

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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Fall 2009

2009 Annual Business Meeting

The annual business meeting of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society convened on 22 May at 11:05 a.m. in the North Star room of the Westin Copley Place, Boston. President Elizabeth Addison presided, and about 25 members attended.

President Addison reported that the society's Distinguished Achievement Award had been presented to Stanley Cavell only moments earlier, at the end of the Society's panel "Emerson after Cavell." Professor Cavell was also warmly welcomed at the business meeting.

Travel money likely will become increasingly problematic. At its meeting on 21 May the Board noted that it is desired, but not required, that board members attend ALA (for the board and business meeting at least) when possible. Electronic means of communication among the Board were discussed.

President Addison read the Secretary-Treasurer's Report (see reverse side) for Bob Habich, who was unable to attend the conference. She thanked Bob for his eight years of service.

In December the Society will be 20 years old. A retrospective observance—perhaps a 20th-anniversary panel—should be planned for the 2010 ALA conference. Thanks to Wes Mott for publishing *Emerson Society Papers* for 20 years.

The society has received a letter of thanks from the Circle City Chamber Ensemble for supporting the premiere in St. Louis of "Woods," by Aaron Krerowicz. The piece was inspired by Emerson and Thoreau.

Joan Fleming of Arizona is making a unique, priceless gift to the Society: the diary of her great-aunt, Helen Legate, a Sunday School pupil of Miss Ellen Emerson who lived in the Emerson House with her for some time, then kept the house after Miss Ellen's death.

Todd Richardson announced that the 2009 winner of the Society's graduate student paper award is Prentiss Clark of SUNY—Buffalo, for her ALA paper "Romancing the World: Emerson, *Nature*, and the Voice of Experience."

Joel Myerson is preparing his alternate-year update of the Society's web site and invited "calls" for papers from committee chairs.

Ron Bosco reported that the Emerson *Collected Works* "continues apace"—actually at an accelerated pace. He gave an overview of the Edition, which was conceived in 1962. *Society and Solitude* (Volume 7) appeared in 2007. The "bibliographically complex" *Letters and Social Aims* (Volume 8) is in press. The variorum edition of *Poems* (Volume 9) will be at the press by December 2009. And *Uncollected Prose* (Volume 10) will be at the press in June 2010.

Leslie Eckel reported on the Margaret Fuller Society's plans for a Fuller bicentennial. The initial event will be at First Parish, Cambridge on 23 May 2009; the Massachusetts Historical Society will host a conference in 2010.

For terms beginning with the chimes of midnight on January 2010, Sandra Morris and Bonnie Carr O'Neill were elected to the Board. Wendell Refior and Susan Dunston, whose terms expire, were thanked for their service; Professor Dunston will serve as sole Program Chair for 2010. Todd Richardson was named Secretary-Treasurer. Wes Mott will become President, and Bob Habich President-Elect. Board member Dan Malachuk agreed to serve on the Distinguished Achievement Award Committee.

Members were urged to contact their librarians about subscribing to *ESP*—indexed by *PMLA* and *ALS* and still a bargain at \$10/year.

Phyllis Cole appealed for support of "Traveling Mercies," a project of her students at Penn State—Brandywine. It provides a piping system that will free Afghan women from the drudgery of daily hauling water into their mountain communities.

Board member Wendell Refior organized the annual Emerson Society dinner for that evening at Legal Sea Foods.*

The Emerson Society will reconvene at the American Literature Association in San Francisco in May 2010.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wes Mott, Secretary pro tem

*[On the evening of 22 May, 16 Emersonians gathered at Legal Sea Foods restaurant at the Prudential Center for the annual Emerson Society dinner. Wendell Refior concluded the evening by reenacting Emerson's lecture "The Protest."]

Treasurer's Report

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc.

22 May 2009

Membership and comparisons (as of 15 May 2009)

	May 2004	May 2005	May 2006	May 2007	May 2008	May 2009
Total membership	188	183	194	210	184	176
Life members	25	22	22	22	25	26
Sustaining members	17	18	18	25	29	19
Contributing members	48	46	51	55	41	40
New members	n/a	11	22	40	15	19
States represented	35	35	43	43	38	35
Non-U.S. countries	5	6	10	10	13	12

Our international membership includes the countries of Japan, 6 members; France, 3; Germany, 3; Italy, 3; Australia, Canada, China, England, Korea, Russia, Slovenia, and Spain, 1 each.

Finances (as of 1 May 2009)

\$31,774	Balance 1 May 2008	\$ 2,494	Current balance, checking account
4,441	Credits	5,119	Current balance, savings account
3,875	Debits	11,661	Current balance, CD #1
32,340	Balance 1 May 2009	13,066	Current balance, CD #2
		32,340	Current assets 1 May 2009

Major *debits* for the 12 months ending 1 May 2009 include awards for Emerson scholarship (2 @ \$750; a third has been awarded but not yet paid), design and layout of *ESP* (2 @ \$500), postage and mailing (\$591), support for the Thoreau Society annual gathering (\$250), sponsorship of the premiere of Aaron Krerowicz' *Woods, A Song Cycle ... after Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Circle City Chamber Group (\$250), registration fees for Massachusetts Secretary of the Commonwealth (\$93), permissions for *ESP* (\$77), petty cash for postage and supplies (\$50), and a stop payment fee (\$35).

Major *credits* for the 12 months ending 1 May 2009 include membership dues (\$3617), appreciation of CDs (\$810), and interest on savings (\$14).

- Membership is down slightly from last year at this time, and there's a pretty sharp decline in the number of sustaining (\$50) members.
- I often get notes from members, updating me on their work and particularly commending *ESP*.
- All membership numbers (except number of foreign countries and life memberships) are down slightly from the high-water marks of 2007.

- After ALA and the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, we always pick up additional new members; I'd expect us to have a total of 200-225 by the end of the calendar year.
- Our CDs are doing well for us, though interest rates have dropped from 4.2% and 3.5% last year to 2.5% this year—still fairly robust, considering the weak economy.
- We continue to bring in more each year than we pay out. But had one of our award checks been cashed on time (inexplicably, it hasn't been), our debits for the year would have slightly exceeded our credits—first time in my 8 years as bean-counter.
- That said, at \$32K we've got plenty in reserve for expenses and future projects, and we continue to draw a sizeable number of new members each year. As a Society, we're in very good shape.

Personal note: It's been my great pleasure to work with you all as the Society's secretary/treasurer these past 8 years. I look forward to other duties, and I enthusiastically recommend Todd Richardson as my successor.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert D. Habich, Secretary/Treasurer
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