

Fall Meeting of the NERWHA Executive Council  
10 September 2016  
216 Campus Center, Middlesex Community College, Bedford Campus  
Bedford, MA

Present:

David Kalivas, President  
David Northrup, Vice-president  
David Burzillo, Treasurer  
Whitney Howarth  
Michele Louro  
Heather Salter  
Bryan Sheckman  
Alfred J. Andrea, Secretary

President David Kalivas called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM.

The first order of business was acceptance or emendation of the Minutes of the 5 March 2016 meeting (Appendix A). The Minutes were accepted as presented. Discussion during a later moment in the meeting, however, revealed an egregious error of omission that might rise to the level of an impeachable offense. Although technically correct, the sentence “Heather Streets-Salter suggested that the Council choose a graduate student as the interim Council member and pledged to talk with the Northeastern graduate students.” falls short of revealing the full extent of the conversation regarding this issue, as will be revealed below when the subject of Council membership is dealt with in its proper context and sequence. The Secretary can only plead the lateness of the hour (past noon), hypoglycemia, and an unbearable ennui of spirit after sitting through an almost-three-hour-long meeting. But enough of all pleas for justification and vindication and back to the proper sequence of events.

Following the Council’s misguided acceptance without correction of the March Minutes, the Secretary turned to his written report of 2 September, which is Appendix B of these Minutes. There being no discussion of the first portion of the Secretary’s report (“Secretarial Busy Work”), save to have him whine again about the user unfriendliness of gmail (“Why can it not have words rather than stupid icons?”), the Secretary turned to the upcoming Fall symposium at Salem Academy.

He noted how on Friday, 9 September, he had visited with the co-owner of Green Tomato, which will cater the event, and was confident that catering would go off without a hitch and would please all. He further noted that the cost for breakfast, break, and lunch would be a reasonable \$856.50 (based on a projected figure of 50 attendees), and Green Tomato is an experienced and popular catering service that produces first-class, home-made food. He has sampled it and finds it far better than average. At that point, David Burzillo noted that only 19 people had registered and paid their fee to date, but their combined fees would more than cover the cost of the food. The Secretary replied it was still “early days,” but he would email all presenters who had not yet registered and request that they do so immediately. To that end, the Treasurer presented him with a printout of the names of those who had registered. At this juncture, Heather Salter expressed

her appreciation of the fact that the former office of Secretary-Treasurer had been divided into two offices, which made for greater efficiency, and noted the contributions of the current Treasurer and Secretary. As a last point, but something to be discussed in greater detail later in the meeting, the Secretary noted that he would be meeting with colleagues at MIT on 27 September to discuss a future NERWHA symposium on that campus.

Bryan Sheckman next raised the issue of the NERWHA website's misdirection regarding membership renewals, namely the date had not been changed from 2016 to 2017. He was informed by the Treasurer that this problem had been fixed, and that, because memberships annually run from 1 August to 31 July, the membership renewal form now has no year attached to it. At this juncture, Andrea interjected the observation that people should be able to renew a membership and make a donation at the same time with one click of the button. Currently, as Heather Salter and he noted, they cannot do so except if they fall within the privileged \$10 per annum group and choose to pay the full \$20 annual dues. (More about that fee later.)

Discussion now turned to what contribution NERWHA would make to the annual WHA Conference, which will meet at Northeastern University on 22-24 June 2017. The themes of the conference, by the way, will be "The Atlantic World" and "Food in World History." Heather Salter noted that a model for previous WHA conferences held within the USA is that the relevant affiliate acts as a host. This could involve simply sponsoring several panels or sessions during the conference or serving as a conference partner. Using the example of the partnership contributions offered by Northeastern, however, his latter role might cost upward of \$2,500 or more--certainly a sum beyond NERWHA's current ability to offer, especially in light of the fact that NERWHA will probably have no money-producing symposia in 2017. Whatever we do, she noted, NERWHA must work with the WHA's Program Committee. David Burzillo noted that minimally NERWHA needed to offer at least one panel. Furthermore, inasmuch as NERWHA will not be offering graduate student travel stipends for their taking the T to the conference, here is \$500 that could be put toward underwriting a coffee break.

Regarding the issue of NERWHA's probably not having a fund-raising symposium in 2017, Heather Salter asked if, perchance, NERWHA could get a "kickback" from the WHA for NERWHA registrants at the conference. Michele Louro, the current Treasurer of the WHA, noted that the WHA cannot afford to do so, and the historically high registration fees of WHA conferences in the recent past reflects that reality. The fee for the 2017 conference has not yet been set, and in the face of members' push back on these high fees, the whole issue of conference fees will be discussed by WHA EC voting members.

Returning to the issue of NERWHA finances, Heather Salter noted further that NERWHA must raise money somehow next year; it cannot just spend down its treasury. In response, David Burzillo noted that the association currently has \$8,408 in combined Paypal and bank deposits, so it is more than just solvent. But if we want a money-making symposium next year, why not late October at MIT? Michele Louro agreed. NERWHA needs to raise funds. When asked what date Kurt Hasselbalch and Jeffrey Ravel at MIT favor, Andrea noted that they were leaning toward Spring 2018. Given that fact, all agreed that it would be MIT in the Spring of 2018, and there would be no 2017 NERWHA symposium. (But wait for it; more is to come regarding 2017.)

Andrea promised to “schmooze” George Schwartz, a curator at the Peabody Essex Museum, to see if PEM would host a Fall 2018 symposium, but given the need of all museums to constantly find sources of income, he is not sanguine that NERWHA could get its facilities for free. David Northrup added that he would look to see if Boston College’s School of Theology and Ministry might want to sponsor a NERWHA symposium on “Religion in World History.” The school holds an annual conference, and possibly NERWHA could piggy-back onto it. With characteristic pro-jesuitical enthusiasm, Andrea chimed in that the theme “The Jesuits in World History” is a “natural,” but he was almost silenced when it was pointed out that this topic is too narrow. Under his breath he muttered, “But the Jesuit Order was the world’s first global scientific network.”

On the same topic of future symposia, Heather Salter suggested that Harvard’s Weatherhead Center for International Affairs might serve as a site for a future symposium, and she pledged to take the lead in contacting them. Whitney Howarth noted that it has a strong program on Transatlantic phenomena and surely should be contacted. Heather Salter then followed up by observing that, indeed, Weatherhead would be a natural fit for possibly Fall 2018. Continuing the discussion regarding future sites, David Burzillo observed that, although it is laudable that NERWHA has held back-to-back symposia at the Rivers School and Salem Academy, in the future we should not hasten to return to any high school, given their inability to offer host-subventions. Whitney Howarth suggested that possibly we might want to “sell” a keynote to Boston College in order to open the Jesuits’ purse strings. David Northrup responded that getting money from BC might be problematical. Michele Louro suggested that Salem State University, a former site of a NERWHA symposium, might be a possibility, given its new administration. If the university were the site for such a symposium, the provost and dean might offer financial aid. David Northrup offered the observation that Emmanuel College might be a possibility, and he further offered to explore that possibility.

As talk regarding possible locations for future symposia bounced about the room, it was proposed and received with some enthusiasm that Salem State University is even a potential locus for a Fall 2017 symposium! In order to pursue future symposia in a coordinated fashion, an unofficial committee of three was formed, consisting of Michele Louro, David Northrup, and A. J. Andrea. This did not immediately end discussion on the issue. Michele Louro suggested that the committee should look at Brandeis as a future possibility, with David Engerman as a possible contact person. Whatever, the case for a Fall 2017 symposium was resurrected from the dead, with early November suggested as a possible time or sometime in September if NERWHA went to SSU, thereby avoiding the dreaded “Haunted Happenings” of October that have reduced stout-hearted men to whimpering shadows of their former selves. If it is SSU in Fall 2017 and MIT in Spring 2018, then maybe BC, Harvard, Emmanuel, or Brandeis for Fall 2018, *deo volente*. The committee shall wrestle with these weighty issues.

That semi-settled, conversation returned to the issue of “What to do for the WHA in June?” Heather Salter advocated for a NERWHA-sponsored reception at the WHA Conference, but one that “does not bust the bank.” Andrea pointed out that NERWHA can easily budget \$1,500 for such a reception, if it combines next year’s \$500 budget item for a graduate student travel award, its annual \$500 donation to the WHA that it would otherwise send in 2017, and an additional

\$500, the minimal sum it hopes to realize from the Fall 2016 symposium. David Kalivas then offered the motion that NERWHA explore the possibility of funding a reception at the WHA for a sum not to exceed \$1,500. Andrea seconded it. Michele Louro then opined that if we cannot afford a reception for that sum, NERWHA at least should sponsor a coffee. It was unanimously agreed that NERWHA set aside \$1,500 as its financial contribution for a reception or coffee of some sort, details to be explored. A five-person committee was formed consisting of David Kalivas, David Burzillo, Heather Salter, Michele Louro, and A. J. Andrea to research this issue and report back to the Executive Committee with its recommendation(s).

Heather Salter then proposed that NERWHA sponsor two panels that it puts together, one on pedagogy and one on research. This venture is to be announced at the Salem Charter School symposium, on the NERWHA website, and through the association's gmail contact list. At this point, Andrea noted that he was putting together a panel on world history pedagogy with Italy's two leading world historians (and presenters at the WHA conference at Long Beach), Luigi Cajani and Antonio Bursa. David Northrup noted that he could suggest a third Italian, XXXX. Andrea replied, if that is the case, and this third person agrees, he would step aside from offering a paper and serve as panel chair. As talk continued regarding NERWHA's program at the WHA, Andrea noted that he loves putting programs together and gladly volunteered to coordinate this effort. Regarding a panel on research, there was general consensus (since none of the named principals was in attendance) that the unofficial program committee of one seek to put together a research panel on the Atlantic consisting of George Schwartz, Dane Morrison, and Christoph Strobel. Heather Salter remarked that Christopher Parsons of Northeastern, who works on the French Atlantic is a possibility for the chair.

With these matters semi-settled, David Burzillo presented the Treasurer's Report, which he passed out and which serves as Appendix C. In explaining the figures in that report, he noted that NERWHA paid out almost \$200 for three hours of work that was aimed (successfully) at making the website less confusing regarding membership renewals and other matters. He further remarked that the Council now had to decide what it would do in regard to the website on the issue of donations and various forms of membership.

With the issue of philanthropy raised, Michele Louro appealed for donations, no matter how small, to the WHA Endowment Fund. On that same point, Andrea interjected the observation that formerly the WHA had a system whereby every January a certain sum was taken from his bank account as a donation. This system was abandoned or allowed to lapse about three or more years ago, and he wishes it were reinstated.

With the Treasurer's Report accepted, the issue turned to a suggestion by the Secretary that the current Executive Director of the WHA, Kerry Vieira, be appointed an ex officio member of the Executive Council. Further, that NERWHA investigate the possibility of its engaging the WHA's web guru, Sarat Chandrika Motukuri (so identified by Whitney Howarth), to service <nerwha.org>.

Regarding the latter issue, Heather Salter noted that her student, Thanasis Kinias, whom she had suggested be appointed an interim member of the Executive Council, while knowledgeable about computers, could not serve the function of web guru, given his other responsibilities. Further,

because if we do not pay for her work, we will probably get what we paid for, we should find out from Kerry if Chandrika (as she prefers) is available and what her services would cost.

The members unanimously voted by acclamation to name Kerry Vieira an ex officio member of the Council and further agreed without dissent that she be offered free registration for all NERWHA symposia.

Talk then returned to the possibility of engaging the services of Chandrika, with David Kalivas repeating the important question: “What would she cost us?” All agreed we need a professional, and she is such a one. David Burzillo suggested that David Kalivas talk with Kerry to see if it is OK to contact Chandrika. If so, then contact her.

At this point in the discussion, the Secretary’s sin of omission regarding the March Minutes and the fallibility of human memory became apparent. It was discovered through a process that is best described as a Socratic dialogue held within the Cave of Shadows that, indeed, a decision had been made on 5 March--at the very end of the meeting of the Council--to place Thanasis Kinias on the Council through presidential appointment, his interim appointment being valid through 31 December 2016. In the face of his not having been so informed officially, the decision was made to do so as soon as possible.

The reason that this oversight came to light--finally--was that Heather Salter now offered the argument that, given his expertise, Thanasis Kinias could serve as an effective intermediary with the web guru, whoever that person might be. At this point, David Burzillo pointed out that any person serving as master of the web would be engaged in those duties for only a few hours annually. In the general discussion that followed, it was agreed that, given this insight, the Council should wait on contacting Sarat Chandrika Motukuri. That being the case, the question arose, could Thanasis Kinias serve in this capacity--as overseer of the website?

As discussion swirled about, it became clear that this function could possibly be performed through the cooperative work of several computer-savvy Council members. David Burzillo revealed that he has all the passwords. Bryan Sheckman noted that WordPress, the software that runs the website is not overly difficult to learn. Michele Louro offered to sit down with Thanasis Kinias to learn about WordPress so that she could assist in servicing the website. Whitney Howarth applauded this offer and noted, not with a trace of irony, that one immediate update would be replacing Michele’s presidential letter with one from David Kalivas.

One area in need of upgrading is the membership application page, which was the next topic of conversation, namely, should NERWHA offer multi-year memberships and even lifetime memberships? In the course of the discussion that followed, the first decision, unanimously reached, was that the \$10 membership discount offered to members of the WHA and several other learned associations be discontinued for all regular memberships and be made effective as soon as the relevant website page can be changed. Nothing was mentioned regarding the \$10 discount offered full-time matriculating students.

Further discussion regarding memberships resulted in everyone agreeing with Bryan Sheckman’s suggestion that an annual email be sent to members reminding them to renew soon-to-expire

memberships. Given the quite finite number of NERWHA members, David Burzillo noted that this would not be a problem, and the Secretary agreed. Further, there was universal consensus for David Northrup's suggestion that a donation button be placed directly on the membership registration/renewal page. Finally, it was agreed without dissent that NERWHA not offer a lifetime membership but it offer memberships for 1, 3, and 5 years, costing respectively \$20, \$60, and \$100. No mention was made of student memberships in this regard.

Inasmuch as several persons who have enjoyed the \$10-discount status have elected to waive the discount and to "donate" that extra \$10 by purchasing a regular membership, Robert Pelletier asked if this new dues schedule would cut into donations. The Secretary replied that, in light of the few donations NERWHA receives, probably not.

Continuing the discussion of donations, Heather Salter proposed, and it was agreed, that future symposium registration pages have a place for registrants to add a donation to their symposium fee. David Burzillo noted that this could be easily done. Whitney Howarth suggested that the form suggest a specific amount, such as \$5. Robert Pelletier said, "Why not have some sort of goofy appeal for donations to capture attention?" At this point the discussion degenerated into goofiness--a goofiness best passed over in silence--and no decision was reached as to the nature and level of allowable goofiness on the website. Heather Salter had the best postscript to this moment of silliness when she remarked, „We need sugar." This might have been a commentary on the fact that no sweet rolls or other degenerate, high-caloric foods had been offered the Council members. But we pass over this in silence as well.

Returning to the proposed donation button, David Burzillo noted that he would have to research whether or not the generic "ticket" system used by NERWHA for symposium registration even allows our placing any verbiage at the bottom of the form. A. J. Andrea suggested, if it does, why not simply have it read: "Sponsor a student" or similar words that make it clear that donations go directly toward underwriting student participation. After all, this year's appeal for donations to bolster the Graduate Student Travel Awards Program resulted in almost \$1000 in a short period of time.

The next order of business, nominations for the Fall elections (which are mentioned in the Secretary's Report), resulted in the creation of a three-person committee: Heather Salter, Robert Pelletier, and A. J. Andrea.

Following that decision, it was further decided, following Robert Pelletier's suggestion, that the two instances in the Constitution that refer to "email ballot" (Articles VI and XI) be changed to "electronic ballot." Inasmuch as this is simply an administrative change for the sake of clarity, the Secretary was charged to change the wording forthwith.

Another discussion resulted in the decision that in the future all official NERWHA business be conducted on the gmail account in order to create and maintain records of all official correspondence. When the Secretary pointed out that contact lists needed immediate updating but he remained mystified by the system and did not know how to update these lists, Bryan Sheckman patiently explained to him, in simple-to-comprehend terms, how the icons work. The Secretary promised to take this instruction to heart and act accordingly, but still muttered,

“Bloody icons. Why can’t they use words?” David Northrup said to him *sotto voce*, “It’s a right brain, left brain thing.”

While this dialogue was going on, Whitney Howarth took it upon herself to update the Executive Council distribution list on the gmail account, adding its newest member, Thanasis Kinias.

With no further business to conduct, David Kalivas declared the meeting adjourned at 12:09. The members then drove to a nearby Indian restaurant for a collegial luncheon.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred J. Andrea, Secretary