THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF PLAY

NEWSLETTER

Volume 8 Number 2

Winter, 1982

POLYMORPHOUS PERVERSITY CONTINUED

TAASP ANNUAL CONFERENCE, MARCH 31 - APRIL 3, 1982. LONDON, ONTARIO.

Editor: Aidan O. Dunleavy  Associate Editors: Andrew Miracle, Roger Rees & Brian Sutton-Smith

"INAUGURAL EDITORIAL"

Following in the illfated footsteps of our salty sultan, Sutton-Smith, this is the first newsletter from the new cast of editors. Through a series of what must surely be regarded as shady dealings, the newsletter now finds its footing (as an Australian empathizer I am cautious of using the word "roots") in cowtown - USA, Ft. Worth, TX., that is. In taking the editorial helm we are anxious to continue the tradition established by young Brian but, if you will forgive such foolishness, we thought we might initiate a few changes - both in content and in style. First, the newsletter will, hereafter, be published only three (3) times annually - October, February and June. This seems more fiscally responsible for now, and is about all the fun we can handle in any given year. Second, we are initiating a POINTS OF VIEW section, the first of which (because we had nothing else) Brian has set forth. This section, we hope, will be much like that contained on the back of the Chronicle of Higher Education, i.e., personal observations, etc. germane to the field, profession or discipline. For now we will see what we get from people and then, but only if need, structure this somewhat more tightly in the future. We do discourage the submission of any "political call to arms" - this, hopefully is not what TAASP is about. Third, on the suggestion of Kendall Blanchard, we will regularly include a CURRICULUM EXCHANGE column. Submissions of course or program curriculum, or the like, are invited so as to provide a source of information which might aid those of us who are in the

CONTENTS

Editorial Notes ................................................ 1
Curriculum Exchange ........................................... 2
Points of View .................................................. 5
Conference Information ....................................... 8
Forthcoming Events ............................................. Throughout

Beginning now... Newsletters will be published in October, February and June.... see editorial, across.

SPECIAL EDITORIAL NOTES

1. NOTE: THIS REPRINT HAS DELETED THE EXTRACTED PORTION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT (NASS) NEWSLETTER.

2. I have received several new books from publishers for review. Two of these, MUSCLES & MORALS by Covallo, and BUZKASHI: Game & Power in Afghanistan by Azoy are in need of a reviewer. If anyone would like to undertake a review for the newsletter give me a call and I will gladly forward the appropriate book. Thank you.
I had been invited to be a member of a panel on the "Aesthetics of Ordinary Experience". The general intent of this kind of far out panel, was to show that (like Dewey) aesthetics was everywhere, not just in Performance Theory, where it has been resting in folklore over the past decade. In short it was an iconoclastic panel given that orientation within folklore. I was invited to submit something about the aesthetics of childrens experience and agreed because that is certainly ordinary enough. It was suggested I send a summary of the talk and I did so, about 50 words, assuming this was the kind of abstract that we use in the TAASP conference newsletter.

Well, our panel was rejected (or some of its members were) on grounds that our contributions were irrelevant to folklore. The new screening panel was working with a vehemence novel for this ancient society. The members of the panel angered by this reached a compromise whereby they were allowed to proceed, but the rejected persons could be present only as chair persons or discussants.

Although a member of the panel I really had no cognizance of any of these politics; and when asked by the chair I was prepared to give my paper anyway naturally said of course. So the partially rejected session proceeded. So far so good.

Then at the annual meeting the Program Committee came forward with a proposal to censure this particular panel because it has gone against their wishes. For two or more hours the several hundred members of the American Folklore Society, gathered there in the Tropicana Hotel in San Antonio, Texas, wrangled over the rights and wrongs of having a screening committee, of censuring panels, etc. In the midst of all this I heard the chairman of the program single out that member of our panel who was so disrespectful of the society's requirements that he submitted only a 25 word summary instead of the required 250. I sat dumbfounded.

Finally and with great fervor the assembled horde moved to vote on these matters, and by a majority (about 3:2) they required that the committee withdraw its censure and apologize, and the screening committee be abolished.

I must say that it was a triumph that a society so long the defender of the outcast scholar, should come to debate over a panel whose substance was irrelevant aesthetics, and ultimately go down the line in the defense of these benighted scholars who had been written out by more conventional brains.

(III) My November Conference was the NASSS, the second annual conference of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport. I gave a paper on the idealization of play arguing that in moving play from its prior neglect and triviality we have now begun to idealize it. My argument was that most definitions of play are at the service of this or that rhetoric and I have examples from status, women's liberation, and social science. Anyway in the course of all this and as a fairly casual example I pointed out that the excellent film called Two Ball Games, although supposedly an objective evaluation of the respective merits of Sandlot and Little League Baseball is unwittingly biased in favor of the former (My analysis is contained in my review in Contemporary Psychology, 1980, 50, (4) 544-547). Well the sky dropped on Henny Penny for that one. It seems that most of the members of that sport oriented audience use the film and because they share its prejudice believe it to be objective. Although I kept insisting that their heated defense was evidence for my view that rhetoric is what counts in our definitions of play, t'would be better had the earth consumed me at that time. That was at Fort Worth.

(IV) In December at Pomona College in Los Angeles a group of us came together to present papers in honor of the 65th birthday of John M. Roberts. It was remarkable largely for the honor we all wished to the most imaginative of scholars most of us had known, and for the wide variety of play and game studies that were presented. Jack maintained in himself that internal contradiction between the highly competent formal scholar of graceful manner in Brooks brothers suit, and the impish, galumphing wickedly sardonic mind.

for the study of sport will be held in
Bu-falo, N.Y. -- dates are: October 14-16,
1982. For info, write:
Dr. Carolyn Thomas, Conference Manager
Phil. Soc. for the Study of Sport
Clark Hall, S.U.N.Y. Buffalo
Buffalo, N.Y. 14214
Unfortunately some of us had to spend about five days in Los Angeles in order to qualify for the cheap fare. Naturally we spent it in bars, restaurants and occasionally on the beach. We consumed considerable gallons of California wine and on one memorable occasion during the assorted laughter two of our members engaged in throwing wine or water at each other, much to their amusement and the consternation of the circumspect patrons.

Although the latter is not a particularly redeeming anecdote it serves to bring to the fore the issue of what was really playful in these four conferences. In Brugge Leo Hendry of Aberdeen and I played at our biographies amusing each other with variations on our life histories. Most memorable, however, was the nightly rout of mosquitoes. It was very hot and there were no screens on the windows, so one had to leave the windows open by day and when returning to the room late in the evening attack the beasts before retiring. Going from room to room we managed to wake almost everyone. That was play? At San Antonio, the Annual Meeting and the great debate over the rectitude of the panel on aesthetics was a playful contest. It is hard to believe the outcome was of much material consequence. (Though there is rumour of power politics involved.) At Fort Worth Billy Bob's Bar had to be the main play area, at least on first inspection. And at Pomona the great wine Melee certainly was the highlight.

Now although Huizinga has suffered something of a scholarly demise in recent critical analysis, one has to admit that all of these unpleasant examples are his kind of play.

Brian Sutton-Smith

*** *

SOME FORTHCOMING EVENTS

An Exhibit:
Champions of American Sport

Champions of American Sport is an exhibit celebrating 100 champions of American Sport from the 1830s to the present. This is the first major exhibition ever devoted to sport personalities. The exhibit opened at the Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. It is now on display by the Chicago Historical Society until February 7. Afterwards, the exhibit will travel to the American Museum of Natural History in New York where it will be presented to the public from March 19 to June 27.

Western Humor and Irony Membership

The tentative program for the April 1-3, 1982 program of WHIM has 250 presenters from 8 countries. The program is sponsored by the Arizona Humanities Council and Arizona State University.

North American Society for Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity

The 1982 NASPSPA conference will be held at the University of Maryland, May 29-June 1. For further information write to Robert W. Tyler, Department of Physical Education, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20740. Abstracts are due February 12, 1982 and may be sent to Tyler.

BE SURE TO ATTEND THE TAASP "GREAT DEBATE" - EDITION TWO - FRIDAY APRIL 2, 4:00 pm.

SEE YOU IN LONDON, ONTARIO. MARCH 31 - APRIL 3

**********
CONFERENCE INFORMATION — March 31-April 3

The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play (AASP) Eighth Annual Conference, Park Lane Hotel, 186 King Street, London, Ontario N6A 1CB, Canada.

Single $39; Double $44. You must reserve by February 28, 1982.

Transportation (From Toronto-Best):
Air Canada to London or train or limousine.
(From Detroit-Windsor): Air Canada, train or limousine.
Contact Jean Cannizzo for limousine from Detroit.

Preregistration form for Conference
Professional - $20.00
Student - $10.00
Visitor - $10.00 per diem

See attached insert

CONFERENCE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Keynote Speaker: ROBERT FAGEN will speak on "The Perilous Magic of Animal Play." Dr. Fagen is the author of the 1981 Oxford University Press book ANIMAL PLAY BEHAVIOR. He is the Geraldine R. Dodge Scholar in Animal Behavior at the University of Pennsylvania. He specializes in population biology, behavioral ecology and sociobiology. Mainly he is remarkable for his conversance also with the psychological theories of and research in play and his attempts to reconcile the psychological and the animal data in the theoretical terms of human evolution and human development.

THE GREAT DEBATE

"Resolved that competition in short be relegated entirely to males for whom it is better suited."

In Favor: Anna Nardo of Louisiana State University and Ann Marie Guilmette of Brandon University.

In Opposition: Peggy Stanaland of Eastern Kentucky State University and Alyce Cheska of the University of Illinois.

ENTERTAINMENTS

(1) Look for a party in the Presidential Suite on Wednesday evening, March 31, after check-in.

(2) On Thursday papers, morning and afternoon, finishing with the keynote speech and a no-host cocktail event.

(3) On Friday papers, morning and afternoon, the business meeting, the Presidential address (Alyce Cheska) and the Great Debate. In the evening either a dance or a performance using local ethnic resources.

(4) Papers on Saturday morning and executive meeting.

PROGRAM SYMPOSIA

(1) RESEARCH IN PLAY--A survey of the state of the art.
Chaired by James Duthie with papers by Ann Marie Guilmette on humor; E. D. Johnsen and James Christie on play and social cognition; Michael Wade and Lynn Barnett on new directions for play research; and James Duthie on adult play. Brian Sutton-Smith as discussant.

(2) PLAY PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL COMMENTARY
Chaired by Jeanne Cannizzo, including her paper on Children's Devils in Sierra Leone; Frank Manning on the Caribana parade in Toronto; Karin Michaelson on Ambiguity in Oneida ghost stories; and Carol Farber on Indian Jatra plays.

(3) FESTIVAL AS TEXT: COMMUNITY FESTIVALS
Chaired by Robert Lavenda and including a number of papers by students and faculty from St. Cloud in Minnesota, largely dealing with festivals to be found currently in Minnesota.

(4) PLAY, ETHNICITY AND INTRA-CULTURAL DYNAMICS
Chaired by Wanni Anderson, including papers by Maria Allison, Steven Fox, George Eisen and Roland Renson. The topics include games in Thailand, Belgium, and of Pala Indians and Navajo Indians in the USA.

(5) COHESION IN SPORT AND PLAY
Chaired by Aiden Dunleavy and with contributions from R. Reese, A. Miracle, D. Suggs and N. Widmeyer.

PAPER SESSIONS

Paper sessions are attempts to put together groupings of miscellaneous papers in the hope that they have something in common. Often they do not. At this time it looks as if we had the following paper sessions, but drastic revision is possible:

(6) CHILDREN'S PLAY
Will include papers by K. D. Jennings & N. Curry on toddlers' social play; M. W. Watson on preschool fantasy play; S. Reifel on affect and constructive
play; and Ase Enerstevdt on children's play in Oslo.

(7) ADULT PLAY
With papers by James Smith on comparisons between race track and casino gamblers; Mark Clark on gambling gallantry and gaming in the neighborhood bar; Bruce Pierini on Bocce Ball amongst Italian Americans; and Bruce Klonsky on gender differences in recreational preferences involving chance, strategy, physical skill, imaginary companions, etc.

(8) STRUCTURING EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITIES IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL DATA
With papers by Richard Alford on the dissociation of motives and functions in human play behavior; K. Finnegan Alford on structuring in the beer parties of the Tarahumara, the dances of the South American negro, the pig feasts amongst the Papuans and the festival of sexual license among the Santal of Eastern India; Aletta Biersack on pollution in the sexual activities of Papuans; Smadar Lavie on the use of the fool amongst the Mzeina Bedouin; and George Eisen on Hungarian Peasant games.

(9) PLAY/LIFE RELATIONSHIPS
Papers by M. Aprey on child play analysis; Diana Kelly-Byrne on the meaning of play's triviality; Helen Schwartzman on play and work in mental health centers; and Rick Grunneau on a materialist critique of Clifford Geertz and Daniel Barnes' A Child's Garden of Violence.

(10) PLAY AMONGST THE HANDICAPPED
Papers by Pearl Tait on the humor of visually impaired children; Lynda Schneekloth on motor activity comparison among the sighted and the visually handicapped; and a discussion of strategies for such interventions in children's play.

(11) PLAY IN HISTORY
Margaret Duncan on Plato and play; Regina Weltbacher on Froebel on play; Roberta Park on the history of college football; and Tony Evangelista on the history of toy premiums on radio.

(12) PLAY IN LITERATURE AND HUMOR
Ann Nardo on metamorphic play in Andrew Marvell; Margaret Duncan on women and leisure in feminist fiction; Ann Marie Guilmette on psychosocial play and humor judgments; and Sarah Tsang on playful judgments and humor.

(13) ASPECTS OF SPORTS
Mari Womack on analysis of sports-writers; Kendall Blanchard on sports studies in anthropology curricula; Peggy Stanaland on Irish hurling; and Jan Harris on youth baseball.

ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS
Contrasted with Fort Worth, we have only 13 sessions this year as compared with 17 last year. The comparative pleasures of Hyatt Houses, sunshine, pre-Reagan economics and xenophobia have all been advanced by causalist thinkers. There is one major advantage: No one need to give a paper after the cocktail hour and the splendid possibilities of night life in London can be examined in Pickwickian depth.

Probably we will run the same periods as at Fort Worth, having two sessions from 8:30 to 10:00, two from 10:30 to 12:00 and two more from 1:30 to 3:00 with special events the rest of the afternoon. There will be one session on Saturday morning followed by the executive meetings. Here is a tentative time table.

SUMMARY OF SESSIONS

Thursday, April 1
8:30 - 10:00 #6 (Child) #3 (Festivals)
10:30 - 12:00 #9 (Life) #2 (Performance)
1:30 - 2:30 #1 (Research) #4 (Ethnicity)
4:00 Keynote: Fagen
6:00 Cocktails (no host)

Friday, April 2
8:30 - 10:00 #11 (History) #13 (Sports)
10:30 - 12:00 #7 (Adult) #8 (Anthropology)
1:30 - 3:00 Business Meeting and
Presidential Address (Cheska)
4:00 The Great Debate
6:00 Cocktails
8:00 Entertainment

Saturday, April 3
8:30 - 10:00 #10 (Handicap) #12 (Lit. & Humor)
10:30 - 12:00 #5 (Cohesion)
1:30 - 3:00 Executive Meeting

Additional Transport Note
The limousine from Detroit to London goes only by arrangement. If you wish to take this route, send plane numbers and times to Jean Cannizzo of the Anthropology Department,
University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, and if there are enough applicants she will make the arrangements and get in touch with you. Let her know by March 1st.

Jean has also been in charge of local arrangements with Frank Manning and she should be contacted about any other quirks in your seated playfulness.

Executive Council Meetings

1. Wednesday March 31, 6-8:00 pm TAASP Suite
2. Saturday, April 3, 1-3:00 pm TAASP Suite

President's Address

"TAASP: A Playful Narrative of an 8-Year Old"
April 2nd, 1-3:00 pm, after business meeting

Brian Sutton-Smith, Program O.
*******************************************************
*******************************************************

SPECIAL NOTICE: FELLOWSHIPS

The executive council would welcome applications from members wishing to seek "fellowship status" in TAASP. Those interested should contact either Alyce Cheska or Brian Sutton-Smith.

*******************************************************

LATE BREAKING NEWS: NEW OFFICERS

Our congratulations to the new officers elected for the 1982-83 year. Good luck guys, keep the ball rolling!!

President
Kendall Blanchard
Chairman
Dept. of Anthropology
Middle Tenn. State University
Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37132

Elec:
Kendall Blanchard
Chairman
Dept. of Anthropology
Middle Tenn. State University
Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37132

Members-at-large
1982-84
Wannie Wilbulswasdi Anderson
Dept. of Anthropology
Brown University
Providence, R.I. 02912

Lynn Barnett
Dept. of Leisure Studies
U. of Illinois, U/C
Champaign, IL 61820

Robert Lavenda
Dept. of Sociology/Anthropology
St. Cloud State University
St. Cloud, Minn. 56301

*******************************************************