

find out details about this new award and is very anxious to see sociologists as strong competitors for this prize. She invited Council assistance in identifying potential nominees for this prize.

G. Lewis A. Coser Award

Following the death of former ASA President Lewis A. Coser during 2003, friends and family of Dr. Coser raised more than \$10,000 in individual contributions to support creation of a new Lewis A. Coser Award for Theoretical Agenda-Setting. This new award, housed in the ASA Theory Section, has been advertised and will be awarded for the first time at the 2004 Annual Meeting. Coser's family has donated the royalties from his books to this award fund.

6. Annual Meeting Issues

Janet Astner, Director of Meeting Services, reported to Council on a series of Annual Meeting issues.

A. 2003 Annual Meeting in Atlanta

In Atlanta last summer, ASA failed to fill its contracted block of sleeping rooms at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, and as a result, the Association became liable for application of meeting space rental fees. The first projection of applicable fees from this attrition penalty was \$110,000. After some corrections were made to acknowledge the room block adjustments requested earlier in the year, and after credits were processed for non-usage of several complimentary contractual benefits during the meeting, the amount due was reduced to \$43,600.

While the power outage in the Northeast contributed to lower attendance in Atlanta, it was not the sole or primary reason that the room block at the Marriott did not fill. Two other factors intersected significantly: (1) there were no other major meetings in the city over our dates, thus leaving all the smaller hotels unfilled and willing to offer low rates to woo members through their doors; and (2) the ease with which travelers can now locate special offers online. At the August Council meeting, you may recall hearing one Council member state that his room reservation had been booked via Expedia because he could get a lower rate. ASA later received "credit" for rooms at the Marriott that were booked online independently by registrants, but it took a months-long audit process by the housing company to achieve.

ASA needed to reach a final decision regarding how to handle the attrition situation at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis in 2003 by the end of this calendar year. The hotel offered to "forgive" the \$43,600 attrition charge if ASA booked a future Annual Meeting at the hotel for 2008, 2009, or 2010, provided that the contract was signed by December 30, 2003. (It would not consider the option of ASA holding its annual meeting at another Marriott elsewhere in the US during the next decade.)

Therefore, based on the discussion and resolution at the 2003-2004 Council meeting in August, including the recommendation that any rebooking of Atlanta be pushed as far

into the future as possible, ASA staff proceeded to negotiate contracts with the Atlanta Marriott Marquis and the Hilton Atlanta for 2010 as the major step needed to compare the two options: paying the \$43,600 from the 2003 ASA operating budget or signing a contract for the Annual Meeting in 2010.

Both hotels offered concessions for 2010 to match those that were achieved by ASA's multi-year contracting for 2001-2004 Annual Meetings. Both hotels made adjustments in proposed room blocks to reduce the total number of room nights and balance the total room block commitment and meeting space allocation more evenly. Both contracts include provisions for reviewing and adjusting room blocks in 2009 based on room pickup history in the intervening years.

At the December 12, 2003, meeting of the Executive Officer and the Director of Operations and Meeting Services with ASA's Secretary and Secretary-elect, the options of paying the attrition charge at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis or signing the 2010 contracts were discussed. It was agreed that the 2010 contracts were excellent and as good as contracts that might be negotiated later for other 2010 venues (and probably better since hotels are currently "hungry" for business and may not remain so in future years). It was also agreed that it was extremely unlikely, as Council had indicated in August, that the Association could avoid having a meeting in the South within the next decade and that, of all the southern venues, Atlanta provides the best facilities for the needs of our meeting.

Based on this discussion and the Council motion of August 20, 2003, Secretary Kalleberg approved the action of the Executive Officer to sign the contracts for holding the ASA Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 14-17, 2010.

B. Attrition and Annual Meeting Contracts

Astner reported that ASA, like most meeting sponsors, has access to hotel meeting space based on commitments to fill a certain percentage of hotel guest rooms. Most ASA Annual Meeting contracts are based on filling 80% of the room blocks outlined in the meeting contracts. Should the anticipated room block pickup fail to materialize, ASA is liable for (1) paying meeting space rental, or (2) paying nightly room rental for the unsold guest rooms.

When ASA reduced the meeting from a 5-day program to a 4-day program there was no reduction in program size. Therefore, ASA has need for a great deal of meeting space

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to associations and other meeting sponsors to fill their room blocks with an increasing number of meeting attendees going online to search for lower cost housing options. While the Internet is not the only factor, it is by far the largest factor affecting attrition in meeting contracts.

The 2004 ASA Annual Meeting will be held in San Francisco in August. While San Francisco is always a popular destination, other groups that have met there recently