

# Dante Society Newsletter

Volume 19, Number 1

December 2012

## An Update from the President

The academic year now well underway has been, and promises to be, an exciting one for the DSA. *Dante Studies* now makes a habit of publishing on schedule; we enjoyed a wonderful lecture from Rachel Jacoff in May and look forward to another from Jeffrey Schnapp in January; the prize committee received such strong and varied essays that they felt compelled to add an "Honorable Mention"; and we have now launched a listserv to enhance communication both to and among the Society's members. The Council, moreover, continues its work in preparing a restructured, technologically advanced and sustainable future for the Society.

Prompted by reading your responses to our 2011 Survey of the Membership, the Council has made progress on the revision of our half-century old by-laws. In your comments most of you expressed appreciable satisfaction with the Society and its operations, but many of you also encouraged us to expand our geographic reach. Several by-law articles—ones that were once, but no longer are, required by Commonwealth law—restricted specific operations and events to Massachusetts. Revision was clearly necessary, and we set about it remaining at once respectful of our traditions of governance and committed to meeting the needs of a twenty-first-century scholarly society.

We have now reviewed the draft by-laws prepared to our specifications by our team of (for the most part) pro bono lawyers. After final revisions, we plan on circulating the document to you by mid-February. A comment period will follow in which questions and/or objections can be raised, answered or incorporated. Our listserv will be critical to this process, though we will be careful to mail to those without email addresses. A vote is projected for our May 18 meeting.

The coming year will thus be a critical one for the Dante Society, and our progress will depend upon your participation. The Council joins me in thanking you in advance for your thoughtful attention.

## Annual Meeting, May 2012

The Dante Society of America's 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting took place on May 19, 2012 at the Longfellow House –

Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At 11 a.m., President Vickers called the meeting to order and introduced Park Ranger Garrett Cloer who welcomed the DSA members to the estate.

The Minutes of the 129<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting were read and approved. The Acting Secretary-Treasurer reported on the good health of the Society's finances, highlighting recent changes voted by the Council both in financial organization (the division of our longstanding Merrill Lynch account into operating and investment sub-accounts) and in budgeting (the introduction of a formal budget approval process). Audit Committee Chair Richard Lansing reported an unproblematic review of fiscal year 2011. The Audit Committee's and Treasurer's reports were approved. Following reports from the Nominating and Prize Committees, the President thanked retiring Councilor Victoria Kirkham for her service. She also outlined the timetable for by-law revision (see above) and administrative reorganization before opening the floor for discussion.

President Vickers then introduced Rachel Jacoff (Margaret and LeRoy Carlson Professor of Comparative Literature, Emerita, Wellesley College), who presented a wonderfully illustrated and engaging lecture on "Dante and Rome." Following a lively discussion the group adjourned to the House's historic garden in full bloom for refreshments (see Rachel below) and conversation.



## Winter Meeting

The Dante Society will meet at the 2013 MLA Convention in Boston on Friday, January 4, 10:15 to 11:30 a.m., in Room 208, Hynes Convention Center. Professor Jeffrey Schnapp (Harvard University) will lecture on "The Pace of Epic." Nancy Vickers will preside. All MLA attendees are invited to join us.

## Next Annual Meeting May 18

The Dante Society of America will hold its Annual Meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Saturday, May 18, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. Details will follow in the Spring Newsletter, on the listserv and on the events page of the DSA website.

## Spring Election Results

Last May the DSA membership elected Albert Russell Ascoli and Arielle Saiber to the Council for 2012-15. Nancy Vickers was elected as Acting Secretary-Treasurer for 2012-13. Later the Council voted to appoint Vickers to a second, and final, three-year term as President (2012-15). They also elected Ascoli as Vice President for a term of one year.

## Essay Prize Winners for 2012

The Dante Prize for the best undergraduate essay was awarded to William Porter (The State University of New York, Geneseo) for an essay on "The Clockwork of Dante's Cosmos: Some Uses of Time in *Paradiso*."

The Charles Hall Grandgent Award for the best essay by a graduate student went to Leah Schwebel of the University of Connecticut for her essay "'Simile Lordura,' Altra Bolgia: Authorial Conflation in *Inferno* XXVI." The Committee also awarded an "Honorable Mention" to Katie Guida of The Pennsylvania State University for her essay "Fellini and Dante: Life and Death in *La dolce vita*."

Prize Committee members Victoria Kirkham (Chair), Dennis Looney and Vittorio Montemaggi judged the essays. The Committee reads essays as "blind submissions" and awards \$500 for the best undergraduate essay and \$750 for the best graduate essay. The deadline for submissions for the 2013 competitions is June 30th. Further details can be found on the Society's website under "Prizes."

## Dante Sessions at Kalamazoo

The 48th International Congress on Medieval Studies will be held at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, May 9-12, 2013. The Dante Society is sponsoring the following sessions, arranged by Editor Emeritus of *Dante Studies* Christopher Kleinhenz (University of Wisconsin-Madison). For details see: <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/>

**\*Dante I: Dante and the Law of Nature.**  
Presider: Laurence Hooper (University of Chicago).

**R. James Goldstein** (Auburn University):  
Dolcezza (Sweetness).

**Maria Adelaide Basile** (John Cabot University, Rome): Il viaggio dell'anima in Dante e Cecco d'Ascoli.

**Jason Aleksander** (Saint Xavier University):  
The Relationship between Natural Law and Divine Providence in Dante's Understanding of Universal Monarchy.

**Jason Baxter** (University of Notre Dame):  
Dynamic Images: Neoplatonic Uses of Nature.

**\*Dante II: Order and Nature in Dante.**  
Presider: Jason Baxter (University of Notre Dame).

**Ruth Chester** (University of Leeds): "mercé del loco / fatto per proprio de l'umana spece": Eden and the Fulfillment of Nature.

**Claudia di Fonzo** (Università di Trento):  
Ordinamento cosmologico e ordinamento giuridico: Teologia e morale filosofia secondo Dante.

**Maria Clara Iglesias** (Yale University):  
Political Theology and the Law of Nature in Dante's *Monarchia* and *Paradiso*.

**Anne Leone** (University of Notre Dame):  
Seeds of Goodness and of Sin: Human Nature in the *Convivio* and the *Commedia*.

**\*Dante III: New Perspectives on Dante's *Paradiso*.** Presider: Jason Aleksander (Saint Xavier University).

**Stan Benfell** (Brigham Young University):  
Virtue in *Paradise*.

**Timothy M. Asay** (University of Oregon):  
Marsyas in Dante's Typology of Irony.

**Valentina Atturo** (Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza"): "Obscura lux": Eclipse and Revelation in *Paradiso*.

**Francesca Southerden** (Wellesley College):  
Rejoicing in the Vernacular: Identities of Affect from Cacciaguida to Adam.

**\*Dante IV: Dante's Reception from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era.**  
Presider: Christopher Kleinhenz (University of Wisconsin-Madison).

**Leon Jacobowitz-Efron** (Achva College of Ben Gurion University, Israel): Legend of Dante's Papal Mantle.

**Joshua Reid** (East Tennessee State University): Dante's Textual Physiognomy.

**Santa Casciani** (John Carroll University): The Truth of Writing: Dante and Ignazio Silone.

**Luigi Ferri** (John Carroll University):  
Dantean Echoes in Gadda's *That Awful Mess on Merulana Street*.

**\*Dante V: Interpretive Problems in the *Divine Comedy*.** Presider: Stan Benfell (Brigham Young University).

**John Bugbee** (Mount St. Mary's University):  
*Turbatio Voluntatis* and the Questions in the *Purgatorio*.

**Enrico Minardi** (Arizona State University):  
Natural Science into Verse: *Purgatorio* XXV, 79-108.

**James McMenamin** (Dickinson College): The Principles that End Each Cantic.

**Anthony J. DeBonis** (Villanova University):  
"Lest the Telling Mar the Tale": Language and Conversion in Dante.

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### Council Members, 2012-13

Nancy J. Vickers, President  
Acting Secretary-Treasurer  
Bryn Mawr College  
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### Nominating Committee, 2012-13

Peter Hawkins, Chair  
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Susanna Barsella  
Fordham University

### Prize Committee, 2012-13

Dennis Looney, Chair  
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University of Notre Dame  
Ronald Herzman  
The State University of New York, Geneseo

### Audit Committee, 2012-13

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University of Wisconsin-Madison  
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Bard College

### Ad Hoc Committee on Web Site Redesign, 2012-13

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University of California, Berkeley  
Joseph Luzzi  
Bard College  
Guy Raffa  
University of Texas, Austin  
Arielle Saiber  
Bowdoin College

### Liaison to the 2014 International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo

Alison Cornish  
University of Michigan

### Liaison to the Prize Committee, 2012-13

Arielle Saiber  
Bowdoin College

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