

THE RUTH SUCKOW NEWSLETTER

Published annually by the Earlville-Ruth Suckow
Memorial Association Earlville, Iowa 52041

Fall 2004

Annual Board Meeting in Grinnell

The meeting began at 10:00 A.M. on June 19, 2004, at the Stewart Library in Grinnell, Iowa, with Barbara Lounsberry presiding. Grinnell was an appropriate place for a meeting because Ruth Suckow was a student at Grinnell College from 1910 to 1913. The photo on this page is of Ruth as the Fairy Child in a 1913 campus production of The Land of Heart's Desire by William Butler Yeats. There were not enough board members present to make a quorum so an official meeting was not held. Board members present were Mary Helgevold, Barbara Lounsberry, Bob McCown, and Harvey Hess. Non-board participants included Kay Burke, Judi Gust, Marian Dunham, and Kathleen Jaeger. Each participant introduced himself or herself. There were no changes made to the minutes of the meeting of June 21, 2003.

Treasurer's Report: Joanne Laxson submitted a treasurer's report. Balance on hand as of June 4, 2004, was \$174.53; savings balance was \$2800.51; and CD balance of \$5512.44.

Newsletter: Bob McCown reported that he would probably need to step

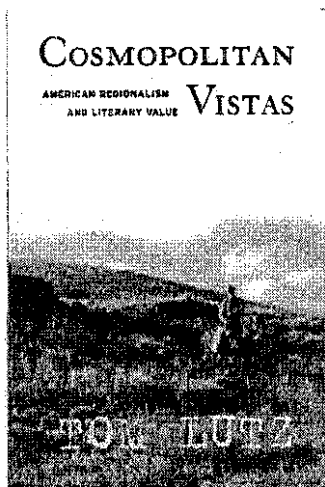
down from the editorship. He acknowledged the assistance of Kathy Hodson and student assistants of the Special Collections Department of the University of Iowa Libraries in preparing the past newsletters. The cost of printing and mailing the newsletter was \$89.88.



Birthplace Report: Mary Helgevold reported restoration of the interior of the Ruth Suckow Birthplace home continued at a slow pace during the

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past year. Mary removed the panels and gridwork of the false ceilings in the large front room and living room last Fall. David Helgevold removed plasterboard and insulation from the false ceiling in a third room. They also removed loose plaster on one wall in the dining room. The contractor who planned to apply new sheet rock to these three rooms during the winter months did not do so. No further work was begun this Spring due to the grant application by the City of Hawarden, further mentioned.



An old postcard, hitherto unseen by most of us, was donated to the historical society by Mary Janet Wilkens. It is a photograph of Ruth Suckow's birthplace, just the house alone. Jerry Bailiff, a student in Harvey Hess's class, requested information on Ruth's typewriter for his intended paper on Ruth Suckow and the industry of her time. The information and a photograph of the typewriter were e-mailed to him.

The City of Hawarden applied for a grant from the Community and Attraction Tourism (CAT) Fund. Restoration of the interior of the Ruth Suckow birthplace is included in this wide-ranging plan. As president of the RSMA, Barbara Lounsberry wrote a magnificent letter of support for the project.

Suckow Park in Earlville: During the past year there were a number of improvements. These changes included tree removal, new shrubs, park mowing, replacement of the roof of the pavilion, and staining of the wood in the structure.

Essay Contest: Press releases about the essay contest appeared in some Iowa newspapers as well as some literary journals. We received three essays for consideration. This year there was a winner, Kathleen Jaeger, with a paper entitled "A 'French Connection': Reading Ruth Suckow in the Light of Isabelle de Charrière". Jaeger compares Ruth Suckow to Isabelle de Charrière, the francophone author of noble Dutch birth who wrote in Colombier, Switzerland, between 1784 and 1805. The contest will be continued at least one more time. The winner of the prize receives \$200.00.

Suckow Website: Board member Mike Dargan continues to oversee The Ruth Suckow website. President Barbara Lounsberry is working to put a few Suckow short stories on our website on the Web for teachers to

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download and use. The address of the website is www.ruthsuckow.org

Final Discussion: Bob McCown mentioned that he has discovered a new book that includes a discussion of Ruth Suckow: *Cosmopolitan Vistas, American Regionalism and Literary Value* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) by Tom Lutz, a University of Iowa Professor of English. He takes a new look at regional and local color fiction. In addition to Suckow, the book includes a section on John T. Frederick, who published the first short story of Ruth Suckow's in his magazine *The Midland*.

Again this year, there was discussion about getting new members of the association. Our goal is to try to encourage each board member to convince at least one other person to join the Ruth Suckow Memorial Association.

The officers that were elected last year will continue in their positions.

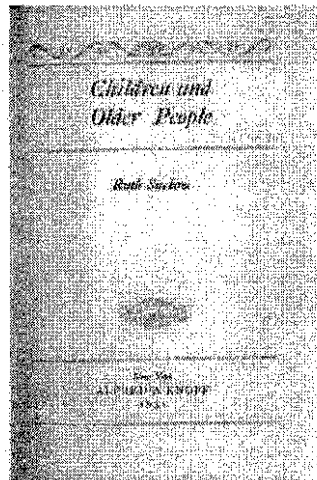
They are:

President—Barbara Lounsberry
Vice-President—Bob McCown
Treasurer—Joanne Laxson
Secretary—Sara McAlpin

Meeting in 2005: The next annual meeting will be held on Saturday, June 18, 2005, in Earlville. In addition to the business meeting, members will discuss Suckow's *Children and Older People*.

The meeting was adjourned at noon and a luncheon took place at the "Depot Crossing" restaurant at 1014 3rd Avenue in Grinnell.

Following lunch there was an in-depth discussion of Suckow's *Some Others and Myself* led by Barbara Lounsberry. Barbara prepared in advance a very helpful guide sheet on the stories and the memoir in this book.



RUTH SUCKOW MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION BOARD

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Ruth Suckow Memorial Association
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Earlville, IA 52041

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RUTH SUCKOW MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION, EARLVILLE, IOWA

Please renew my membership in the RSMA

Please enter my membership to the RSMA

Name _____

Address _____

Check one:

General membership \$15

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Mail with your check to Joanne Laxson, Box 129, Earlville, IA 52041