

Minutes of the Hawaii Writers Guild (HWG) Board of Directors (BOD) ANNUAL MEETING, held *via Zoom*. All times noted refer to Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time.

Officers and Directors present *via Zoom*:

Bruce Stern -*Vice President*

Bob Lupo -*Treasurer*

Donna Beumler -*Secretary*

Joy Fisher -*Public Relations Director*

Diane Revell -*Registered Agent; Regional Director/North Kohala-area; President-elect*

Bryan Furer -*Events Director; Regional Director/Volcano-area*

Other members present *via Zoom*:

Nancy Baenziger

Jordan Barnes

Susie Cysewski

Duncan Dempster (Webmaster)

CherylAnn Farrell

Virginia Fortner

Steven Foster

Cecilia Johansen

Lucy Jones

Don Kennedy

Don Mules

Carol Prescott

Frank Reilly

Heather Rivera

Catherine Tripp

Tamara Williams

Diann Wilson

Margaret Zacharias

CALL TO ORDER: On behalf of out-going president, Carol McMillan, who was unable to be present this date, Vice President Bruce Stern called the meeting to order at 3:11 pm. Bruce provided an overview of the Guild's strengths, which include great diversity in terms of background and expertise. He also mentioned that members represent a broad range of creative pursuits and writing genres. It is a goal of the Guild to grow and to expand its diversity over the coming year.

Bruce briefly mentioned the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic over the past year; however, he reported that he was very pleased with how the Guild responded to those challenges. In particular, the Guild utilized the internet meeting tool "Zoom" on a regular basis to maintain contact and conduct business. Local writers' groups (Tutu's House and North Kohala-

area) also relied on Zoom to continue with their “readings and critique” sessions while staying safe and abiding by pandemic protocols which suggest social distancing where appropriate. Meeting *via* Zoom had the added benefit of allowing the Guild to include geographically distant members, and has been especially helpful in establishing an on-line writers support group (*Readings and Responses*) for HWG members no matter where in the world they reside. Also in this regard, Bruce acknowledged Diann Wilson and her efforts to reach out to the general public using YouTube and her on-line production *Write On!*.

Bruce noted that this past year the Kauai Writers Conference resumed its in-person gathering, which was attended by some Guild members. Other activities in 2022 included the upcoming publication of the 4th edition of the Guild’s on-line literary journal *Latitudes*. Bruce acknowledged the dedication of Bob Lupo as Managing Editor, as well as his team of editors, and extended his appreciation to them for their hard work. He remarked that the opportunity to be published in *Latitudes* is a highly valued benefit of membership in the Guild. Bruce also conveyed his appreciation to Joy Fisher and Cece Johansen, for taking on the project that has become the Guild’s on-line newsletter, *Member News*, and to Webmaster Duncan Dempster, for recent updates to the Guild’s website.

Finally, Bruce thanked the out-going Board members (many of whom are returning in their respective roles in 2023) for maintaining the business of the Guild and using creative solutions to navigate uncertain waters during an unprecedented pandemic.

ELECTION RESULTS: A Google ballot having been distributed *via* e-mail representing one candidate for each office, the election of officers took place between January 7-20, 2023. The results, announced by Diane Revell, are as follows:

Thirty-five members voted, with all votes for Diane Revell for president, Bruce Stern for vice-president, and Donna Beumler for secretary. Thirty-four members voted for Bob Lupo for treasurer, with the outstanding vote by Bob himself, for a lighthearted twist and in an effort not to vote for himself.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE: Bruce previously e-mailed to the Board membership logs reflecting a current tally of 74 (with 13 new) active members. He noted that, at the beginning of last year, the Guild counted 76 active members, adding that the membership roles typically do reflect some growth as well as some attrition.

Bruce emphasized that it is a core goal of the Guild to expand its activities and opportunities, and to reach out to potential new members from different backgrounds with a broad range of writing skills. While noting that the on-going pandemic will likely impact the Guild this year, he did remark upon the importance of addressing diversity concerns, and advised

that the Guild continues to search for ways to broaden its appeal amongst a wide variety of writers.

CALL FOR MEMBERS' SUGGESTIONS: Bruce advised that, later in the week at the Special Planning Meeting, members' suggestions will be reviewed and discussed, and in this regard he invited members to provide input *via* e-mail. He encouraged each member to take an active role in shaping the future of the Guild, which is an organization developed by and operated for its members. Finally, Bruce commented that, under the leadership of President-elect Diane Revell, we all are looking forward to a successful year for the Guild and its members.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Bob Lupo reported that the Guild's ASB *pro forma* operating balance as of this date is \$9,333.93. This compares to \$6,134.17 at the end of 2021 and \$8,513.15 at the end of 2022. The vast majority of these funds are derived from membership initiations and annual dues. Bob noted that the Guild's expenses over the past few years have been unusually low because activities have been drastically curtailed by pandemic restrictions. Going forward, there is reason to be optimistic that more normal activities (and therefore expenses) will resume, at least to some extent.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Donna Beumler reported that she spent 2022 drafting and finalizing dozens of meeting agendas and minutes for Board meetings. She noted that the minutes, in final form (approved for accuracy), are posted to the website and easily accessible. Additionally, she has been tasked with being the "gatekeeper" for new applications, and will shepherd those applications along to make sure that action is taken on a timely basis (typically within seven days). Finally, Donna is helping to organize a gathering with author Janet Evanovich on February 4th¹ for Guild members, and advised that any member who wishes to attend but has not RSPV'd can still do so by sending Donna an e-mail. She echoed Bruce's and Bob's comments about looking forward with optimism to a good year with greater diversity for the Guild.

OPPORTUNITY DRAWING [1]: Diane Revell "screen shared" the spinning wheel which she had prepared for the opportunity drawing to give away books donated by members who had either written or edited the books. The winner of the first spin was Lucy Jones, who was awarded two books: *Quiet Water* (by Heather Rivera) and *Smitten and Bitten* (by Eila Algood). The winner of the second spin was Diann Wilson, who will receive *Chapel on the Moor* and *Where Are You?*, both by Duncan Dempster.

¹ Subsequent to the meeting, the date for the gathering for Janet Evanovich was changed to February 25th due to an illness in her family.

PRESENTATIONS:

Members Who Published in 2022: Joy Fisher introduced the Powerpoint presentation which she'd prepared highlighting the work of each Guild member who published during 2022. She noted that a total of 43 Guild members (more than half), published in 2022. A total of 25 members had their work published in *Latitudes 3rd ed.*, 16 members published books last year, 16 members published short stories, essays, poems, and/or articles in non-Guild related publications or had their work produced for the stage, and two members (Linda Petrucelli and Greer Woodward) were nominated for writing awards during 2022. Bruce and Margaret extended their appreciation to Joy for her presentation, and congratulated all who published last year.

On-line Writers Groups: Margaret Zacharias provided an update regarding the on-line writers group *Readings and Responses*, as follows: the group meets *via Zoom* on Saturdays. Margaret typically hosts the "open forum" group the first and second Saturday of each month at which all Guild members are welcome. Frank Reilly normally hosts the "fiction focus" group, which is open by invitation only. The "fiction focus" group, wherein writers read from, and solicit feedback about, book manuscripts in progress, does not have any openings at this time, but Frank does maintain a waitlist. Margaret advised that she and Joy are working to develop a "nonfiction focus" group, and invites those interested to contact either her or Joy. Margaret also made reference to relatively new (and perhaps concerning) artificial intelligence (AI) technology wherein written works are composed by a computer program, noting that she and another member have been discussing how best to identify works which are created in this fashion, moving forward. Finally, Margaret offered her congratulations to Frank Reilly for his recent publication in the Baltimore Review.

YouTube Presentations: Diann Wilson reported on the Guild's YouTube channel, wherein the Guild offers the interview program which she produces and hosts, *Write On!* She also made reference to *Inside the Writer's Studio*, which is currently on hiatus as its host, Eila Algood is no longer available. Diann was able to obtain statistics which reflect how successful these programs have been, advising that there were 658 total views on the Guild's YouTube channel this past year, with a total watch time of 2,903 minutes. She noted that there were twenty-four "likes" during 2022 and six new subscribers, and reminded the Board to let new members know they can go on-line and subscribe. The #1 most-viewed episode of 2022 was *Inside the Writers Studio, Episode 25* with Don Kennedy. The second most-viewed episode was *Write On!, Episode 18*, with Sheri Brenden, who discussed the path to the publication of her book about Title IX (which has now been published by the University of Minnesota Press). Diann noted that the Guild's YouTube channel, and in particular *Inside the Writer's Studio*, began as a substitute for in-person readings when the pandemic eliminated in-person gatherings. *Inside the Writers Studio* highlights an author reading from, and being interviewed about, his or her work; any member interested in taking over as producer and host of this program is encouraged to contact either Diann or Eila. Finally, Diann asked that anyone who would like to be interviewed about any topic related to writing in *Write On!* contact her for more information.

OPPORTUNITY DRAWING [2]: Diane Revell hosted a second spinning of the wheel. Margaret Zacharias was the winner of two books of poetry: *Dwarf Stars 2022* (co-edited by Greer Woodward) and *Estuary* (Eila Algood). The next spin's prizes were *Rise of Daan* (Don Mules alias D. Ward Cornell) and *Eternus* (Tessa Rice), and Donna Beumler was the winner of the spin. Finally, the third round winner was Don Kennedy, who was awarded the book *Eleven Days* (Don Mules alias D. Ward Cornell).

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES

EVENTS DIRECTOR UPDATE: Bryan Furer advised that he has been unable to find volunteers at this point to serve on a committee which would plan and carry-out activities; although there are events which he would like the Guild to participate in, he does need other members to get involved. Bryan is spearheading a radio theatre-style podcast project, and he and the Volcano-area writers continue to promote their newly-published second anthology. He noted that there is currently planned a reading and book-selling event on February 11th at Volcano Garden Arts, and indicated that this type of event is open to Guild members more broadly, as long as this does not conflict with the Guild's 501(c)(3) status. Bruce opined that Guild members can attend such events, read from their work, promote HWG, and offer their books for sale, without running afoul of non-profit guidelines—as long as the Guild does not fund these types of events. Joy agreed, advising that Guild members participate in this type of event on a regular basis at Kona Stories Bookstore in Keauhou. Bryan brought up the possibility of HWG participating in State-sponsored events, as well as Oahu's "Comic Con," and plans to contact the Hawaii Tourism Authority for more information. He did reiterate that the "Events Committee" really does need to be a "committee," rather than the efforts of just one person. Bruce agreed, and asked that this topic be added to the agenda for the upcoming Special Planning Meeting.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR UPDATE: Joy Fisher advised that she writes and distributes publicity releases for Guild-sponsored events. For example, prior to the pandemic, she attended, and then wrote articles about, in-person community readings by Guild members. She then archived those articles on the Guild's website's "Guild News" section. Joy also manages and maintains the Guild's two Facebook sites (one for the general public, and the other for members only); however, she has been searching for the past year for someone with appropriate social media skills and expertise to take over management of Facebook for HWG, and she continues to look for assistance in this regard. Additionally, Joy and Cece Johansen develop and publish the Guild's newsletter *Member News*. The newsletter concept originally arose out of the need for members to keep in touch and stay informed during the time that the pandemic mandated a restriction on social gatherings. *Member News*, which is published on the Guild's website twice per year, includes feature stories about members, a "genre column," a section highlighting new members, and an article about members whose work has been published. Joy

anticipates that the next issue of the newsletter will be posted to the website sometime in March, and she will be sending out an e-mail soliciting stories and articles from members.

WEBMASTER UPDATE: Duncan Dempster mentioned the recent changes that he made to refurbish the “landing page” of the website. He encouraged anyone who has any questions to reach out to him at admin@hawaiiwritersguild.com. He also invited those members who have not opted to create an “authors page” on the website to consider doing so by forwarding to his attention a photo and a short bio (150 to 200 words). Additionally, Duncan is working on creating a new page for the website which will inform members as to the writers’ support groups which are available (both on-line and in-person). Finally, he noted that he is working with Bob Lupo to finalize and post to the website the fourth edition of the Guild’s on-line literary journal, *Latitudes 4th ed.*

LATITUDES: Bob, as Managing Editor of *Latitudes 4th ed.*, advised that he has now contacted all those who submitted their work, and notified them of the Selection Committee’s decisions. He acknowledged with gratitude all authors who took the plunge and shared their writing for consideration. He believes that *Latitudes 4th ed.* is on target for a mid-February launch. 74 works were submitted across four genres (poetry, fiction, non-fiction/memoir, and drama). Of the eleven fiction submissions, seven were accepted for publication. Similarly, eight of thirteen non-fiction/memoir submissions were accepted. The one work of drama submitted will be published; however, poets did not fare as well, with only 12 of 49 poetry submissions being accepted. Bob believes that total submissions and acceptance rates were roughly in sync with prior years. Accepted work, which he rates as “very good to excellent” across all genres, is in the process of being formatted by Duncan for publication on the website. Finally, Bob expressed his appreciation to all the hard-working editors who donated their time and expertise to cull through submissions and make the difficult decisions.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Bryan Furer, Volcano-area Writers Group: Bryan related that anticipated activities amongst the group are slow to roll out at this point because COVID continues to spread in the community and impact whether in-person events can go forward. He urges everyone to continue to take precautions, as the pandemic lingers. He would like to see greater involvement by members in Guild event planning and organizing activities. Joy congratulated Bryan and the Volcano-area writers on their two published anthologies, and inquired as to whether the group has plans to publish a third volume. Bryan believes that publishing a third anthology is a distinct possibility, and that the group has learned a lot during the publication process. He would also like to move forward this year with producing a podcast.

Diane Revell, North Kohala-area Writers Group: Diane Revell reported that North Kohala writers meet every other Thursday *via* Zoom. There are typically about six active participants out of approximately thirteen members of the group, which allows plenty of time for readings and feedback. Diane reiterated that she took over as facilitator of the group, which resumed in September, after Eila’s hiatus and her decision to move on to other things. Diane is encouraged that there are several new members. She has heard from others that it would be ideal to start back up with public readings. In this regard, Diane has been in touch with Eila and Joy about developing a type of “checklist” to help with the organization and implementation of in-person readings; additionally, Eila has offered to assist those interested in learning how to emcee such a gathering.

OPPORTUNITY DRAWING [3]: Diane displayed the spinning wheel to award the remaining books donated by members. Although the wheel brought up Donna’s name as the winner of Duncan’s books *Chapel on the Moor*, and *Where Are You?*, Donna won one of the spins during the earlier opportunity drawing, and her name should have been removed. Additionally, Donna noted that she has both books, enjoyed them immensely, and asked that another winner be selected. The wheel was spun again, and both of Duncan’s books (the second set he’d donated) were awarded to Nancy Baenziger. The winner of the final book, Angela Leslee’s *Lucky to Live Hawaii*, was Susie Cysewski. Bruce inquired of Susie as to the correct pronunciation of her last name; she prefers “Sisoski.” Diane did invite members who might be interested in taking over hosting the spinning wheel game to let her know. Joy indicated that she would be responsible for distributing books to the winners.

OTHER BUSINESS/PARKING LOT:

Member Suggestions: Bruce noted that, in the interest of time, it would be more efficient for members to e-mail their suggestions and ideas to Donna, himself, or any Board member, rather than to solicit input verbally at this time. That input would then be considered at the upcoming Special Planning Meeting. He encouraged all members to share their thoughts on what they would like to see the Board do in order to grow the Guild and to further its mission of promoting literacy and supporting writers. Bruce reminded members that the Guild seeks contribution from all, and that members’ participation matters. Duncan added that there is a form on the website for suggestions under “Events,” and that members may also share their ideas *via* the website.

IN CLOSING, Diane remarked that she hopes the Guild can find opportunities to gather in-person in the future, perhaps in small groups, in order to connect in ways that are difficult to accomplish virtually. It has been her experience that face-to-face interaction is valuable, and she asked that anyone who has ideas about how to safely meet despite the on-going pandemic share their thoughts on this topic. Bruce concurred with Diane’s comments. Finally, Diane mentioned

that Board members are always happy to mentor others who may wish to run for leadership positions in the future.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

* The next **BOD meeting/Special Planning Meeting** will be held on January 26, 2023 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. All meetings for the foreseeable future will be **held via Zoom and hosted by Duncan**. **Requests for items to be added to the agenda for the next regular Board meeting should be sent via email to President Diane Revell (diane.b.revell@gmail.com) and Secretary Donna Beumler (dmbeumler@gmail.com) at least 10 days prior to the next meeting (no later than January 16, 2023). The agenda will be emailed to the full membership five days prior to the meeting.**

The meeting adjourned at 4:32 pm.

Respectfully submitted this 8th day of February, 2023

By: Donna Beumler

Donna Beumler
Secretary, HWG