



GRATEFUL DEAD STUDIES ASSOCIATION
www.deadstudies.org

annual meeting minutes

**The Annual Meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association,
Hyatt Regency Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM, February 23,
2019.**

Minutes by Jan Wright and Nicholas Meriwether. Approved August 27, 2020.

The organizational meeting of the Grateful Dead Studies Association was called to order at 3:30 p.m. Thirty people were present.

1. Background

After a brief welcome, Nicholas Meriwether provided a synopsis of the history of the efforts to organize a professional group devoted to Grateful Dead studies; some of that history is provided in the chair's column of the 2019 Grateful Dead Scholars Caucus conference program, which also provides a précis of the work by the ad hoc organizing committee that led to this meeting.

Meriwether explained that the discourse of Grateful Dead studies is greater than that of a conference area and is sustained by a discourse community whose efforts—publications, etc.—exceed the capacity and scope of the Caucus. The Caucus has, for some

years, behaved as an unincorporated professional organization, according to the legal definition of that term; that also points to the fact that the needs of the discourse community associated with the Caucus have outgrown the capacity of a conference area. Two years ago, G. Ganter and Kurt Torell approached Meriwether to suggest the possibility of creating a professional organization to conduct the work of Grateful Dead studies on a more formal basis. The three formed an ad hoc task force to investigate models, which culminated in this meeting.

The task force identified four main reasons for pursuing greater organization:

- Preserve and continue the work of the discourse community;
- Expand the reach of the discourse and the size of the community;
- Elevate the profile of Grateful Dead studies;
- Share governance and expenses.

2. Rationale

Granville “G” Ganter then spoke, noting that the third member of the task force, Kurt Torell, was unable to attend the conference and sent his regrets. Ganter observed that forming an academic association as a not-for-profit organization was organic and natural and offered compelling advantages:

- Permit tax-deductible contributions from individuals and private foundations, whose gifts are often restricted to 501c3s;
- Sponsor publications, both print and online, including a web site;
- Promote the scholarly work of Dead studies;
- Protect individuals from liability;
- Fund events, including helping to defray conference expenses;
- Qualify for grants;
- Provide a mechanism for preserving work that might otherwise not survive (ie, a group archive).

Ganter also noted that there are academic benefits to having an organization backing scholarly work for participants, including credit for service.

Meriwether read a letter of support for the establishment of the Association from longtime Caucus participant and former area chair Barry Barnes, who could not be present, and opened the floor for comments; several supportive statements followed. No negative opinions were expressed.

3. Incorporation

Andrew McGaan, as the attorney coordinating the incorporation of the Association, gave a brief discussion of the history of the effort, explaining the incorporation process and outlining the meetings with Meriwether and the legal team as well as the status of the incorporation. McGaan noted that there was a backlog at the IRS that might delay

the approval. Two participants voiced support for the 501c3 and noted that it was appropriate for a mature discourse to have a dedicated organization to foster that work and expand its reach.

4. The Association

In addition to supporting conference meetings and a conference program, the Association will also establish an archive and publish a peer-reviewed journal. Meriwether reported that he had secured an agreement from Northwestern University library to host the group's archives as part of a larger Grateful Dead studies collection. Questions from the floor clarified that the archive will provide an optional mechanism for presenters to preserve copies of their papers in the group's files as part of the record of conference meetings. Depositing papers in the archive will be voluntary and will not preclude or interfere with depositors' right to publish their papers elsewhere.

Meriwether gave a status report on the journal *Grateful Dead Studies*, whose publication will be sponsored by the Association. The journal's website is in final development; all content will be available for free PDF download at the site with an option to purchase print copies. In the future, print copies of the journal will be provided to members, as will the conference proceedings. The first three volumes of the journal will make much of the content of the short-lived, small run journal *Dead Studies* available, substantially revised and expanded; Volume 4 will be the first issue under the new format, with earlier volumes to follow, as time allows.

The Association website has been completed by Meriwether and will go live once federal 501c3 approval has been obtained. A suggestion from the floor proposed a moderated discussion forum for the Association, hosted on the website; comparable academic associations have found that to be an important scholarly forum as well as an effective mechanism for outreach. General comments indicated approval for the idea and it was tabled for future discussion.

5. Discussion

Questions from the floor asked about the relationship, if any, between the Caucus and the Association; Meriwether explained that the Caucus was an area of the SWPACA, which was why it was called a caucus: an unorganized group, one that in this case comprises an area of the SWPACA. The Caucus is merely a nickname for the area, and all areas are defined and governed by SWPACA's rules. There is no connection or relationship between the two groups.

Another question asked about outreach; the website will provide a means for doing so. Questions about press announcements led to a discussion about timing and infrastructure; announcements will be made after the organizational process is complete. A discussion about membership followed, and Meriwether explained that the

Association will be able to enroll members and accept dues only after incorporation process and the Association's not-for-profit status has been approved; the Association cannot establish a bank account until then. The Council will establish the dues schedule based on the costs of incorporation, the websites, and printing and mailing the conference program and the journal.

Discussion of the constitution and bylaws process followed. Revisions are underway, primarily driven by the incorporation process and the issues that reveals; these will be completed in 2020, when the incorporation process concludes.

With no further questions from the floor, membership cards for potential members were filled out and collected; thirty cards were completed and returned, representing 100% of participants present.

Participants were then invited to elect the first slate of officers for the Association. The ad hoc task force presented an initial slate of officers and asked for nominations from the floor; no candidates were proposed.

Ballots were distributed and completed with the following unanimous results:

- Beth Carroll, Treasurer
- Jan Wright, Secretary
- Kurt Torell, Vice President
- Granville Ganter, President-Elect
- Nicholas Meriwether, President

4

Terms are two years, a length designed to ensure that officers serve for two conference meetings, with elections held at the annual meeting. Since the Association is just getting organized, terms for the first officers will commence after incorporation has been completed and conclude after the second annual meeting, but as Meriwether noted, the officers have already begun their work.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m. for champagne and cake.