

From the Executive Director

Teddy O. Amoloza

Tribute To Marianna McJimsey

As I was leafing through some files in preparation for the fall board meeting,



I came across a letter from Van Symons to Joan Ericson, a colleague at Colorado College. Van was responding to Joan's request asking for a tribute to Marianna McJimsey that was to be read during her

retirement party. He had succinctly summarized Marianna's pathbreaking impact on ASIANetwork. It occurs to me now that there are many among our members, especially those who joined lately, who do not know of the ASIANetwork legend that is Marianna. Thus, I decided to use the first part of my newsletter column to pay tribute to her as well.

Marianna's personalities defined what ASIANetwork is today. Gracious, unassuming, genuinely sincere, she immediately made me feel welcome when I first met her at the ASIANetwork conference in St. Petersburg, Florida in April 1995. At subsequent conferences, she treated attendees with respect and showed genuine interest in each one, thus putting everyone at ease. The atmosphere of the conferences was always friendly, affording participants the opportunity for network building that is at the heart of the mission of the consortium. We came away from each conference inspired by what we learned from our colleagues and friends. Marianna set that tone and we hope that future conferences will be so characterized. But her legacy is much more than that.

When she accepted the position as the first Executive Director, there was no template to follow. She laid the groundwork for the consortium. She diligently recruited member institutions and kept records. She kept track of the organization's finances, meticulously keeping records of income and expenditures. She was editor, writer, layout editor, and production manager of this newsletter, which she published thrice

a year since 1994. She worked with the board of directors to secure funds

from foundations. In other words, Marianna was the director, manager, development officer, newsletter editor and number one cheerleader of the organization.

Her initial efforts enabled us to secure funds from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Ford Foundation. A grant from the Luce Foundation funded a consultancy program that enabled a total of 22 institutions to receive consultancy visits from Asian studies colleagues to help them develop their Asian Studies program. The Ford Foundation grant for faculty development enabled 40 faculty members from different institutions to strengthen their Asian studies courses by participating in faculty development seminars (East, South or Southeast Asia) at a host institution for the first summer and continuing the seminar through an on-site visit to the Asian region during the following summer. The consortium that she handed over to Van in 1999 was poised for continued growth, growth that was sustained through the six years of Van's leadership. Our founding board members planted the seed of the consortium; Marianna nurtured it during its infancy and helped it grow into the vibrant, strong and respected organization that it is now. And for that we are deeply grateful. On behalf of all of us, *maraming, maraming salamat* (many, many thanks)!

The October Board Meeting

So here we are now, in our fourteenth year as a consortium. While conferences have provided the annual highlight of ASIANetwork activities, the vibrancy of the organization has become more palpable to me during the board

meetings. At the fall board meeting during the first weekend last October, I noted the high level of energy of the board members, old and new alike. On Saturday, we met from eight in the morning until six at night with short morning and afternoon breaks plus a lunch break. And we met again at night for another two hours, and met again the following day for four hours. Every issue was meticulously discussed, all sides were heard, consensus was arrived at, difficult decisions were made, but always in a spirit of camaraderie and friendship and with a common understanding of what is best for the consortium.

In addition to routine matters like selecting nominees for board membership and the Council of Advisors, evaluating financial reports, and discussing issues related to our different projects, we discussed matters that again evidenced the continuing growth of the organization. The board approved the addition of \$25,000 to our "ASIANetwork fund" invested in Vanguard, that at the time of the board meeting was valued close to \$800,000. We discussed membership issues and affirmed the commitment to increase our membership by inviting national and regional liberal arts institutions to join. On the development front, the board approved the working arrangement with the AAS Editorial Board for the publication of our book series project, Resources for Undergraduate Teaching. The list of topics for the book series was also approved, namely, Asian Performing Arts, Asian-American Histories, Asian Cartography/Geography, Asian Media, and Asian Contemporary Religions (in addition to Asian Art and Asian Missionary Archives). The next step then is to find the foundation or foundations that will fund the writing and publication of the books. Of course we talked extensively about the forthcoming conference in April that promises to be not only intellectually exciting but visually and aesthetically pleasing as well. (See pages 1 and 3-7.)

As one of ASIANetwork's founding board members (Rita Kipp who was at

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Board Nominees



Erin McCarthy

Erin McCarthy (Ph.D. University of Ottawa, 2000) joined the Department of Philosophy and Asian Studies Program at St. Lawrence University in 2000. She teaches courses on ethical theory, feminist philosophy, existential philosophy, Asian philosophy, and introduction to philosophy — from a comparative perspective whenever possible. Her research on comparative philosophy has been published in *Philosophy, Culture and*

Traditions, Sagesse du Corps, Corps et Science: Enjeux culturels et philosophiques. She has also published writing on teaching Asian and comparative philosophy in *ASIANetwork Exchange*, and on post 9/11 rhetoric and popular culture in *Collateral Language*. Her current research takes two directions. First, she adds a feminist perspective to comparative philosophy on ethics and the body, in particular using the work of French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray and Japanese philosophers Watsuji Tetsurō and Yuasa Yasuo. The second current interest proposes how teaching comparative philosophy can contribute to the development of multicultural communities and ‘geocitizens’ on liberal arts campuses. In addition, she has served on Columbia University’s *Expanding East Asian Studies* collaborative and is Co-Director of St. Lawrence University’s *Asian Studies Initiative*, an initiative funded by the Freeman Foundation Asian Studies Development Grant.

McCarthy received an ASIANetwork Student-Faculty Fellows grant in the summer of 2001 right after she became involved in ASIANetwork. Her interest in working with the board stems from her experiences at ASIANetwork meetings since 2000, as well as being more involved with Asian studies both at St. Lawrence and beyond. She looks forward to being able to contribute to an organization that has enriched her own research and teaching since her involvement in ASIANetwork began.

Contact Information:

Robert Y. Eng
 Professor of History and Department Chair
 University of Redlands
 1200 E. Colton Avenue, P.O. Box 3080
 Redlands, CA 92373-0999
 909-793-2121, ext. 4273
 Robert_Eng@redlands.edu
 FAX: (909) 335-5215

Zhenhu Jin, Ph. D
 Associate Professor of Finance
 College of Business Administration
 Valparaiso University
 Valparaiso, IN 46383
 219-465-7957
 Zhenhu.jin@valpo.edu

Erin McCarthy, Ph.D.
 Philosophy Department
 Asian Studies Program
 St. Lawrence University
 Canton, New York 13617
 315-229-5224
 emccarthy@stlawu.edu

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the board meeting as Editor-in-Chief of the book series) remarked, ASIANetwork is no longer the “new kid on the block.” We have established a reputation as evidenced by several requests from different organizations for collaborative work with us.

Recognizing that we are indeed growing, there is a need to define the direction of our growth. Thus, at the suggestion of vice-chair Phyllis Larson, the board agreed to develop a strategic or long-range planning document. To help us accomplish this, we

will be doing what I consider to be a very Asian tradition, seeking advice from our elders. Paul Watt had earlier proposed, and the board approved, the formation of the Past Chairs Advisory Council, composed of former board chairs and executive directors, and we are inviting them to be part of this conversation. They have much to share and we will profit from their wisdom. And as we move forward, we will always be guided by the vision of our founding members and will remain anchored to the basic mission of the consortium.

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