

**2008 Minutes of the Society of Early Americanists' Annual Business Meeting
Thursday, May 22, 2008, American Literature Association Conference,
Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Center in San Francisco (Pacific G)**

Attending: Mary McAleer Balkun, Rosalie Murphy Baum, Emily García, Theresa Strouth Gaul, Lisa Gordis, Sandra Gustafson, Susan Imbarrato (SEA Vice-President), Thomas Krise (SEA President), Helene Littman, Denise MacNeil, Christopher Phillips, and Jodi Schorb.

SEA President Thomas Krise called the Society of Early Americanists' annual business meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Minutes from the 2007 SEA business meeting were distributed and approved. Minutes will be posted on the SEA website.

SEA President Thomas Krise's Report

Brief History of the SEA: Krise provided an overview of the SEA by explaining its genesis and initial affiliation with the American Literature Association in the early 1990s. The Society for Eighteenth-Century American Studies (SEACS) merged with the SEA shortly thereafter. He also explained that the first biennial SEA conference was held at Charlestown, South Carolina in 1999 and that the first topical conference, Ibero-Anglo Summit, took place on May 16-19, 2002, Tucson, Arizona. Last year's biennial SEA conference in Williamsburg, June 7-10, 2007 was held jointly with the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, in conjunction with the 400th anniversary of Jamestown and with the Institute's annual conference. Krise reported that nearly 500 participants attended. Information about the Williamsburg and other past conferences is available in Archives on the SEA website.

Krise noted the success of the recently held SEA-affiliated conference, *Prophetstown Revisited: A Summit on Early Native American Studies*, 3-5 April 2008, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. The conference commemorated the bicentennial of the founding in 1808 of Prophetstown, the Shawnee brothers Tecumseh and Tenskatawa's pan-Indian village on the banks of the Wabash. Kristina Bross (Purdue University) and Edward Watts (Michigan State University) served as co-chairs.

2009 Conference: Krise provided an update on the next SEA biennial conference to be held 4-7 March 2009 in Hamilton, Bermuda to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of the colony. Panel Proposals are currently being considered and a Call for Papers should be going out by the end of June 2008 on the EARAM-L and the SEA Website. Krise explained the Hamilton Hotel rates with the special rebates and noted that accommodations and travel information is available on the SEA website. Several pre-conference activities are in the works. The Program Committee currently includes Michael Drexler (Bucknell University), Michael Jarvis (University of Rochester), Heather Kopelson (University of Alabama), and the SEA Executive Officers.

Krise also noted the collegial, inclusive quality of the SEA as one of its enduring strengths, including its encouragement of junior members and scholars and its outreach to secondary school teachers. Krise acknowledged previous SEA president, Zabelle Stodola's valuable efforts in securing grants from the Gilder Lehrman Institute that has allowed secondary school teachers to attend SEA conferences.

Forthcoming Topical Conference: Krise noted the next topic conference: "*Early American Borderlands*," St. Augustine, Florida, May 2010. A call for panels and papers will follow in the spring of 2009. For 2012, Heather Nathans (University of Maryland) and Jeffrey Richards (Old Dominion) are working on a proposal for a conference on Early African American Literature and Theatre.

The Society of Early Americanists Newsletter (SEAN): Krise acknowledged Richard Frohock (Oklahoma State University), Editor of the *SEAN*, and Brad Sewell, assistant editor for their outstanding work on the newsletter. He also explained that forthcoming issue of the *SEAN*, volume 20, issue 1, will reveal a new format that includes expanded membership and society information.

Affiliations: Krise reported on the SEA's ongoing affiliations with the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS). Lisa Logan (University of Central Florida) serves as chair of the SEA-ASECS Committee of Correspondence. The next ASECS conference will take place in Richmond, Virginia, March 26-29, 2009. The SEA will again sponsor two panels.

SEA Essay Prize: Krise reported that Anna May Duane (University of Connecticut) has agreed to serve as chair of the SEA Essay Prize Committee and thanked Laura Stevens (University of Tulsa) for her devoted service as previous chair, 2003-2008. Each recipient receives a framed certificate, a check for \$100.00, and immortality. More information about the prize is available on the SEA website.

Tom Krise also noted that the next SEA election for a new Executive Coordinator will take place in February 2009. Details will be available on the list-serv and the SEA website in the Fall 2008. Krise then read an email from Past SEA President Dennis Moore regarding a possible collaboration between the SEA and the McNeil Center at the University of Pennsylvania regarding sponsoring a scholarship.

General Discussion

Sandra Gustafson (University of Notre Dame) asked about comparable groups to the SEA in related disciplines in History and Literature such as the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, for example, as a source for contacts and possible collaborations. Lisa Gordis (Barnard College) suggested the MLA Division "America to 1800" as a possible contact. Emily García (Grand Valley State University) noted that the annual International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo draws over a 1,000 participants. Rosalie Baum (University of South Florida, Tampa) noted that Rhetoric/Composition programs have been encouraging early American courses to prepare students for academic positions, which then led to discussion about job postings and the range of "early-American studies." Thomas Krise (University of the Pacific) noted the dates of inclusion as "approximately 1800," as per the SEA's Mission statement. Sandra Gustafson noted that in addition to the MLA Executive Committee Division of American Literature to 1800, the journal *Early American Literature* includes material "up to 1830" and the *William & Mary Quarterly* cites "up to 1820." Krise noted that geographically research areas in the field have been expanding. Theresa Strouth Gaul (Texas Christian University) considered 1830 a good boundary for SEA work as well. Denise MacNeil (University of Redlands) noted that several panels at the ALA acknowledge the gap between 1800 and 1830 in early American / Early Republic studies. There was a general discussion about the SEA possibly posting academic positions. Mary McAleer Balkun (Seton Hall University) explained that there had been some exploration last year about this possibility, but considering the labor-intensive aspects and the potential for duplication, referring job seekers to the many established sites seemed best as well as posting on the SEA list-serv, EARAM-1, managed by Raymond Craig (Kent State University). Jodi Schorb (University of Florida) asked how many people are on the list-serv. Approximately 600 was the general consensus. Rosalie Baum asked about graduate students subscribing to the list-serv as a way to introduce them to the Society. Graduate Students may join by going to the SEA homepage and subscribe to the SEA listserv. Theresa Gaul asked if there was a way to search archived messages for the list-serv. As SEA Webmaster, Imbarrato offered to find out. Gaul also noted a need for more short-term fellowships to provide research opportunities for junior faculty, a suggestion that was very well received.

SEA Vice-President Susan Imbarrato's Report

The Society of Early Americanists is sponsoring four panels and co-hosting a morning coffee reception at this year's American Literature Association Conference at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, May 22-25, 2008.

Reception: Earlier this morning, the SEA co-hosted a Morning Coffee reception with the Society for the Study of American Women Writers (SSAWW). The reception was well attended with over thirty guests. Karen Dandurand (Indiana University of Pennsylvania), SSAWW Vice President, Development and Donna Campbell (Washington State University), SSAWW Vice-President, Publications co-organized the reception, along with Melissa Homestead (University of Nebraska), SSAWW Vice-President, Membership and Finances. The SEA appreciates their generous financial support in co-hosting this year's reception.

Panels: The Four SEA sponsored panels at this year's ALA: "Reconsidering Revolutionary Early America: Rhetoric, Identity, and Literature," (Thomas W. Krise, Chair), with 33 in attendance; "Native Americans: Images and Representations (1542-1820)," (Michael P. Clark, Chair), with 30 in attendance; "Transatlantic: Bodies, Texts, Identities," (Christopher Looby, Chair), with 36 in attendance; "Teaching Early American Topics: A Roundtable," (Susan Imbarrato, Moderator), with 37 in attendance. A complete list of papers included on these panels appears on the "Early American Moments" handout and is posted on the SEA homepage. As SEA Vice-President, Imbarrato assembled and chaired an ad hoc committee to screen the thirty proposals for papers in the current ALA conference. She thanked and acknowledged SEA colleagues Professors Christopher Looby (University of California, Los Angeles) and Ivy Schweitzer (Dartmouth College), for their valuable service on this year's ad hoc selection committee, noting especially their expertise and their thoughtfulness.

ALA Boston 2009: The 2009 ALA will take place May 21-24, at the Westin Copley Hotel, in Boston. As Vice-President Susan Imbarrato will again be coordinating the SEA Sessions. The call for papers will go out in the Fall 2008.

SEA Conference Site for 2011: Imbarrato asked for suggestions regarding a possible site for the SEA biennial conference in 2011. Discussion included Philadelphia, which many members thought would be a convenient and historically rich location. Imbarrato will pursue options.

Report from the Society of Early Americanists Webmaster:

The SEA homepage continues to serve our membership with assistance from Minnesota State University Moorhead student interns and web technicians, who recently helped with updating and redesigning the SEA "Teaching Early American Topics" and the "Recent Publications on Early American Topics" pages. This past spring, with assistance from Prof. Edward J. Gallagher, Lehigh University, the Bibliographies on the Teaching page were updated and revised. We are fortunate to have the good assistance of Prof. Tamara Harvey, English, George Mason University who manages the SEA Early American Fellowships, Seminars, and Prizes page, which contains information about seminars, fellowships, annual prizes, and publication opportunities related to Early American literature, history, and culture (<http://gunston.gmu.edu/tharvey2/>). The "Additional Resources" page maintained by Harold William Halbert serves as a links page and resource guide to other Web sites that may be of interest to SEA members and individuals interested in Early American literature, history, or culture (<http://faculty.mc3.edu/hhalbert/sea/>). Imbarrato acknowledged Prof. Hal Halbert for his longtime service to the SEA as manager of the "Additional Resources" page. Following Halbert's decision to step down as manager, Imbarrato has begun seeking a new manager for this webpage.

SEA Executive Coordinator Hilary E. Wyss's Report

Hilary E. Wyss, SEA Executive Coordinator, could not attend the meeting, so Tom Krise read her report: The SEA Treasury stands currently at \$28, 736.76. The SEA has roughly 500 members (current and lapsed), including sixteen Lifetime members. With our new and very convenient electronic renewal form, many members are opting to renew for two or more years at a time, so an annual renewal count is no longer necessarily a clear indicator of membership numbers. Nonetheless, around 150 memberships have lapsed, 82 renewed in 2007-08, and we welcomed 49 new members in this fiscal year.

Tom Krise commented on the healthy treasury and robust membership of the SEA.

Adjournment:

Thomas Krise concluded the meeting, which adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Imbarrato
SEA Vice-President, 2007-09