

Shaunna L. Scott  
President, ASA  
December 5, 2007

### **Ask What ASA Can Do For You – AND Ask What You Can Do For ASA!**

In his 1961 inaugural address, John F. Kennedy instructed us “ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.” Thus, Kennedy set the tone for his administration. As I prepare to leave office at the end of our 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference which will be held at Marshall University on March 28-30, 2008, I leave you with a variation on Kennedy’s theme:

“Ask what you can do for ASA *and* ask what ASA can do for you!” Let’s get started.

Here is how you can help ASA do more for you: First, when the ASA asks your opinion, *answer!* This issue of *Appalink* includes a survey concerning the newsletter. Please complete and return the survey with your conference registration. Also, do not forget to fill out the conference evaluation survey before leaving the conference.

In coming months, ASA is likely to ask more questions. For example, we want to learn from non-academic members how ASA can better serve your needs and the needs of the region. Watch for that conversation.

Communication is a *big issue* for us. We must communicate more effectively amongst ourselves and to the public. You can help by reading this newsletter to learn more about the organization and its needs.

As President, I will appoint an Ad Hoc Communication Committee to coordinate internal and external communication and develop policy for our proposed new e-mail list. The Committee will be composed of the Newsletter editor, the Website Chair, and a person in charge of public relations and press releases. Could that person be you? This, of course, leads to the next important thing you can do for ASA.

Volunteer! In this issue, you will find a description of volunteering opportunities and a form to indicate how you can help. Read up, check off, and return that form with your registration. In the future, we will be engaged in additional efforts to improve the ASA. New committees and teams will be formed, and decisions will be made. We need your participation.

ASA structure and governance, in particular, require creative thought and sustained action. As our organization currently structures its work, it is difficult for anyone but a full-time academic (preferably tenured) to lead ASA. If we want community people and practitioners to play a more central role, we may need to redistribute the work and consider hiring additional staff. We may also wish to consider forming an Executive Committee of the Steering Committee to handle routine matters.

Third, contribute to the ASA endowment! For the first time ever, there is a check-off box on the registration form for members to help build a “rainy day” savings fund for our organization. If we want ASA to survive in the future, we need to take this fiscally responsible step.

Finally, come to the conference and attend the “town hall” plenary session on Friday, Mar 28, to hear about the Long Range Report and Plan and become more actively involved in ASA. Also, be sure to attend the Annual Business Meeting as well.

I look forward to seeing you at the conference at Marshall University, where we will be looking ahead to our next thirty years. As we do so, just remember to: “Ask what ASA can do for you *and* ask what you can do for ASA, too!”