

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

**December 29, 2000**

**Washington, D.C.**

Present: Michael Anesko (President), Sheila Teahan (Vice President), Greg Zacharias (Executive Director)

Zacharias convened the meeting at 7.30 pm.

**I. 2000 Officer Election:** Zacharias reported the results of the election for Secretary/Treasurer: Wendy Graham, 50; Beverly Haviland, 38; Lee Mitchell, 38. There were 2 spoiled ballots, 1 with 2 votes and 1 with 3.

**II. Society Finances:** Zacharias reported that the Society held \$30,447.71 in its Creighton Federal Credit Union account, \$6,000 at Hopkins for the *HJR*, and about \$1,000 at L.S.U., for a total of \$37,447.71. Noting that the main account was a checking account, Zacharias proposed that \$15,000 be placed in a 12-month CD, and \$8,000 be placed in a 6-month CD, leaving \$7,447.71 in checking. After brief discussion, it was agreed unanimously that the proposal should be carried out.

**III. Henry James Review:** Zacharias summarized the new contract with Johns Hopkins UP-Journals . The main discussion had to do with Hopkins's proposal, forwarded to the group by Susan Griffin, the journal's editor, that the James Society spend \$2,000 - \$3,000 to promote the journal. Hopkins expected that such a promotion would yield "32-55" new subscriptions. Zacharias opened the discussion by noting the following:

1) That JHUP, not the James Society, was obligated by contract to promote the journal. This is specified in Section 6, points A and C of the new contract, which articulate the Press's responsibility for "obtaining new subscriptions to both print and online editions of the Journal" and "Servicing subscriptions to both print and online editions of the Journal, including, without limitation [. . .] soliciting renewal of subscriptions [. . .]."

2) Hopkins's proposal does nothing to help our members.

3) Hopkins's proposal does nothing to address the main loss in subscriptions over the past eight years or so, which is in the number of individual subscribers.

4) Hopkins's plan is financially unsound, for even if the expense should be \$2,500 and would yield 55 new subscriptions, the cost would be \$45.45 per new subscription, more than giving subscriptions away.

Zacharias proposed a James Society subsidy of new subscriptions and subscriptions renewed over the next six months.

Anesko and Teahan agreed that there were problems with Hopkins's proposal and that a subsidy might be the best course. Anesko also proposed that the Society subsidize graduate student subscriptions, although that would establish a 2-tier subscription rate. Nevertheless, it was the sense of the directors that if Society money were used to try to boost subscriptions, that the above plan ought to be tried, not the Hopkins plan. Zacharias agreed to carry the counter proposal to Hopkins's attention.

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Michael Anesko asked whether the Society received royalties on *HJR* hits on Project Muse. Zacharias said that he believed we did not, but probably should. He said that he would make such a point during the next contract negotiation. Anesko asked whether it would be possible for Hopkins to find out and report to us whether the decline in individual subscribers was related to the proximity of Muse subscriptions. We wanted to find out whether there was a chance that those who dropped subscriptions are using the journal now online at their home institutions.

**IV. Proposed Henry James Conference in Paris for July, 2002:** Peter Walker outlined the history of plans to carry out a Henry James Conference in Paris in July, 2002. He reported that he had been in contact with administrators at the American University in Paris, who seemed interested in allowing its facilities to be used for the conference. Walker outlined the requirements for moving ahead with the conference, including forming an international committee, investigating requirements for establishing conference bank accounts in France or elsewhere in the EEC, and securing a commitment from the American University in Paris.

Following discussion, it was agreed unanimously that the James Society should sponsor the conference. The directors asked Walker to move ahead with his plans to form a committee and explore details for the conference. Zacharias asked for a timetable within a reasonable time. All were excited by the prospect for this conference. Zacharias and Teahan volunteered to help Walker with planning and administration.

**V. Old Business:** There was no old business.

**VI. New Business:** Michael Anesko noted that the ALA was asking its member organizations to establish web sites, and that it would be a good idea for the James Society to have one. There was discussion about the merits of such a site for members and those interested in becoming members. There was also discussion about the need to maintain such a site. There was unanimous agreement that a web site should be created, that it should be a "bare bones" site, that the person creating and maintaining the site should be compensated (Zacharias mentioned \$500, Anesko \$300, Zacharias asked whether \$400 would be acceptable and there was no objection), and that the site would be located at Creighton.

Finally, on behalf of the Society, Zacharias presented Michael Anesko with a first English edition of *The Wings of the Dove* as a token of gratitude for his two years of service to the Society. Anesko accepted and regaled the group with the

particular publishing history of the volume and with the pathetic decline of the publisher.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10pm.