

**Minutes for Emily Dickinson International Society  
Annual Members' Meeting  
Alumni House Large Meeting Room  
Amherst, Massachusetts  
9:30 a.m. August 4, 2018**

**President's Welcome and Report**

At 9:33 EDIS Past President Martha Nell Smith welcomed the members to the annual members' meeting of EDIS. Forty-six members attended. Smith stated that current president Barbara Mossberg would soon be taking over the meeting. She asked members if they had copies of the meeting agenda.

**Approval of Minutes of the August 12, 2017, Members' Meeting**

Smith stated that last year's minutes were on the EDIS website. Retiring secretary Nancy List Pridgen presented the minutes for the previous annual members' meeting of August 12, 2017. A motion was made and seconded, and the minutes were approved as written.

**Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018**

Smith asked treasurer James Fraser to present the treasurer's report. Fraser said that the report covered fiscal year July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018. He stated that the beginning balance was \$22,700.79. The ending balance was \$11,418.18. Fraser said EDIS's money comes from membership fees and meeting registration fees. Major expenses include costs incurred for the annual meeting, \$2,500 an issue for printing and mailing the *Emily Dickinson Journal*, for two issues a year; \$6,400 for awards and scholarships; a \$2,000 gift to the Emily Dickinson Museum and a \$1,000 gift to the Jones Library. Fraser said EDIS has been making these two gifts for years.

Antoine Cazé expressed gratitude to Fraser for his service, and members applauded.

**Membership Committee Report**

Elizabeth Petrino, outgoing membership chair, introduced the other members of the committee. They included Midori Asahina, who worked with international members; Sara Brock, who served as EDIS's liaison with public school teachers; Eleanor Heginbotham, who worked with membership outreach; Nancy Pridgen, who coordinated new members. Petrino passed around a report from Johns Hopkins University Press, which stated EDIS's current membership as 262.

Petrino stated that Asahina, of Kyoto University in Japan, currently serves as vice president of the Emily Dickinson Society of Japan. She advertises EDIS's events in the Japanese society's announcements. She has also made EDIS aware of a recent publication of Dickinson's poems translated into Japanese by EDIS member Masako Takada.

Petrino said that Brock announced EDIS's events and the annual meeting in publications of the New England organization for English teachers and in the National Council of Teachers of English publications, thus making public school English teachers aware of EDIS's events. She also has made announcements about EDIS on a site called English Companions, which reaches English teachers in New England and New York State.

Petrino praised Heginbotham's efforts in collecting names and contact information of scholars who have had articles published on Dickinson research. Heginbotham has also drafted a letter for EDIS to send to these scholars, encouraging them to join the Society.

Petrino described Pridgen's efforts in mailing packets to new members of EDIS. Packets contained a certificate of membership, a letter of welcome from the EDIS president, a crossword puzzle, and a magnet.

Petrino welcomed newly-elected membership chair Antoine Cazé, who intends to expand EDIS's international membership. Petrino said the membership committee is always interested in finding new members, and they welcome any suggestions from members. Responding to a member's question, Petrino said that 99 members were registered for the 2019 annual meeting. Smith thanked Petrino for her report.

### **Emily Dickinson Museum Update**

Smith introduced Jane Wald, executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum. Wald reported that the next few years were going to be momentous for the Museum. She said that since the combination of the Homestead and the Evergreens into the Emily Dickinson Museum fifteen years ago, most of the energy and fundraising have been focused on a backlog of deferred maintenance issues for both houses and building improvements to prepare the Museum for significant restoration of the two houses. Wald announced that the Museum has just received a significant grant to make improvements on the Evergreens, as well as installing a museum-quality heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system that will improve the environment and protect the Museum's collections. The next step will be a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system for the Homestead. This will be followed by a tremendous restoration of both houses. The project's original cost of the major repairs was four million dollars, and the Museum has completed three and a half million dollars of that.

Wald said that the Museum has purchased a property on the outskirts of the Dickinson property, which will house all the offices now in the Homestead, freeing the Homestead for restoring all the original rooms of Dickinson's home. The members applauded at this news.

Wald said that when the restoration is completed, the Museum will move into a phase called the comprehensive interpretative plan. The Museum board has prepared a new Mission Statement with the following vision: to spark the imagination by amplifying Emily Dickinson's revolutionary poetic voice from the place she called home. Wald described this as a three-pronged approach. The first prong is sparking the imagination, which involves research, curriculum, and creativity. The focus for the first prong is "to inspire new generations of poets, writers, artists, and thinkers to dive deeply into life of the mind, the heart of creativity, and the world around us as Emily Dickinson did, thus bringing her revolutionary poetic voice to life in perpetuity."

Wald explained that the second prong is "amplifying that voice, so connecting the singular programs and resources at the EDM with scholars, students, and enthusiasts both around the corner ... and across the globe. Advanced technology and welcoming facilities and education will help to sustain innovative interpretations ... and meaningful educational outreach."

Wald said the third prong is "focused on presentation or stewardship, preserving and caring for the material legacy of the Dickinson family, the building, the grounds, the collections, to enliven and enhance the experience offered to the public. The story of her historic poems and landscape will create a physical environment that accurately creates the environment of Dickinson in her time and provides a richer platform for exploration of her poetry and legacy."

Wald pointed out that the Museum is waiting for a grant that will be used to catalog, document, and prepare condition reports for the nearly 8,000 collections objects in the Museum.

Wald thanked the members of EDIS, both collectively and individually for their donations to the Emily Dickinson Museum. The Museum uses these donations for regular operations, for pursuing knowledge on Dickinson, and to care for her home, adding that that is the Museum's legacy.

### **Nominations Committee Report**

Paráic Finnerty reported that this is his last year as nominations chair. He introduced the committee: Renée Bergland, George Boziwick, Antoine Cazé, and Eliza Richards. Finnerty introduced the new Member-at-Large, Hsu, Li-hsin. Finnerty reported that the committee also re-elected four members to the board: Paul Crumbley, James Fraser, Michelle Kohler, and Alexandra Socarides's replacement Faith Barrett. Socarides has left the board because of other responsibilities. And finally the board has elected the new slate of officers:

President:	Barbara Mossberg
Vice President:	Elizabeth Petrino
Secretary:	Adeline Chevrier-Bosseau
Treasurer:	James Fraser
Clerk:	Diana Fraser
Nominations Chair:	Michelle Kohler
Membership Chair:	Antoine Cazé

Finnerty also thanked Martha Nell Smith, who was stepping down as president and from the board. Smith thanked Finnerty for his report and turned the meeting over to Mossberg, the new president.

### **2019 EDIS International Conference in Asilomar**

Mossberg discussed next year's International Conference in Asilomar, a state park and conference center located directly on the beach in Pacific Grove, California. The conference will be held August 8-11, 2019.

Mossberg described the history of Asilomar, a state park that was established in 1913 by the YWCA to encourage women's leadership. Asilomar was designed by Julia Morgan, the first woman engineer-architect. She also gave some history about Pacific Grove's involvement with poetry and the arts. She described it as having the largest number of Victorian houses in existence. Pacific Grove also has a quite active Dickinson Chapter. The city promotes poetry and has elected a permanent poet in residence.

Mossberg described the conference's theme as "I started early, took my dog, and visited the sea' – 'I never saw the sea.'" She said the conference will include the usual research papers by Dickinson scholars and shenanigans such as a parade of people in white dresses and suits walking dogs to the sea.

Mossberg pointed out that the conference should attract more scholars of Dickinson living near the West Coast. Facilities provided by Asilomar for the conference depend on the number of rooms purchased by conferees. Rooms include doubles and triples, and conferees' meals are also included in the cost of the room.

### **Possibilities for Future Meetings and Member Talk Back**

Heginbotham said she heard that the EDIS annual meeting in 2020 would be held in conjunction with the Folger Library in Washington, D.C. Smith said that Dickinson and Shakespeare would be the theme of this meeting.

An EDIS member suggested that a future annual meeting be held in the middle of the country. In response, Smith suggested Chicago, Denver, or Austin.

Marta Werner encouraged members to attend the Emily Dickinson Research Circle.

### **Farewell to Retiring Secretary of EDIS Nancy List Pridgen**

Martha Nell Smith and Marta Werner warmly thanked retiring secretary Nancy List Pridgen for her many years of service. They presented Pridgen with a merino shawl and a copy of the book, *The Gorgeous Nothings*. Pridgen expressed her deep gratitude.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.