

Secretary-Treasurer Report 2017

As I approach the end of my third year as Secretary-Treasurer and Executive Director of the ASA, I remain very optimistic about the future both of the Society and of the specialty of aesthetics. We are continuing to rebuild our membership numbers; we have funded numerous conferences and workshops on cutting edge issues in aesthetics; and our annual and divisional meetings are drawing significant attendance and participation.

National Office

We have not modified our national office operations in the past year. The ASA contracts with a wide variety of firms and individuals to provide needed services, such as printing of the *ASA Newsletter* and tax filings with the IRS. Thanks to the efficiency of on-line communications, it has not been necessary to relocate all of these functions from Savannah to Denver, which is now the official home of the National Office. Our journal co-editors are in Minnesota and Michigan; our newsletter co-editors in Ohio and California; Facebook manager in Mexico City; Web editor in the Netherlands; printer, accountant and investment advisor in Savannah; and legal counsel in Washington, DC. In 2015, we moved our official mailing address to: 1550 Larimer St. #644, Denver, CO 80202-1602. We also moved some business accounts to a major bank with a physical presence in Denver. In 2015, we added a direct pay option for people who receive more than one payment from ASA in a year; this has worked very well for speeding up payments and simplifying payments and reimbursements. We continue to encourage people to sign up for direct pay if they expect any payments from ASA.

As the ASA does not have a physical office or office staff, it has an operating budget which is lean and mean, especially compared with larger organizations with substantial overhead. We also have no university home at present. This is an advantage, as we do not need to negotiate with financially strapped universities for overhead costs, but it can also be a disadvantage at those times when it would be handy to be able to turn to student assistants to complete the routine tasks which inevitably arise in running the organization. As I have noted before, these should be considerations in the recruitment of future secretary-treasurers.

Annual Meetings

The Annual Meeting for 2017 is being held November 15-18 in New Orleans. This is a lively, interesting city with good air connections and reasonable ground travel, all significant factors in selecting meeting sites. Before selecting this city, we solicited hotel bids from Cleveland, as that was the city where ASA was founded 75 years ago. The bids were not inviting. After polling several officers and trustees, we concluded that New Orleans would be an appropriate city for a celebration, especially as ASA has never before met there.

The program chair, Jonathan Neufeld, reported 128 submissions for the program (98 papers, with 40 accepted, and 30 panels, with 12 accepted). This is a substantial increase from the 100 received for 2016. Two of these were withdrawn to protest the Trump administration's travel ban. The chair also received word (and regrets that they would not be submitting) from two other members that they would be boycotting the US for the same reason. The final program represents significant diversity by many measures, especially because panel submissions have been more likely to address this.

We understand that most people can only get travel funds from their home institutions if they have a substantive presentation on the program, and we have slightly increased the number of "slots" available in recent years. We continue to have four concurrent sessions on Thursdays and Fridays, as has been the practice for many years. But until 2015, ASA had only three concurrent sessions on Saturdays; we increased that to four, adding six additional hours for papers and panels. We know that some lament the Saturday

afternoon programming and wish that we would return to an older practice of scheduling group walking tours and other activities in lieu of papers. However, given the increased interest in participation at the annual meeting and the restraints of travel funding, this does not seem feasible. We would lose eight hours of programming, roughly 16 substantive papers and commentaries. Further expansion of the programming could involve scheduling on Wednesday (traditionally our arrival day, with an evening reception). We know that many people would find it difficult to miss that many classes and have not pursued this. In the future, we could also consider expanding to five concurrent sessions to add more paper slots. If people are interested in this option, we could consider it for the 2021 meeting, which has not yet been set.

Program chairs typically set up a unique e-mail account with G-mail where persons submit their proposals. At the request of the 2018 program chair for the Toronto meeting, we explored several proposal submission systems, along the lines of that used by APA. Many are very expensive and/or too cumbersome to set up and use. After several on-line demos with other companies, we settled on a company called Submittable recommended by other small societies and will be using that for the 2018 meeting. The cost is \$1000 for a 12-month license. The submission period will be December 1, 2017 – January 15, 2018. This is comparable to the 45-day submission period used by APA. We will promote this extensively via bulk e-mail to ASA members, the print newsletter in December, Facebook, Twitter, and Philos-L.

Meeting registrations are being handled for the third year on the new web site. Also for the third time, we offered early-bird registration rates for those registering at least 30 days before the meeting, copying a technique used by the American Philosophical Association. Early-bird is a substantial savings of \$50. 170 registered early-bird (21 more than in 2016), which is tremendously helpful in preparing nametags and setting final catering numbers. As of today, an additional nine have registered and we expect another 20-30 by the start of the meeting. Print information about the meeting, with a mail-in registration form, was included in the Summer ASA *Newsletter*, but only three mailed in paper registrations and checks.

The hotel rate for the conference at the Astor Crowne Plaza was attractive (\$149/night) and the room block was booked very quickly. Last year we increased the size of the room block, but still ran out. Now that the economy is in a strong recovery in most of the country, hotels have less incentive to bargain with us for economical sleeping rooms or add more discounted rooms to our room block. Although rates for the hotels in the next few years are not this attractive, they will still be economical compared with the open market. I encourage people to plan ahead to arrange roommates, when possible, and book their rooms early. I am reluctant to expand our room block for future meeting by too much. We get free meeting rooms and several other perks for attendees when we meet our rooming commitment. Some old-timers will remember when Secretary-Treasurers had to plead with people to stay at the conference hotel. Those days seem long gone now.

We are using, for the third time, an app called Grupio at the annual meeting. Everyone is able to look up the meeting schedule, maps, hotel information, restaurants, speaker bios, and much more on their tablets, smart phones, and laptops. The app works with both Apple and Android on tablets and smart phones. On laptops, the same information is available in a different format: <http://www.grupio.com/asa2017>. Preliminary schedule information was available on Grupio in June. The Grupio app can be downloaded for free at the Apple Store and Google Playstore. We received many positive comments on Grupio in 2015 and 2016, especially for those adept at newer devices. Although some members don't particularly care for these new communication vehicles, we continue to publish extensive information in our print newsletter, which was mailed in August. We explored alternative apps, but Grupio is by far the most economical and is more than adequate for our needs. The APA uses a different brand of app, which is much more expensive; but many of our participants are becoming familiar with the use of apps to find out program information.

In 2015, the Board approved an overhaul in the registration fees for our annual fall meeting and that rate structure was continued for 2016 and 2017. Among other things, we added the early-bird discounts for those registering at least 30-days before the meeting. ASA's fees have been very low compared with the American Philosophical Association, the American Political Science Association, and the British Society for Aesthetics. We run this important meeting at a substantial deficit and hope to reduce that somewhat. We do consider special requests for fee reductions from unemployed and underemployed aestheticians, following the case-by-case approach of APA-Pacific, although none was received for the 2015 and 2017 meetings and only one was received (and approved) for the 2016 meeting. (This was a retiree in the Seattle area who had never had a tenured faculty appointment and who was considered important on a panel presentation.) Because of the substantial deficit, the Board approved a 10% across-the-board rate increase for the 2017 meeting, but our fees are still be very low compared with comparable organizations and less than the 2017 APA registration fees.

In 2015 the Board adopted a new policy on the use of recording devices at our annual meetings, continued without change in 2016 and 2017. We learned of some unfortunate incidents at other professional meetings, when entire talks were recorded and distributed on-line, without the advance knowledge or permission of the speakers. Our policy: "Out of respect for our speakers, unless you receive their express approval beforehand, please do not use any visual or audio recording devices of those speakers during their presentation." Enforcement of this policy rests solely with the chair of each session. If a speaker does not object to being recorded, that is the speaker's choice. No reports of problems have been received.

For the fourth year, we are providing luncheons for the meetings of the Feminist Caucus and the Diversity Committee. Because of the difficulty getting a precise head count for these, we asked members to register and pay \$10 in advance for plated lunches. The actual cost is \$39/person (which includes service charges and sales tax), with ASA absorbing the balance of the cost. By using hotel catering instead of sending people to a nearby restaurant, the costs count toward our guaranteed food-and-beverage minimum in the hotel contract.

Commencing in 2018, we will provide three Chayes Travel Grants to the Annual Meeting of \$1250 each for persons with no institutional access to travel funds. Selections of papers will continue to be made by the program committee without knowing who is eligible for this or student travel funds. As we are expecting one more check from the Chayes estate, it is possible we will be able to increase the number of these awards, subject to Board approval of an expansion of this program.

One of my priorities the past three years has been securing hotel commitments for the Annual Meetings for the next several years. Other members of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) typically book annual meetings three to five years in advance. With the economy strong, hotel space at acceptable rates is increasingly difficult to come by. Our membership has indicated they want to meet in interesting areas, with cultural opportunities. I routinely look at airfares to various cities, to find locations with competitive rates for our members. Finding hotels with acceptable rates and adequate meeting rooms in attractive and inviting venues is an increasing challenge.

I learned a lot from our survey of members in fall 2014 on preferred scheduling options and locations and have taken that into account. I am keenly aware of the fiscal stress on many members. About a third of our members do not have access to any travel funds to attend meetings, and I have taken costs into account in looking at meeting sites. I always talk with hotels about the availability of double rooms with two beds for those who need to share to cut costs. I look at ground travel from the airport and the availability of reasonably priced food options in the adjacent neighborhood. In some cities, such as Toronto (2018) and

Washington, DC (2020), Amtrak service will be an economical alternative for transportation to the meeting.

We have a small window for scheduling meetings and compete with both business and non-profit groups for hotel space. On the survey in 2014, I asked about meeting over Labor Day (when the APSA meets), summer, and early in the new year, but respondents were not happy with those alternatives. When we exclude Halloween weekend (at the request of many members) and take into account the schedules of both quarter system and semester campuses, as well as the British Society of Aesthetics meeting in September (attended by many of our members), our window is basically mid-October through mid-November. This is also a popular time for professional meetings and conferences and as a small society we do not have the bargaining power of much larger organizations.

On the new web site, I added a survey for preferred cities for future meetings. I encourage everyone to vote if you have not yet done so. Now that we are booked for meeting sites through 2020, we have some breathing space before we start looking at locations for 2021 and beyond. Strong contenders at this point are Boston and Montreal. Several members have recently suggested we look at Detroit, home of a magnificent art museum and opera house. Although it is perhaps too early to plan on meeting in the next decade in Havana, especially due to the current political environment and the lack of appropriate hotel facilities for a meeting like ours, I hope ASA can make such a trip eventually. Last summer, we made a serious attempt to schedule a meeting in Mexico City, but encountered several major roadblocks which would have made this very difficult for our members, so we had to abandon those plans.

At the urging of many members, I have contacted associations with shared interests in the arts to see if we might coordinate our meetings, but have been unable to arrange this so far. We have sought bids from several cities of interest to members, but costs are prohibitive (e.g., Chicago, San Francisco). If any members are interested in hosting a future meeting, please get in touch with me and we'll see what we can do.

Here's the schedule of annual meetings through 2020:

New Orleans: Astor Crowne Plaza Hotel: November 15-18, 2017 (Program chair: Jonathan Neufeld)
Toronto: Fairmont Royal York Hotel: October 10-13, 2018 (Program Chair: Deborah Knight)
Phoenix: Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel: October 9-12, 2019 (Program Chair: John Kulvicki)
Washington, DC: Hilton Crystal City: November 11-14, 2020

Divisional Meetings

I encourage people to look seriously at the three divisional meetings as venues for presenting their work. They are doing well in terms of attendance and finances and we hope that continues. We rely heavily on volunteer organizing committees for all three meetings and assist when possible. E.g., we do significant publicity about each meeting on the ASA web site, Facebook pages, Twitter, and *Newsletter*. We also manage all funds for the divisions, including the on-line registration on the ASA web site and paying all bills from funds received. We ask each Division to plan their meeting to bring in sufficient revenue to cover all expenses and leave at least \$2000 to carry-over to the next year. All are doing well in meeting this goal.

For several years, ASA has provided up to \$2000 to each Division to cover travel and honoraria for keynote speakers that enhance the meeting and improve attendance. Commencing in 2018, each Division will also receive \$1000 for Chayes Travel grants for persons with no institutional access to travel funds. Although ASA is thus seriously involved in the finances of the divisions, we have sought to defer as much as possible to the

organizers in their selection of locations, program, format, etc. We hope this decentralization promotes distinct regional interests in each meeting.

Membership

When I was handed the baton on February 1, 2015, the paid membership stood at 388. This is truly alarming, given that membership in 1999 was 1042. We finished 2015 at 533 and 2016 at 601. As of November 4, 2017, we are slightly over 600 and I am hopeful we will hit 610 or more by December 31. The increases are resulting from a mix of returning members who had lapsed for several years and new members. It appears that some new members are participants in our Facebook-Group who see regular announcements of our activities and decide to join. ASA membership is not required for the Facebook-Group and numbers as of November at 918. A long-standing ASA policy is that brand-new members who join in the last three months of the year are extended through 12/31 of the next year, and we have been publicizing this on Facebook and Twitter.

The new Green Memberships went into effect on January 1, 2017, and are a great success. To date, 56 people have signed up for the Green option. Members can only make the conversion to green when they renew, so we expect more as memberships expire 12/31. We hope this option will make it easier for persons (especially international members) who do not get institutional support to purchase and retain a membership. Green members receive all membership benefits, but do not receive any print materials (the Journal and the ASA Newsletter), but can access those on-line. International members save \$18/year, while domestic members save \$3, but interestingly about half the current green members are in North America.

Many people have offered their ideas on how to reverse the previous membership slide, and it's clear that there is no "silver bullet." I believe we need to continue to proceed on many fronts. Here are some things I've done the past three years to rebuild membership.

Enforcing existing membership requirements: Historically, the ASA has limited several activities to members, including presentations on the program at the annual meeting and eligibility for the annual monograph prize. It's not clear to me that all of the existing requirements have been consistently enforced in the past and I have focused on doing that.

Adding membership requirements to more activities: We try to strike a balance between activities open to everyone, in hopes of introducing them to both aesthetics and the ASA, and activities that are restricted to members and provide incentives for new and renewed memberships. Activities open to non-members include most of the new web site, the Twitter feed, the Facebook-group page (which replaces the old AE-list-serv, which went off-line in August 2015 when the new web site went "live"), and attendance at ASA-sponsored conferences.

The Board in 2015 also added a few requirements for membership to encourage more to join the ASA. Beginning in 2016, although non-members may submit a paper for the annual meeting, if that paper is accepted, the person must join ASA within 30 days or be replaced on the program. We considered the approach used by the APA that everyone must be an APA member at the time of submission, but the program committee was concerned that this would discourage new people to the field. The 30-day rule (which also applies to commentators, panelists, and chairs) worked well for the 2016 and 2017 meeting and we expect to continue with this approach.

Each division also now requires ASA membership for all on the program and all on the organizing group. Although enforcement methods are left to each region, compliance has been very good.

The Board also added ASA membership requirements for some on-going prizes, beginning in 2016, including

the John Fisher Prize and the Ted Cohen prize. For students wishing to publish their dissertation abstract on the ASAGE site, a valuable form of self-promotion, ASA student membership is now required. ASA membership is also required for ASAGE editors, but *not* for authors who submit papers to the on-line journal. For JAAC, ASA membership is required for the editors, but not for authors submitting work or writing book reviews.

We also require ASA membership at the time of application for several new opportunities we created in 2015, including presentations at the Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy at Rutgers University, the UCSD Summer Program for Women in Philosophy, and the Brown Summer program, cooperative ventures we continued in 2016 and 2017, and will continue in 2018.

Adding perks for members: We have added several valuable perks for members which are only available in the members section of the new web site. Currently, that includes access to historic archives from the ASA, minutes, other documents from current ASA activities, newsletters, annual meeting programs, and divisional meeting programs, as well as discounts from Oxford University Press. A member-search function also is available on the site, but only for members; we hope members find this helpful in identifying possible speakers for conferences and persons in the same geographic area with shared interests. In 2016 and 2017, members have had access to the on-line version of the new *Oxford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics-2d* edition and six months of on-line access to *Grove Art Online* and *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*. We are very pleased that Oxford is extending this benefit for the *Encyclopedia* through 2018 for ASA members. (This was initially a benefit from Oxford in gratitude for ASA's subsidy of editorial costs for the *Encyclopedia* several years ago.)

Grant-funded conferences: Only members are eligible to apply for grants. I have made encouraging grant applications a major priority the past three years and I am pleased at the steady stream of applications we have received. Among other things, I have made presentations at all three divisional annual meetings since 2015 to talk about the future of ASA and encourage brainstorming with me about possible conferences and other activities. Our grant-funded conferences aim to show the rest of the academy, as well as the broader public, the value of aesthetics for a wide range of interests: architecture/design and aesthetics, the ethics and aesthetics of the environment, art and cultural images (held at the APA-Pacific meetings for 2016), theater and aesthetics, cognitive science and aesthetics, philosophy of games, black aesthetics, etc. Among other things, I hope these conferences help demonstrate the interdisciplinary possibilities of aesthetics and attract more members. The Board also approved a new requirement three years ago that all grant-funded activities must give credit to the ASA and include our logo. This helps us build the identity of the ASA as an organization supporting a wide range of important and worthwhile activities in aesthetics and thus promote future membership.

Responding to changes in the profession: The traditional professoriate is changing, with increasing reliance on adjuncts, lecturers, visiting professors, on-line teaching, and outsourced instruction. At least some of our membership decline seems attributable to the loss of traditional, tenure-track teaching opportunities. We can try to push back, as others are trying, but the changes are major and likely to continue. If we focus mainly on recruiting from traditional academic positions, our membership is likely to decline as the traditional professoriate declines. I regularly talk with people who love the arts and aesthetics, but have no expectation of ever getting a tenure-track job with good benefits that earlier generations enjoyed. Is there a place for them in the ASA? I believe there is, but we need to focus on what we might do to adapt. I hope we can provide information and incentives on using aesthetics education in non-traditional careers outside the academy. Having spent fifteen years of my own career in non-traditional positions, I know these jobs can be rewarding in many ways and also make good use of formal academic training. I am talking with many people about ideas for conferences that reach out to non-traditional audiences with events on evenings and

weekends when they can attend and with content that connects with their interests. Should we be trying to add more streaming video to our events? Will on-line conferences and blogs be of interest? Our essay contest for the 2016 meeting focused on this new terrain (all essays were published in the *ASA Newsletter*). If we show at least some of these people that they have a place in the ASA and we value their contributions, some membership will follow.

The Board also approved using some of the bequest from Irene H. Chayes for travel to the annual meetings so people with no institutional access to travel funds could present their work and stay connected to the professional dialogue.

Member outreach: I have tried to take advantage of economical mechanisms for reaching out to lapsed members. In 2015, when I was travelling for other reasons, I held these in Washington, DC, New York City (for graduate students), Toronto, and southern California. In 2016, I held one in Seattle and another in New York City (for dance scholars). Even for those unable to attend, I have been able to strike up worthwhile conversations to elicit their ideas for the future of the ASA.

New modes of communication: As discussed below, we are expanding our means of communication in several ways, which I hope will reach a broader range of people interested in aesthetics of various ages. We are straddling several generations, so we still have a print newsletter which includes information on the Annual Meeting in the summer issue, but we added several newer forms of communication in 2015 and are very active on all of them: a Twitter feed (@ASA_aesthetics), a Facebook group page (now with over 900 members) (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/7399905817/>), and the new web site (as of August 2015) with many more interactive features. While “community” was shaped largely by in-person meetings only a few decades ago, these new forms of social media are building new senses of community, available to people who love the arts and aesthetics but for whatever reasons are unable to attend our meetings. We need to continue staying in touch with new media that respond to contemporary interests, including the Aesthetics for Birds blog, which the ASA Board funded as a start-up in 2014. We funded an on-line conference in 2015, but that is on holding due to the illness of the organizer; we hope this will occur in 2018.

Differing senses of “aesthetics”: Several long-time members have suggested to me that membership has dropped off as ASA membership is perceived as of interest only to narrowly defined analytic philosophers. Our current membership actually includes a wide range of practicing artists, art educators, historians, anthropologists, and many others. On a survey I posted on the web site, members indicate interest in much more than analytic philosophy. From time to time, I post these (unscientific) results on Facebook to demonstrate this diversity to people. In our meetings and other ventures, I hope we can be as broadly inclusive as possible to demonstrate the relevance of ASA to a wide range of disciplinary interests and methodologies.

New Technologies and Social Media

I have been working with the Board of Trustees and an *ad hoc* committee on Social Media to explore adding new capabilities to our communications and dissemination. We spent much of 2015 working with a web technology company to move to a new web site and went “live” on August 28. It is the same company that supports the American Philosophical Association’s web site and gives us many more options for members and non-members alike. Members can look up their own membership status and see whether they are paid up on dues, e.g. We also are able to collect anonymous demographic data from members and get a better sense of the state of the profession (although most decline to complete this, making the data unseable). In 2016 and again in 2017, we gave members on-line access to the new edition of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*

and six months of on-line access to *Grove Art Online* and *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, available only to members on the new web site. Oxford is extending this access through 2018, which we greatly appreciate.

Rob van Gerwen was selected after a search for a new web editor; he began work on the new site June 1, 2015. In summer 2017, our ad hoc committee conducted a two-year performance review and extended his contract for another two years. We recently connected the ASA site to Google analytics to get some sense of usage. It is too early to provide significant data, but it is noteworthy that in the last month only half of the persons accessing the site are in the US. The rest are from 30 different countries around the world.

In 2015, we established a new Twitter account for announcing deadlines and other information about the ASA. Please follow us: @ASA_aesthetics. We decided not to forward Tweets from other associations; if people want to follow them, they can, so we won't clutter up people's Twitter feed with duplicates they are already receiving. For the annual meeting, we encourage people to use #asa2017 to share comments on the meeting.

We have ruled out, for the time being, establishing a YouTube or Instagram account, but are open to adding those in the future. The technology exists for us to live-stream our meetings, but costs are still high, mainly for the technology and staff we would need. We could consider this in the coming years if there is member interest. One big problem is a likely reduction in the in-person registration revenue. We will be watching the APA's efforts to live stream a few key talks to see if this might be something we should emulate. The technology for Facebook-Live is very easy to use for a lecture or panel discussion and we have started encouraging conference and meeting organizers to consider this.

We have added still photos from our various events to the web site under Photo Gallery, and welcome submissions from members for that use. Cynthia Freeland is serving as the volunteer photo editor for our meetings and conferences and photos should be sent to her. In submitting photos for the web site, photographers are providing ASA with a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use the photos in its official publications, including the web site. WE only need to know the name of the photographer, so we can provide credit, and the identifications of the persons in each shot.

We have wondered what to do with the physical archives of the history of the Association, including programs of meetings and minutes of the Board. Many of these are on deposit in the archives of San Diego State University. A detailed inventory, along with many documents, have been scanned and are available under the Members tab of the new web site. Everything we have on hand was scanned in the summer of 2016 and posted on the site: newsletter archives, annual meeting programs, and divisional programs. These are of specialized interest to some researchers. E.g., the Feminist Caucus would like to search old records concerning the participation of women in the ASA. For those interested in specialized topics, such as dance or opera, it is possible to search presentations at annual meetings to see when these topics were addressed and which scholars were doing pioneering work on them. The on-line archive has the distinct advantage of being available to all members with access to the Internet worldwide. We are still missing a few items, as noted on those pages, if anyone can loan us their copies for scanning.

Grants

The ASA is fortunate to have a successful journal (which provides about 80% of our operating budget) and a substantial investment account. We are committed to using the revenue to support grants of various kinds that will promote the ASA and aesthetics. Since 2015, we have committed to obligating \$100,000/year in grants and have come close to this goal each year. The complete list of grants funded in 2011-2017 is available on the web site with the guidelines. I am always happy to brainstorm with people on project ideas and to

review draft proposals with an eye to issues that have been of concern to the Board. Funding decisions are made by the Board of Trustees, and proposals are accepted throughout the year. The Board needs at least a week to discuss by e-mail and another to vote, but schedules sometimes require a longer review period. We have several important priorities we are trying to support with these grants and welcome ideas for future projects.

Promoting aesthetics within the academy

We are alarmed that after the retirement or death of prominent aestheticians in recent years, departments are not always choosing to replace them with specialists in aesthetics. We aim to demonstrate the continued importance of hiring aestheticians and offering aesthetics courses. For example, we co-sponsored with philosophers of art from Australia a two-continent conference on “Art and Imagination: the role of metaphors, tropes and images in shaping experience and guiding action.” The project received major funding from the Australian Research Council (ARC). The first conference was held April 2-3, 2016, in San Francisco to coincide with the APA-Pacific meetings. The second was held over several days in July 2017, during the annual conference of the Australian Association of Philosophy. ASA funds, up to \$7,000 overall, helped to support videotaping of the Australian events so interested persons worldwide can benefit and all tapes are now available on our web site under the Photo Gallery submenu. ASA funds also supported travel grants to both conferences for ASA members whose papers are selected for presentation by the program committee. Other conferences we have funded share the goal of demonstrating to both the university and interested public what aesthetics can offer.

We also are supporting graduate students in aesthetics. In the past, we have funded a one-day graduate student conference in conjunction with the ASA Eastern meeting in Philadelphia and we again funded this in 2016, one day after the ASA-Eastern meetings. However, the organizing committee has moved on and we were unable to recruit a new one. Instead, we hope to nationalize the experience of one-day student conferences. The Board approved a CFP for grants up to \$3500, with up to four conferences each year; the first one was held in Charleston, SC, for the southeastern region in March 2017. We hope this is a model for other regional conferences for students, e.g., New England, southern California, greater Chicago, Bay Area, etc.

We awarded our first Dissertation Fellowship to David Johnson of Northwestern University. The competition was ferocious, with twelve applications. Marilyn Johnson of CUNY-Graduate Center received the second one and Madeleine Ransome received the third, for 2017-18. The deadline for the next Dissertation Fellowship competition is January 1, 2018. Guidelines were revised in 2016 to permit resubmissions and to accept applications from doctoral programs throughout North America. We are very pleased that both David and Marilyn completed their PhDs during the fellowship year.

For students with papers accepted for the annual meeting, we continue to provide generous travel grants, roughly 17-21 students at each of the recent annual conferences. In 2017, we also began offering travel support for ASA student members to *attend* some of our conferences and several took advantage of this new funding.

Promoting diversity within the profession

We are especially proud of funding aesthetics speakers at three important summer programs for undergraduate philosophy students in 2017, the UCSD Summer Program in Philosophy for Women, the Summer Institute for Diversity in Philosophy at Rutgers University, and the Summer Immersion Program in

Philosophy at Brown University. This was the third year we have supported these programs, and the ASA Trustees have approved continued support for 2018. Our financial support not only helps promote diversity in the profession but also introduces these promising undergraduate students to aesthetics almost none of whom have had an undergraduate aesthetics course.

The ASA Diversity Committee completed its third competition for \$5,000 awards to develop curriculum modules that could be used in teaching aesthetics. The winners in 2017 were Christopher Jenkins, Erich Hatala Matthes, and Rossen Ventzislavov . The winning curricula from all three years of this program are posted to the public section of the ASA web site under ASA-Diversity.

Using new means of communication and technology to promote aesthetics

Our four in-person meetings each year are successful and popular, and we will continue those. But we understand that many members are unable to attend these, due to financial and scheduling complications. We are exploring additional means of dissemination and communication. As noted, we funded video taping of the Australian conference in 2017. We have awarded a grant for an on-line aesthetics conference; if it is successful, we can consider making this an annual event. ASA funded the start-up costs for the popular blog, Aesthetics for Birds, developed by Christy Mag Uidhir at University of Houston and now directed by Alexandra King at SUNY-Buffalo. We also approved funding for an ASA member to develop aesthetics content for the new Wi-Phi site, although we did not receive applications and have tabled this project for now. As technology develops and costs decline, we should remain open to taping and/or live-streaming at least some elements of our annual meetings, for people without the means to attend in person.

75th anniversary of the ASA

Our 75th anniversary is in 2017. The co-editors of *JAAC* have just published a special issue with articles commemorating the anniversary. The co-editors of the ASA Newsletter have also published a variety of materials about the anniversary. Several special events at the meeting November 15-18, 2017, will celebrate the anniversary.

Divisional Meetings

Our three divisional meetings in 2017 (in Philadelphia, PA; Pacific Grove, CA; and Santa Fe, NM) were great successes. All three regions had excellent attendance, diverse programming, and all finished their meetings with sufficient carry-over funds in case there is an unexpected registration drop for the next year. All registrations and financial disbursements are now handled through the ASA web site. But all other planning (including programming, scheduling, and locations) are determined by the local organizing groups. One gap in the funding arrangements for the regional meetings has been support for travel for students and unemployed/underemployed philosophers, and the availability of \$1000 for each division in 2018 from the Irene H. Chayes Travel funds will help begin to address this problem.

ACLS/NHA/IAA

The American Council of Learned Societies has its annual meeting for member organizations in April. Dom Lopes attended the Baltimore, MD meeting this year as the ASA Delegate and I attended as the Chief Administrative Officer. ASA also belongs to the National Humanities Alliance, the major lobbying organization for the humanities in the US, and contributes annual dues based on membership to the International Aesthetics Association.

Elections

Three trustees complete their three-year terms on January 31, 2018 (Emily Brady, A.W. Eaton, James O. Young). The trustees nominated six persons to stand for election in December 2017. Their bios are posted on the "Trustee elections" submenu on the Members section of the web site. The announcement and bios were also posted on Facebook and through bulk e-mail to all members. The web site is also where the elections will be held in December. The web site enables us to set up elections that are completely confidential and easy to submit, which we hope will increase the participation rate. For the handful of members who do not use the internet, a notice in the August print newsletter informed persons unable to vote on-line to request a print ballot. To date, no requests have been received.

Prizes

Committees have been busy selecting the winners of the new Ted Cohen Prize, the Monograph Prize, the Outstanding Student Paper, the John Fisher Prize, and the Selma Jeanne Cohen Prize in Dance Aesthetics, all to be awarded at the business meeting in New Orleans. Guidelines are available on ASA's web site under "News-Grants and Prizes." Also on the web site, there is now a "donations" section where anyone can easily make a tax-deductible donation to the Cohen and Fisher Prize funds.

In 2017, the first Arthur Danto/American Society for Aesthetics prize winner was selected. It will be awarded in January 2018 at the APA-Eastern meeting in Savannah, along with a program with commentary and response. The prize will be awarded in alternate years for the outstanding published article in aesthetics in the previous two years. The Board, in approving this prize, hoped that it will bring more attention to aesthetics among the broader philosophical community.

For the first competition, fourteen nominations were received. Three were withdrawn, as nominators were not members of both APA and ASA and declined to join both to make the nomination. The winner announced in June 2017 is Professor Kenneth Walden (Dartmouth College) for his paper, "Art and Moral Revolution." The article was published in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 73:3 (Summer 2015), 283-295. It available in the Wiley On-line Library (for ASA members) and JStor.

JAAC

We are now completing the fourth year of a five-year publication contract with Wiley-Blackwell. Theodore Gracyk and Robert Stecker, co-editors of the *Journal*, have five-year terms that continue through 2017 and the Board will complete formal review for reappointment at its November 15 meeting in New Orleans. They are both eligible for a second five-year term. We are all very grateful for the editorial and finance success of the *Journal*.

ASA Newsletter

David Goldblatt continued as co-editor of the *Newsletter*, publishing three issues each year. Henry Pratt stepped down in April, after assisting the new co-editor, Shelby Moser, selected after an open search. They have a good working relationship with the printer in Savannah that ASA has used for several years. All agreed that there was no point in moving to a different printer, so long as everyone is happy with the current arrangement. To avoid the considerable expense of a separate print mailing of schedule and registration information for the Annual Meeting, I compiled a four-year insert on green paper for the summer issue of the *Newsletter*, with a skeletal schedule, mail-in registration form, mail-in membership renewal form, and other

information, as I did in 2015 and 2016. I expect to do this next year, again to save printing and mailing costs.

ASAGE

The current editors are completing their second year at ASAGE (the ASA Graduate E-Journal). Nick Curry serves as Managing Editor and Eric Murphy as Book Review Editor, with two year terms, 2016-17. As ASAGE is approaching its 10-year anniversary, a review committee to assess the role and success of the publication was appointed and presented their recommendations to the Board for its November meeting. Recruitment for new editors will be conducted in 2018.

Facebook

ASA Member Gemma Argüello established in 2014 an unofficial Facebook-Group page which has been very popular with members. The Board decided to formalize our arrangements and put out a call for applications to be the Facebook Manager. Gemma was appointed and oversees both the Group page and a formal ASA page. The group page currently has over 900 members, and it is open to both ASA members and non-members. Anyone on the group site can post their own announcements of aesthetics events, learn about other events, and add comments. The site thus functions as an effective replacement for the old AE-list-serv, which we had to shut down when the new web site went “live” on August 28, 2015.

Guide to Graduate Studies in North America

The fourth edition of the *Guide* was published in 2016, and is available to the public on the web site. We had some difficulty getting department chairs to respond to the questionnaire mailed in early 2016. An addendum has been started to include departments not included in the original published *Guide*; information should be sent to secretary-treasurer@aesthetics-online.org. We have not at this time scheduled another edition, but should probably consider this for 2020.

Financial Affairs

ASA is presently in excellent financial shape. The *Journal* generates substantial income (over \$200,000 a year) which, along with membership dues of about one-tenth of that, cover our operating expenses. We all wish that nothing would ever change in the earning capacity of journals, but nobody knows what publishing will look like in five, let alone ten years. We are making a heavy investment in grants to promote the ASA and aesthetics and hope that future budgets will show a much greater revenue stream from memberships. As noted, we are fortunate to have an investment account of \$3.9 million at this writing. It is certainly possible, in the future, that the revenue from this account will be needed to support basic operating expenses. But we have several years (at least) to work on promotion of ASA membership and aesthetics.

-Julie Van Camp
November 4, 2017