

MINUTES
of the Annual Meeting of
the Novel Club of Cleveland
April 24, 2016

That Ann Ogan, she's a tough taskmaster, as she hectors late comers to "take their seats" and pleads with "talkers" to keep it down to a dull roar. Her efforts were rewarded, when at precisely 4:20 PM on the noted date, she called The Annual Meeting of the Novel Club to order. First on her agenda was a profuse and heartfelt "thanks" to our hosts Ham and Lin Emmons. It's a lot of work to accommodate 30 or so people for a meeting, followed by a potluck meal, and the Emmons were more than up to the task. Further the Emmons' residence is so stately and conducive to hosting a large gathering. Novel Club members always enjoy gathering there.

Next on the Ogan agenda was a review of the 2015 Annual Meeting minutes. Ham Emmons moved acceptance of said minutes, received a second, and in a voice vote the minutes were approved. Our next meeting of the NC is scheduled for May 3rd wherein we'll listen to learned papers delivered by Dave Novak and Louise Mooney. Bob Brody and Tom Slavin are to host the meeting at the Brody residence. Because of ivory colored rugs – those who prefer red wines will have to abstain – the libations de jour will be Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignons, and Riesling's. *The Blue Flower* by Penelope Fitzgerald will be the subject of our scholarship.

Inserted into the 2016-2017 Calendar will be a designation of "past presidents" something a little new to the NC. Our Club's financial condition remains robust. Dues in the amount of \$20.00 for 2016-2017 should be paid to Treasurer Ham Emmons either at the May or June meeting. Emerita/us members are not required to pay dues or give papers – although the latter is not a hard and fast rule.

Celebration of our 120th year reappeared on President Ogan's meeting agenda. The Novel Club decided that a Committee consisting of James Saunders, Tom Slavin, Leigh Fabens, and Toby Siegel be empowered to plan the event. Tom Slavin reviewed his recollections of the 100th anniversary celebration of the NC. Suggested venues included The Country Club, The Mayfield Club, and the Rowfant Club. A request was made for speaker suggestions. President Ogan reported that the Club, during the course of the last year, gave a generous

contribution to an entity founded by our late member Bob Cheshire – a entity designed to foster reading amongst poor and disadvantaged children.

The Council of Administration and Membership was called by President Ogan to report. James Saunders suggested that David Welshhans was being proposed; however, no formal resume nor letters of endorsement were in hand. James stated that he'd bring to the Club's next meeting the aforesaid. President Ogan then read to the assembled the protocols for membership, which include, four letters from sponsors and an applicant prepared resume. The Club's membership stands at 32 members whereas our stated membership cap is 36.

The Program Committee chaired by Leigh Fabens was next to report. Leigh acknowledged the difficulty the Committee has had in developing a theme. "How does a Committee satisfy so many different tasters? This year the Program Committee suggested for our special category "the novella" something that's not been tried before. Catherine thought there was an inherent difficulty in dealing with a classic modern book and she opined that what we're really talking about is genuine contemporary books. Ted Sande defined contemporary books as written by living not dead authors. Art Stupay discoursed on the subject and stated he liked themes, for example, books by Canadian authors. After considerable discussion President Ogan declared that we'll reopen the discussion of "Categories" at the May 3rd meeting.

But members would not sit still for a postponement...with James Saunders stating that the NC affords him the opportunity to read books that he would likely never read. Dave Novak suggested that members write up a replacement proposal to the present category delineation – which could then be voted on by members. Jane suggested we try something new – like empowering the Program Committee to actually select our books. And merrily we discoursed on the subject until we realized time was passing and we had much too much to yet accomplish.

VP Jay Siegel was anointed – and in October will hold forth as the Club's new president. From my notes it would appear that all other officers and committee members were re-elected for another term. The slate of officers was approved without dissent.

Like spring tulips, the members of the Program Committee emerged from winter hibernation, and commenced to review their 18 book selections. Each book was individually reviewed by a Committee member, then comments were solicited from NC members on the chance that the Committee's offerings may

have previously read by one or more members. Leigh then proceeded to pass out ballots. With each member voting our selections for 2016-2017 NC year were made. Details as to our book selections are found elsewhere.

After the vote, NC members descended en masse on the dining room, where an assortment of delicious foods and drinks were provided. Members were solicited by Leigh as to hosting inclinations, inclination to draft a biographical sketch, and/or deliver a critical paper. This process was in flux when the voting results were proffered.

The meeting essentially dissolved into those who were eating, those who were trying to organize hosts and speakers, and those that simply wanted to talk. It was a delightful conclusion to a wonderful afternoon.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Slavin
April 29, 2016