

AMERICAN
SOCIETY FOR
18TH. CENTURY
STUDIES

President's Column

LISA A. FREEMAN

University of Illinois Chicago

Like many of you, I am racing to put the finishing touches on my ASECS talk. I am thrilled that we will be meeting soon in Toronto and wish everyone who is able to attend a safe and easy journey there. Our program committee (Sarah Eron, Dana Lew, Robert Paulett, Hanna Roman, with Daniel O'Quinn as chair) has done a fantastic job of organizing a rich program that represents the broad diversity of our members' research, teaching, and professional interests. I'm looking forward to attending many sessions, to engaging with your ideas and arguments, and to joining you in a bit of collegial conviviality at our various receptions and events. I am particularly delighted to highlight the Presidential performance event on Friday evening, featuring M. NourbeSe Philip, who will be reading from her extraordinary work *Zong!* Please also consider attending the Presidential roundtable session, "Approaching *Zong!*" earlier that day, to hear from some of our members about this profound, poetic meditation on the deliberate drowning of over 130 enslaved Africans by the crew of the slave ship *Zong!* in 1781.

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I look forward to the ASECS conference every year not just because it provides an occasion to see so many old friends and colleagues and to meet new ones, but also because there is a special energy which circulates across the conference and galvanizes our entire society. Whether it is because we are excited by the challenge of new ideas or because the discussion has just stimulated a great idea for how we might approach our next class, the energy generated over the course of our three days together and the camaraderie built in affording ourselves the opportunity to become an intentional community for curiosity, thought and ideas is something that can sustain us all of over the entire year and result in innovative courses and further new insights in our scholarship.

The strength of ASECS stems, too, not only from our members' commitment to research, teaching, and scholarship but also from a shared willingness to take on leadership and service positions both on the Executive Board and across our many caucuses, committees, and affiliates. I would particularly like to recognize the epic efforts of our two, current Vice-Presidents, Paola Bertucci and Misty Anderson, for their incredible work co-chairing the Constitution and Bylaws Task Force. Over the last six months, they have facilitated a set of intense discussions and thoughtful debates among our amazing colleagues on the task force and have arrived at a place of strong consensus and clarity regarding the

mission of ASECS and our best path forward as a scholarly organization and community devoted to all things eighteenth century. I hope many of you will be able to join us at the Town Hall-style session at ASECS, on Saturday, April 6, 9:45-11:00 am, where the task force will share an overview of some of the main changes to our bylaws and solicit feedback from the membership.

To ensure that all members have an opportunity to share their thoughts and feedback, we will also host a post-ASECS online Town Hall session on Wednesday, May 8, 5:00 pm EDT. For now, I want to take a moment to thank the Task Force members, George Boulukos, Mark Boonshoft, Jason Farr, Jennifer Germann, Monica Hahn, Christy Pichichero, and Chunjie Zhang for their dedication, vision, and insight and for their consistent demonstration of collegiality and generosity in all of the discussions. I also want to extend special thanks to our ex officio members of the Task Force, our Executive Director, Benita Blessing, and our Parliamentarian, Nush Powell, for providing significant guidance and input throughout the process that will ensure that ASECS is in compliance with all laws and regulations and able to conduct its business in an effective and collaborative manner.

ASECS has also just announced searches for two important positions: Treasurer of ASECS, and Editor of *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (SECC). Search committees have been formed for each search, and you will find the calls for

President's Column, cont'd
Election Results

applications for these positions in this news circular. I am incredibly grateful to our current Treasurer, Joseph Bartolomeo, who has worked tirelessly over the past few years to get our books in order and to transition us through two changes in the Executive Director position. Joe has been steadfast in his efforts, and has agreed to serve one final year in the position to train his successor and ensure a smooth transition in financial oversight for our organization.

I am also grateful to David Brewer and Crystal Lake, who have done a tremendous job editing SECC for the past 4 years. Together, they have overseen the production of four volumes and assembled a fifth, all

representing a vast array of research interests across our membership. A look through the most recent volume to arrive in the mail reveals the richness of our field and illustrates David's and Crystal's impressive expertise in curating and editing each volume. We welcome applications for the crucial position of Editor of SECC, as well as for the Treasurer position.

Over and over again over the last nine months, I have been amazed by the work and generosity of our members across the society. I continue to be deeply honored to serve as the President of ASECS and again, look forward to seeing many of you in Toronto soon.

2024-2045 ELECTION RESULTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS!

PRESIDENT: PAOLA BERTUCCI (2024-2025)

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: MISTY G. ANDERSON (2024-2025)

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: ELENA DEANDA-CAMACHO (2024-2025)

AT LARGE SEAT 1: OLIVIA SABEE (2024-2027)

AT LARGE SEAT 2: BRIAN COWAN (2024-2027)

CONTINUING BOARD MEMBERS

MEMBER AT LARGE: EMILY FRIEDMAN (2022-2025)

MEMBER AT LARGE: MEGHAN ROBERTS (2022-2025)

MEMBER AT LARGE: BARBARA ABRAMS (2023-2026)

MEMBER AT LARGE: KAREN STOLLEY (2023-2026)

TREASURER: JOSEPH BARTOLOMEO

PARLIAMENTARIAN: MANUSHAG (NUSH) POWELL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: BENITA BLESSING

*LISA A. FREEMAN WILL SERVE AS PAST PRESIDENT

Executive Director's Column

When this news circular arrives in your inboxes, I'll be in Toronto, meeting with our events manager Devon Binder and the Sheraton Centre hotel staff to prepare for 700 ASECS members and friends arriving for the 54th Annual Meeting. Many of you will be packing at the beginning of the week – don't forget your passports if you're traveling across the border! – and maybe you've already downloaded the app (**passcode: Toronto!**) and have started browsing through sessions.

It's hard getting away from professional and personal responsibilities for 3 days - thank you to those of you who could so. And if it wasn't possible for some of you this year, I hope that you'll mark your calendars now for next year's **Virtual Annual Meeting**. It will be held over two weekends, March 28-29 and April 4-5, 2025. Details to follow, but I hope to hear some ideas from you in the weeks to come on what kinds of offerings would be helpful. You can find the dates of locations of future meeting sites on the Annual Meeting page under [Past and Future Annual Meetings](#).

If you're at the Annual Meeting in Toronto, please take a moment to let me know how your session went. This has been a particularly challenging year between the bureaucracy of crossing a border to coming up with solutions for dizzying AV costs. Thank you to everyone for your patience and good humor.

For the Annual Meeting and beyond, you'll see the first steps of one of my pet projects: making philanthropic giving to ASECS a little easier. If you live much

of your life on your phone like I do, perhaps you've found yourself in a situation where you wanted to support an ASECS initiative, but wished there were a way to do so in addition to the current website. You can still donate through the [Johns Hopkins UP website](#), our partners in membership management. But you can now also take advantage of some PayPal options for specific fundraising campaigns, and for general giving as well. Look for a few QR codes at the conference!

Did you know that there is another *Chronicle* that is as important for learned societies in the humanities as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*? It's the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, and [a recent article](#) suggests some good news for nonprofits like ASECS: **donations are predicted to increase** this year. Specifically, individuals will likely increase their charitable giving by 2.6% in 2024.

Those individuals are people like you, and me, and I hope you'll join me in making ASECS one of your top 3 places to give this year. Whether it's \$5 or \$500 or \$5,000, your contribution of just 2.6% more this year will help continue the programming that supports this community, from travel awards to prizes for outstanding scholarship to access to resources like [ECCO](#). One easy way to donate at the Annual Meeting will be a revival of an actual jam pot (or as close as we can find in the hotel) for cash donations for graduate student travel. And yes, there will be a QR code and link as well. **Check out the options** - we'll rotate through different funds monthly - and let me know what you think!

Search Announcement Treasurer

The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) is searching for a Treasurer to begin a three-year term on 1 July 2025. The Treasurer is an Appointed Officer and Member of the Executive Board who has Executive Board voting privileges. The successful candidate will report directly to the Executive Board of the Society and work closely with the Executive Director to manage the financial affairs of the Society. The Treasurer chairs the ASECS Finance Committee, which oversees the Society's investment accounts. For more information about the responsibilities of the Society's Treasurer, see Article V, Section 7 of the Society's [Constitution and Bylaws](#).

The successful candidate for Treasurer will be a member in good standing of the Society. They should have experience administering or overseeing financial affairs. This experience could be through an administrative role at an academic institution, preferably as a department head, dean, or other senior administrator. Alternatively, it could be through work on/with other non-profits, including other academic societies. In addition, they should be prepared to identify the Society's financial needs in the short and long term and to work with the Executive Board and the Executive Director to develop strategies to ensure the Society's financial stability and growth. Experience with fundraising campaigns is also welcome.

The position is eligible for reappointment pending approval of the ASECS Executive Board. To ensure a smooth transition and continuity in July 2025, the candidate selected will be familiarized with ASECS financials and trained by the current Treasurer during the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The Treasurer attends the in-person meeting of the Executive Board and Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting in the spring, the virtual annual meeting of the Society's Steering Committee in January or February, and regular virtual meetings throughout the year. The Society pays for the Treasurer's travel and three nights' lodging for the Annual Meeting. The Treasurer is expected to be in regular contact with the Executive Director in order to ensure timely attention to all ASECS financial matters.

Nominations and self-nominations are welcome from all scholars in traditional and non-traditional academic settings and career paths who will help us achieve our vision of a diverse and inclusive community. ASECS is an equal opportunity organization and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, national origin, disability, race, size, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.

Interested candidates should send a letter of application by April 30, 2024 to the ASECS Executive Director Benita Blessing (director@asecs.org). The letter should state the candidate's qualifications and interest in the position. It should be accompanied by a CV and the names of two recommenders who can speak to the candidate's experience as a financial administrator in an academic setting or comparable situation. Questions about the position and the application process may also be addressed to Benita Blessing. The Treasurer Search Committee may invite candidates to an interview via phone or Zoom.

Search Announcement **Editor-in-Chief, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture***

The American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) announces the search for the Editor-in-Chief of its journal for emerging research: [Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture](#). This peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary publication showcases scholarship presented in public venues in the previous two years by a member of ASECS or of a learned society [affiliated with ASECS](#) or the [International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies](#).

Since 1972, SECC has charted new directions for research on the long eighteenth century; over the years, the journal itself has evolved with the field, alongside ASECS's other journal, [Eighteenth-Century Studies](#). Still published in a clothbound format, the entire run of SECC volumes has also been digitized and made available online through Project MUSE.

The four-year term will begin July 1, 2024. Applicants should have an established record of scholarship in the field, possess strong organizational skills, and a commitment to the mission of the society and journal. The Editor-in-Chief's principle responsibilities lie in shaping future volumes of the journal and, in consultation with the journal's Advisory Board and the ASECS Executive Board, imagining any next steps in this key journal's evolution.

By way of support, the Society provides a stipend to cover editorial costs and covers the cost of travel and two-nights' lodgings for the Editor-in-Chief to attend the Annual Board Meeting and Conference. Institutional support for the journal's activities is not a prerequisite for applications for the position, though candidates who may be situated in institutions that do provide support for journal editors should consult accordingly with their institutions. ASECS will evaluate all applications based on candidate qualifications, as indicated above.

Nominations and self-nominations are welcome from all scholars in traditional and non-traditional academic settings and career paths who will help us achieve our vision of a diverse and inclusive community. ASECS is an equal opportunity organization and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ethnicity, ancestry, gender, national origin, disability, race, size, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, or any other status prohibited by applicable law.

Interested candidates should send a letter of application by April 30, 2024 to the ASECS Executive Director Benita Blessing (director@asecs.org). The letter should state the candidate's qualifications, interest, and vision for the position, as well as indicate any type of institutional support they may be able to secure. It should be accompanied by a CV and the names of two recommenders who can speak to the candidate's editorial experience or qualifications. Questions about the position and the application process may also be addressed to Benita Blessing. The SECC Editor Search Committee may invite candidates to an interview via phone or Zoom.

In Memoriam

J. Paul Hunter, known to everyone as "Paul," passed away in Charlottesville, Virginia on December 4, 2023. Born in Jamestown, New York on June 29, 1934, Paul studied at Indiana Central College and received his Ph.D. from Rice University in 1963. In his long career as a scholar and teacher, Paul taught at the University of Florida, Williams College, the University of California at Riverside, Emory University (where he served as Chair of the Department of English from 1973 to 1979), the University of Rochester (where he was Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1980 to 1987), the University of Chicago (where he served as the director of the Franke Institute for the Humanities from 1996 to 2001), and the University of Virginia, from which he retired in 2010.

There is a good chance that most readers of this news circular have one or more of Paul's books, perhaps within arm's reach, right now. Each of Paul's monographs--*The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (1966), *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance* (1975), and *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (1990), which won the Louis Gottschalk Prize--had a transformative effect on the field, and each continues to be widely cited. Paul was also the author of many influential scholarly articles, among them "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader" (1977), "The Insistent I" (1979), "The World as Stage and Closet" (1984), "Clocks, Calendars, and Names: The Troubles

J. Paul Hunter In Memoriam

of Tristram and the Aesthetics of Uncertainty," (1989), "From Typology to Type: Agents of Change in Eighteenth-Century English Texts," (1994), and a series of late essays on English couplet poetry: "Form as Meaning: Pope and the Ideology of the Couplet" (1996), "Couplets and Conversation" (2001), "The Poetry of Occasions" (2005), and "Seven Reasons for Rhyme" (2006). He edited multiple editions of *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, *The Norton Introduction to Poetry* and *New Worlds of Literature: Writings from America's Many Cultures*. Paul's *Norton Critical Edition* of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* has now gone through three editions, the most recent one in 2022. In the course of his career, Paul had fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Humanities Center. He served as Senior Advisor to the Mellon Foundation, and as President of ASECS in 1996-97. Few scholars in our period have been more influential in eighteenth-century studies or in the profession at large.

Beyond that extraordinary record as a scholar, Paul is also remembered for his brilliant teaching in the classroom, his generous mentorship, and his contagious enthusiasms: for eighteenth-century literature, to be sure, but also baseball, London, classical music, fine food and

excellent wine. Rivka Swenson, who studied with Paul when doing her doctorate at Virginia, recalls that "the thing that stands out the most for me in memory is how generous Paul was and how he modeled that generosity for his mentees . . . His general demeanor toward the world was generous, in the full sense of the word." Adrienne Ghaly, writing about the experience of being an undergraduate in one of Paul's courses, remembers "with great clarity Paul Hunter's Introduction to Poetry class the spring quarter of my first year at the University of Chicago. He marshalled the class with such power to the liveliness of a poem's way of thinking. We were not just readers or addressees but co-conspirators in literary forms' capacities to think ways of being and of living." Tom Krise, whose dissertation Paul supervised at Chicago, offers a characteristic anecdote: "One of the Paul stories I tell most often comes from the summer of 1994 when the British Library was still in the British Museum in Bloomsbury. Paul had invited me to lunch at the very good (and alas, now closed) Museum Street Cafe. Just before I was to leave the round reading room to join him, I got a slip of paper delivered to my table saying that the book I wanted, 'The Politicks and Patriots of Jamaica: A Poem' (1718), was unavailable due to being 'lost in bombardment in the Second World War.' Amused, I took this to show

J. Paul Hunter In Memoriam

show Paul. He looked at it and said, 'I know they have that. You have two options: wait until first thing in the morning, or go now and tell them you know they have it and to please get it for you.' To which I said some polite, late-20th-century version of "WTF?" Paul explained: 'It's a hot day. The book is shelved on the top floor of the stacks, which doesn't have air conditioning, and the staff doesn't want to go up there. So, if you can wait, it'll be cool in the morning, and they'll be more likely to get it for you.' For me, this story captures not only Paul's deep knowledge of eighteenth-century materials, but also his epicureanism, his generosity,

his kindness, his humor, and his attentiveness to people in all walks of life. Paul's former colleague Stuart Sherman sums it up: "In Paul's teaching, life, and scholarship, pleasure was the through line. To study with him, to dine with him, to read his work and to think with him was to learn, on one's own pulses, that all of these were one, and that all of these were fun."

Paul is survived by his partner (and long-time member of ASECS) Cynthia Wall, a sister and four children. He also leaves behind a field that will continue to benefit from his scholarship, leadership, and example. - *John O'Brien, University of Virginia*

THE NEWS CIRCULAR OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY STUDIES (ASECS)

-published three times per year-

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Cover banner "Toronto Island Marina,"
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