

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Executive Group of the Henry James
Society, Inc.**

**December 29, 2005
Washington, D.C.**

Meeting convened: 7.30 pm.

Present: Susan M. Griffin (Editor, *Henry James Review*), Greg Zacharias (Executive Director), Leland Person (Board member), Gert Buelens (President), Pierre Walker (Vice-President), Tamara Follini (Secretary/Treasurer).

1. President's report: Gert Buelens reported that submissions in 2005 for the ALA and MLA conferences were very good, and the numbers substantial: 20 proposals for the ALA and 30 for the MLA. He also noted how he would miss his involvement in the Society over the last three years. At the end of the reports by Society officers, Greg Zacharias praised Gert's gracious expertise in handling the Presidency and presented him with a travelogue, from James's library and containing his signature, on behalf of the Society.

2. Vice-President's report: Pierre Walker announced the topics he had devised for the ALA and MLA; the former included a panel on 'James and Other Women' and one on 'James as a Character', the latter would present a second panel on 'James and Other Women' and one on the contribution of Adeline Tintner to James studies.

3. *Henry James Review*: Susan Griffin's report happily noted the good health of the HJR: subscriptions were up in the past year, from 446 to 471, of which 207 were libraries, the remainder individuals. She also noted that 13 institutions subscribe to the electronic-only version of the magazine, and that it is available to an additional 1161 institutions through Project Muse. Article views have also been buoyant and growing: 16,205 in 2004-5 and for 2005, January through November, 25,400. Review submissions this year have been representative of an international range of interests, but for the Leon Edel Prize were down from 25 to 7 (the highest figure for any year was 40). Susan said she would give some thought to strategies to boost submissions, especially how and when the call for entries was announced. She closed her report with a request for special funding this year, \$3,015, to purchase much needed new equipment for the Review offices and to support a pay rise for a deserving member of staff. The request was approved.

4. Executive Director's report:

(a) Secretary/Treasurer election: Greg Zacharias reported the election of Julie Rivkin as the new Secretary/Treasurer of the Society and provided figures on votes.

(b) Venice conference and (c) Budget: Greg explained he was still sorting out the delay in receiving the return of the deposit to San Servolo and the caterer's invoice, but that there seemed to be no dispute about the money actually owed to the HJS. He summarized the expenditure for last July's Venice Conference, 'Tracing Henry James', noting that expenses gross amounted to nearly \$28,000, and that the

Society, after recouping a portion of this, funded the conference in the amount of \$9,836. Yet the Society's finances were in better shape than expected, currently totaling approximately \$39,000. Discussion followed on new or especially high areas of expenditure involved in mounting the Venice conference, notably the introduction of a stipend for the Conference director and guest speakers, and it was suggested that the latter might be reviewed for the next international conference in 2008. But the point was also made that these gatherings were invaluable for James studies and must be sustained, and Greg noted the very positive responses that he had received from participants affirming the conference's beneficial nature.

5. 2008 International Conference: Suggestions for US locations for the conference were put forward. It was decided that Burlington, Vermont was too small and isolated to attract international visitors, but that Newport might be more appealing. Concerns were raised as to the availability of good accommodations, higher overall expense, and the difficulty of direct transportation to Newport from a major airport. Boston was suggested as an alternative, on all counts, and the point was made that the number of attractions for James scholars in that city was greater, while the venue would still allow for the organization of a trip to Newport. It was agreed that further investigation into the advantages and disadvantages of both locations would be undertaken before a decision was reached.

6. New Business: The issue of how officers were elected to the Society was raised. All acknowledged that it was important to find a method that would make the best use of the resources of the James community of scholars and minimize members' reluctance to stand against each other. After some discussion of possible models, it was suggested that changes be formally announced in the *HJR*. Finally, Susan Griffin proposed that the *HJR* might include summaries by Society representatives of publications in their respective countries. Warm support was given to the suggestion that details of cultural events relating to James also be included, and ways to facilitate the gathering of such information were discussed.

7. Adjournment: 10.00 pm.