



# The Chaucer Newsletter

A Publication of the New Chaucer Society

Volume 19, Number 1

Spring, 1997

## Travel Subventions for New Chaucerians

At the NCS Congress in Canterbury in 1990, the Trustees of the Society decided that interest income accumulating from the NCS Endowment Fund should be made available to encourage and assist new Chaucerians to attend biennial congresses. Anyone who has been awarded a Ph.D. since August 1995 or who is in the advanced stages of completing the dissertation and who is interested in obtaining such a subvention to attend the 1998 Paris Congress should send to the NCS Director by August 1, 1997 a brief (1-page) letter of request that also describes how his or her dissertation/thesis centrally focuses on Chaucer. At the same time, the applicant's dissertation director should write a brief supporting letter to the NCS Director confirming the status of the dissertation.

Subventions (in the form of reimbursements) are meant to cover some of the expenses related to attending the Paris Congress; the size of subventions will depend on the number of applicants and the amount of interest income available, but every eligible applicant will receive some funding.

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## News from the President:

### A New Director and Editor, and a New Committee

The trustees have unanimously voted to appoint Susan Crane of Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ) as the next Executive Director of the New Chaucer Society, and Larry Scanlon, also of Rutgers, as the Editor of *SAC*. Both positions are effective July 1, 1997, and as of that date the offices of NCS will move to Rutgers. In addition, a new position of Book Review Editor for *SAC* has been created, and will be held by Christine Chism of Rutgers. *SAC* will continue to be published by Ohio State University Press, whose new Director, Barbara Hanrahan, has expressed a desire to help increase subscriptions and sales of the book. Christian Zacher and Lisa Kiser have graciously agreed to stay in their positions until the Rutgers move is effected, and are working with Susan and Larry to make the transition a smooth one. I know that I speak for us all in thanking Chris and Lisa for their generous service and helpful support, and in also thanking Susan, Larry, and Chris for agreeing to take on the stewardship of the Society for the next five years.

In addition, the constitutional amendments put to you last fall all passed with near-unanimous support from the voting membership. The trustees subsequently voted to elect Derek Brewer, for four years, and John Fyler, for six years, to the new Finance Committee, whose first tasks will include recommending policies regarding the investment and disbursement of NCS assets and income; guidelines regarding financial commitments for the Paris Congress; and a full review of the present schedule of dues. The ex officio members of this committee are the executive director (Chris Zacher until July 1, and then Susan Crane) and the current President. The affairs of NCS have become more complex with time as the Society has grown and increased its involvements, and having a standing group to consult and help develop financial policy will ease some of the burden on the Executive Director and the Trustees. Chris, Susan, and I are grateful to Derek and John for agreeing to serve, and to all who agreed to be nominated.

## Nominations for New Trustees

The Nominating Committee (Stephen Barney, Jeorg Fichte, Charlotte Morse, Elizabeth Robertson, and Alastair J. Minnis [chair]) has submitted its recommendations for new Trustees. The nominees are C. David Benson, Julia Boffey, David Burnley, Carolyn Dinshaw, Robert W. Hanning, and James Simpson. The membership will now be asked to choose three names from the six listed above. Ballots will be mailed out shortly.

## Prophesia

Those who mail in their 1997 memberships before July 1st will receive *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, Vol. 19, with the least possible delays. Forms can be obtained from our web site (<http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/chaucer/>) or via email (montano.1@osu.edu). Use of these two alternative forms for sending communications will help save money in franking and printing fees. If, however, you require a hardcopy, please contact Jesse Montano by telephone (614-292-2061) or fax (614-292-1599). Postscript: please let us know if printing off the internet or from email is not convenient or possible for you.



## 1998 NCS CONGRESS-- Call For Papers

The Eleventh International Congress will be held at the Sorbonne, Paris, from Friday 17 to Monday 20 July. The Program Committee announces the following topics for sessions. Proposals for papers should be sent directly to the organizers of each session so as to reach them by **1 July, 1997**. Organizers will make their selection of papers and participants as soon as possible after that deadline; the names of participants and the titles of their presentations will be announced in the *Chaucer Newsletter* for Fall 1997. Members may apply to more than one session, but may actually participate in only one.

Submissions for papers are especially solicited from younger scholars and those who have not spoken in previous NCS congresses.

The Committee, like its predecessors, is keen to encourage the maximum discussion among members at the Congress, and so is scheduling colloquia as well as the more traditional paper sessions. Presiders at all sessions will be asked to enforce strict time limits on all presentations in order to allow proper time for discussion.

The constitution of the NCS requires that participants (except for invited speakers from other fields) be members with their dues paid up. We ask you to share this announcement with graduate students, younger colleagues, and others who may not now be members of the NCS. We also urge you to inform colleagues outside North America and the UK of the Congress. Students may join the Society at a reduced membership rate; new Ph.Ds may also apply for travel subventions (see the information given elsewhere in this Newsletter).

## CONCURRENT PAPER SESSIONS

Paper sessions will last one and a half hours, and will consist of three speakers and time for discussion. In order to ensure that members of the audience do indeed get a chance to respond and contribute, papers **must not exceed 15 minutes'** presentation time, and presiders will have strict instructions to stop over-length papers. (Papers of any speakers who find they cannot attend the conference will likewise not be read on their behalf, sinke discussion requires the presence of the author.) Abstracts of proposed papers (c. 250 words) should be sent to the organizer named for each session.

**The House of Fame.** The roots of Chaucer's inspiration for the art he describes in the *House of Fame* are from either the bookish or the physical world. The session invites papers to explore connections between this art and Chaucer's world. Jesús Luis Serrano Reyes, C/Magistrado Eguilaz 3-3, 14850 Baena, Córdoba, Spain; tel. Spain 957-671149; fax 957-671492 (commercial hours).

**Literary and Non-Literary Concepts of Time in the Canterbury Tales.** Papers are invited that deal with Chaucer's use of sacred, historical and natural time (non-literary time) and his handling of literary time (compression, expansion, vagueness, etc), especially in reference to the various genres in which the individual tales are composed or to which they are related. Joerg O. Fichte, Englisches Seminar, Universität Tübingen, Wilhelmstr. 50, 72074, Tübingen, Germany.

**Norms Governing Speech in Chaucer's Narratives.** This session will explore how Chaucerian speakers critically adapt, judge, subvert, dissent from, and/or validate the various norms governing public speech in fourteenth-century English culture: those constructed by social groups (including "estaats"), by clerics, by rhetoricians, logicians, and schoolmasters, by folk traditions, by law and custom, by authoritative texts. Papers may consider tales, set pieces, and other extended acts of speech as well as interchanges between figures. Edwin Craun, Department of English, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA 24450-0303; e-mail craun.e@wlu.edu

**Chaucer and Ethics: Connecting the Self and the Good.** Chaucer's ethical relativism has for so long been central to criticism of his works that his ethics have become a non-question. This session re-opens the issue, in the light of recent lively interest in moral philosophy, and in the relationship of ethics to other discourses. Contributors might consider the importance of ethics both in the construction of the subject in Chaucer's poetry and in interpretation of his work, and the relevance of ethical ideas for current discussions of desire and agency in medieval literature. Norm Klassen, Department of English and Modern Languages, Trinity Western University, 7600 Glover Road, Langley, BC, Canada V2Y 1Y1; e-mail nklassen@twu.ca

**Chaucer and the Non-Christian World.** Papers are invited on the *Canterbury Tales* and the fourteenth-century non-Christian world. The focus should be historical and should deal with Chaucer's representation of the unconverted, whether Tartar, Islamic or Jewish. Brenda Deen Schildgen, Department of Comparative Literature, University of California at Davis, Davis, CA 95616; e-mail bdschildgen@ucdavis.edu

**Chaucer and Public Order.** As a prominent royal bureaucrat, Chaucer belonged to an important social group generally regarded as being responsible for what little stability and order fourteenth-century England was able to achieve. There has been a recent tendency to recognize, however, that "royal power contributed to disorder and that the judicial authority of the crown was a public nuisance" (Michael Clanchy). In light of this tendency, papers are invited that explore the complexities of Chaucer's own response to the omnipresent problem of authority and public order in late fourteenth-century England. Richard Firth Green, Department of English, University of Western Ontario, London, ONT N6A 3K7, Canada; e-mail rgreen@bosshog.arts.uwo.ca

**The Material Body in Chaucer.** This panel will explore ideas and representations of the material body in Chaucer's works, with special emphasis on how its physicality is culturally produced. Topics might include theories of physiology as providing categories of interpretation; the infliction of pain, including public spectacles of punishment and martyrdom; pleasure and enjoyment; the erotic and the sacred. Jeffrey Cohen, Department of English, George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052; e-mail jjcohen@gwis2.circ.gwu.edu

**Representations of Death.** Papers on literary, artistic, and/or historical representations of death in Chaucer's culture are all welcome. Judith Laird, Department of English, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, TX 78666; e-mail jl10@swt.edu

**Textual Criticism and the Reception of Chaucer's Work.** Papers are invited on a range of topics relating to editions or scholarship of any post-medieval period: how textual critical practice reflects and conditions interpretive responses, including canon formation and the representation of Chaucer; how textual critical practice bespeaks cultural context; how textual critical practice for Chaucer's work relates to that for other works; how textual critical responses have changed over time. Tim W. Machan, Department of English, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI 53233; e-mail 6583machant@vmsb.csd.mu.edu

**Chaucer and His English Contemporaries.** The topic will be understood as broadly as possible. Proposals are encouraged both for writers with whom Chaucer has been traditionally paired (e.g. Chaucer and Gower, Chaucer and Usk, etc), and other major writers and traditions that shared his cultural moment (e.g. Chaucer and Wyclif, Chaucer and Julian of Norwich, Chaucer and the Drama). Preference will be given to synoptic treatments, especially those which use their topics to interrogate the presumptive status of Chaucer's centrality. Larry Scanlon, Department of English, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903; e-mail lfscanlon@aol.com

**Chaucer and Medieval Latin Literary Culture.** Papers in this session will show Chaucer engaging particular medieval Latin texts, genres, and traditions, and invite reflection on his attitude, as a poet ambitious for his own vernacular, toward the authority of the Latin tradition. Winthrop Wetherbee, Department of English, Goldwin Smith Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; e-mail ww22@cornell.edu

**Chaucer in a Francophone Culture.** This session seeks to explore the range of influence of French as a linguistic presence for Chaucer and his contemporaries. Papers should be concerned with the possibilities for author and audience in a bilingual society. Those which approach the literary from non-literary sources are especially solicited. Robert F. Yeager, Department of Literature and Language, University of North Carolina, Asheville, NC 28804; e-mail yeager@unca.edu

**Carpe florem and the Roman de la rose.** This session will address the quite extraordinary influence that the *Roman de la rose* had on Chaucer, and indeed on medieval textual culture in general; offers of papers not dealing specifically with Chaucer are most welcome. The objective is to identify those features of the poem that were most challenging for its medieval readers and re-writers, thereby placing Chaucer's conversations with Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun in a context that will enable us to comprehend them better. Alastair Minnis, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP, UK; e-mail ajm22@york.ac.uk

**The Fabliau in France, Italy and England, 1200-1400.** Papers are invited on the fabliau in France, Italy and England, with particular emphasis on the cultural, manuscript, and formal contexts for medieval bawdy stories. Barbara Nolan, Department of English, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA 22903; e-mail bn9a@poe.acc.virginia.edu

**The Griselda Story.** Papers are invited on, but not limited to, the following topics: narrative form, translation, transmission, manuscripts, audience, cultural meaning, politics, the French translations, and adaptations of one particular translation. Amy Goodwin, Department of English, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA 25005-5505; e-mail agoodwin@rmc.edu

**Froissart.** Submissions are welcome on any aspect of Froissart's work as poet and chronicler, for a session that will think about Chaucer from the perspective of one of his earliest influences and most notable contemporaries. Papers need not explicitly connect Froissart's work with Chaucer's, but they should be written with a Chaucerian context in mind. John Fyler, Department of English, Tufts University, Medford, MA 02155; tel. (617) 628-5000; e-mail jfyler@emerald.tufts.edu

**Chaucer's Influence on His French Contemporaries.** Chaucer's early influence on French writers: on literature composed during his lifetime or up to, at the latest, c. 1420. Helen Phillips, Department of English, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK; e-mail aezhp@aen1.english.nottingham.ac.uk

**Christine de Pizan and Chaucer.** Though Christine de Pizan and Chaucer do not appear to have known each other's texts, they both worked from the same textual traditions and within similar court cultures. Comparative papers on textual, historical and codicological topics are invited, particularly concerning the ways in which Christine studies might challenge Chaucer studies. Marilynn Desmond, Department of English, Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York, NY 13902-6000; e-mail mdesmon@binghamsun.cc.binghamton.edu

**Anglo-French Relations and the Hundred Years' War.** This session seeks to re-assess approaches to Anglo-French interaction in the late Middle Ages. Taking as a starting-point the political backdrop of the Hundred Years' War, papers are sought on the cultural encounter (poetic, artistic, or musical) between the English and French, Paris and London, acknowledging hostility as well as influence, *débat* as well as *rapprochement*. Ardis Butterfield, Department of English, University College, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT; e-mail uclearb@ucl.ac.uk

**Parisian Intellectual Culture.** This session will link the study of intellectual culture with history of institutions, focusing on the University of Paris and its production of knowledge, ideas, and material artefacts (e.g. books and/or codicological practices), as well as on implications for English intellectual culture in the age of Chaucer. Rita Copeland, (until 22 March) Department of Historical Studies, University of Bristol, 13 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1TB, UK; (after 23 March) Department of English, University of Minnesota, 207 Lind Hall, 207 Church St SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0134; e-mail copel002@maroon.tc.umn.edu

**Translating Chaucer into French.** Papers are welcome on all aspects of the subject, including the difficulties of translating Chaucer into French, the choice of prose or verse, the conception of translation revealed through translated texts, translation and the history of Chaucer reception, translation and the French literary tradition, the French conception of the Middle Ages as revealed in translation. Wendy Harding, Université Paul Valéry, Route de Mende, 34199 Montpellier Cedex 5, France; e-mail harding@bred.univ-montp3.fr  
**Note:** Depending on response, this session could be offered as a colloquium. Please indicate whether you would be willing to submit a shorter paper.

**Open Sessions.** There will in addition be two sessions without specific topics, for which submissions are invited from members with interesting work on Chaucer that they would like to share but which does not fit with any of the subjects listed above. Full outlines of papers (c. 1000 words) should be sent to the Chair of the Program Committee by **1 August** (the extended deadline being to allow time for the more extensive drafting): Helen Cooper, University College, Oxford OX1 4BH, UK; e-mail helen.cooper@english.oxford.ac.uk (Proposals not accepted for other sessions will also be forwarded by the organizers for consideration for these open sessions.)

### CONCURRENT COLLOQUIA

Colloquia will also last one and a half hours, with a minimum of one third of that time, and usually more, consisting of open discussion. The number of panelists will vary from four to six, so the length at which each can speak will in every case be tightly limited. Many of the following topics are designed to invite participants to make a brief position statement such as will open up debate; others are more appropriate for brief summaries of interesting aspects of the session topic. All those interested in contributing are invited to send a statement of about one page to the organizer, indicating the nature of their interest in the topic.

**The Monk's Tale.** The aim of this session is to reopen the Monk's Tale in order to explore it from the perspective of its literariness, its generic status, and its relationship to other tales and discourses (this last not being limited to the *Canterbury Tales*). Jim Rhodes, 25 Braeside Drive, Hamden, CT 06514-1601; e-mail rhodes@scsud.ctstateu.edu

**Place and Space in *Troilus and Criseyde*.** In architectural history, archaeology, anthropology, art history, gender studies, geography, literary theory, religious studies, and social history, space and place are high on the agenda. What can the insights of other disciplines contribute to an understanding of place and space in Chaucer's capacious narrative of Troy? Peter Brown, School of English, Rutherford College, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NX, UK. Fax (0)1227-827001; e-mail p.brown-2@ukc.ac.uk

**Neologisms and First Recorded Usages.**

Submissions should focus on a word or words invented by Chaucer or appearing for the first time in the written record of Middle English in his writing. Any mode of lexical analysis (historical linguistics, the study of complex words, the cultural history of keywords, etc) will be welcome, with the panel hoping to bring together the greatest possible variety of approaches to lexical study, and to produce an equally various assessment of the significance of "new" words. Christopher Cannon, Department of English, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1430; fax 310-206-5093; e-mail cannon@humnet.ucla.edu

**Chaucer's Versecraft.** The colloquium will address the linguistic and metrical characteristics of Chaucer's verse with specific emphasis on recent theoretical interpretations: what has the twentieth century contributed to our understanding and teaching of Chaucer's metrical heredity, originality, banality, and philological reality? Donka Minkova, Department of English, UCLA, 405 Hilgard Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1430; fax 310-206-5093; e-mail minkova@humnet.ucla.edu

**Chaucer and Manuscript Study.** This session invites papers dealing with any aspects of the construction (including decoration and script), transmission, and audience of Chaucer's manuscripts. Tony Edwards, Department of English, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y2, Canada; e-mail aedwards@uvic.ca

**Chaucer and Langland: Teaching the Dream Vision.** This session will address theoretical and practical problems in teaching Chaucer's and Langland's dream visions. How does the dream vision genre support such radically different poets, and how does each rewrite the other within the genre? Participants are encouraged to provide syllabi and other teaching materials. Louise M. Bishop, Department of English, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1286; e-mail lmbishop@oregon.uoregon.edu

**Faith and Skepticism in Chaucer.** Recent Chaucer congresses have been concerned with issues of faith and skepticism in Chaucer and his readers. Contributions are invited to stimulate discussion on such subjects as what kind or kinds of faith are exhibited in his work; how they intersect with, challenge, or contribute to the social, theological, and religious controversies and events of his day; and what is the validity or helpfulness of atheist, agnostic, or non-Catholic responses. Other issues more than welcome. Elizabeth Robertson, Department of English, University of Colorado at Boulder, Box 226, Boulder, CO 80302; e-mail roberte@spot.colorado.edu

**Virgins Material, Mythical and Metaphorical.** In this colloquium, we hope to challenge and/or extend traditional interpretations of the virgin and virginity in Chaucer's works. We are interested in virgins male and female, gay/lesbian/straight, in virginity as a concept, as a physical condition, as a Marian ideal, a poetic trope, a category of the menacing feminine, a foil for maternalism, a discipline, and an excess. Any and all approaches welcome. Kathryn Lynch, Department of English, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA 02181; e-mail klynch@wellesley.edu

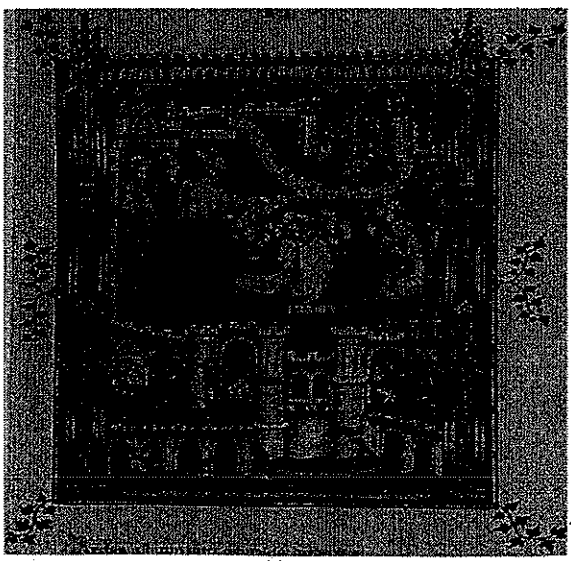
**Feminism and Chaucer Studies.** The aim of this session will be to explore possible new directions that the feminist study of Chaucer might take in the new millennium. Contributions, representing differing viewpoints and intellectual positions, are invited from informed speakers who are willing to set up a genuine debate with very well-focused short arguments. Felicity Riddy, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, The King's Manor, York YO1 2EP, UK; e-mail fjr1@york.ac.uk

**Masculinities in Chaucer.** This session will focus on Chaucer's various and varied approaches to maleness in relation to individual pilgrims or characters, though more theoretical explorations will also be considered. What did Chaucer think it meant "to be a man"? To what extent, and by what criteria, did he distinguish masculinity from femininity, and what definitions of those words are appropriate? What about gender-crossing and alternative masculinities? Peter G. Beidler, Department of English, Lehigh University, 35 Sayre Drive, Bethlehem, PA 18015; e-mail pgb1@lehigh.edu

**Chaucer and Queer Theory.** This session will focus on the possible uses of queer theory and lesbian/gay studies for the investigation of Chaucer's works and their historical contexts. Especially welcome are reflections on methodology--including the tensions between queer and gay/lesbian approaches--and on the useful intersections of queer theory with feminist, postcolonial, psychoanalytic, deconstructive and other theories and approaches. Steven Kruger, Department of English, Queens College, CUNY, 65-30 Kissena Boulevard, Flushing, NY 11367-0904; e-mail [sfk\\$engl@qc1.qc.edu](mailto:sfk$engl@qc1.qc.edu)

**Chaucer and Post-Colonial Theory: Risks and Possibilities.** Proposals for this session might, for example, address ways that post-colonial theory can inform any of the following: Chaucer's works and culture, the historicization of the Middle Ages, the positioning of "the medieval" and Chaucer in modern or contemporary political discourse. All proposals should consider the relation of their approach to the historical and political project of post-colonial theory today. Kathleen Davis, English Department, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ 08903; fax: 908-932-1150; e-mail [kdavis@ucis.vill.edu](mailto:kdavis@ucis.vill.edu)

Film session: **A Walk with Love and Death.** The local organizers are arranging a showing of this John Huston film of 1968, set in the period of the 100 Years' War. It will be followed by two short commentaries and a panel discussion. Anyone interested in participating in the panel should contact Sandra Gorgievski, 5 cité Joly, 75011 Paris; e-mail c/o Laura Kendrick, [laura.kendrick@sudam.uvsq.fr](mailto:laura.kendrick@sudam.uvsq.fr)




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**Announcement**

**"CHAUCER OUT LOUD AT KALAMAZOO"**

There is still room in the small-group workshops for those who would like to read Chaucer out loud with each other, paying attention to questions of pronunciation and scansion, under the eye and ear of an experienced reader/performer. The workshops will be on Saturday, May 10, at 5 p.m. For further information, speak to Alan Gaylord, Dept. of English, Dartmouth College, Hanover NH 03755/E-mail: [<alan.t.gaylord@dartmouth.edu>](mailto:alan.t.gaylord@dartmouth.edu)

IN ADDITION, there will be a "Masterclass in Reading Chaucer Out Loud" on Friday, at 5 p.m. Observers are cordially invited to attend, and need not pre-register. Further questions to ATG as above.

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**Edith Rickert Memorial**

We would like to thank the contributors who made it possible for the New Chaucer Society to furnish a headstone for Edith Rickert. Special thanks to Virginia Everett Leland for first suggesting the idea.

According to the Oakwoods Cemetery Association, the headstone should be in place sometime in April or May. The address for the cemetery is 1035 East 67th Street, Chicago, IL 60637.

**Edith Rickert Fund Contributors**

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|-------------------------|------------------|
| Shinsuke Ando           | Ruth apRoberts   |
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## **Annual Chaucer Bibliography**

The Bibliographers of the New Chaucer Society encourage you to inform them of publications that pertain to Chaucer. Please use the form below (or separate paper if more convenient) to report your Chaucer publications of the past calendar year. Offprints are welcome. Submissions will appear in the annual *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* bibliography and the On-line Chaucer Bibliography.

**Author's Name:**

**Titles and publication information:**

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or

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### **Newsletter Submissions**

The New Chaucer Society accepts both computer and traditional printed submissions to the *Chaucer Newsletter*. If computerized, the submission may be in ASCII, Binary, or WP5.1 format; it must be stored on IBM compatible diskette, preferably three and one half inch. Computerized submissions should be accompanied by a hardcopy of the text. Please include your address, phone number, and e-mail address with any submissions.

The *Chaucer Newsletter*, distributed twice a year to New Chaucer Society members, is intended primarily as a vehicle of Society business. Its ephemeral nature makes it unsuitable for substantial articles, but we are always happy to publish discussions of research in progress and other activities of interest to Chaucerians. The Deadline for the Autumn issue is 1 September; for the Spring issue, 1 January. Send materials to Christian Zacher, Editor, or J. Montano, Assistant Editor, at the address below. You may also reach the NCS office by phone (614) 292-2061, by fax (614) 292-1599, or e-mail montano.1@osu.edu.

## **The New Chaucer Society**

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0505-200505-361 NCS



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