President’s Remarks:

First, I want to invite y’all to attend our 2006 annual meeting, March 9-11, in San Antonio. This is a wonderful setting, and we will be treated to first-rate arrangements and accommodations, in substantial part due to the hard work of Craig Hanks, local arrangements chair. In addition, for at least two reasons, we definitely will have an exceptionally strong program. In the first place, we’ve had a record number of submissions in response to our call for papers. This is a telling measure of the health of our organization and the vibrancy of our field. It is also a measure of the very large amount of work placed on the shoulders of the 2006 program committee: Jackie Kegley and Erin McKenna (co-chairs), Cynthia Gayman, and Mary Magadaward (new members of the Executive Committee), Bill Gavin, and Mark Johnson. Please help make sure that this work, so critical to the Society, is recognized. In the second place, in response to my invitation as approved by the Executive Committee, nine scholarly organizations have planned sessions as part of our program. They are: Asociación Filosófica de México; the American Studies Association; the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy; the Society for the Study of Process Philosophies; the Cologne [Germany] Constructivism Group; the George Santayana Society; the Personalist Discussion Group; the Society of Women in Philosophy; and, the Josiah Royce Society. This is a genuinely exciting development. I am confident that this will greatly strengthen our program and, beyond this year, I hope that this may be the beginning of a greatly expanded vision and mission for SAAP as a kind of intellectual federation. I ask for your help in any and all forms to make this happen.

Second, as discussed at the annual business meeting last March in Bakersfield, you will receive in the mail in the next few weeks a ballot to vote on the new constitution that has been proposed and unanimously approved by the Executive Committee. We will include a copy of the new document and the additional information necessary to allow for its comparison to our current constitution, initially put in place some thirty years ago. Approval of the proposed new constitution will, I think, allow the organization to operate in a manner that is more efficient, more professional, more inclusive and fair, and more open
and transparent. Please mark and return your ballot promptly after you receive it.

Third, as many of you know first-hand, our two newest officers already are hard at work. David Hildebrand, the new director of communications, has done a remarkable job of preparing the way for a redesigned web page with many new features and, more broadly for improved communications across SAAP. These changes, made possible by the many contributions of Glen Kuehn, will begin to roll out in the next few months. The ideas that we have been exploring include: on-lines dues payments and receipts; multi-year memberships with one payment; on-line registration for the annual meeting, the summer institute, and other Society activities; electronic archives; some features available only to members, perhaps with a password similar to the way the APA now operates; and, an electronic version, in part or in whole, of the Newsletter—something that might allow for us to distribute information in a speedier, more newsworthy manner as well as an option that might allow some cost-savings (as well as tree-savings) that might be passed on in the form of reduced dues. In this context, I invite any one with ideas, recommendations, or even just a “wish-list” to contact David or me at any time. Jessica Wahman, our new Associate Editor of the Newsletter, has been working with Patrick Dooley, Newsletter Editor, to help achieve the goals that led to the creation of her position: a broader decision-making process about the selection of books we review, careful selection of reviewers, and editorial oversight of the quality of reviews. Many SAAP members have suggested to me that if we are going to include reviews in our Newsletter that we need to adopt more fully the normal standards and structures of professional journals that do this kind of work. We are moving in the right direction on this front, and I know that the officers and Executive Committee will make sure this continues.

Fourth, there are many additional SAAP programs and events now scheduled or in the works. SAAP will hold sessions at the Eastern Division, Pacific Division, and Central Divisions of the APA; there are regional SAAP groups in the Midwest, the Northwest, and in New York; and, there are SAAP sessions at a wide range of other conferences—from the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy to the American Catholic Philosophical Association. If you are not involved in
these groups but would like to be, please contact the relevant liaison (listed at our website). I encourage you to become involved and also to bring along three or four colleagues new to American philosophy and its traditions.

Fifth, I want also to extend a personal invitation to you to participate in the business of the Society. By this I mean that I invite you to: forward nominations to the Nominating Committee—this is a particularly important year for such nominations because, in addition to the usual annual openings, we will elect a new vice-president (as the current vice-president assumes the presidency) and the splitting of the secretary/treasurer position into two separate positions will begin as well; make recommendations to the Coss Dialogues Committee for future years (as this is one place where I think we need to plan further in advance); invite colleagues and friends to join the Society; propose wholly new ideas, courses of actions and both academic and public agendas for the Society; and, finally, to provide financial support to the Society through gifts or endowments that support awards for excellence, graduate student participation, and public initiatives. In addition, I want to note that the executive committee will meet at the Eastern Division APA meeting in New York this December and that I invite any member to bring to me any issue for the agenda of this meeting.

Last, I want to say a special word of thanks to the other officers and members of the Executive Committee—both this year and last year. These positions involve a lot of work in the easiest of times. In the past year and a half, I know that I have made sure that it has not been the easiest of times for this group. I have worked hard to advance ideas, proposals, policies and new actions that I think are much needed at this time for the Society to build on its past but not become buried in it. I have asked for a larger vision of the Society that I think is possible at this time. And I have asked this group to be at least a little less risk-adverse than is the academic and scholarly norm. All of this has generated a substantially higher work load for them. For taking up this work with intelligence, collegiality far beyond civility, and determination and hope, these public words of thanks are much deserved.
If there is anything I can do (in the context of SAAP!), please let me know in person, by phone (615-322-2637), e-mail (j.stuhr@vanderbilt.edu), or mail. In the meantime, please do make your reservations for San Antonio and our 2006 annual meeting.

With best wishes, John Stuhr