so far focuses on: 1) Recent books on Sri Lanka published in Sri Lanka (purchased through the Library of Congress purchasing program); 2) Books on Islam and Islamic studies; 3) Recent and “classic” books on Sri Lanka published outside Sri Lanka

The library also contains several years of the Journal of Asian Studies, kindly donated by Murray Straus. The library is open to AISLS members by appointment.

Colombo Office. Jeanne Marecek reported that we have a filing cabinet of AISLS members' publications. She requested that members forward copies of their books and articles to the Executive Committee, which will convey them to the Colombo office. The office has upgrading its computer system, and it now has a DSL connection. The office is hoping to purchase subscriptions to J-STOR and other databases.

Chandra de Silva reported that the Colombo office now has a lease extended to December 2005. Two workshops were conducted in Colombo this summer: Workshop on Ethnic Identities in June, organized by Chandra de Silva and Amita Shastri; and a Workshop on Sri Lanka’s Muslims, organized by Dennis McGilvray.

Acknowledgments. President Jeanne Marecek thanked several individuals for their assistance over the past year, making special note of John Rogers for his work on the Fellowship competition, on the development of the Colombo library, and on the cataloguing project associated with AODL (American Overseas digital Library), and Chandra de Silva for overseeing the Colombo office.

Submitted by Susan A. Reed for Anne Blackburn.