

Minutes from the Massachusetts Senior Classical League meeting held 4 November 2000 in the Classics Department at UMass-Amherst

Present: Sterling (Harvard), Rachana (Harvard), Katherine (BU), Sarah (Harvard), Russell (UMass), Ms. Fillion, Craig (BU alum), Phil (Harvard), Jonathan (Tufts), Lisa (Amherst), Denis, Jennifer (Smith), Ansara (UMass), Kevin (MIT), Jim (UMass), Liz (BU), Sabrina (Wentworth), Erica (MIT alum), Leighanne (UMass)

The meeting opened with yet another attempt to explain the sheep thing. In a nutshell, we have a problem with officers--and even members--disappearing, dating back to a president who claimed to have been kidnapped by sheep while studying abroad in Spain.

I. Opening Business

A. Introductions

2000-2001 Officers

President: Sterling Darling, Jr., sdarling@fas.harvard.edu

Vice President & Treasurer: Rachana Shah, rnshah@fas.harvard.edu

Secretary & Historian: Katherine Lochbrunner, kalochb@bu.edu

Editor: Sarah Ramer, sramer@fas.harvard.edu

Web Master: Sean O'Hanley, sohanley@mediaone.net (Where ARE you, Sean?)

Member at Large (Western Chapter Organizer): Russell Hansen, hansenrp@hotmail.com

B. What is the Senior Classical League?

The American Classical League (about 100 years old) is a professional society of Classics scholars. For the past 48 years they have run Junior Classical League conferences for secondary students of Latin and Ancient Greek; these conventions involve competitions, academic-related tests, and officer elections. For the past 22 years the Senior Classical League has involved graduated JCL members as well as other post-secondary students who enjoy the Classics, whether they do or don't study them formally; the SCL mainly assists the JCL.

The MASCL group has been active for the past 5 years (though a 1979 certificate granting a chapter to UMASS-Amherst has surfaced). This follows a national trend of state chapter formations (as opposed to a small band hanging around at the national JCL convention). We have meetings about once a month, with at least one of those a year outside of Boston, traditionally our home base. [These minutes contain info. on our activities.] MASCL maintains a moderated email list; email Kevin Fu (fubob@mit.edu) with any questions.

II. Old Business

A. MaJCL Classics Day

MaJCL sponsors a Classics Day in the fall and sometimes in the spring.

Last year MASCL hosted a workshop ("The Trojan Horse") on using Classics to get into college during which Sarah and Sean inspired Holbrook to form a Certamen team. If another Classics Day happens this year, it will be in March at Harvard.

B. State JCL Convention

This year's state convention will be at BC High. It's a one day gathering at a high school with academic tests, creative & academic contests (costume, interpretation of passages, artwork), and Certamen (a quiz bowl / Jeopardy-type game with mainly Latin questions involving one team of four from each school; there are three levels and a range of subjects) which we help judge. Janet likes to stress the importance of our involvement to the organizers because of our past experiences. This is also our official yearly meeting at which we elect officers and pass (or veto) constitutional amendments. For those MASCLers who are not in the Boston area, we'll gladly assist you in transportation fees so you can come be a part of the fun.

C. Certamen Questions

Katherine (kalochb@bu.edu) is in charge of assignments; more info. will come later. Janet is ultimately in charge (rockberries@mindspring.com). There was some discussion as to how to write a template; Sarah is to send out last year's form so at least we're writing questions in a consistent format. Janet has a copy of last year's questions from TN, so we'll figure out what the official format is soon enough. Deadlines for writers to send Certamen questions to the editors is by DECEMBER 15; deadlines for editors to send questions to Janet is by JANUARY 15. PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS IN ON TIME!! We looked at Latin in American Schools for suggested syllabi to see if we can get a firmer grasp on what should be included at each level. Professor Kitchell mentioned that there is a computer program which can create Certamen questions, but we're convinced we've got a "cottage industry" going since Tennessee is very competitive and wants to make sure no one gets ahead of questions beforehand. This is one of our sources of income (\$200).

D. Legion XIII Performance

This was MaJCL's fall Classics Day, held at Boston Latin Academy. Legion XIII is an English performing group which recreates Roman life in 1st century AD Britain through equipment, armor, and dress, as well as discussions on culture and daily life, such as marriage customs, teeth-cleaning, and bathroom habits. 4 SCLers were in attendance.

At this point, the meeting was interrupted by JONATHAN'S cell phone. It wouldn't be a bad idea if our cell phone-toting members could remember to hit the "off" or "silence ring" button before meetings. Thanks.

E. Caligula's Pony Express

CPE is our publication which appears once a year in time for convention to give to SCL members and JCL graduating seniors who might join. It includes "news," creative things (Aaron's History of the World in less than 300 Latin words), and other such items. It would be nice to have a Western

chapter column. Time to start thinking about what you might like to contribute; let Sarah (sramer@fas.harvard.edu) know if you have something for this.

III. New Business

A. 2001 National Convention (New Orleans)

This year's national JCL convention will be 17-23 July 2001 at Tulane University, in the Garden District of New Orleans. It would be great if we could get the SCL out in force; they want as many "old" members as possible. Convention highlights include Ludi and Olympica events, That's Entertainment (a sort of talent show), the Convention Ear (a newspaper with creative interpretations of "news"), and election of national SCL officers. As an incentive to go, at the end of each year, MASCL sets aside half of money in its account to divide evenly among members in attendance; this defrays some of the cost of registration / transportation. And the more MASCL members who go, the better the prestige of MASCL.

B. Tests for MaJCL Convention

Janet announced that we are going to write new tests for the MaJCL convention to sell to MaJCL for \$50 each. This 50 question multiple choice (of 4 possible answers, preferably not "All of the above" or "None of the above" types) tests will be written by MASCLers before 1 March 2001. Janet suggested that related majors / minors should write them. After much discussion, it was decided that people who are going to the national convention are especially encouraged to write tests. However, all money earned will go into the coffer so they will be reimbursed indirectly instead of earmarking that money for them. Sterling proposed that all who are going to nationals need to participate in some form of fundraising: writing Certamen questions or tests or helping Kevin Fu sell / make That's Entertainment videos (for which we have "squatter's rights"). These tests will be given to all levels and graded by level; they should include 20 easy questions, 20 of medium difficulty, and 10 hard.

At this point the meeting was interrupted by Prof. Kitchell bearing delectable subs and yummy cookies.

As with Certamen, Katherine will organize this operation; an email will go out soon with sources and more info. Here are tentative assignments: Grammar (Lisa B. & Phil Z.), Myth (Sarah R. & Jennifer M.), Daily Life (Sterling D. & Liz S.), Derivatives (Craig S. & ?), Mottoes / Proverbs / Abbreviations (Leighanne R. & Russell H.), Greek (Denis G. & Katherine L.), & Pentathlon (Rachana S. & Adam B.?). Erica P. will help format. Next year we might do reading comprehension for each level, pending the changing of rules so kids can take more than one test at each convention. This will be a good fundraiser for the next several years--at least.

C. JCL vs. Pioneer Valley Classics Association

Russell and Prof. Kitchell, who happens to be President of the PVCA, discussed our getting involved in talking to PVCA members about going to

JCL conventions. These western MA schools are primed for joining JCL since they are already involved in Classics in a statewide organization; some already do both. Russell wanted to see if MASCL is interested in helping to introduce the concept of JCL and, if so, what we think would be best to do. The PVCA is primarily an association of teachers, sponsoring meetings throughout the year for them and then a Classics Day for the students, which traditionally has been close in time to the JCL convention. This year's PVCA Classics Day is on a Saturday in April at UMass-Amherst; in the future the idea is to have it at high schools. Janet introduced the problem of the age-old split between east (Boston) and west (basically everywhere else), proposing a central location for statewide functions as ideal. There was some concern about MASCL getting caught in the crossfire if we get involved, but Prof. Kitchell pointed out that the idea is not for one group to envelop the other, though eventually it might be nice if JCL runs the spring convention. There was discussion as to why JCL is not as prevalent in the West (traditions, PVCA Classics Day closer and about same time--problem of resources) and how to best have the two groups coexist, which would be by friendly cooperation (supported by mutually advantageous reasons for doing so) and by infiltration. Janet presented the idea of holding Certamen prelims in the Holyoke area, to which Prof. Kitchell provided a great solution. In conclusion, it was decided that Russell ought to attend the PVCA general meeting in December and see what the interest is. Then we received a geography lesson during an attempt to locate the true Pioneer Valley while deciding that this may be a long term project.

D. Western MA chapter of SCL

There was some discussion of the technicalities of forming a chapter of MASCL. Our constitution does allow for a chapter to be formed pending approval of the executive board and the existence of at least 5 members. According to the national association, we are a state-recognized SCL group with local chapters as subsets, though the Boston group has never been conceived of as a chapter since traditionally that is where our base has been. We propose to have at least one meeting each year in each area (eastern, or Boston, and western, or Amherst) so that everyone is at an "equal disadvantage."

IV. Closing Business

A. Next Meeting Date & Location

THE NEXT MASCL MEETING WILL BE HELD SATURDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2000. The location is Craig's apartment; directions to follow as the date approaches. Tentative time is 3 pm through dinner time, after which plans will be made for food. This will be a check-in meeting; bring questions on Certamen or tests or any other MASCL issues. Also, be prepared to watch a screening of Craig's movie, made with the help of our own Kevin Fu, and look at Katherine's photos of Roman monuments in Spain. (Sorry, I don't think I

have any of sheep.) Western MASCLers should feel free to organize a trip east; MASCL will reimburse your transportation fees. Also, you will have your own December meeting; Russell will keep you posted on that.

B. Thank-yous

Thank you very much to Russell Hansen and Professor Kitchell for organizing the meeting and the meeting space at UMass-Amherst; thanks also for the sandwiches and cookies. Thank you to Janet Fillion and Kevin Fu for driving the Boston crew over.

V. Silliness

"Puella--that's your favorite word now." --to Craig

"This is just like class at Harvard!" --Sterling on the cell phone ringing

"It's even better with it's the lecturer." --response to Sterling

"He got engaged." --Kevin's answer to the query on what happened to Aaron

"But that's not current." --Sarah on the idea of including part of Craig's screenplay in CPE

"It's not life or death!" --Russell

"THIS is area 'A'; you're area 'B'." --Russell to the Boston-area officers

"Whatever you ask, the answer is no." --Janet

"It's all about subterfuge; it really is." --Phil