



The Chaucer Newsletter

A Publication of the New Chaucer Society

Volume 16, Number 2

Holiday, 1994

1996 New Chaucer Society Congress

The Trustees of the New Chaucer Society are pleased to announce that the 1996 congress will be held 26-30 July, 1996 at the University of California, Los Angeles conference center. John Fyler (Tufts University) is the Co-chair in charge of program planning, and Edward Condren (University of California, Los Angeles) is Co-chair in charge of local arrangements. Susan Crane (Rutgers University), Linda Georgianna (University of California, Irvine), and R. F. Green (University of Western Ontario) round out the congress planning committee. Calls for papers will be forthcoming in the Society's Spring 1995 newsletter.

For more information contact John Fyler or the NCS office (B. Davis, Secretary for Membership and Finance, bdavis@magnus.acs.ohio-state).

Chaucer Reading Before a Live Audience

At the Medieval Institute in Kalamazoo next spring Alan Gaylord will offer a "Masterclass in Reading Chaucer Out Loud."

Gaylord invites "reasonably experienced" readers of Chaucer who would be interested to write him. "The sessions are not for absolute beginners," he adds, "but neither do we emphasize reading-as-dramatic-performance/spectacle."

Observers committed to the entire time period will allow the Masterclasses "to avoid the in-and-out traffic of the usual session."

Would be readers or observers are invited to write Alan Gaylord/Dept. of English/Dartmouth College/Hanover, NH 03755 (or e-mail at alan.t.gaylord@dartmouth.edu).

Actions of the Trustees of the New Chaucer Society Trinity College, Dublin Friday, July 22, 1994

Officers

Present: President Jill Mann (Girton College, Cambridge); President-elect V.A. Kolve (University of California, Los Angeles); Trustees Mary Carruthers (New York University), Helen Cooper (University College, Oxford), R.F. Green (University of Western Ontario), Barbara Nolan (University of Virginia), David Wallace (University of Minnesota), Winthrop Wetherbee (Cornell University); Trustees-elect Peggy Knapp (Carnegie Mellon University) and Paul Strohm (Indiana University). **Absent:** Executive Director Christian Zacher (Ohio State University), Trustee Elizabeth Kirk (Brown University), Trustee-elect A.J. Minnis (York University)

International Secretaries

Present: Toshiyuki Takamiya (Keio University)

Staff and Observers

Bibliographer Mark Allen (University of Texas at San Antonio); Secretary for Membership and Finance Fred Porcheddu (Denison University); Program Committee Chair John Ganim (University of California, Riverside); Local Arrangement Chairs John Scattergood and Gerald Morgan (Trinity College Dublin); and Philippa and Rich Harrison (Harrison Typesetting, Portland, OR)

Administration, Publications, Finance

Reports were received from Secretary for Membership and Finance Fred Porcheddu and SAC Editor Lisa J. Kiser. (For information on NCS membership and finance, see the report of the Executive Director, page 3).

Professor Kiser reported that the number of submissions to SAC has increased sharply over the last year, suggesting both a renewed vigor in the community of Chaucer scholars and a continuing interest in the journal as a vehicle for scholarly and critical treatments of Chaucer and his age. She further reported that beginning with the 1993 volume, SAC printing and binding have been overseen by Ohio State University Press.

On-Line Bibliography Projects

Bibliographer Mark Allen reported that the bibliographies from SAC volumes 15 and 16 (1993 and 1994) are loaded now, and that an on-line version of a SAC bibliography should be available within a few months.

Allen then outlined for the Trustees the options for electronic versions of SAC and its bibliography. Philippa and Rich Harrison (owners of Harrison Typesetting, Portland, OR) proposed that the Trustees consider adding a CD-ROM version of *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* in the future to exist alongside paper volumes of the journal. After extensive discussion, the Trustees decided not to pursue the option of a CD-ROM publication at the present time; instead, the Trustees voted to grant Mark Allen \$2,500 to oversee retroactive inputting of data for an on-line bibliography.

The Trustees also authorized Allen to investigate the possible conflation of the on-line bibliography with other existing bibliographic projects. (Trustees, page 2)

(Trustees, cont'd)

Expenditure of Endowment Monies

Five decisions were made regarding the use of Endowment Fund earnings to support special projects.

1. The Trustees revised procedures for awarding travel subventions to recent Ph.D.'s to attend NCS congresses. The following policy received general assent: "Preference may be given to those who have recently been awarded a Ph.D.'s, or who are in the advanced stages of completing the dissertation."

2. NCS has received a request to help fund a Russian translation of Troilus and Criseyde. The Trustees agreed that NCS cannot fund the entire project, and that the quality of the translation is a very important consideration in such a request. The Trustees agreed to offer the translator a grant of \$2,000, contingent upon the formalizing of production contracts and the favorable opinion of text samples by outside reviewers.

3. The Trustees voted in favor of granting the Middle English Dictionary an additional gift of \$2,000 beyond the amount of \$1,000 already donated to the project.

4. Trustee Mary Carruthers suggested that NCS sponsor an *informal networking event* at the Chaucer section of the MLA meeting in San Diego. The Trustees decided to fund such an event on a recurring basis.

5. Trustee David Wallace suggested that NCS support the increased interest in Chaucer in eastern Europe by donating materials to Charles University in Prague. The Trustees agreed to send a complete set of SAC to Charles University and to enter a complimentary subscription for them.

Members are encouraged to help increase Middle English holdings in the Charles University Library by sending any appropriate texts c/o Jan Cermak, Department of English, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

International Secretaries

The Trustees decided to ask Anna Torti (University of Verona) to be an official International Secretary, joining Toshiyuki Takamiya (Keio University).

As stated in Article XV of the NCS Constitution, "International Secretaries shall assist in recruiting new Members, encourage library subscriptions for the Society publications, advise on publications and congresses, communicate information to and from the Society, and perform other functions deemed appropriate."

Professors Torti and Takamiya both have been instrumental in supporting NCS goals throughout the world, and their efforts were gratefully acknowledged by the Trustees.

Other Business

The Trustees discussed the possibility of specifying that one position on the Board of Trustees be allocated for a non-native-English speaker. After considerable discussion the Trustees tabled the matter, favoring the idea in principle but believing that it would be impossible to implement in practice.

Secretary for Membership and Finance Fred Porcheddu announced that he will be leaving his post by the end of 1994; his successor is Bryan P. Davis, a Ph.D. candidate in medieval literature at Ohio State University.

Acknowledgements

Thanks were offered to John Ganim for putting together the innovative Dublin program, and to Gerald Morgan and John Scattergood for their labors in coordinating the local arrangements for the meeting.

Report of the Executive Director Ninth Biennial Congress of the New Chaucer Society Trinity College, Dublin July 23, 1994

This is my third report as Executive Director, and I will start by repeating what I said in the last two reports, that the Society continues doing what it has always done, and that it is without a doubt and by any measurement a flourishing professional organization. We have grown slightly since the 1992 Seattle meeting, when I reported a membership of 720. There are now 743 members listed in our database, including 26 members who have joined this year. Three members have resigned in the past year.

While two-thirds of the Society's members live or work in the United States, the number of non-U.S. members is growing steadily. There were 127 of these members in 1988, 152 in 1990, and 186 in 1992; today there are 207 non-U.S. members, representing 22 countries: 61 from the United Kingdom; 40 from Japan; 38 from Canada; 12 from Germany; 7 each from Italy and France; 6 each from Australia, Spain, and the Republic of Ireland; 4 each from Switzerland and Belgium; 3 from the Netherlands; 2 each from Korea, Israel, and Denmark; and 1 each from Austria, South Africa, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, New Zealand, and the Czech Republic. (Portugal, Romania, New Zealand, and the Czech Republic are newly represented in the Society.)

We now have 62 emeritus members, compared with 34 in 1990 and 57 in 1992. And it is a heartening fact that the number of student members remains strong at 59, up from only 8 six years ago. Our attempt at compiling electronic addresses (e-mail and fax) for the membership continues to meet with success, with nearly half of the Society's members providing fax numbers and one-third providing e-mail addresses.

Membership renewals (the mail-

ing for which usually takes place in early Spring) have been delayed this year, in large part due to the acquisition by the Society of the ability to accept credit card payments for membership dues and for congress registration fees. Delegates to this congress who have not yet received the 1994 renewal form will likely find it waiting for them when they return home, or they can renew at any time during the congress by seeing the Secretary for Membership and Finance, Fred Porcheddu.

The Dublin congress has registered 310 participants, compared with 333 in Seattle in 1992, 325 in Canterbury in 1990, 286 in Vancouver in 1988, and 197 in Philadelphia in 1986. Over 200 members and guests are reading papers, chairing sessions, or participating in panels here, as compared with 176 in Seattle, 130 in Canterbury, and 120 in Vancouver. The program, assembled by John Ganim with the assistance of Rita Copeland, Carolyn Dinshaw, and David Lawton, includes more varied than ever international representation: papers by 23 participants from the U.K., 5 each from Canada and Japan, 4 from Spain, 3 each from Germany and Australia, 2 each from Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands, and 1 each from Switzerland, Israel, Taiwan, Bulgaria, and Romania.

Gerald Morgan and John Scattegood, aided by colleagues and staff here in Dublin, have handled the local arrangements for our meetings and festivities. We thank all of them for their efficient planning; we also thank the Trinity College Department of English for its generous hosting of Monday night's reception.

Our Endowment Fund remains a strong and distinctive feature of the Society. Donald R. Howard established it twelve years ago, with a bequest of \$57,000; I reported two years ago that the balance of the Fund, consisting of Don's bequest and other contributions, had reached approximately \$89,000. The Fund is presently housed in a short-term bond portfolio with the Fidelity Investments company of Dallas, Texas; interest and addition-

al contributions have raised the current market value of the Fund to just slightly under a landmark \$100,000.

As a result of the Trustees' decision in 1990, the interest from the Fund has allowed the Society to pay twelve young scholars who have recently completed dissertations to attend this congress; this is the second time we have made such subventions.

The Trustees have recently approved two other expenditures of Endowment funds, including contributions to the fundraising effort of the Middle English Dictionary project and to the next J.A.W. Bennett Memorial Lectures Symposium, which will emphasize and promote Chaucer studies among medievalists from non-English-speaking countries.

The finances of the New Chaucer Society, overseen by Fred Porcheddu, remain very healthy. The savings account and checking account of the Society (i.e., not including Endowment monies) stood at \$66,452 on January 1, 1992; on January 1, 1994 it stood at \$89,292. (Fred Porcheddu has copies of the comparable finances for 1991, 1992, and 1993 if any of you care to look at them.) Our "net worth"--i.e., savings account, checking account, and Endowment Fund--on January 1, 1994, was \$189,934, approximately 30% greater than the amount I reported in Seattle.

As was the case with the Seattle congress in 1992, we have spent about \$17,000 to defray some of the travel expenses of speakers, officers, and trustees coming to this congress.

This healthy financial situation would not be possible without the unpaid services of Lisa Kiser, Mark Allen, Bege Bowers, and your Director, and the support of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies and the Department of English at Ohio State University, which have underwritten much of the administration of the Society and supplied a part-time Secretary, office and storage space, and other logistical and personnel support for the editorial production of SAC.

Studies in the Age of Chaucer, now printed by Ohio State University Press, is thriving under the editorship of my colleague Lisa Kiser. In a time of

squeezed budgets, library orders remain firm at 270, making total circulation approximately 1,050 (compared to 995 in 1992, 956 in 1990, and 843 in 1988).

John Fyler (Tufts University) has agreed to serve as Chair of the 1996 Program Committee, and Susan Crane (Rutgers University), Linda Georgianna (University of California, Irvine), and Richard F. Green (University of Western Ontario) have been asked to serve on the committee. They will meet this fall in Columbus to make 1996 congress plans, and the Call for Papers will be printed in the Spring 1995 Chaucer Newsletter. Now and into the Fall, members are encouraged to approach the Program Committee members with ideas for the 1996 meeting.

As for the 1998 congress, the Trustees are considering offers from several possible hosts--we will let you know more about these prospects soon.

The NCS Trustees meet biennially at the times of the congresses. The terms of Trustees Mary Carruthers, Helen Cooper, and Winthrop Wetherbee end with this meeting, and we gratefully acknowledge their work over the past four years. Richard Firth Green, Elizabeth Kirk, Barbara Nolan, and David Wallace will continue to serve as Trustees through the 1996 congress. Peggy Knapp, Alastair Minnis, and Paul Strohm have been elected to serve from the end of this congress through that of 1998.

The term of Jill Mann as President of the Society ends with this congress. She has presided with authority during these last two years. She will be succeeded by V.A. Kolve, who will preside at our meeting in 1996. Fred Porcheddu, the point of contact with the Society for many of you since 1991, has this year begun full-time teaching, and for that and other reasons has decided to give up his position as Secretary. I do not think he will be replaceable; but you will know his successor soon.

The NCS Constitution was most recently printed at the end of the Membership Directory mailed to all

members in 1992; copies of the Directory are available at the registration desk during this meeting, and a newly updated one will be mailed to all members soon. The Constitution mandates that the Executive Director shall report to the members at each biennial congress on the administration and financial condition of the Society, but that the governance of the Society shall rest in the hands of the President and the seven Trustees, who may on occasion call for mail ballots of the entire membership.

This ends my official report, President Mann. If there are questions that I can answer, I will be happy to do so. If there are suggestions about the procedures and activities of the Society, I will take them to the Trustees, who will either act on them or submit them to a mail ballot of the membership.

--Christian Zacher

Call for Nominations of New Trustees

Four NCS Trustees must be elected in 1995 to serve from 1996-2000. The terms of Trustees Richard Firth Green, Elizabeth Kirk, Barbara Nolan, and David Wallace will end with the 1996 congress. Peggy Knapp, Alastair Minnis, and Paul Strohm will serve until 1998.

Outgoing President Jill Mann has appointed a nominating committee composed of Peggy Knapp (Chair, Carnegie Mellon University), Piero Boitani (University of Rome), Seth Lerer (Stanford University), and Julia Boffey (University of [redacted]). We select eight candidates to fill the four vacancies. The Constitution

of the Chaucer Society specifies that to these eight may be added nominations made by written petition signed by at least ten NCS members. Nominations by petition must reach the Executive Director by February 1, 1995.

A ballot listing proposed nominees will be mailed to all members in March 1995; the election period will end in the Spring. All signers of petitions, candidates, and elected Trustees must be NCS members in good standing.

Newsletter Submissions

The New Chaucer Society is now able to accept both computerized and traditional printed submissions to the *Chaucer Newsletter*. If computerized, the submission must be in ASCII text; it must be stored on diskettes using IBM-compatible or Macintosh-compatible diskette formats. Either five and one-quarter inch or three and one-half inch diskettes are accepted. Computerized submissions should be accompanied by a copy of the printed text. Please include with any submission your address (and E-mail address, if available), phone number, and fax number (if available).

The *Chaucer Newsletter*, distributed twice a year to members of the New Chaucer Society, is intended primarily as a vehicle for Society business. Its ephemeral nature makes it unsuitable for substantial articles, but we are happy to publish discussions of research in progress and other activities of interest to Chaucerians. The deadline for the Autumn issue is September 1st; for the Spring issue, January 1st. Send materials to Christian Zacher, Editor, or Bryan P. Davis, Secretary for Membership and Finance, at the address given below. You may reach us at the NCS office at (614) 292-2061, by fax at (614) 292-1599, or by e-mail at bdavis@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu

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