

New England Regional World History Association (NERWHA)
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING
302 Cowan Center, Middlesex Community College
5 March 2016

Present:

David Kalivas, President
David Burzillo, Treasurer
A. J. Andrea, Secretary
Whitney Howarth, Council Member
Michele Louro, Council Member
David Northrup, Council Member
Robert Pelletier, Council Member
Bryan Sheckman, Council Member
Heather Streets-Salter, Council Member
Christoph Strobel, Council Member
Sana Tannoury Karam, Council Member

President Kalivas called the meeting to order at 9:36 A.M. Following a brief welcome, he referred all participants to the agenda that had been sent out electronically.

The first report was by the Secretary who, likewise, referred all to the Minutes of the August 2015 meeting that had been sent out electronically shortly after that meeting and again on 3 March 2016. Upon his asking for comments, questions, and emendations, David Northrup inquired about the supposed member's link on NERWHA's website that had been mentioned in those minutes. David Kalivas responded that it is not and has never been operational. Michele Louro added that she has requested papers, syllabi and the like from the membership at large for that link, but has, to date, received nothing. Heather Streets-Salter moved that the Minutes be adopted as written, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Treasurer's report followed, a copy of which appears as Appendix A. In commenting on his report, David Burzillo noted that NERWHA is in good financial shape. A healthy profit was made from the Fall 2015 symposium at Bryant University, in large part because of the university's generosity in paying all expenses except for the Bryant University tote bags that were handed out to participants. Future hosts will probably not be able to be so generous, especially high schools, and it is absolutely mandatory that NERWHA meet on occasion at secondary schools, given its multi-faceted mission of serving world history teachers, scholars, and students at all levels.

To date, 35 persons have registered for the Spring symposium at The Rivers School, and all but one of them has paid the fee. At that point, Bryan Sheckman inquired whether or not NERWHA could allow students from his school, Lowell High School, to attend the April 2nd symposium for free, especially in light of the fact that its theme, "Race and Racism in World History," is of immediate interest to them. David Kalivas responded (with all others nodding assent) that, indeed, we will offer gratis registration but we will need firm numbers in order to arrange and to pay for their lunches.

Heather Streets-Salter offered her appreciation of David Burzillo's stewardship of NERWHA's finances, and there followed an unanimous voicing of approval.

Conversation turned to NERWHA's annual donation to the World History Association. It began with an annual voluntary tithe of ten percent of NERWHA's end-of-year treasury balance but metamorphosed two years ago into a flat \$500 gift sent in December. David Burzillo noted that no payment was made in December 2015 pending examination of the state of NERWHA's fiscal health and the Executive Council's setting of a policy regarding this subsidy. The question now was, should NERWHA continue the policy and, if so, should it be ten percent or \$500? Indeed, with uncertainty over NERWHA's financial future, should there even be a formal policy? Alfred Andrea offered the following motion: **"Be it moved that NERWHA contribute to the WHA a minimum of \$500 on an ad hoc annual basis dependent on the state of NERWHA finances."** Heather Streets-Salter seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Michele Louro, current Treasurer of the World History Association, stated that she is uncertain regarding what other WHA affiliates have done in the past regarding subsidies to the WHA, but as WHA Treasurer, she advocated NERWHA's continuing this gift. Alfred Andrea replied that during his two year term as WHA President (2010-12), he urged other affiliates to follow NERWHA's example but none chose to do so.

Clarification of what "ad hoc" means in this motion was called for, and Andrea replied it means, NERWHA has the option from year to year to offer this gift if it deems its financial health warrants such generosity.¹

The question was called, and the Council voted unanimously in favor of the motion. Further, it instructed the Treasurer to pay December 2015's subsidy immediately, and Burzillo stated he would do so. He further informed the Council that around 1 December 2016, he will send out a Treasurer's report in which he will also request the Council's advice and consent regarding whether or not to send a subvention to the WHA and, if so, how much it should be. David Northrup followed this by remarking that the Council should leave it to the Treasurer to suggest via email whether or not a gift should be sent and, if so, how much. All Council members silently assented, and Burzillo agreed to send out an email on or around 1 December with his advice on this matter.

David Kalivas next asked if the Council should hold a Fall meeting prior to its Fall symposium. Louro and Andrea advocated for such a meeting, and it was unanimously agreed that the Council would meet again in the Fall.

The next item on the agenda was NERWHA's annual Graduate Student Travel Award for a student or students presenting a paper at the annual WHA conference. The grant was instituted in 2014, with the first award of \$500 scheduled for the 2015 annual conference. Actually, two

¹ Andrea's reflection on that term on 7 March. It is unnecessary and can and should be deleted for the sake of clarity; "on an annual basis dependent on the state of NERWHA finances" says it all.

awards were made last year, each of \$300 to support two students from Northeastern University who presented papers at the conference in Savannah.

Heather Streets-Salter noted that because the WHA's conference will be held in Ghent, Belgium this year, NERWHA should offer more money in 2016. Moreover, because she estimated that six or seven students from Northeastern University will be going to Ghent this year, she would recuse herself from the committee charged with overseeing this award program.

The Council then turned to discussing how much money would it disperse. Sana Tannoury Karam strongly advocated for more than one grant. Robert Pelletier noted that given the great expense of flying to Europe in high season, NERWHA should make it possible for at least one person to make the trip. Michele Louro pointed out that we can expect students to secure grants from their schools, and this should be viewed as a supplement. Heather Streets-Salter further pointed out that receiving such an award from NERWHA looks good on one's CV.

David Northrup then suggested (by way of a question) what about instituting an ad hoc fund-raising effort specifically for this award? Everyone enthusiastically agreed, and the Secretary pledged to send out an email on NERWHA's gmail account and also through H-World announcing such an effort and requesting donations.

The question was raised, is there a system in place already that sets award-criteria and a process for application? The Secretary, who serves as the conduit for applications, answered in the affirmative and noted that there was already one applicant for funds. Those criteria and the application process appear as Appendix B. Although they were not articulated during the discussion, the Secretary appends them for the information of all.

In its discussion of the state of NERWHA finances now and in the near future, the Council momentarily wandered into the arena of symposium costs. The question was raised: What will the projected Fall symposium at Salem Academy Charter School cost us? Michele Louro stated that she is sanguine that she can help NERWHA receive funding assistance from Salem State University. Andrea agreed that he and Rob Pelletier would send the symposium budget to Michele and Heather Streets-Salter for possible financial assistance from their respective universities, namely SSU and Northeastern. But, as Heather emphasized, it is imperative that she be sent specific information regarding plans for the symposium and its budget. David Burzillo further noted that NERWHA should seek a subvention from the group in Massachusetts that vocally supports charter schools.

Returning to the issue at hand, the Graduate Student Travel Award, Heather Streets-Salter introduced the motion that **“NERWHA offer two stipends of minimally \$500 each and divide among those stipends in equal amounts the money raised from its ad hoc fund-raising efforts.”** Whitney Howarth seconded the motion.

In the discussion that followed it was agreed that the conference's being held in Ghent makes this a one-off phenomenon.

With that settled, the question was called, and the motion passed unanimously.

An Award Committee was formed consisting of Michele Louro, David Northrup, and Alfred Andrea, with Andrea serving as conduit. It was further agreed that the call would go out almost immediately in March with an announcement of the awards on 15 April.

Finally, regarding the WHA conference, Sana Tannoury Karam asked what presence, if any, NERWHA has had at WHA conferences. Michele Louro replied that in the past NERWHA has put together panels and has reported on its activities, but that is it. It sponsors no coffees and has no table.

Discussion now returned to NERWHA symposia. Andrea noted that everyone had received the symposia report that he sent out electronically on Thursday, 3 March, and which appears here as Appendix C. He then passed out printed copies of draft 8 of the program for the Spring symposium at The Rivers School, noting that he had recently visited the school and found it to be a first-rate venue with a warm and welcoming faculty and staff. The setting is beautiful, he noted, and the facilities are everything NERWHA could wish for. Further, its food service produces excellent meals (which he had sampled while at the school), and the food service manager promises to set up a sandwich and salad bar for lunch that will satisfy all symposium participants.

While extolling the virtues of The Rivers School, he also asked those Council members who wished to be entered in a raffle for a copy of *Shackles of Iron*, three additional copies of which have been donated by Hackett Publishing Company for the symposium free raffle, to write their names on a slip of paper. The drawing would take place at the end of the Council meeting.

Moving on to more important matters, David Kalivas offered three changes to the draft program: 1) The Welcoming Ceremony begin at 8:45 rather than 8:30; 2) NERWHA invite Richard Warner, current WHA president, to offer words of greeting; 3) Move the business meeting and raffle to the 75-minute lunch period. All agreed these were excellent points, and Andrea agreed to contact Richard Warner as soon as possible and to amend the program accordingly.²

Returning to the issue raised by Bryan Sheckman regarding free admission to the symposium, David Burzillo stressed that he should be informed of their numbers and names. It was further noted that Angela Lee's students at Weston High School should be offered the same opportunity as well as Rivers School students and faculty and students at Salem Academy Charter School. No motion was presented, but the general spirit of the moment appeared to be that the numbers of persons who took advantage of this offer would be small enough for NERWHA to bear the burden of the cost. Regardless, as Burzillo pointed out, he needed definite numbers in order to arrange food.

Turning to the Fall symposium at Salem Academy, Andrea noted that he had visited the school and found it totally suitable. Because it did not have its own food service, NERWHA would need to contact and contract with a suitable area catering service. Although Salem does have nearby restaurants, comity and convenience demand that NERWHA provide an on-site lunch.

² The Secretary emailed an invitation to Rick Warner later that day, and he replied almost immediately that it would be his pleasure and honor to do so.

The date of the conference was discussed, and it was unanimously decided that Saturday, 24 September was ideal.³ Further, the suggested theme, “Navigation, Travel, and Exploration in World History,” was approved by all.

In further discussion, the issue of trying to secure Peabody Essex Museum passes for symposium participants was raised but left unresolved.

Looking farther into the future, the issue of 2017 symposia arose. The question was raised, shall we have semi-annual or annual symposia. Andrea argued for twice-yearly because of several factors, not least of which is NERWHA’s mission to further world history studies in our region. There seemed to be general agreement on this point, but there are special circumstances surrounding 2017. Namely, the WHA will hold its annual conference in Boston that summer. Heather Streets-Salter suggested that NERWHA might want to postpone its Spring 2017 symposium to the summer and combine it with the WHA conference. This met with unanimous approval.

Andrea noted that he had began preliminary discussion with Jeffrey Ravel regarding a symposium at MIT and this might well serve as the site for a Fall ’17 symposium, but right now everything is in flux. Heather suggested that Northeastern could be a fallback if MIT fails.

Discussion of the website was next on the agenda. Everyone agreed that there are too many glitches in it and much of it is outdated, but what to do about it is a problem of significant magnitude.

Sana Tannoury Karam noted that for members of her generation a website is almost irrelevant because they depend on such social media as Facebook and Twitter. When a show of hands was called for to see who has a Facebook account, all hands went up save that of the Secretary, who prefers carrier pigeon and pony express. When David Kalivas pointed out that the Secretary does, indeed, have a Facebook account, he self-righteously replied that one of his Chinese students had set it up for him, he never used it, and in September deleted himself from it (with the aid of someone who knows how to navigate its complexities). Wisely disregarding this troglodyte attitude, Sana further noted that Facebook and Twitter can provide easy access to the website.

David Burzillo volunteered to be the person who will, at least momentarily, serve as Facebook/Twitter conduit inasmuch as Angela Lee, our Facebook/Twitter person finds herself inundated with other responsibilities. David Kalivas will contact Angela, secure the password, and distribute it to all Council members (except the Secretary).

Getting back to the website, Christoph Strobel noted that having a professionally-run site can be exceedingly expensive. But we need to have someone who has the time to oversee it on a regular basis. This verity led to Bryan Sheckman’s observation that NERWHA needs a website oversight committee. He volunteered to serve on such a committee, and Sana Tannoury Karam agreed to help. David Burzillo also agreed to join it. The committee will make recommendations regarding

³ On Monday, 7 March, Rob Pelletier informed the Secretary by email that SACS’s principal, Sean Gass, agreed with this date.

the site after the Spring symposium. Until those recommendations come in, the Council will hold off any decisions or actions regarding the website.

On a peripheral issue, that issue being membership renewals on the website, David Northrup inquired if one could purchase a multiple-year membership. The consensus is that this is desirable and something we should seek to implement. Moreover, membership renewal reminders should be sent out electronically, something that is currently not done.

With the resignation of James Diskant as Vice-President, it was deemed necessary that the Council appoint an Interim Vice-President who would serve through 2016, with an election held in the Fall to fill that post for the remainder of Diskant's two-year term. It was unanimously agreed that one of the Vice-President's duties, namely creating a regular newsletter, is now moot and can be dispensed with, given NERWHA's use of Facebook. The Vice-President will continue to have the duty of directly reporting NERWHA's activities to the WHA on an annual basis.

David Northrup was suggested as Interim Vice-President; he agreed to serve and was unanimously acclaimed. With his moving from general Council membership to the vice-presidency, a seat on the Council became vacant. 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.

As the meeting drew to a close, the Council decided that the Fall Council meeting will be held in Lowell on 10 September commencing at 9:30 AM.

David Kalivas reached into an oversized bag where the several nameslips had been deposited and drew out that of Bryan Sheckman, who duly received the promised book.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 PM, with all members, save the Secretary, heading to a nearby Thai restaurant for sustenance and companionship. The Secretary had to hurry off to catch the next stagecoach to Vermont.

Respectfully submitted,

Alfred J. Andrea, Secretary