

EDIS Annual Business Meeting

August 1, 2004

Moku'ola I Room

Hilo Hawaiian Hotel

Hilo, Hawaii

Approximately 43 present

EDIS President Jonnie Guerra convened the meeting at 12:50 p.m., welcoming all members. She announced the upcoming EDIS meetings and international conference and their themes:

- “Dickinson and Family,” annual meeting, July 29-31, 2005, Amherst, MA
- “The Art to Save: The Healing Power of Emily Dickinson’s Words,” annual meeting, 2006, Vancouver, British Columbia, not yet decided
- An international conference, 2007, site to be announced soon

Regarding the Scholar in Amherst Award Program, Guerra reviewed the three awards that have been made so far to:

- Paraic Finnerty, 2001, whose book on Dickinson and Shakespeare will soon be published by the University of Massachusetts Press
- Angela Sorby, 2002, whose work on Dickinson focuses on the poet’s reading
- Magdalena Zapedowska, 2003, a Polish scholar, who was unable to be here

The 2004 Scholar in Amherst Award honors the late Dickinson scholar Brita Lindberg-Seyersted. The deadline for applying is October 15, 2004. Former applicants are encouraged to re-apply. The award is given to junior scholars who have completed their Ph.D. and would benefit from a visit to Amherst. Additional information can be found on the EDIS web site. EDIS also offers a Graduate Student Fellowship. For information, visit the EDIS web site to contact Mary Loeffelholz at Northeastern University.

In the absence of representatives from the Dickinson Museum, Guerra announced the merger of the Homestead and the Evergreens in July, 2004, to form the Dickinson Museum. There are two co-directors: Cindy Dickinson is Director of Interpretation and Programming, and Jane Wald is Director of Resources and Collections. Among the Museum’s many activities was a marathon reading of Dickinson’s poems in April, attended by several EDIS members.

Guerra announced that Journal Editor Gary Stonum, would be co-editing the *Journal* with Cris Miller until next July when Miller will become the new editor. She concluded her remarks by

thanking all members for their help and support during her presidency.

Having distributed copies of the minutes, Secretary Barbara Kelly asked for and received approval of the minutes from the 2003 Annual Meeting at Cabrini College in Radnor, Pennsylvania.

Treasurer Jim Fraser reported a closing balance of \$29,147.21. The balance reflects expenses of \$4,433.94, but not conference costs of about \$15,000. Fraser projects a 2005 balance of \$15,273.21, roughly similar to the past year after the conference expenses are paid.

Membership Committee Chair Erika Scheurer reported a total of 353 members (including 52 non-U.S. members from 21 countries). Since last year, membership has increased by 25 (including members from three new countries: Ukraine, Brazil, and India). She said the loss of five “Contributing” members was counterbalanced by a gain of eight members in the new “Sustaining” category. She has sent letters to lapsed members, asking them to renew their memberships, and she encouraged EDIS members to reach out for new members.

Nominations Committee Chair Ellen Louise Hart announced the re-election of four EDIS Board members for 2004-2007: Jonnie Guerra, Ellen Louise Hart, Mary Loeffelholz, and Cristanne Miller, whose terms expire this year, agreed to serve for another three-year term. She also announced the election of officers: Gudrun Grabher, President; Paul Crumbley, Vice-president; Barbara Kelly, Secretary; Jim Fraser, Treasurer; and Erika Scheurer, Membership Committee Chair. She thanked Guerra for her long service to EDIS and welcomed Grabher as the new president.

Guerra opened the discussion to comments and questions. Several members’ wedding anniversaries were acknowledged as well as the 129th anniversary of Gilbert Dickinson’s birth. The discussion then turned to EDIS chapter development. Gary Stonum said a woman in Ohio is interested in starting a chapter. Cheryl Langdell announced an upcoming meeting of the Los Angeles chapter at her house in Pasadena on August 28; she added that a list of members’ addresses would be helpful in contacting people. Cindy MacKenzie reported a very successful meeting of the Saskatchewan chapter in a local bookstore. Emily Seelbinder’s group in North Carolina met and gave her a scepter (a fly-swatter) for her 50th birthday; she also reported a Dickinson tea with two seatings, at which Connie Clark gave one-woman Dickinson presentations. Erland Heginbotham asked if there was a place in the *Bulletin* for chapter news. Georgiana Strickland replied that the news is published when it is sent to the *Bulletin*. Lois Kaufman tried to start a chapter in Atlanta, but she has no university affiliation and needs a list of names and addresses of local scholars. Margaret Freeman told of her Dickinson reading group in Heath, MA. Guerra said starting a chapter can seem intimidating and encouraged something more modest; for example, she said her colleagues at Cabrini look forward to her annual Emily

Dickinson birthday party, including readings of poems, gingerbread, and tea. Hiroko Uno then told everyone about the invitation the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan had extended to EDIS to hold an international conference in Japan.

The last item on the agenda was Margaret Freeman's preview of the 2005 Annual Meeting in Amherst, July 29-31. The planning committee includes Martha Ackmann, Betty Bernhard, Daria D'Arienzo, Cindy Dickinson, Margaret Freeman, Tevis Kimball, Connie Kirk, and Polly Longworth. Planning the meeting has generated the idea for a catalog of Dickinson resources in the Amherst area. The anticipated schedule includes a Friday poetry reading having to do with the Dickinson family, while the EDIS Board meets. Amherst also has walking trails, museums, and art galleries to be explored. A banquet is planned for Friday evening with nineteenth-century tableaux for after-dinner entertainment. The Saturday workshops will focus on Dickinson's correspondence with family members, and participants will be encouraged to read from the letters. A performance of "The Magical Prison" by Amherst College graduates will be offered Saturday evening. Sunday morning before the annual business meeting, the annual research circle will meet in the garden and participate in readings. Freeman said that if you bring someone who is not a member to the annual meeting, the organizers are offering a non-member registration fee.

Guerra announced gifts of \$1,000 to the Dickinson Museum and \$500 to the Jones Library from EDIS.

Gudrun Grabher, the newly elected EDIS president, acknowledged the great honor and responsibility of her new role, especially in light of the fine leadership of past presidents Margaret Freeman, Vivian Pollak, Cris Miller, and Jonnie Guerra. She said she was glad to have a great vice-president, Paul Crumbley, to rely on. With heartfelt and sincere gratitude she then thanked Jonnie Guerra, who was president for four years and vice-president for five years, and presented her with a gift from the members. The gift is a large Emily Dickinson doll handcrafted by Judy Grove of Altoona, Pennsylvania. To everyone's delight, "Emily" was shy about standing up in front of so large an audience, but Guerra thanked everyone and said the doll would be added to Emily Dickinson's birthday party at Cabrini College.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Barbara Kelly
EDIS Secretary

