

Massachusetts Senior Classical League Meeting, held 24 September 2000, in

Loker Commons at Harvard University

Present: Sterling D. (Harvard), Rachana S. (Harvard), Katherine L. (BU), Sarah R. (Harvard), Russell H. (UMass-Amherst), Janet F. (BLA), Adam B. (BU), Philip Z. (Harvard), Craig S. (BU grad), Jonathan C. (Tufts), Liz S. (BU), April A. (Newbury), Jessica D. (Wentworth), Tiffany C. (BU), Robby H. (BU), Sabrina P. (Wentworth), Jennifer M. (Smith), Reasha R. (Lesley), Angela B. (Framingham St.)

Notably absent (i.e. much missed): Sean O., Kevin F., Jeff R., Erica P.

I. Opening Business

a. About MASCL: We think MASCL has been around about 4 years. According to Sterling's much contested statement, we have MASCL members at just about every MA college. We are a fairly active group, attending and helping out with conventions, writing Certamen questions, having Saturnalia-time dinners, and taking trips to see things (Gladiator, A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum).

b. Officer Introductions

President = Sterling Darling, sdarling@fas.harvard.edu (Janet questioned Sterling's ability to handle his many positions of power; he assured us the NJCL President position requires very little. But there is little doubt but that next year he will begin in earnest to take over the world.)

Vice President / Treasurer = Rachana Shah, rnshah@fas.harvard.edu

Secretary = Katherine Lochbrunner, kalochb@bu.edu

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

Webmaster = Sean O'Hanley, sohanley@mediaone.net

Member at Large = Russell Hansen, hansenrp@hotmail.com

Each member was allowed to introduce him- or herself. Among the highlights were Craig's reports of his latest projects (The Catullus script is making the rounds in Hollywood, and no one can steal the title for his next one) and a discussion of Adam's attempt to be the Sterling (Craig: "Don't judge a man by the size of his tie; it's the suspenders that count.").

c. Membership

Dues for NSCL are \$6. This low, one-time payment lets you be a member for your four years of college and receive the Letters of the League, which Sterling assures us will actually manifest itself this year.

Dues for MASCL are \$4. Only members who have paid dues can vote in elections (held at the last meeting of each year, at the MJCL convention).

Membership dues and related questions should be addressed to Rachana.

The MASCL maintains a moderated email list, mascl@mit.edu. Questions should be addressed to Kevin Fu (fubob@mit.edu).

d. Activities during the year: See I, a. Also, the past two MJCL conventions have been held in Longmeadow, MA. This year's convention is to be at BC High. We help judge contests, and last year we were invited to

join the Certamen fun, which was hardly marred by a few glitches.

II. Old Business

a. National Convention (2000, Norman, OK)

One of our big fundraisers is selling That's Entertainment videos at the Nat'l Convention. Kevin is still making copies, so if you have not yet received yours, be patient.

Kevin, Sterling, and Sarah were our representatives at this convention.

At the end of each year, MASCL takes half of the money in the treasury and divides it among those who attended the nat'l convention. This year's convention is in New Orleans. (If you want to go and get some of your money back afterwards, pay your dues.)

b. Western MA Chapter Meeting (Russell)

Our idea is to have a MASCL chapter in western MA based at UMass-Amherst. Since the majority of our membership has traditionally been from Boston-area schools, our focus has been there. A western chapter would allow a more diverse membership and the opportunity to work with MJCL groups in that area. Russell is in the process of securing an advisor and hopes to hold a public meeting in 2 to 3 weeks. He has received some enthusiastic response from the UMass Classics Honors Society.

Unfortunately, Russell is to fall victim to the Curse of the MASCL Officers, as he is to spend the spring semester in Prague. (This prompted much speculation as to the amount of sheep in that part of the world and Janet's idea to have all study abroad students pose with our sheep.)

After Sarah pointed out her smiling and frowning pretzels, we settled on Saturday, 4 November, as a possible date for the long-awaited MASCL meeting in western MA, the exact location at UMass-Amerhest TBA. A back-up date is 28 October. If things fall through, the meeting will be held at Craig's apartment (after some cleaning).

III. New Business

a. MJCL Classics Day (Ms. Fillion)

This 1 day mini JCL convention, a thinly disguised excuse to skip school, is to be held in March at Harvard, or so the organizer thinks. Janet did invite us to see Legion 14 (a Roman army recreated; previous appearance: '96 nationals at Indiana) on Friday, 27 October, at Milton High. Details will be announced once things get ironed out.

Sarah relates the story of how our otherwise not very appreciated Trojan Horse talk on using Classics to get into college resulted in the Holbrook Certamen team, overseen by Sarah and Sean. Sarah is still in contact with the kid who became so inspired. Sarah says, "Now I have a new friend"; according to Russell, "Basically she's stalking him."

b. Future MASCL meeting in Western MA (see II, b; IV, a)

c. Certamen questions: Certamen is a Jeopardy-type show at conventions that tests knowledge of the world of Classics. We earn \$200 for writing

Certamen questions. Janet thanked Sarah for her hard work last year in organizing and editing and formatting all of the Certamen questions--far from an easy task. This year everyone is to write questions in the same format (following a style sheet) so things can be compiled in a Word Document for submission to Jim O'Neil. We discussed citing sources and the importance of writing more questions than is called for. Sterling mentioned getting a copy of the nat'l guidebook for the list of sources. These questions need to be in BEFORE mid-January so teachers can edit them in a timely fashion.

There are three levels (novice, lower, upper) and four categories (language, history / life, mythology, literature). For now Jonathan, Adam, Phil, and Liz have volunteered for language, with Liz as editor; Katherine has volunteered for literature, with Rachana as editor; Adam, Russell, and Craig have volunteered for history / life, with Adam as editor; and Sarah and Russell have volunteered for myth, with Sarah as editor. The editors are to make sure the difficulty level is consistent and check for errors. Katherine is to coordinate who does what--for now. Anyone anywhere can submit Certamen questions, and these appointments are by no means set in stone. Please, please, please volunteer to help; you can certainly split writing questions with others or help compile them. Begin thinking of possible questions now!

Feedback about our questions suggested students thought the questions were easy, but their scores didn't reflect that belief.

Janet did not talk about the possibility of writing exams, which caused quite a discussion of the way MJCL is run.

d. Items for Caligula's Pony Express: Caligula's Pony Express is our annual publication to which all MASCL members are encouraged to submit. Start thinking about ideas now so Sarah doesn't have to scramble at the last minute to put it together. A discussion ensued following the observation that a wedding announcement keeps appearing in each issue. Who's next?

IV. Closing Business

a. Next MASCL meeting: Details TBA. Please pencil Saturday, 4 November, in your calendar. Plan on leaving mid- to late morning and returning mid- to late afternoon (if you're in the Boston area, that is). Boston area folks with cars are greatly encouraged to offer to let us carpool with you; MASCL will reimburse you for transportation fees. The trip to Amherst takes about 2 hours, depending on your speed and luck to not get a flat tire. Other tidbits: Sterling's goal is to keep meetings to one hour. We have much money in the bank account. Craig is to send out details on the screening of the rough cut of the film he made with Kevin's help the summer before last. There was a cry for Ben Watson to attend. And, for the record, Katherine has the scrapbook; she promises not to lose it.