

ASIANetwork Staff: 1999-2005

Note from the Executive Director:

When the headquarters of ASIANetwork moved from Colorado College to Augustana College in late summer 1999, the consortium was blessed to retain the services of the Augustana College Controller, Mary Doonan, to manage our increasingly complex financial affairs. Since then, Mary has worked with me to carefully monitor the incoming revenues of AN and to disperse them as needed to fund our various programs and other initiatives. She prepares monthly a complete financial statement for review by the executive committee of the board, manages an annual outside financial “review” by the accounting firm of McGladrey and Pullen, prepares AN’s annual tax return statement, and carefully monitors all expenditures linked to foundation-funded programs. She is thorough, attentive to detail, and for me, patient in explaining what the array of figures we deal with is all about. We have also turned to Mary for sound advice on investment strategies and on the preparing of our “Investment Policy” guidelines. In short, Mary has worked tirelessly, often without compensation, to create for ASIANetwork a fiscally responsible model for managing our finances. We are all greatly indebted to her. The report she has submitted for the newsletter below will give readers a sense of Mary’s contributions to AN and the professional manner in which she has supported us.

**Mary Doonan
Controller
Augustana College**

Augustana College assumed the fiscal and accounting responsibilities of ASIANetwork, Inc., effective September 1st, 1999. ASIANetwork purchased an inexpensive financial software package for small businesses, QuickBooks, which provides basic tools for financial management. It was necessary to customize the software and account structure to work in a not-for-profit environment, with the use of Excel spreadsheets for foundation reporting of restricted funds. An upgrade of the software application was just recently completed to facilitate the relocation of the ASIANetwork homebase from Augustana college to Illinois Wesleyan University later this year. Financial statements are prepared monthly and distributed to the Executive Director and various members of the Board.

Since September 1st, 1999, ASIANetwork ceased to have any employees, which eliminated the need for payroll tax withholding and reporting, both at the federal and state levels. This decision was made partly to accommodate the required movement of headquarters to various institutions throughout the country. All stipends and honorariums are now paid as non-employee compensation and reported on Form 1099–Misc. An application was filed in October 1999 to withdraw from the State of Colorado reporting (the former headquarter location for ASIANetwork).

In November 1999, after a drawn-out process of jumping through many hoops, ASIANetwork received exemption from sales tax in the State of Illinois. This exemption was renewed in 2004, and extending through June 1, 2009. Since the headquarters is moving to Illinois Wesleyan University, the exemption will continue to be in force and utilized.

Once based at Augustana College, ASIANetwork was able to utilize the services of the College’s Controller, whose preparation of the organization’s Form 990 *Return for an Organization Exempt from Income Tax*, spared ASIANetwork the expense of outsourcing this service. The tax return is due by January 15th of each year for the preceding fiscal year.

At the request of the Henry Luce Foundation, ASIANetwork was required to submit a financial statement review report each fiscal year, starting with the year ending August 31, 2001, in order to receive additional grant funding. The report is compiled by the Controller, and an outside public accounting firm reviews and issues an opinion on the contents.

Over the last 5½ years, ASIANetwork has written almost 1,000 checks to vendors, institutions and individuals. In May 2002, an unrestricted endowment was established with the Commonfund, with \$600,000 of excess available funds through the direction of the Board of ASIANetwork. The excess funds were generated through prudent fiscal operations, both in implementing programs and in minimizing administrative overhead. The funds were invested with the intent of generating investment income to provide financial resources for the administrative expenses needed for general operations. An additional \$50,000 was invested at a later date. Once the investment account was moved to The Vanguard Group in July 2004, a total of \$725,000 in funding was available for investment. As of December 31, 2004, the market value of the endowment was \$771,853. Recently, the Board approved the hiring of an investment advising firm, DHK Financial Advisors, Inc. to provide investment advice to the Board. Safeguarding this endowment is a key priority for the future success of ASIANetwork.



Jane M. Tiedge
Project Coordinator
Freistat Center for Studies in World Peace
Augustana College
Administrative Secretary 1999-2002

“The journey is the reward”
Chinese proverb

My journey with ASIANetwork was not that as a keynote speaker, conference panelist, committee chair, board member or Executive Director; yet, from 1999 through 2002 I journeyed with each of these persons. When I became an employee of Augustana College in 1992, I worked with the History Department and as a result became acquainted with Van Symons and his dedication to the mission of ASIANetwork. There were numerous times that I read articles by ASIANetwork members or heard of programs that ASIANetwork supported. In addition to being an employee of the college, I was also a non-traditional student working towards a bachelor’s degree in religion and history. I soon came to know the generosity of the programs sponsored by the Freeman Foundation and its association with ASIANetwork as I became one of the first students to receive a Student-Faculty Freeman Fellowship, which allowed me to travel to China in 1998.

However, one of the most memorable steps in a journey that started in 1999 was when Van came into my office and asked if I would support his work as ASIANetwork’s Executive Director in the role as his Administrative Secretary. For the next three years, I worked closely with the ASIANetwork institutions and members, attended conferences and board meetings, and organized all of the mailings to the membership. I have been grateful for the opportunity to meet numerous members who have inspired me with their own research and expertise. Not just Augustana faculty but members from around the country such as Suzanne Barnett-Wilson, James Leavell, Gita Rajan, Anne Prescott, Joel Smith and Henry Rosemont - thank you.

As the Administrative Secretary for ASIANetwork it seemed easy enough: type minutes, mail out notices, prepare

conference packets. However, as this journey started, I soon realized there were ways in which I could help others make their journeys a little smoother. I remember going to Van and explaining that ASIANetwork needed a membership directory. It would not take “too much time”—just send out forms for members to fill out and return when they sent in their membership dues, compile the data into a database and print out the directory! By the spring conference, ASIANetwork had its first printed membership directory.

In the spring of 2002, I attended my last ASIANetwork Conference. At that time, my position at Augustana changed and I would no longer be able to continue with ASIANetwork. Ruth Symons stepped in and created a niche of her own within the organization. Since she has been on board, I discovered that the directory is now online, the membership database has grown and she has worked closely with the editors of the newsletter.

Over the years, ASIANetwork members have benefited from memorable conferences, timely programs, outstanding speakers, innovative newsletters, and unique opportunities for both faculty and students. I am proud of the contributions made by those in my position. You probably have talked with either Ruth or myself, but did not realize who we were. We were the ones at the Registration Table; taking notes at the meetings; on the other end of the phone when you called to inquire about your institution’s membership status, submit a name change or change of address; or to ask questions about programs and upcoming conferences.

As you reflect on how ASIANetwork has served you while housed at Augustana College, I hope that you will fondly remember the journey that Ruth and I took with you.



Ruth and Van Symons
Augustana College
Administrative Secretary 2003-2005

Several weeks ago while Van and I were in Chicago, we had the opportunity to attend a performance by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The conductor, Daniel Barenboim, was in top form, and each section of the orchestra played with ease, accuracy and enthusiasm for a combined effect that was greater than the sum of all the parts. I was immediately struck by the similarities between the orchestra and ASIANetwork. It is through the combined efforts of many, many dedicated people and subgroups in our organization, each working for countless hours behind the scenes, that we are able to provide solid academic opportunities to the faculty and students of the liberal arts colleges that compose our consortium. Through our efforts, we have become highly respected by our peers in the academic community where we have the reputation of being dependable, fiscally responsible, thorough and responsive: truly on the cutting edge.

I have immensely enjoyed attending our semiannual board meetings, where, over the course of the three years I have been the ASIANetwork secretary, I have seen creative proposals which first appeared on the agenda in very tentative forms be shaped and refined by board members into substantial and beautifully crafted documents. These proposals, when funded, have enriched the lives of literally hundreds of our colleagues and students. So first, I want to thank our fine board members, and especially the board chairs I have been privileged to work with, Jim Leavell, Paul Watt and Joan O'Mara, for their dedication and truly inspirational leadership and also for their friendship.

As Jane Tiedge mentioned, the ASIANetwork secretary is the contact person who gathers membership information and fields membership questions. I am indebted to Jane for creating the original membership directory and our impressive membership database. Jane's organizational skills made it easy for me to learn the ropes quickly when other campus responsibilities required her to leave ASIANetwork. I am also grateful to Diane Clayton and Craig Rice, who have been the dynamic duo responsible for the on-line directory. We have spent countless hours in gathering

information from you and transforming this into a highly valuable resource available to you at the click of the mouse. If you haven't seen our on-line directory yet, take a moment to visit our website at (www.ASIANetwork.org) and scroll down to *Online ASIANetwork Membership Directory*. I also appreciate all of you who have taken the time to send me individual and institutional membership updates. We try to incorporate that information into the directory at the end of each month.

Thanks also to Marsha Smith, editor of *The ASIANetwork EXCHANGE*, and her co-editors, Anne Prescott and Nirmala Salgado. I have truly enjoyed the day to day camaraderie with Marsha, who shares an adjoining office in our suite at Augustana College, and I marvel at her composing skills. As an English major, I have also enjoyed being a proof-reader for the journal on occasion.

Finally, I would like to thank Van Symons, our retiring executive officer, who invited me to become the ASIANetwork secretary when Jane left. Since Van also happens to be my husband, I can't be too effusive and maintain my proper professional decorum. But I will say that I have never met anyone who has worked longer hours (and with more perpetual and boundless enthusiasm) than Van has for ASIANetwork. He is a wonderfully organized administrator who over the past six years has devoted forty or more hours every week to ASIANetwork causes: fundraising, writing grant proposals, sorting out conundrums, providing a living history of the organization, consulting at colleges, and encouraging every board member to achieve more than he or she would have imagined possible. Life is never dull in Van's company! Thank you, also, Teddy for agreeing to become the new Executive Officer. ASIANetwork will continue to be a dynamic organization under your capable leadership, and I will probably see a little more of my husband. Our best wishes go out to you.

I will truly miss being a part of ASIANetwork. It has been a very important part of my life for the past three years. Thanks to all of you for your support and your dedication to ASIANetwork.