

International Theodore Dreiser Society
Minutes of Annual General Meeting, May 26, 2022 (Chicago)

Attendees: Donna Campbell, John Dudley, Anita Duneer, Steven Frye, Hannah Huber, Cara Kilgallen, Eric Carl Link, Keith Newlin

Recent News:

- Roark Mulligan has kept the Society Page and social media updated.
- Miriam Gogol did a special *Sister Carrie* Podcast.
- There was a dedicated Dreiser sculpture in Terre Haute, Indiana, to commemorate last year's sesquicentennial of Dreiser's birth.
- There was a special panel and Dreiser Conference, in November 2021, just prior to the War on Ukraine.

Actions & Discussion Points:

- Cara Kilgallen was elected President and Vice-President of the Society, after Keith noted that we had to fill both positions.
- The attendees brainstormed ideas on how to generate more interest in Dreiser and naturalism, particularly among the next generation of teachers and scholars.
- Cara mentioned brainstorming ideas for future panels and recruiting new Society members.

Next Steps/Plan of Action:

- Keith suggested offering a stipend for travel funds that would allow for a graduate student and faculty without funding to attend ALA.
- Our next step is to draft an announcement to email members.
- The attendees discussed next year's panels to focus on connecting Dreiser with other writers.
- Eric suggested pulling together author Society Presidents (Crane, Dreiser, Norris, and London) into one Collective called the Literary Naturalism Research Consortium.
- Donna suggested virtual options for international scholars and members.
- Keith recommended a virtual workshop focused on graduate students.
- Donna said Transatlantic Women Writers does something similar.
- John mentioned that the Virginia Woolf Society does a monthly virtual salon. He also noted there are lifeboat exercises where faculty defend their disciplinary areas.
- Attendees discussed graduate student interest in naturalism such as digital humanities, contemporary film, non author-centric topics, through-lines, and themes.

More Votes & Thoughts:

- Attendees voted yes to reserving five hundred dollars for a graduate student with suggested matching funds from institution (Hannah's excellent idea).
- Eric suggested a quasi-endowment for Naturalist Consortium that provides yearly travel funds, 25k as minimum, to which all naturalist societies could contribute. If all pool funds, we could achieve this goal and meet this benchmark in 5-7 years.
- Donna noted that Hemingway, London, and Poe Societies have generated funds from donors.
- Eric mentioned a psychiatrist who claims to be a descendent of Norris.
- Cara mentioned extending Dreiser and Naturalism to the digital realm and beyond academia.
- Next Step: Zoom Session for Crane, Dreiser, London, and Norris Society Presidents; Cara will organize with Adam Wood.