

OSA newsletter

August 2005

The Oromo Studies Association

Two Decades of Service and Scholarship

In this Issue:

1. A note from OSA President
2. 2005 OSA Annual conference and Conference photo gallery
3. 2006 OSA Annual Conference
4. Mobilizing OSA's human resource: new Ad hoc committees:
 - Scholarship team (solicit for scholarship funds)
 - Fund-raising team (raise \$5000 for OSA)
 - Bylaw team (implement approved changes and review for possible changes)
 - Membership team (recruit 25 new members)
 - External Activities team (participate in at least 2 other conferences)
 - Unity team (address issues related to Oromo political obstacles)
 - Review team (improve OSA's performance)
 - Team Oromia (extend OSA's activities to Oromia)

1. A note from OSA president

This year marks the 20th anniversary of OSA's establishment. Given the challenges OSA has faced during these two decades, the expectations imposed upon it as a scholarly organization, and the extreme polarization of Oromo politics that could have diffused into its research territory, it is obvious that OSA is an Oromo success story. OSA members have contributed and participated in large international conferences, published widely read journal articles and books, maintained the quality and continuity of the *Journal of Oromo Studies* (JOS), and held annual and regional conferences for so long. OSA also organized protest rallies, wrote appeal letters, and supported Oromo students including those illegally purged from Addis Ababa University in 2003/04. It has invited prominent keynote speakers and awarded outstanding individuals for their contribution to Oromo scholarship. This year's OSA recognition went to four individuals: Obbo Ibsa Gutama, Adde Qabanne (Bonnie Holcomb), Dr. Aneesa Kassam, and Dr. Ezekiel Gebisa. On behalf of OSA members, I would like to congratulate recipients of this year's OSA awards.

This note is not intended to present a complete resume of OSA or examine OSA's 20 years of activities. I refer to OSA as Oromo success story because it is quite common for organizations to rise and vanish. I also mention this so that we can be encouraged by our accomplishments and aim even higher for better scholarly excellence. I have outlined some of our plans for this OSA year that will enhance its research goals and I ask all members to support the ad hoc committees created for this purpose. OSA's success requires a collective effort, a team work where each

member assumes a role to generate and put to motion creative ways of enhancing OSA's role in Oromo scholarship. There is no other way for OSA to grow.

At its 2005 annual business meeting, OSA members approved minutes of last year's meeting, approved officers' reports, and elected new officers to office. They also raised and discussed several issues. Dr. Gobana Huluqa was elected as vice president, i.e., he will take over the Presidency in August, 2006. Members also elected Qabanne to join OSA Board of Directors and re-elected Dr. Beyan Asoba to the Board. The new auditor is Obbo Fekadu Megersa. The complete list of OSA officials can be found at OSA web site: <http://www.Oromostudies.org>

Donations and dues: Those who want to pay OSA dues, join as new members, or want to donate to OSA, please send your pledge to:

OSA
P. O. Box 7508
Silver Spring, MD 20907.

Note that all contributions are tax deductible.

2. 2005 OSA annual conference

About 30 papers were presented in 8 panels on various topics including human rights, public health, history, language, economy, environment, and politics. Some of the papers exhibited very high quality. A complete text of the papers will be published as OSA proceeding. I am asking Dr. Gobana Huluqa to collect these papers. Authors, **please send electronic copy of your papers** as soon as possible to Dr. **Gobana** at **hulukgo@auburn.edu**, preferably in Microsoft Word.

Note: 2005 Conference photo gallery will soon be posted at OSA website.

3. 2006 OSA annual conference

The 2006 OSA annual conference will be held around end of July or beginning of August in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Preparations for this conference are already underway. We will soon establish a local organizing committee to make all the necessary arrangements. Please visit OSA web site or see the next newsletter for update.

4. New ad hoc Committees

- **Scholarship team:** As the years passed, there have been more and more issues requiring OSA's attention and intervention. The fate of young and college worthy Oromos in exile is a case in point. The case of Oromo elders of tremendous oral knowledge residing in Kenya in abject conditions, presented at the 2005 OSA business meeting by Dr. Aneesa Kassam is another point. I am asking a team of Oromo scholars to address such issues in a wider context of helping promising Oromos residing in exile, so that they can continue their education and become productive citizens. This will require looking for funding and scholarships. I am asking Dr. Bahiru G. (baarudee@comcast.net) to create and lead this team.
- **Fund-raising team:** OSA account is near zero, and the 2005 Conference income can barely cover upcoming OSA journal and proceeding publications, let alone conference hall rental and other miscellaneous

expenses. I am afraid we will be financially so constrained that we will not be able to pay for various inevitable expenses. I am asking Dr. Bahiru D. (bahiruduguma@aol.com) to help OSA raise \$5000 before the end of the calendar year. Dr. Mohammed is willing to be part of the team (hismha@langate.gsu.edu).

- **By-law team:** This committee will be in charge of incorporating approved changes to OSA bylaw. It will also review the bylaw and, if necessary, present recommendations to OSA assembly next year for approval. I am asking Dr Guluma to lead this team and work with. Adde Qabanne, Dr. Ezekiel, and Obbo Abraham towards accomplishing this goal.
- **Membership team:** One of the goals we envision to accomplish this year is to boost OSA membership by encouraging young Oromo scholars and inviting non-Oromos to join OSA. This is critical for OSA's continuity and also to inject fresh ideas into the pool of scholars we already have. For this, we have set an ambitious goal to recruit 25 new members this year. I have asked Dr Misgana, one of our young talents to create a team and lead this effort. Please help him accomplish this goal for OSA by forwarding possible candidates to him. His email address is mkmuleta@yahoo.com.
- **External Activities team:** OSA at ASA and others: Recall that OSA established a Review Committee to look into ways of improving OSA's activities. One such recommendation was to participate in various national and international organizations. I am asking Dr. Getahun Benti, (benti@siu.edu) to recruit and coordinate OSA panels at other conferences including ASA. Drs Mohammed and Asafa may help him in this effort. Assuming Dr. Getahun

- will be willing to assist, please drop him a note or a reminder if you have any ideas about upcoming conferences.
- **Unity team**: The last panel presented at this year's conference on the state of Oromia and the discussion that followed warrant continuation of the subject matter at a scholarly level. As it stands now, the Oromo struggle needs a serious scholarly input that will lead the debate and design a roadmap out of the current predicament. Obviously OSA is a neutral research body, but it is not neutral on collective Oromo needs. In fact, as a collection of Oromo minds, OSA has a scholarly duty to play a leading role in addressing serious Oromo issues to facilitate the unity of the Oromo people without favoring any Oromo political organization. Fear of partiality should not paralyze OSA, and we should take calculated, careful, and scholarly measures to address current problems of the Oromo struggle. Oromo political problems of this magnitude deserve no less attention than the burning of Oromo forests or the expulsion of Oromo students from AAU to which OSA reacted honorably. I am asking Dr. Asafa Jalata (ajalata@utk.edu) to create a team of scholars and address this issue. The goal of the team to suggest methodological topics or measures through which the Oromo struggle can be enhanced, and to produce a research agenda that can help create a political platform based on which a useful political dialogue can be initiated among Oromo political entities. We also believe the input of the team will help us organize more constructive panel topics at the 2006 OSA conference.
 - **Review team**: Adde Qabanne (bkholcomb@aol.com) will create and lead this team to look into long and short term ways of increasing OSA's activities and improving its performance. The short term goal of this team may include organizing a mid-year OSA seminar.
 - **Team Oromia**: A large number of Oromo scholars live and work inside Oromia. Many of them, including graduate students, write excellent theses with raw data from Oromia that could be published in JOS. In fact, OSA needs to close the gap of communication between home and Diaspora research by inviting more participation from Oromia. This includes opening its membership to home scholars and designing a means by which JOS can be widely distributed to Universities and Colleges in the region. I plan to create a team and lead this project to boost OSA activities and membership inside Oromia.
- Dear ad hoc committee members:** I thank you sincerely for your willingness to be part of these efforts. We have set these goals believing that they are achievable provided we mobilize OSA's own capacity – a format which could be duplicated and replicated by OSA or any other Oromo organization. These projects, and more may come over the next months, are tests for OSA; I hope we will pass all these tests and celebrate our success by August 2006.
- Nagaan,
Asfaw
abeyene@rohan.sdsu.edu
<http://beyene.sdsu.edu>