

The Howellsian

A Letter from the President of the Howells Society

Dear Members of the Howells Society and Interested Readers:

Effective January, 2011, the annual dues for the Howells Society will rise to \$15 per year. While this is still one of the lowest annual membership fees for any of the single-author societies associated with the American Literature Association, I feel a brief explanation is warranted.

Our annual expenditures revolve solely around two things: publication and mailing of our newsletter, *The Howellsian*, and the monetary stipend we award each year for the winner of the Howells Prize. Currently, the newsletter costs a little more than \$300 per issue to produce and mail; we typically produce two issues a year. The Howells Prize is a \$100 award. That brings our total annual expenditures to somewhere around \$700 and change.

Unfortunately, income from member dues does not currently match this amount—in fact, it falls well short. And so a gentle appeal: if you haven't already done so, please pay your 2010 fees (still just \$10/year). There is a mail-in form at the back of this newsletter. To those of you in good standing, thank you.

Starting in January, the Society will also begin a direct-mail campaign to remind members to renew their annual memberships, and we will mail receipts upon request for the fees paid. We hope these gestures will simplify the process and serve as an added incentive to support the Society.

Your continued support of the Society makes both our newsletter and our annual prize possible. Thank you, and I hope to see you in Boston at the 2011 ALA.

Sincerely,
Rob Davidson
President, W. D. Howells Society
1 July, 2010



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The William Dean Howells Society Essay Prize

... is awarded each year for the best paper on Howells presented at the annual ALA conference. The winning paper may have been presented in any session on the program of the conference, including but not limited to panels sponsored by the Howells Society. Papers are judged by members of the Executive Committee of the Society, who have the option of appointing additional readers as necessary. The prize includes a cash award of \$100 and an accompanying certificate. The winning essay is published in *The Howellsian*, a peer-edited newsletter indexed by the MLA International Bibliography.

Congratulations to this year's prize winner, Owen Clayton (University of Leeds) for his essay, "Seeing with a New Lens: The Influence of William James on *London Films*," which was presented at the 2009 ALA conference in Boston. A revised and extended version of the essay is forthcoming in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*. We hope to obtain permission from NCL to publish the shorter, conference version of the essay in a future issue of *The Howellsian*; as of press time for this issue, that permission had not yet been granted.

Minutes of the Howells Society Annual Meeting, ALA San Francisco, 27 May 2010

Submitted by Mischa Renfroe, Secretary

The WDHS Business Meeting was held on May 27, 2010 at the American Literature Association Conference, which took place May 27-30, 2010 at the Hyatt Embarcadero Center. President Rob Davidson called the meeting to order. Other members present were Sally Daugherty, Christine Holbo, Brian McGrath, Paul Petrie, Mischa Renfroe, and Lance Rubin.

Rob Davidson read the treasurer's report, which was provided by Elsa Nettels prior to the meeting. The WDHS has \$1520.27 in its account. Twenty-seven members paid dues in 2009 and 2010. Expenses were \$287.54 and \$304.63 for printing and mailing the newsletter and \$150.00 for the WDHS Essay Prize (\$50.00 was added to the usual \$100.00 prize to compensate for the exchange rate for dollars into pounds and the fee for conversion).

Paul Petrie provided an update on *The Howellsian*. Members discussed the possibility of issuing the newsletter in electronic form to eliminate printing and mailing costs. Rob Davidson noted that the society does not have the funds to continue printing and mailing the newsletter over the long term. The society spends about \$600 per year on the newsletter with each issue costing about \$300. With its current budget, the society can afford about four more issues before running out of funds. Members discussed pros and cons of moving to an electronic format. In short, an electronic newsletter would save money. However, some members may prefer a hard copy and overlook an all-electronic version. Sally Daugherty suggested a notice in the *Howellsian* to gather information about which version members would prefer.

Members also discussed ways to make the transition to an electronic newsletter. If the electronic format is adopted, members would receive an email announcement with the

newsletter provided as an attachment. The newsletter would be sent to members several months before it would become publicly available on the WDHS website. Members would also receive periodic email announcements about time-sensitive matters such as upcoming calls for papers.

Members agreed that the newsletter needs at least one more print edition to make the transition to an electronic format. The society will publish one issue of the newsletter per year rather than two and revisit this issue at the next meeting.

Members then discussed the impact of membership dues on the budget.

Sally Daugherty suggested raising the dues to offset the cost of the newsletter. Currently, members pay only \$10 per year. Rob Davidson suggested raising the dues to \$15 per year and providing a receipt upon payment.

Also, many members of the society do not pay dues on a regular basis. Mischa Renfroe reported that according to the mailing list, 118 members apparently receive the newsletter; however, the treasurer's report indicated that, to date, only 27 members have paid dues in 2009-10. Some members felt that a more formal payment process might encourage members to pay dues in a timely fashion. Payment of dues could be tracked, and reminders could be sent to members who have not paid dues.

The topics for next year's ALA conference were discussed, with several suggestions offered:

- Howells as a critic of genres other than fiction
- Is Howells a realist?
- Howells in Critical Context
- Open Topic Panel
- Teaching Howells

Lance Rubin will generate a call for papers based on this discussion.

AMS press representative Gabe Hornstein contacted the society about doing scholarly editions of Howells's work. AMS is currently publishing a series on James Fenimore Cooper; these are hardcover, library books that meet MLA criteria for scholarly editions. Members are interested in pursuing this opportunity and decided to contact established Howells scholars who might oversee such a project. For more on AMS, see the website at: <http://amspressinc.com/>

Paul Petrie reminded members to send announcements to include in *The Howellsian* and to suggest ideas to include in future issues. Members discussed a recurring feature in which Howells scholars comment on Howells's position in the canon.

In 2011, Lance Rubin will take over as President, and the society will elect a Vice President/ Program Chair.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

REVIEW:

Mark Twain & Male Friendship: The Twichell, Howells, and Rogers Friendships, by Peter Messent. Oxford University Press, 2009. 272 pp. \$49.95.

In the elegiac memoir *My Mark Twain* (1910), William Dean Howells describes his late friend's tendency to reveal intimacy and distance in the same facial expression. Twain, writes Howells, "was apt to smile into your face with a subtle but amiable perception, and yet with a sort of remote absence; you were all there for him, but he was not all there for you" (26). Howells may be betraying wistfulness about Twain or, alternatively, he may be capturing a nuance in their relationship: if "amiable perception" and "remote absence" shimmer in the same smile, perhaps these feelings coincide in friendship as well.

In his compelling *Mark Twain and Male Friendship: The Twichell, Howells, and Rogers Friendships*, Peter Messent makes the strong case that late 19th century male friendships were significantly cooler than their earlier analogues. Messent argues that, as sentimental relations yielded increasingly to professional and corporate networks, marriage became the central locus of intimacy within modern life. The social function of friendship, in turn, shifted from the affective to the professional. But, vestiges of sentimental forms and feelings remained, as Howells' *My Mark Twain*, for example, vacillates between an intimate personal eulogy and a professional literary critical account. With Messent's insight in mind, then, Twain's gnomic smile might be read as an emblem for male friendship at the end of the 19th century: amiable and perceptive, but not finally self-disclosing.

Messent, author of *The Cambridge Introduction to Mark Twain* (2007) as well as numerous other studies on Twain, brings his deep knowledge of all things Twainian to bear on this study of Twain's friendships with Howells, the pastor Joseph Twichell and the Standard Oil mogul Henry H. Rogers. The book is organized around the three friendships, with two chapters devoted to each. This structure gives a sense of Twain's social voracity – how much he enjoyed the range of humanity, even as he claimed to disdain it – while also providing an in-depth account of each relationship. The work engagingly combines biographical details with socio-historical commentary about religion, literature, and business. Moreover, each pair of friends corresponds, in Messent's structure, to a theme: secularization in the Twichell sections, literary realism in the Howells sections, and corporatization in the Rogers sections. Messent emphasizes his protagonists' hegemonic positions within their respective fields, arguing that their relationships – and even the intimacy they appeared to share – were facilitated by their positions of power in society. One of Messent's key aims is to elucidate the emergence of a new kind of friendship that functioned primarily as socio-economic alliance and only consequently as affective tie. Thus, Twain's three friendships are taken to exemplify the rise of modern anomie in the context of professionalization and the increased emphasis on the centrality of marriage. In a particularly poignant coda, Messent reflects on the nature of grief and the processes of mourning amid these changes.

Messent's treatment of Twain's friendship with Howells is

especially relevant to scholars of Howells. In two chapters on Twain and Howells, Messent builds on the extensive body of work, beginning with Howells' own *My Mark Twain*, that already exists about the pair. In particular, he extends Susan Goodman and Carl Dawson's recent biographical depiction (*William Dean Howells: A Writer's Life*, 2005) of the collaborative nature of the relationship. His well-supported account builds on the work of Kenneth E. Eble, Louis J. Budd, and Leland Krauth. Eble's *Old Clemens and W.D.H.: The Story of a Remarkable Friendship* (1985) offers perhaps the most comprehensive overview of the friendship, while the relevant chapter in Krauth's *Mark Twain & Company* (2003) is dedicated to Howells and Twain's humor. Among existing accounts, Messent's analysis draws much from Budd's "W.D. Howells and Mark Twain Judge Each Other 'Aright'" (2006). Budd began the task of interpreting Howells and Twain's superlative praise of each other as a form of "emotional solidarity," and Messent now extends this reading to include a broader social lens. For Messent, the crucial aspect of the literary friendship, and the one that has not been sufficiently highlighted, is the convergence of social interests that created the conditions for an emotional bond. If this argument resembles its predecessors in many respects, it nonetheless offers an engagingly broad scope for thinking afresh about the Twain-Howells connection.

Highlighting friendship as a professional alliance helps Messent, in the book's most striking contribution, to reveal realism as a reciprocally developed professional practice. As Howells evolved to take a darker view of American society, his work and his conception of realism became increasingly close to Twain's vision and, in Messent's words, they became "two writers working on parallel track" (122). By suggesting that literary realism emerged out of the experience of friendship, Messent adds an important new dimension to the ongoing discussion about its theoretical and historical trajectory. He challenges his readers to consider the interpersonal, and necessarily socioeconomic, relations within which realism evolved. This book is valuable reading for anyone interested in the friendship of Twain and Howells, as well as the broader question of how friendship shapes literary lives and practices.

**Marcella Frydman
Harvard University**

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ABSTRACTS

**Howells Papers Presented at the ALA Conference,
San Francisco, May 2010**

Chair: Lance Rubin, Araphoe Community College

Panel: New Perspectives on Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes*

1. "The Hazard of Economic Modernity in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*," Christopher Raczkowski, University of South Alabama

Despite his frequent caricature as the excessively genteel dean of 19th century American letters by a generation of 20th century modernists, William Dean Howells's defining moment as both a public intellectual and novelist may well be the 1886 Haymarket Affair. Courageously aligning himself with the eight anarchist defendants, Howells published an open letter in the *New York Tribune* denouncing the trial's verdict as civic murder and conducted a lonely crusade on behalf of the fabulously unpopular Haymarket defendants. He was met with stony opposition from almost all quarters—James Russell Lowell voicing the general opinion amongst the literary establishment that the "rascals were well hanged." In the years that immediately followed, Howells became an enthusiastic reader and supporter of the various socialisms of Edward Bellamy, George Herbert and Laurence Grundland. In his letters from that time, Howells clarifies the immense importance the Haymarket Affair had upon both his political subjectivity and his practice of realism. Writing to Francis Fisher Brown, editor of *The Dial*, Howells stated that "the affair has not been for one hour out of my waking thoughts... I am reading and thinking about questions that carry me beyond myself and my miserable idolatries of the past. Perhaps you'll find that I have been writing about them."

In this conference paper, I will argue that Howells's troubled engagement with radical labor politics and the American literary establishment during the Haymarket Affair made possible the early modernism of *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), a novel that marks the limits of both realism and liberal bourgeois capitalism. The narrative dramatizes the failures of realism and its implication in the social and economic injustice of modern capitalism in two registers. On the level of content, Howells novel is strangely haunted by references to bloody Gilded Age labor conflicts, the sight of impoverished immigrant laborers in the city, talk of bomb-throwing anarchists and a general sense of the proximity of violent social change; all of which comes to a head when the historically real New York Streetcar Strike of 1890 erupts into the fictional world of the novel. As it pivots around the launch of a new literary magazine in New York—the quasi-realist *Every Other Week*—the novel also narrates the implication of literature and the lives of the magazine's literary professionals in the pernicious logic of commodification and exploitation. The novel's chief innovation though, is to engage this problematic on the level of form. As the novel's putative realist writer hero, it is Basil March's attempts to see and represent the totality of the modern city in series of "New York Sketches" for the magazine that structure

much of the narrative. His increasing ambivalence about this project and his complexly ironic identification with the city's immigrant laborers through his chance reacquaintance with his old marxist German tutor, reaches a crisis point when his street-car is stopped by the strikers in the novel's climactic scene. Realist vision is rendered blind by what March terms the massive "social convulsion" metonymically figured by the strike and the project of the sketches is never mentioned again. The novel in which this story about realist vision is told, on the other hand, continues to represent the social world in a manner that is increasingly reliant on a kind of negative dialectic that suggests Howells's early engagement with a distinct element of modernist aesthetics. Interestingly, the radical negativity that emerges here in Howells's aesthetics and politics, would be flipped on its head as his fiction shifted to a visionary—and powerfully positivist—model of narration in the 1890s cycle of socialist utopian fictions that conclude with his 1907 novel, *Through the Eye of the Needle*.

2. "The Aesthetics of the Witness: Mobility and Encounter in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*," Will Lombardi, California State University

Abstract: Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* can be read as a critique of a new and rapidly growing anxiety about one's comportment in urban life. Broadly, it is Howells's attempt to apprehend the spatiality of the "youngest of the world's great cities" (Riis 1), New York. It is a novel of inhabiting: the instances when disparate groups come into contact are vital to Howells's plot. As the novel proceeds, the interactions among the above peoples become visibly stratified into definable levels of interpersonal commitment or engagement. The degrees to which Howells's characters connect outside, with the city itself and its masses, becomes quantifiable and qualifiable. Basil March's lack of engagement with, and sense of responsibility to, his fellow citizens is predicated on maintaining his perspective as an observer. I examine New York City's places and focus on March's position thus as a witness. Among the novel's primary symbols and its ultimate point of conflict, the train is representative of modernity, which demands a type of new urban morality, and in March's case, the train represents a means of conveyance that facilitates his passive aestheticism in response to the people and needs of New York without forcing upon him the repercussions of direct interpersonal contact. March travels the city on foot as a reluctant *flâneur*, by carriage and train as a voyeur and passenger, but never, in each case, is he more than at best an unwilling participant in the scene he encounters.

Using Howells's brief mention of him upon March's first visit to Lindau's hovel, I use Ruskin as a touchstone to the moral stances of these characters and as an introduction to what Phillip Mallet identifies as the "three key problems in urban history: 'those of the organization of space within the city, of the creation of order among its peoples, and of the adjustment to its new conditions of the human personality'" (43). My explanation of March's aesthetics is predicated on Mallet's premise, Stephen Kern's *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918*, and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, and I substantiate my claims with Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*.

3. "Howells' Literary-Philosophical Form," Brian McGrath, Rutgers University

Howells' literary method was inductive and empirical. He thought about ethics and history by writing, through the development of character, plot, indeed the unfolding of sentences. The novel is both the process of that thinking and its result.

Howells wanted to represent the ordinary and mundane, even the banal. In the smallest details of middle-class life he discovered the tension between liberal ideals and a historical reality characterized by incoherence. Neither morally nor intellectually could Howells justify the American plutocracy, which he thought comprised not only a state governed by the rich, but a collective aspiration and its consequent failures. Liberal democracy, he wrote to Henry James, was "coming out all wrong in the end," and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* was the novel through which he most deeply explored his concerns. The result was a productive incoherence, or rather, a continuously unfolding form: Howells keeps finding out more about the problem of middle-class morality as he writes. Instead of resolving the problems his characters encountered, he pursued these problems to their full complexity.

I examine three sections of the novel. In each, I demonstrate the way Howells' narrative technique uncovers a contradiction between ethical concepts and the evidence of specific historical events. In Basil March's ride on the elevated train, Howells tests middle-class political ideas against the evidence of economic inequality in developing New York; at Conrad's death, transcendent moral ideas are evacuated from a depiction of public violence, in order to understand this event without ethical illusion; and in March's religious speculations Howells discovers the inadequacy of religious thinking. Sometimes the narrator is fully sympathetic with the characters and their perception of events. At other times, the narrator exceeds the character's understanding of events in order to comment on the limitations of middle-class perception. At all times, explicitly at moments, Howells is present as a third consciousness, trying to make sense of these contradictions, and discovering them as constitutive of an inchoate middle-class ideology. Philosophical insight thus emerges as a problem of writing.

Panel: Howells's Aesthetics and Influences

1. "Moral Suspension and Aesthetic Perspectivalism in 'Venice in Venice,'" Christine Holbo, Arizona State University

William Dean Howells' career as a writer spanned more than 50 years, beginning before the Civil War and ending after the First World War. Most critical inquiry into Howells' writing, however, has focused on the products of a narrow period, the novels of the 1880s. And while recent critical efforts have begun to direct much-needed attention toward Howells' post-1900 writings, little attention has been devoted to the first two decades of Howells' career. In this paper, I will make a case for the importance of reading the early Howells and of approaching Howells, not as the "dean" of American literature, but as a young outsider torn between political radicalism and aesthetic ambition. Specifically, I will suggest not only that Howells de-

veloped most of the important techniques of his fiction by the time he resigned the editorship of the *Atlantic* in 1881, but also that it was before this moment that his style most influenced other writers of the post-bellum generation.

The exposition of this paper is divided into two parts. In the first, introductory section, I will discuss contemporary testimony suggesting that Howells' early writing exercised a considerable influence on the style and generational tastes of the writers who came of age in the wake of the Civil War. In the second section of the paper, I will offer a reading of *Venetian Life* (1866), enumerating a number of characteristics of his prose that were read by Howells' contemporaries as "modern" and innovative, and thus as definitive of the realist movement emerging in the years after the war. These techniques include: an emphasis on perspectivalism; a historical sensibility oriented toward extreme contemporaneity; a suspension of moral judgment and an exploration of tensions between moral, economic, historical and aesthetic modes of judgment; a self-reflexive stance toward the literary anticipation of experience, and an ironic, double-gesture of embrace and rejection of "sentimentalism." In concluding the paper, I will explore how an understanding of *Venetian Life's* new American aesthetic can alter our interpretation of the major novels of the 1880s.

2. "Neighborhood Tourism in Howells' Boston Writing," Monica Kathryn Zaleski, University of Delaware

Imagine Howells as an American version of a *feuilletoniste*—a man-about-town whose views of the city became a staple of European metropolitan newspapers in the 1830s. As a cultural commentator, the *feuilletoniste* gave readers his insight into everything from theatrical debuts and art exhibitions to literary gossip and society scandals. Part literature, part journalism, *feuilletons* appeared as lively anecdotes, make-or-break reviews, and the occasional poem. Many took the form of impressionistic city sketches.

My conference presentation discusses this method of writing the nineteenth-century city in Howells' Boston writing, specifically in *Suburban Sketches*, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and *An Imperative Duty*. Through narrated walks in neighborhoods, Howells presents the cyclical pattern of migration, displacement, and settlement in the growing metropolis, challenging accepted notions of American identity. For Howells, the commitment to showing neighborhoods as a nexus of social change works toward domesticating the city, making it more accessible and less intimidating.

Feuilleton-like city sketches became ubiquitous in the American metropolitan press of Howells' time. In the hands of writers like Howells, the unruly form allowed experimentation with the endless thematic and structural opportunities offered by the inchoate city as a literary subject. However, sketches of Boston's neighborhoods demonstrate that Howells made the cityscape more knowable by breaking it up into neighborhood entities. By the turn of the century, city-sketches had evolved into the serialized novel. Examining Howells' narrative approach against this proposed genre-shift may help explain the perceived vagaries of structure in Howells' greatest of city novels, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*.

3. "The Greatest Pathos and the Highest Tragedy": William Dean Howells's Letters to Harvey Greene," Donna Campbell, Washington State University

In *Years of My Youth* (1916), W. D. Howells writes of his friend "H.G.," James Harvey (or Hervey) Greene, an ardent abolitionist and newspaper editor who lived with the William C. Howells family as an apprentice printer. Howells kept up a sporadic correspondence until Greene's death in 1890, and Greene was a presence in Howells's correspondence throughout much of both men's lives; Howells continues to discuss Greene in letters to his family as late as 1916, long after Greene's death. A more complete picture of Howells and his relationship to Greene emerged in 2008 when John T. Narrin, the great-great-great-grandson of Greene, and William Griffing, a descendant of Greene's sister Cassie, made available seven previously unpublished letters from Howells to Greene. The earliest of these letters is dated 1854, adding a rare early glimpse into Howells's life during this period, and the others—one from the 1860s, two from the 1870s, three from the 1880s, and one published in the *Medina Gazette* after Greene's death in 1890—reveal Howells's previously unpublished reflections on subjects ranging from Tolstoy to *The Rise of Silas Lapham*.

But Greene was also a significant figure for Howells for other reasons, as the 1854 letter and others show. Described Howells as "intense and brave," Greene was a man of action who put his abolitionist sympathies into action in the 1850s by leaving his job to go to "Bleeding Kansas." He later volunteered for service in the Civil War, being commissioned as a Captain in the 8th Wisconsin Regiment in September 1861, and served for most of the duration of the war. In 1886, Howells read and praised Greene's memoir, *Reminiscences of the War*, which was drawn from letters published in the *Medina Gazette* and later privately printed. In it, Greene describes serving in several campaigns, but in a letter to his sister Aurelia dated 21 July 1915, Howells writes of an incident that Greene did not mention:

Another thing: Did either of you know of poor Harvey Greene's being forced out of the army in dishonor by his superior officer who lied against him? I used to hear of it from Joe, who said that Harvey always meant to kill the wretch if they met. But of course this didn't happen; the man died. (*Selected Letters* VI: 83)

As Greene's service record makes clear, he was indeed forced out, but he was later exonerated. Yet Howells, who mentioned this several times in letters to his family, believed that the incident permanently blighted Greene's life—a conclusion that may be questionable given Greene's continued involvement with veterans' groups and civic life.

What emerges most strongly from Howells's letters and references to James Harvey Greene is the portrait of a brave man unjustly accused by those in power over him. Greene was a friend, intellectual companion, and—in an ironic reversal of the role Howells usually played for others—an editor who was able to support and promote Howells's works, the subject of several of Howells's letters. He played a role hitherto unexplored in Howells's life and work: that of the impetuous man of action who sacrificed much for his intense idealism, consistently stood up for his principles in print, and paid the price. As Howells writes in *Years of My Youth*, "romance for romance, I

think their [Harvey and Jane Greene's] romance of the greatest pathos of any I have known, and it has phases of the highest tragedy" (122). Despite the injustice Greene experienced at the hands of a superior officer, the real "tragedy" for Howells seems to have been that after such an auspicious beginning Greene had chosen—or in Howells's retelling, had been forced by circumstances—to remain in the small towns of Ohio to which Howells looked back in *Years of My Youth* with a mixture of nostalgia for that world and relief that he had escaped from it.

Howells Papers on Other Panels: Poe and Reputation

"The Jingle-Man: Poe, Emerson, Howells, and Reputation," Stephen Rachman, Michigan State University.

Abstract unavailable.

CALL FOR PAPERS

**Howells Society Panels at the ALA Conference,
Boston, May 24-27, 2011**

Teaching William Dean Howells

The William Dean Howells Society welcomes submissions for a panel at the 2011 ALA in Boston that deal with any and all issues related to teaching Howells in the classroom. What has succeeded? What obstacles do you face? We are especially interested in presentations that offer insights into teaching Howells to undergraduate students and/or with such mega-anthologies as the Heath and Norton. Also important are presentations exploring the use of the vast resources of the media and the Internet.

Please submit your 200-250 word abstract and a current CV (or any inquiries) to Lance Rubin at lance.rubin@arapahoe.edu by **Monday, January 3, 2011.**

Open Topic: William Dean Howells

The William Dean Howells Society is sponsoring two panels at the upcoming American Literature Association conference, which takes place over Memorial Day weekend in Boston. For one of the panels, we are interested in papers that touch upon any topic in Howells's work. We are especially keen to hear about new directions in Howells scholarship and/or texts that often get overlooked.

Please send your brief (1-2 page) abstract and a current CV as a Word attachment to Lance Rubin at lance.rubin@arapahoe.edu by **Monday, January 3, 2011.** Inquiries welcome!

Howells Society Membership or Renewal—Dues Notice 2010

Membership dues for the William Dean Howells Society for 2010 remain a mere \$10. New members are cordially invited to join the Society by sending a check to the address listed below.

Current members, your **2010 dues—which a majority of us have not yet paid—are due now**, please!

Dues money helps cover the cost of printing and distributing *The Howellsian* and such other documents as publicity brochures and announcements; it also funds the annual Howells Essay Prize; also, the Society has been discussing methods of using accrued dues to strengthen the Society and expand its membership by promoting the reading and study of Howells's work regionally as well as at the ALA meetings. *Please see the letter from the President and the minutes from our recent business meeting in this issue for more important information about upcoming changes to our dues structure.*

Please help make your Society a stronger, larger, more effective one by sending your check for \$10 promptly. Thank you! And thanks, too, for your continuing interest and support of W. D. Howells scholarship, and the William Dean Howells Society. We depend on it!

New Membership Renewal

Name:

Mailing Address:

Email Address:

Amount Enclosed:

Please make your check out to the ***William Dean Howells Society***, and send it to:
Dr. Elsa Nettels, 211 Indian Spring Road, Williamsburg, VA 23185

FROM THE EDITOR

You'll notice some changes in this edition of *The Howellsian*: fewer pages, smaller typeface, less whitespace and fewer illustrations, and a combination of contents usually found in two issues rather than a single one. These changes constitute an effort to reduce expenses for the newsletter, the Howells Society's single greatest ongoing expense and one that, with our recent loss of institutional support for printing and mailing, outstrips income from sporadically paid dues from you, the Society's members. Please be sure to read Rob Davidson's letter on the front page of this issue of the newsletter to learn more about this situation and our collective efforts to address it constructively. Also be sure to read the Society's business meeting minutes for information about the current state of the Society's thinking about the future of both dues collection and *The Howellsian*. These ideas include the possibility of moving—despite the preferences of at least some of us—to an all-digital format for the newsletter, which of course would be printable from the Society's website or from email for those preferring print to electronic reading. Ideas from Society members and other readers on these issues are more than welcome. Drop an email to Rob Davidson at RGDavidson@csuchico.edu or to me at petriep1@southernct.edu to communicate with the Society's executive board, or post a message to the Howells listserv. (Instructions are available on the Society website: www.howellssociety.org.)

One way or another, *The Howellsian* will continue as a primary mode of communication among Howellsians and fellow travelers, and one hopes that current fiscal difficulties and their consequences will be temporary. In the meantime, please do devote some thinking to these issues and contribute your two cents (as well as your dues payment). You might begin by answering the following question:

On a scale from 1 to 10, do you prefer to receive *The Howellsian* in print (represented by "1") or electronically (represented by "10")?

Please send your numerical response, along with any commentary you wish to add,
to: petriep1@southernct.edu

The Howellsian

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THE HOWELLSIAN
PAUL R. PETRIE, EDITOR
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
501 CRESCENT STREET
NEW HAVEN, CT 06515