

**Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature**  
**2017 General Membership Meeting Minutes**  
June 3, 2017

President Mary Catherine Harper called the meeting into session.

Action Items:

The membership approved as President Elect for 2017-18/President for 2018-19:

Jeffrey Hotz, and

As Executive Advisory Committee Members with terms running from 2018 to 2021:

Ross Tangedal and  
Rachel Price

The membership discussed the Executive Advisory Committee proposal to ADD digital availability to SSML publications (in addition to maintaining current hard-copy production) to increase the visibility and availability of SSML and SSML member scholarship. The concept is to make all SSML publications, back to the beginning, available digitally.

Information Items:

The 2018 SSML conference will be held at the Kellogg Center on Thursday through Saturday, May 17 – 19, 2018.

There has been some fall off in the number of poets attending the SSML conference. If you have ideas for increasing attendance by poets, please contact Marc Van Wormer and/or Roger Bresnahan.

Sara Kosiba asked any poets with suggestions for the SSML websites and/or for the websites of other poetry-related organizations to let her know so that we can send out calls for proposals that include these organizations and websites.

The possibility was raised of advertising in Midwestern journals, like *Belt*, *American Gothic*, etc. To date, SSML has only used reciprocal free ads with no money changing hands.

Douglas Shelton will contact *American Gothic*.

Andy Oler will set up a five-member committee and submit a recommendation to the SSML corporate board by July 31, 2017. The recommendation will relate to creating a new award for the best scholarship of the year in leading literary journals. If you have thoughts on this topic, please contact Andy.

The silent auction of two copies of the *Dictionary of Midwestern Literature: Volume 2* has netted \$110 for the Society. The two winning bids are: John Beal, \$60; Marc Van Wormer, \$50. SSML thanks the winning bidders and all who participated!

SSML will make contact with the strong Midwestern MFA programs, including but not limited to, the University of Michigan, Norte Dame, the University of Iowa, and the Art Institute of Chicago. An effort will also be made to connect with Midwestern schools with strong undergraduate writing programs. Stephanie Amada will compile a list of programs and literary organizations that SSML should make contact with and provide information on our conference and contests.

Ed Morin suggested that SSML also seek connection with graduates of Midwestern MFA programs on the belief that these people are heavily sponsored and involved while enrolled in MFA programs but need connections after graduation.

Douglas Shelton asked whether SSML can get a creative writers' listserv and do email blasts to those on the list? Sara Kosiba promised to check with Laura Julier.

Jim Gorman suggested that SSML should advertise more and better regarding student financial aid for the conference, and, based on distance, pay student registration first, then add additional funding.

Speaking as a graduate student, Michelle Campbell felt the SSML's conference is very affordable for graduate students. She suggested that SSML give more visibility to our Mentoring Café and other benefits of the conference and society. She feels the SSML Mentoring Café is among the most beneficial she is aware of.

Jim Gorman suggested that SSML-connected poets propose panels on the state of poetry in the Midwest and create a call for papers on poetry. Stephanie Amada seconded that idea, calling for papers on the craft of writing. Sara Kosiba agreed and said the only limit is finding someone to put together the calls. Such a call would provide presentations on the intersection of research and creative writing. Andy Oler responded saying that it is very easy within SSML to propose panels and bring in people.

John Rohrkemper proposed that SSML do something on "The 10-minute play," which is very hot now. He reported that the Dramatists' Guild will allow people to post CFPs, etc. John will take the lead with this.

Jim Gorman asked how to find the winner of the Mark Twain Award early. Check the SSML website to find who the winner will be.

New Business:

Sara Kosiba spoke for Sara and Laura Julier. Sara reported that we now take paper and panel submissions for the symposium via a Google Docs form (linked on the website and pushed through our Facebook page). I'm sure some folks are still sending them in to Laura via email, but she created a Google Docs form last year to try and streamline the process.

Sara asked all SSML members with ideas for stories for the SSML webpages on Facebook and other places, please send them to Sara Kosiba and Laura Julier.

Ed Morin said that now, with federal money being cut down significantly, it is a great opportunity to promote SSML.

Jon Lauck reported that volume one of his Midwestern History Association effort, *The Midwestern Moment*, is out and volume two and three will come out very soon. He also told the membership that the Midwestern History Association meeting will be on Wednesday, June 7, in Grand Rapids. He invited all to attend. He mentioned also that the Midwestern History Association is seeking someone proficient in podcasts to help with the ongoing series of podcasts. Please contact Jon if you are interested or know someone who could contribute to the effort.

Kari Smith believes that SSML needs a Friday evening event. Mary Catherine Harper suggested play readings, film showings, open mikes, poetry slams, etc. She asked those with suggestions to send them to Laura Julier.

Ed Morin suggested that there would also be value in adding a Thursday evening activity, perhaps something related to the awards.

The meeting adjourned.

Philip A. Greasley  
Recording Secretary