

# Minutes, 2011 OAH Business Meeting

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2011 • HOUSTON, TEXAS

The OAH Annual Meeting was called to order at 3:30 PM by President David A. Hollinger.

## **I. Report of the OAH President, David A. Hollinger**

President Hollinger noted that the OAH was saddened this past year by the passing of Treasurer Robert Griffith. He also noted that the OAH's thoughts are with the members in Japan who have been the victims of a catastrophic earthquake and tsunami. Hollinger noted that a letter will be sent to all OAH members in Japan expressing our concern.

Hollinger discussed the 2012 meeting in Wisconsin and noted that the meeting there will take place as planned even though the state has passed legislation severely limiting collective bargaining. There will be a concerted effort to use the meeting as a "teachable moment" and have papers and presentations focusing on labor history. There is an ambitious set of papers and a full program for this meeting.

The Executive Board, in cooperation with *JAH* Executive Editor Ed Linenthal, will convene an online interchange about collective bargaining and labor unions and how that connects with OAH's contracts with conference hotels.

Hollinger reported that the administrative affairs of the OAH are in much better shape. He also noted that Al Camarillo led a task force to study the *OAH Magazine of History*, and the recommendations of that task force were approved by the board. A task force chaired by OAH Executive Board Member Ramón Gutiérrez is studying the possible formation of a gay lesbian transsexual standing committee, and that task force will report on its findings in the fall.

## **II. Report of the OAH Interim Treasurer, Jay S. Goodgold**

Interim Treasurer Jay Goodgold noted that as the latter quarter of fiscal year 2011 is approaching, the OAH continues to show improvement in its financial condition and is expecting a small operating surplus off a revenue base of \$2,759,055. Internal management of the organization has improved, and a more realistic cost allocation methodology has been employed to allow the staff and Executive Board to better gauge the expenses and revenues of OAH programs. The cash liquidity of the OAH also continues to improve. Because no distributions were taken this past year from endowment funds, the OAH's assets have grown to \$1,809,000 as of January 31, 2011. The assets are still below the peak level of \$2,002,776 before the financial crisis; however, the organization has made considerable progress in recouping its assets.

Goodgold then discussed the 2012 operating budget. He noted that the OAH Executive Board had passed a budget for 2011–2012 that projects a small surplus of \$1,000 and is continuing to review all revenue and expenses. Funds have been allocated to market the 2011 conference. He also noted that the OAH is projecting \$57,000 in nonrestricted donations for 2012. The coming year will be the first year that the OAH will conduct only one fund-raising appeal to members, and an increased effort is being made to secure higher levels of giving from those who can.

Goodgold added that OAH funds are invested with the Indiana University Foundation in a broad array of investment vehicles. The historically low interest rates today make it very difficult to earn a steady income stream from investments.

Finally, the interim treasurer noted that the OAH relies heavily on membership dues, and this reliance on dues in a free digital age is one of the great challenges facing the OAH as well as many other nonprofit organizations. Therefore, the OAH will focus on attracting new and retaining current members as well as looking for alternative ways to create new sources of revenue without changing the mission of the OAH.

### **III. Report of the OAH Executive Director, Katherine M. Finley**

Executive Director Katherine Finley noted that since last year, the staff reorganization has been completed, membership numbers have stabilized, the organization is in the process of designing a new database, the organization finished the fiscal year 2009–2010 with a surplus, and the OAH has begun working on enhancing membership benefits, marketing membership, and enhancing the programs and outreach of the organization.

The membership in the OAH is approximately 8,000, with 8,309 members at the end of 10February 28). Over the past year, the OAH has restructured and simplified its dues and has moved to an annual dues billing system. It also has developed new membership benefits and is in the process of marketing memberships to new audiences. The OAH is in the process of developing a new online database that will combine the many databases at the OAH and allow members to update their information online.

The OAH instituted this year an automated database which saved countless hours of staff time and increased the number of those voting in the OAH election. Because of this new system and the OAH's efforts to publicize the election among members, the OAH had the largest number of members voting in over a decade (1,718 or 21.8% of the membership voted in the election). Below is a list of the slate elected for this year:

- OAH PRESIDENT: Alice Kessler-Harris, Columbia University
- OAH PRESIDENT-ELECT: Al Camarillo, Stanford University
- OAH VICE PRESIDENT: Alan M. Kraut, American University
- OAH EXECUTIVE BOARD: Michele Mitchell, New York University;  
Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Howard University; Peter Kolchin, University of Delaware
- OAH NOMINATING BOARD: David Waldstreicher, Temple University;  
Linda Gordon, New York University; Bruce A. Ragsdale, Federal Judicial History Office

Finances also stabilized during the past year, and the OAH had an operating surplus of \$66,773.

It was noted that for the first time, the OAH has committed funds to market the organization and its programs and services. Aside from its completely redesigned Web site, the OAH this past year instituted a monthly electronic newsletter for members, and at the meeting in Houston the board approved the production of a quarterly, 4–8 page newsletter for members that will include more in-depth information on OAH programs. The OAH is also making efforts to reach out to other history and education-related



organizations and to renew and strengthen relationships with the History Channel and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. The OAH also has worked this past year with the National History Coalition to preserve the Teaching American History Grants.

Both the *OAH Magazine of History* and the *Journal of American History* are published by Oxford University Press. Finley reported that so far the transition has been smooth, and the distribution and marketing of these publications should be enhanced because of Oxford's large marketing and distribution network.

Finley reported that the total attendance for the Houston meeting was approximately 1,300 but that the program was strong.

Finley concluded by noting that the OAH faces a number of challenges but also many opportunities. She added that 2010–2011 was a good year for the OAH but hopes 2011–2012 will be an even better year.

#### **IV. Report of the OAH Nominating Board, Katherine M. Finley (on behalf of the OAH Nominating Board)**

Rosemary Kolks Ennis, Chair of the OAH Nominating Board, reported that the Nominating Board had met and has chosen Patricia N. Limerick, professor of history at the University of Colorado at Boulder, as Vice President (to begin her term after the OAH Annual Meeting in April 2012). The OAH Nominating Board is completing the slate for the open OAH Executive Board and Nominating Board seats and will submit their completed report soon.

#### **V. Report of the Executive Editor, *Journal of American History*, Edward T. Linenthal**

Executive Editor Ed Linenthal reported that the transition of both the *Journal of American History* and the *OAH Magazine of History* to Oxford University Press has been a fairly smooth one. He observed that one of the great benefits of the OAH's publication relationship with Oxford is that for the first time, both publications will be marketed internationally.

Linenthal discussed the upcoming issues of the *Magazine* including the April issue focusing on the Civil War (in recognition of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War). He also noted that the *Magazine* will have a special issue devoted to the anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Linenthal also noted that upcoming issues of the *Journal* will have state-of-the-field essays on conservatism, sports history, and environmental history. The June 2012 issue of the *Journal* will focus on the oil industry and be a special, larger issue.

He thanked the entire OAH staff for their work to make the organization better over the past year.

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 PM with David Hollinger turning the meeting over to incoming President Alice Kessler-Harris.