

Emily Dickinson International Society
Annual Members Meeting
Fondation Deutsch de la Meurthe (Grand Salon)
Cité Internationale Universitaire
Sunday, June 26, 2016
9:15-10:34 a.m.

1. President's Welcome and Report

The meeting opened at 9:15. Twenty-six members were in attendance.

EDIS president Martha Nell Smith welcomed the members and went over the highlights of the meeting. She said she had heard many quality papers at the Paris conference so far. In particular, Smith expressed her deep pleasure and admiration of the performance given by soprano Linda Mabbs the night before. Smith ranked Mabbs's performance as one of the most outstanding she had heard in her lifetime. George Boziwick pointed out how unusual it was for the soloist to speak highly of her pianist. Smith said she learned a lot about other composers by listening to Mabbs's comments. Smith said she also appreciated the wittiness Mabbs displayed during her performance. Mabbs sang various versions of such Dickinson poems as "Heart, I will not forget him."

Smith also spoke briefly about future meetings. She stated that the next EDIS international conference would be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2019. She also mentioned that several people at the conference had suggested Italy for a possible site of a future EDIS international conference. However, EDIS currently has no members from Italy. She also invited further suggestions of places EDIS might hold a meeting or a conference.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the August 8, 2015, Meeting

EDIS Secretary Nancy List Pridgen presented the minutes of the August 8, 2015, Members' Meeting in Amherst, Massachusetts. The minutes had been on the EDIS website. A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes, and they were approved without changes.

3. Presentation of the EDIS Treasurer's Report

Martha Nell Smith presented the minutes for James Fraser, Treasurer, who was unable to attend. The treasurer's report has been available to board members on Dropbox. Smith said that financially EDIS is in good stead because of the support for the EDIS Paris conference garnered by Antoine Cazé. Smith pointed out the myriad permits Cazé had to acquire in order to put on the conference. In particular, he had to get permission to put the letters of Dickinson's poems on the pond in the Parc Montsouris near Cité Internationale Universitaire. Some permits required a long process, for which he had to begin six months in advance. Smith said that Fraser will need to work out an exchange between the French support and the Society, and after these negotiations take place, he will send around the

final budget report.

Smith reported also that EDIS is in healthy financial condition in terms of memberships. She recommended that members donate to EDIS by giving gift memberships, which is also a great way to get people involved in the Society. Additionally, she recommended donating to the Graduate Student Travel Fund. The Society may set up a separate account for money collected for awards in order to keep the moneys separate. Members will know that when they donate to EDIS, they are supporting a young scholar to go to conferences and meet and exchange ideas with other scholars, including international scholars.

4. 2016 Conference

Smith introduced Antoine Cazé, who organized the Paris conference. Cazé pointed out that he was able to get funding from several universities, including his own, and from the city of Paris, for a total of 4,300 Euros. In addition he was able to get for free the three houses at the Cité Internationale Universitaire in which to hold the conference, the performances, and the banquet. This included staff available to provide for conference needs, to prepare and redecorate the room downstairs where the conferees ate, and even to tune the piano. Smith expressed the Society's gratitude for these preparations.

5. Membership Committee Report

Smith introduced Committee on Membership chair Elizabeth Petrino, who reported that the membership of EDIS has increased, partly as a result of the international conference. She reported that the total membership included 273 subscribers. Many of them are regular members, including fifty-four joint members with the Emily Dickinson Museum. Also, several are student members or associate members.

Petrino stated that several members will be stepping down from the committee. Alexandra Socarides will be devoting her energy full time to fundraising. Cynthia MacKenzie is retiring. New member Sarah Brock will focus on attracting secondary teachers. Midori Asahina will be reaching out to international members. Eleanor Heginbotham will help cultivate new members among scholars who have published Dickinson articles in the *Emily Dickinson Journal* and other publications by contacting them by letters and invitations to become members. Smith stated that as a part of this project of recruiting published scholars to join EDIS, she would purchase initial memberships for several scholars. Thus, while she would not renew these memberships, she would get scholars exposed to the Dickinson Society. Heginbotham will also encourage EDIS membership among Dickinson chapter group members.

Petrino reported that new members still each receive a new member packet. Thirty-nine packets have been sent in the past year. Additionally, a new bookmark is available this year. She suggested that members buy one and take some for recruiting others to join. Petrino reiterated the suggestion of giving potential members – a graduate student, a colleague, or just a passionate reader of Dickinson – the gift of membership in EDIS.

Petrino said that the various membership forms – the online form, the form sent out in the fall by Johns Hopkins University, and the form in the *Emily Dickinson Bulletin* – all contain differences, and that the committee will be working to bring these forms into alignment with one another. They will also be working with the new committee on donations to clarify different levels of membership and encouraging donations. Petrino said she would be eager to hear from anyone who has ideas about recruiting new members or who has issues with the membership process. Heginbotham recommended EDIS chapter groups as a way to increase membership among people who like to gather and read Dickinson's poetry. Petrino offered to provide a membership welcome letter that could be used to recruit new members from chapter groups.

Petrino also recommended active updating of EDIS's Twitter account. Smith asked for a volunteer to provide frequent updates to Twitter, and Nuala O'Conner volunteered. Emily Seelbinder recommended recruiting EDIS members through regional Modern Language Associations, as the South Atlantic Modern Language Association attempts to do, because students often attend these meetings with their professors. Petrino asked that anyone chairing a Dickinson panel at a regional MLA make a pitch for EDIS membership. Seelbinder said the call for papers for SAMLA is on the EDIS site.

6. 2017 Emily Dickinson International Society Annual Meeting Possibilities

Smith stated that the 2017 annual EDIS meeting would be held in Amherst, Massachusetts, either on August 4rd through 6th or August 11th through 13th. The Amherst meeting will include presentations by participants of the last three critical institutes from EDIS meetings.

Eliza Richards explained briefly what the critical institute does. Emerging scholars submit works in progress in advance and receive feedback from Dickinson scholars and other students at the institute. Students receive advice and a different perspective on their projects, both from the scholars and from more established student researchers. This year they were also provided with a professionalization hour, in which they received suggestions for various ways to move forward, ways to secure money for research, and available venues for publication of their papers. Richards said they now have a body of graduates of these institutes and are planning to showcase their work at the 2017 annual meeting in Amherst. These presentations will be an honor to the students and a way for the membership to see what is going on at the institutes. Smith thanked Richards, Faith Barrett, and Alexandra Socarides for their tremendous work on the institutes. Smith said EDIS would be incorporating presentations from institution participants into its annual meetings on a regular basis.

Smith said that members love to come to Amherst and talked of the eminently successful 2015 meeting. She thanked Jane Wald for her outstanding efforts at organizing this annual meeting and said she is still receiving messages of high praise for the events and presentations at the meeting. She also thanked the local Dickinson chapter group in Amherst, who provided a great deal of help in putting on the conference.

7. Plans and Possibilities for Future Annual Meetings

The 2018 meeting will be in Asilomar Conference Grounds in California. Putting the Asilomar meeting off until 2018 will help people save money after the Paris trip so they will be able to afford the California trip. Smith said that Asilomar is a gorgeous camp on the Pacific Ocean. It is about an hour from San Jose and about two hours from San Francisco. The meeting will include a retreat for both the board and the members of EDIS. The members will revisit EDIS's mission and evaluate how well the Society is doing in achieving its goals.

The 2019 International Conference will be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It will feature Dickinson and technology. Barrett will organize the Pittsburgh International Conference.

Smith pointed out the connections to Dickinson that come to the fore as Society meetings are held in various places, such as Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and potentially New Orleans. She asked members to send her any suggestions they have for themes for next year's Amherst meeting, as well as any ideas for future meetings.

Smith stated that information about meetings and dates would be posted on the EDIS page on Facebook and on the EDIS Twitter account.

8. Emily Dickinson Museum Update

Jane Wald presented an update on activities at the Museum. She told the members that the third week in September, the Museum is sponsoring the fourth annual poetry festival along with the town of Amherst business improvement district. This includes the town business center and the Dickinson historic district, and it has just recently been designated as a state local cultural district. The poetry festival is a three-day weekend featuring young poets and established poets, plus the annual marathon reading of Dickinson's poetry.

Wald said the Museum is offering a new activity for writers and would-be writers. They will be able to pay a reasonable fee to write in Dickinson's bedroom. During the course of the restoration of Dickinson's bedroom, the Museum invited poets to come spend some time in the bedroom – their own time – just writing. Then poems they submitted were published in a little chapbook. Now the Museum will be offering an opportunity to purchase an hour in Emily Dickinson's writing space to others. In November, when the conservatory is complete, people will be able to write at Dickinson's second writing location, just outside the conservatory in the dining room.

Wald described several restoration and reconstruction projects the Museum is planning in conjunction with restoring the conservatory.

Wald explained that doing several restoration projects in one area saves money over doing these projects one at a time. The restoration/reconstruction of the conservatory

provides an opportunity to extend that work into the library and replace the door between the library in the homestead and the conservatory. This will provide the opportunity to do other restorations in that room: to replace the ceiling with real plaster; put in 19th Century flooring, reconfigure the fireplace to its 19th Century position; move an interior doorway from its 20th Century position back to its 19th Century position; replace the wallpaper. The Museum also already has wallpaper reconstructed from a sample and printed and ready to go.

Seelbinder asked Wald if she had ideas for lining up donors for the projects planned at the Museum in conjunction with the conservatory restoration. Wald said she is stressing the savings involved in doing several other projects along with the conservatory rather than doing them as standalone projects. The fireplace, the most expensive project, would cost \$50,000 to restore to its 19th Century condition, versus \$100,000 as a standalone project.

Wald announced that the Museum will hear in August whether they have received the National Endowment for the Arts funding for the Museum's kindergarten through twelfth grade teacher professional development workshops. She said they had to skip the past year because of personnel changes. If the funding for next year's workshops is not approved, the EDIS annual meeting can be scheduled earlier in the summer.

Heginbotham asked about the movie made about Dickinson. Wald said she may well be the only person present who has seen the Terrence Davies movie. The movie will be shown at the Toronto Film Festival. Plans have not been finalized for its showing in the United States. The producers would like the movie to be out and showing while the Morgan Library has its major Emily Dickinson display.

The Morgan Library is mounting what will be the largest exhibition of Dickinson materials outside their home institutions. It will open in January 2017. Wald stated that the Morgan Library is in New York City and that Mike Kelly at Amherst College is the chief guest curator for this exhibition.

Heginbotham said EDIS should see the Davies movie next summer. Smith reminded the members that the movie is fiction, not fact. Wald spoke about the inaccuracies in the film but stated that it is meaningful to the filmmaker and the main character, and beautifully filmed and charming. Cynthia Nixon portrays a very feisty version of Dickinson. Petrino said it got a good review from a difficult critic in the *New Yorker* and suggested that it be shown at EDIS in conjunction with discussion of several Dickinson biographies. Perhaps someone – the actress or the director – could dialogue with EDIS members. Smith pointed out that all biography of necessity has elements of fiction.

Smith encouraged EDIS members to purchase joint memberships with the Museum. Wald said the Museum continues to develop the Museum's resources on their website for secondary schools. Petrino said the membership committee would stress the Museum's offerings for secondary schools as part of their focus on secondary teachers.

9. Nominations Committee Report

Nominations Chair Páraic Finnerty introduced the members of the nominating committee: Martha Nell Smith, Marta Werner, Vivian Pollak, Barbara Mossberg, and Páraic Finnerty.

Finnerty welcomed new Member-at-Large George Boziwick, who will replace Eleanor Heginbotham. He also welcomed Renée Bergland, who will step onto the board as Jonnie Guerra retires. Finnerty thanked Guerra for many years of service on the board, including serving as EDIS president.

Finnerty presented the names of EDIS board members who were reelected to the board for 2016-2019. They include Antoine Cazé, Páraic Finnerty, and Eliza Richards.

Finnerty then presented the elected officers for 2016-2017:

President:	Martha Nell Smith
Vice President:	Barbara Mossberg
Treasurer:	James Fraser
Clerk:	Diana Fraser
Secretary:	Nancy List Pridgen
Nominations Chair:	Páraic Finnerty
Membership Chair:	Elizabeth Petrino

Smith thanked Petrino, Finnerty, and Pridgen for their service to EDIS.

Finnerty announced that another election for member-at-large will take place this year. He encouraged members to nominate themselves or another person. He said the board would especially like to have more international members.

10. Members' Talk Back and Announcements

Smith requested announcements from the members. Heginbotham reminded members that the scholars' circle would meet immediately after the business meeting.

Heginbotham also reminded members of the Society for the Advancement of American Women Writers meeting July 5-12, 2017, in Bordeaux, and asked European scholars to participate actively in an Emily Dickinson panel. Most scholars from the United States could not afford to return to Paris next year. She said Finnerty would be active in organizing this conference. Samantha Landau said most Japanese scholars would not be able to come because these dates are in the middle of the semester for them. Landau said she would talk to a few scholars she knows who could attend. Heginbotham said the deadline to submit topics is the end of June 2016, but that she would ask to have a spot reserved for a Dickinson panel and an extension for final topics. Cazé said he and other

French scholars would speak to the organizers of the conference. Smith said she was interested in coming back to France next year.

Barbara Dana talked about the Committee on the Arts. She said she is will be serving as chairman because Guerra is stepping down. She thanked Cazé for the artwork, the play, and the music at the Paris conference, which were wonderful and rich. She asked members for ideas of arts performances and presentations for future EDIS meetings. She also asked for people to submit names of books, exhibits, and other works of art on Dickinson to add to an ongoing list. She announced that new board member-at-large George Boziwick will be a member of the arts committee. She also announced that there are plans for another Dickinson and the Arts series in the *Bulletin* and asked that submissions by or about artists connected with Dickinson be forwarded to her or to Daniel Manheim.

James Guthrie announced that he needs submissions of both old and new work for the *Emily Dickinson Journal*. He does not have a stockpile of papers to select from at this time. Smith said that she had seen and read some quality papers and would encourage the scholars who wrote them to submit them to the *Journal*. Georgiana Strickland asked Guthrie why the print is so small in the latest *Journals*. Several others also stated that the print was significantly smaller. Guthrie said he would check on that problem.

Smith thanked LeeAnn Gorthy for the many excellent photographs of the highest quality that she has taken for EDIS over the years. She has worked throughout the Paris conference, taking photos of various events. She does these photographs as a volunteer photographer and does not get enough credit.

11. Adjournment

Smith adjourned the meeting at 10:34 a.m.