ALa annual Conference
21-24 May 2015
Boston, MA

For the 10th time of its existence, Kay Boyle Society met in Boston, on Friday May 21st.

In the morning, a panel session entitled Modernist Intimacies explored the intersections of community and commonality, the personal and the political, location and dislocation in a number of modernist writers, including Kay Boyle, Malcolm Cowley, Lola Ridge and Evelyn Scott. Bethany Mannion (Pennsylvania State University) examined how Boyle’s experiment with the form and content of autobiography made visible the process of writing a memoir and contributed to a shift in the form. Caroline Maun (Wayne State University) retraced Ridge’s and Scott’s crucial influences on Boyle’s early aesthetics and politics, and her developing view of the transatlantic modernist ecosystem. Hans Bak (Radboud Universiteit, Nijmegen) resituated Malcolm Cowley’s role as “a force behind the scene” in modernist cultural production and gave a number of new perspectives to the study of his life and work.

In the afternoon, we had the honor and pleasure to welcome New York actress Tandy Cronyn who discussed the dramatization of the TALL BOY, based on Boyle’s 1951 short story THE LOST. Tandy Cronyn then treated us to an extract of her solo performance THE LOST. Tandy Cronyn then treated us to an extract of her solo performance.

As ever, our gratitude goes to Faith Gude and Ian Franckenstein for their support of and interest in our activities. This year in Boston we also had the immense joy of meeting Faith’s daughter, Clothilde, and her granddaughter, Gianna who illuminated the day with her joie de vivre. Thanks to all three of them! And to Lee Pierce for her kind interest in the KBS.

Minutes of the business meeting for the representatives of author societies

ALA Conferences venues: Alfred Bendixen reports that contracts for 2017, 2019, and 2021 have been signed with the Westin Copley hotel in Boston. There are contracts for 2016 and 2018 with the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero in San Francisco, where the labor dispute has been satisfactorily settled. ALA symposia: societies are encouraged to participate in the two forthcoming symposia (see CFPs on the right).

American Literature section at MLA: the Modern Language Association is disbanding the American Literature Section. The ALA has been asked to take over the awarding of the Hubbell Medal. Duke University Press and American Literature will no longer provide the $2500 prize for the award. Bendixen and others feel there is a need for another American Literature scholarly journal to serve the profession and to be different from American Literature and American Literary History. There has been discussion of a new digital resource which could employ the expertise of the ALA.... (continues on next section)

In the next five years Bendixen envisions the ALA moving to official non-profit status and that new structures will be developed in the organization. There likely will be a membership fee, approximately $100.00 a year per society, as well as fees for individual members. There also will be a need for committees. He also envisions representation of more genres on the programs, i.e., graphic novel, science fiction, crime fiction. Future developments may include a free job list service, a listing of resources for societies and members. Successful programs at the 2015 conference included those on mentoring, the job market, promotion and tenure, and featuring editors of university presses and scholarly journals. Another focus to continue is on archives and scholarly resources.

Contact and information:
http://tandycronyn.com/tallboy.html

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