

# THE CHAUCER NEWSLETTER

*A Publication of the New Chaucer Society*

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## Executive Director's Report, Paris 1998

By Susan Crane

This is my first report to you as Executive Director of the New Chaucer Society. This year's congress at the Sorbonne in Paris is the first congress we have held outside the English-speaking countries. It takes place as our non-US membership is reaching 30% of the total membership, which now extends to 20 countries. As of July 13, of the 664 members who have renewed for 1998, 197 are from outside the USA: United Kingdom (58), Japan (36), Canada (26), France (12), Germany (9), Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Australia, Ireland (7 each), South Korea (4), Israel, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium (3 each), Austria (2), Czech Republic, Portugal, Singapore (1 each).

My report outlines the society's daily operations, finances, and governance since the 1996 congress. From July through October 1997, the New Chaucer Society office moved from Ohio State University, where it had been located since 1989, to the Department of English at Rutgers University. Thanks are due to Christian Zacher, the outgoing Executive Director, and to Jesse Montano, the last Graduate Assistant at OSU, for their advice and assistance during this transition. Lisa Kiser continues as editor of *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* through volume 20; for volume 21 Larry Scanlon of Rutgers University will take over the editorship of *SAC* with Christine Chism of Rutgers University as book review editor. *SAC* will continue to appear from Ohio State University Press with the intelligent and energetic support of press director Barbara Hanrahan. You the members have exercised patience as we transferred membership files and experimented with bulk mailing rates. Graduate Assistant Susan Arvay's computer wizardry has now created not only accurate and flexible new

membership files but also a splendid webpage. Please take a look, use the webpage to reach us, and suggest enhancements: <http://ncs.rutgers.edu>.

The newly established Finance Committee, made up of elected members Derek Brewer and John Fyler together with President Mary Carruthers and myself as Executive Director, oversees the financial policies of the New Chaucer Society. We've worked to improve the Society's financial health in two major changes this year. First, we have divided the endowment account between the Fidelity Short-Term Bond Fund and the Vanguard Index 500 Trust to better protect the endowment from market fluctuations. Between that division in July 1997 and June 1998, the Fidelity account's value has increased by 6.07% and the Vanguard account's value has increased by 18.02%. Second, the Finance Committee has declared the endowment to be fully distinct in its uses from the operating funds generated by members' dues and sales of *SAC*. Withdrawals from the endowment are limited to 5% per year of the funds' average value over the preceding three years. By this formula we hope to ensure the steady growth of both the endowment and the income it provides for special expenses that sustain the Society's long-term goals. This year, the endowment supports the attendance at this congress of young Chaucerians who do not yet have full-time positions. The total value of the endowment this year is approximately \$83,000. Member dues will amount to about \$28,000 this year, and those dues will pay for the production and mailing of *SAC* (about \$22,000) and for the newsletters and other mailings. The Society could not continue to prosper were it not for the generous financial and institutional resources provided to us by Rutgers University.

The New Chaucer Society's Trustees meet biennially at the congresses. After this congress, the terms of Trustees Peggy Knapp, Alastair Minnis, and Paul Strohm come to an end, and those of David Benson, Carolyn Dinshaw, and Robert Hanning begin; Trustees David Aers, John Ganim, Linda Georgianna, and Anna Torti continue their terms through the next congress in 2000. The presidency of Mary Carruthers ends with this congress, and Paul Strohm succeeds her as President through the

next congress. The program committee for that congress, David Lawton (Chair), Christopher Baswell, Elizabeth Fowler, Robert Hanning, and Wendy Scase, will meet in late October to establish the call for papers, which will appear in the Spring 1999 Chaucer Newsletter.

This concludes my written report to you; please be in touch with me and with any of your officers and Trustees with your advice and questions about the Society's operations.

## Trustees Discuss 2000 Congress, Endowment Campaign

The Trustees of the New Chaucer Society met during the Eleventh International Congress in Paris. They heard reports from Lisa Kiser, the outgoing editor of Studies in the Age of Chaucer, and from her successor Larry Scanlon. Mark Allen reported that the annual bibliography for 1997 will have close to 400 entries and that the on-line version is getting about 1750 hits per month. The Trustees agreed to continue funding the bibliography at a rate of \$1 per entry.

The Trustees approved in principle a proposal to hold the next international congress in London, pending further information about financial support and concessions on rates that would bring the cost of the congress within the financial reach of the general membership. The officers and Trustees recorded thanks to Julia Boffey and Ardis Butterfield for their invitation to meet in London and their work on the proposal's details.

The Trustees considered a proposal that the NCS should sponsor an honorary fellowship in Chaucer Studies at the University of Kent. Discussion turned on the absence of funding for such a fellowship and the unequal relationship the fellowship would establish between the NCS and the

University of Kent, and the NCS and other universities. The Trustees voted not to approve the proposed fellowship, but also expressed the hope that income from the endowment may eventually fund a fellowship adequate for maintenance for a year or term which could be held at any number of universities willing to sponsor such a fellow.

The Trustees voted to instruct the Finance Committee, enlarged as the Committee chooses, to explore the possibility of an endowment campaign to begin in about three years. Susan Crane reported that the NCS finances are working out well in the Society's first year at Rutgers University, thanks to generous support from the university and the NCS membership's willing response to the dues increase that went into effect in 1997.

Outgoing President Mary Carruthers welcomed her successor Paul Strohm to the post and thanked the three Trustees completing their terms of service—Peggy Knapp, Alastair Minnis, and Paul Strohm—for their wise counsel and unfailing service to the Society in a time of transition. Ballots for the election of new Trustees will be mailed to all NCS members early in 1999.

## A Tribute to NCS Founder Paul Ruggiers, 1918-1998

By George Economou and Daniel Ransom  
University of Oklahoma

On 8 April 1998 Chaucerians lost a staunch friend and ally in Paul Ruggiers, who died at Norman Regional Hospital after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife Ernestine, his son Christopher, and his two grandsons Daniel and Alexander.

Paul was a builder and facilitator of our fellowship, a worker in the vineyard who brought eminent good sense and irrepressible good cheer to all the tasks that he performed on our behalf. To many who needed support he lent his assistance and his bullish optimism.

His energy and enthusiasm were naturally infectious. He was a rare and wonderful man.

Those who knew Paul understand that his personal qualities overshadowed even the achievements that appear in his professional vita. Still, for the record:

Paul G. Ruggiers was born in Paterson, New Jersey, on April 29, 1918. He took his B.A. at Washington and Jefferson College in 1940 and then entered Cornell University where, after service in the Army during World War II, he completed a doctorate in English letters in 1946. He then accepted a position in the English department at the University of Oklahoma, where he spent his entire teaching career, and where he served as director of the Honors Program between 1963 and 1969. Paul received many awards that recognized his skill as a teacher and his productiveness as a scholar; early among them were a Ford Fellowship (1954-55), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1956-57), and a Fulbright Research Fellowship in Italy (1961-62). He is the only professor in the history of the University of Oklahoma to hold three professorial titles, being named a David Ross Boyd Professor in 1964, a George Lynn Cross Professor in 1972, and Distinguished Professor

of Humanities in 1979. In 1997 he was elected to the Oklahoma Educators' Hall of Fame. His publications, apart from numerous articles and reviews, include a translation of Barbi's *Life of Dante* (1954), *Florence in the Age of Dante* (1964), and *The Art of the Canterbury Tales* (1965). Paul also edited several books, among them *Cultural Leadership in the Great Plains* (1957), *Modern American Reader* (with Irving Ribner, 1958), *A Homage to Dante* (with W. B. Fleischman, et al., 1965), *Versions of Medieval Comedy* (1977), *The Canterbury Tales* (facsimile of the earliest manuscript, 1979), and *Editing Chaucer: The Great Tradition* (1984). In 1977 he started a publishing firm, Pilgrim Books, to provide facsimile editions of six important Chaucer manuscripts (the last appeared in 1987), as well as publish an annual journal, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, and a variety of monographs by other scholars. He was also the founder of the New Chaucer Society (1977), serving as its director for five years, and of the *Variorum Chaucer* (1967). Paul served as general editor of the *Variorum* until his retirement in 1988; as professor emeritus at the University of Oklahoma, he continued afterward to work on the project. He was engaged in editing the *Chaucer Encyclopedia* at the time of his death.

Though Paul was deeply engaged with his family and his scholarship, he also found time to pursue two great passions: painting and reading. He read almost everything he could lay his hands on or came his way, from *Primary Colors* before it was by Joe Klein to a new translation of Euripides, and was just as prolific as a painter. He was an accomplished artist in several mediums, but favored water color and oil. His subjects ranged from still life

to seascape, but he was especially devoted to the landscape, which he rendered with the eye and hand of a poet. He loved the mountainous country around Santa Fe, where he and his wife Ernestine spent many happy days in their second home. He painted the New Mexico soil, rock, and sky with particular elegance and imagination, the very place in which he envisioned Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee dispensing law and order with a tribal flair in the Tony Hillerman mysteries he loved so much. He found great joy and satisfaction in these pursuits and took equal pleasure in sharing them with others.

**In Memoriam**  
**Patricia Shaw Fairman**  
By Antonio R. León Sendra  
University of Córdoba

We were very sad to learn of the death of Professor Patricia Shaw Fairman, O.B.E., in Oviedo (Spain) on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1998, after receiving the Last Rites and Papal Blessing.

She was an excellent scholar, a great friend and a very hard worker, with important academic responsibilities in the University of Oviedo.

She was a member of the NCS and one of the founders of SELIM (Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature) of which at the time of her death she was President.

All those who had the privilege of her friendship will realize the great loss that we have felt at her passing.

We should like to extend our deepest sympathy to her husband Professor José Millán Urdiales Campos and her son Martín Urdiales Shaw. Rest in peace.



## Updates to the NCS Website

Members who would like to revisit some of the sights from the congress this past July can now see photos from Paris on our website (<http://ncs.rutgers.edu>). Just click on the "Photos" link on the home page to go to a menu of pictures of the congress, the Sorbonne and the Latin Quarter. Congress attendees are welcome to send in any photos they took at the congress that they would like to contribute to the on-line album. Photos will be returned if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please send them to Susan Arvay, Department of English, Murray Hall, Rutgers University, 510 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1167.

We regularly update the NCS website to provide our members and other medievalists with current information about the society and to alert them to the wealth of material of medieval interest on the internet. Our "Links" page has recently been updated and expanded to include links to on-line versions of Chaucerian and biblical texts, information about medieval on-line discussion groups, and several additional links to sites about Chaucer in particular and medieval studies in general. Members who know of valuable sites that aren't listed should send them along to Susan Arvay at [arvay@eden.rutgers.edu](mailto:arvay@eden.rutgers.edu).

The NCS site also contains information about Studies in the Age of Chaucer (including submission guidelines, how to order back volumes, and institutional subscription information); past and present officers of the NCS; a membership form; plus our address, phone/fax number and e-mail addresses. Members can turn to the website for answers to many of their questions about the society and SAC. Or if you prefer, please contact us by mail, e-mail or fax.

## New URL for On-Line Chaucer Bibliography

Members who wish to access the On-Line Chaucer Bibliography maintained by Mark Allen at the University of Texas at San Antonio should know that the site's URL has changed. Its new address is <telnet://libcat.utsa.edu>. (If you try to access the bibliography through its old URL, the UTSA computer will prompt you for a password.) To get into the bibliography, you will need a telnet application on your computer. The basic telnet program that comes with Windows95 will do. If you need a telnet application, there are several shareware versions available for downloading. Search for a telnet program at Tucows (<http://www.tucows.com>), File Pile (<http://filepile.com/nc/start>), Shareware.com (<http://www.shareware.com>) or a similar shareware website.

If you already have telnet installed you can connect with just one click by following the link from the NCS website to the bibliography. Look at the bottom of the links menu on the home page or under "Other Sites" on the links page. Once you establish a connection with the UTSA server you will see a page that says "UTSA." Type "library" and hit ENTER. Follow the instructions on the screen to access and search the bibliography. To quit the bibliography and return to the NCS site, type "stop."

We encourage members to inform us of publications that pertain to Chaucer. Send all submissions for the bibliography to Mark Allen; Division of English, Classics, Philosophy and Communications; University of Texas at San Antonio; San Antonio, TX 78249-0643 (fax: 210-458-5366).

## Chaucernet, An Online Forum for Chaucerians

### By Edwin Duncan

*(Editor's note: The following article is a slightly edited version of the text that appears on Edwin Duncan's webpages at <http://www.towson.edu/~duncan:descchau.html> and <http://www.towson.edu/~duncan:subchau.html>. It is reprinted with the author's permission.)*

Chaucernet is an electronic forum, or academic discussion group, devoted to Chaucer studies. Its membership consists of professors, graduate students, undergraduates, and others from all over the world who either specialize in--or are merely interested in--Chaucer, his works, and related topics. Like other academic networks on the Internet, Chaucernet costs nothing to join.

Once you become a member of Chaucernet, you immediately start receiving all the mail sent to the network by other members. This may range from as few as three or four messages a day to as many as fifteen or twenty, depending on the day and time of year. The volume is lightest in the summer and on holidays and weekends and heaviest during the regular school year during the week.

The messages vary in length from less than a line to several screens full, but most are generally a paragraph or two, and the topic will have something to do with Chaucer. For example, one member may ask a question or make a comment pertaining to the Prioress's Tale and attitudes toward Jews in fourteenth-century England. Then, in the following days this member's query may evoke one or more responses by other members, and messages on this topic will run concurrently with other questions and comments on different Chaucer topics: how much memorization to include in a Chaucer course, questions about Chaucer's travels in Italy, and so on. Sometimes the discussion may be something you are interested in, sometimes not. When it isn't, you can just delete the message and go on to the next one.

You can subscribe to Chaucernet by following these instructions (available on-line at <http://www.towson.edu/~duncan/subchau.html>).

1. Log in to your computer account and get into your MAIL program.
2. Address a message to [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)
3. Send a message that reads as follows:

sub chaucer your name

Thus, if your name is Fenwick Furd, the message you send should read:

sub chaucer fenwick furd

It is not necessary to put anything on the subject line (unless you are on a commercial provider like AOL, which requires something).

If you have done everything correctly, within a day or so, sometimes within only a few minutes, you will receive a reply from the listserver informing you that your request has been accepted and that you are now a member of Chaucernet.

Once you have subscribed, remember that when you want to send a message directly to the other members, you do not address the message to the listserv address for the network but to the network itself. Thus, if you want to post a message for all the other Chaucernet members to read, you will address it to [chaucer@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:chaucer@listserv.uic.edu), not to [listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu).

If you ever find yourself in a situation where you are leaving town or are otherwise not going to be able to check your e-mail for a while, then you will want to postpone receiving mail from Chaucernet to avoid having a large number of messages pile up in your account while you're gone. To do this, you will want to set your account to "nomail." Then, when you return, you can reset your account to "mail" and start receiving postings from Chaucernet again. Instructions for setting your account to nomail, mail, and others are provided in "Listserver Commands for Chaucernet" at <http://www.towson.edu/~duncan/listser2.html>.

## SAC 20 Coming Soon!

Studies in the Age of Chaucer, volume 20, will be shipped by the Ohio State University Press on **October 29**. Please allow at least six weeks for overseas delivery.

### Chaucer Division Plans Sessions and Party for San Francisco MLA

The Chaucer Division is sponsoring three sessions at the 1998 MLA:

1. "**Visual Chaucer**," organizer and presider Sarah Stanbury. Papers include "Chaucer's Ekphrastic Fetish," Joel Fredell; "The Art of Death in the Knight's Tale," Elizabeth Fowler; "The Miller as 'Harras Bureau' or the Reeve's Paranoid Eye," Becky McLaughlin; "The Ring and the Mirror: Optics in the Squire's Tale," Suzanne Conklin Akbari. Monday, 28 December, 3:30-4:45 p.m., Franciscan Room D, SF Hilton.
2. "**Chaucer in the Classroom and the Curriculum of the 21st Century**," organizer and presider Elaine Tuttle Hansen. Brief presentations on "Chaucer's Theoretical (Ir)relevance," Richard

Glejzer; "Queer Chaucer in the Classroom," Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger; "Chaucer Had Adam Scryven; We Have Bill Gates," Susan K. Hagen; "Low-Tech Chaucer: An Iambic Alternative to the Analytical Paper," Peter G. Beidler; "Teaching the Dream-Visions in a non-Chaucerian Context," Maud Burnett McInerney; "Of hir felaweship anon: Addressing the Audience(s) of the Chaucer Web Site Consortium Project," Daniel T. Kline. Tuesday, 29 December, 10:15-11:30, Franciscan Room A, SF Hilton.

3. "**Chaucer and Literary History**," organizer and presider Jennifer Summit. Papers include "The Prioress's Tale: What Did Chaucer Know and When Did He Know It?," Lee Patterson; "Chaucer's Jobs," David R. Carlson; "Eulogies and Usurpations: Thomas Hoccleve and the Chaucerian Inheritance," Ethan Knapp; Respondent, Theresa M. Krier. Wednesday, 30 December, 10:15-11:30 am, Parlor 3, Centennial Ballroom, SF Hilton.

All Chaucerians are also invited to the annual party co-sponsored by the New Chaucer Society and the Chaucer Division Executive Committee, on Tuesday, 29 December, starting at 8:30 pm in Elaine Hansen's suite in the San Francisco Marriott.

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### Langland Conference at UNC-Asheville

The Second International Langland Conference, co-sponsored by The Yearbook of Langland Studies and Pegasus Institute for the Humanities, will be held July 29-31, 1999, at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. The format will follow that established by the First International Langland Conference at Cambridge in 1993. In addition to several plenary addresses, there will be a number of smaller sessions devoted to in-depth discussion. Because space is limited, persons wishing to read papers or to serve as respondents in a discussion session should notify the organizers as soon as possible: John A. Alford, 7 Parkview Dr. Ext., Asheville, NC 28805, or James Simpson, Girton College, Cambridge CB3 0JG (U.K.).

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### Launch of New Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature at MLA

NCS members are warmly invited to the champagne launch of the new Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature at the Cambridge University Press booth, 4:30-6:00, Monday 28 December, at the Modern Language Association convention in San Francisco. The majority of chapters in this volume are written by NCS members; the Chaucer chapter is by Glending Olson.

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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 WordPerfect or Microsoft Word format; it must be stored on a 3.5-inch IBM compatible diskette. 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 Spring issue is January 1; the deadline for the Fall issue is September 1. Send materials to Susan Crane, Executive Director, or Susan Arvay, Graduate Assistant, at the address below. You may also reach the NCS office by phone or fax at (732) 932-8703 or by e-mail at [arvay@eden.rutgers.edu](mailto:arvay@eden.rutgers.edu).

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