

Minutes of the Hawaii Writers Guild (HWG) annual Special Planning Meeting, held via Zoom due to pandemic protocols. 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*

Bryan Furer -*Regional Director, Volcano-area*

Others Members present via Zoom:

Duncan Dempster -*Webmaster*

Diane Revell -*Registered Agent*

Cecilia Johansen -*Public Relations Committee*

Margaret Zacharias -*On-line Writers Group Facilitator Team*

Donna Maltz -*Member, joins at 2:02 pm*

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Without objection, Webmaster Duncan Dempster activated Zoom's "record" function.

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Carol McMillan being unavailable this date, **Vice President Bruce Stern called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm.**

Bruce addressed the general issue of planning for 2022 in light of the on-going pandemic. Noting that the situation regarding in-person gatherings, mask mandates, etc. is presently still very fluid, Bruce observed that the pandemic has substantially affected the Guild's activities for the past two years. At this time, it's unknown whether, and to what extent, the pandemic will continue to require personal precautions, making definitive planning for the upcoming year difficult. The Guild would like to restore some of the activities which have been on hold, such as public readings—even if masks are required to attend— but it appears premature at this point to move forward with those plans.

Bruce observed that planning for the Guild's future projects and activities will necessitate taking into account HWG's non-profit status pursuant to §501(c)(3) of the IRS Code.<sup>1</sup> He noted

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the question of whether the Guild should *continue* to operate as a non-profit is addressed infra at page 6.

that, because the transition to a non-profit organization resulted in the Guild's decision not to participate in the promotion of book sales for its members, some members felt that HWG no longer offered the support they were seeking, believing that one of the Guild's major purposes is to assist its members in selling their books.

Bruce then reviewed the original goals of the Guild upon its formation in 2017, as stated in its "mission statement" accompanying the application for non-profit status, as well in the Guild's promotional trifold brochure. Some of the basic goals included supporting the community of writers in the Hawaiian Islands, providing opportunities to engage with the public, promoting artistic awareness and literacy, and enriching the community through the written word. In this regard, it was again noted that the pandemic has restricted many of the Guild's traditional activities, such as public readings and workshops.

#### Review of Current Projects- Website, YouTube Programs, In-person Readings, and Informational Tables:

Within this general planning framework, Bruce provided members with an opportunity to review existing HWG programs and activities.

Webmaster Duncan Dempster reported that he has posted the Guild's literary journal (3rd edition) and its newsletter (2nd issue) to the website. These time-consuming projects having been completed, the website is essentially now self-maintaining, although he does occasionally find a technical glitch which requires his attention. Duncan would like to find a member who is willing to learn the art of website management, and hopes to identify someone who is willing to take over for him when he is ready to step down.

In the absence of Events Director Johnson Kahili, Joy discussed the YouTube program featuring readings by members which had been spearheaded by Johnson, *Hawaii Writers Showcase*. It was agreed that, if pandemic protocols do permit gatherings this year, the Guild would like to return to in-person readings which are open to the public. However, it would be ideal to maintain the on-line readings as well; *Hawaii Writers Showcase* has been well-attended.

Joy emphasized the need to recruit people who are willing to facilitate these programs, especially as maintaining a web presence **and** re-establishing in-person readings will require more active participation by members willing to assist. It was noted that, in the past, Carol has been helpful in implementing public readings, and the Guild hopes to look to Carol for her continued assistance in this regard.

Bruce reiterated that the Guild should move in the direction of continuing to produce *Hawaii Writers Showcase* and other YouTube productions, but that this requires the participation of members with the necessary technical skills. Bruce also emphasized the importance of public readings (when pandemic protocols allow), and noted that these in-person readings should also be recorded for posting to Facebook and to the Guild's YouTube channel.

Reference was made to the Guild's informational tables, typically manned by Guild members at the King Kamehameha Hotel in Kona (Christmas in July and Christmas Crafts Fair) and at the Cherry Blossom Festival in Waimea (which was cancelled again this year due to the pandemic). It was noted that these activities require an expenditure for which that the Guild does budget. The discussion then focused on a theme which continued throughout the planning meeting: the very real need to engage more members to take on responsibility for organizing activities, staffing informational tables, emceeding public readings, and otherwise more actively participating in leadership roles. Joy noted that many of these activities fall under the auspices of the Guild's events director. Should Johnson be unable to continue as events director, HWG will look to its members to find a volunteer willing to fill this position. Joy also advised that the informational trifold brochure will need to be updated, and she offered her expertise in this regard. Finally, it was noted that the Guild's YouTube production *Inside the Writers Studio*, formerly hosted by Eila Algood, is not currently active.

Review of Current Projects- *Latitudes, 3rd ed.*, and *Member News*:

Bob Lupo was pleased to announce the February 28th launch of the Guild's on-line Literary Review *Latitudes, 3rd edition*. He noted that changes made to the process this year (e.g., a larger selection committee) resulted in some challenges not previously encountered; however, overall, the new process resulted in a rewarding experience. The review reflects diverse and superior quality writing from 28 Guild members. Bob was also happy to see that more submissions were accepted this year than last, and that members who had never submitted before did so this year. For next year's edition, Bob would like to see the current changes to the process, such as co-genre editors and a larger selection committee, remain. He'd also like to see the submission window open up a little earlier next year.

Duncan suggested, to unanimous agreement, that greater emphasis should be paid next year on including audio and/or video versions of the accepted submissions.

Bob extended his gratitude to the Guild's Webmaster Duncan Dempster, and acknowledged Duncan's extraordinary diligence in, once again, bringing *Latitudes* to life via the Guild's website. In addition, Bob acknowledged Laura Burkhart, Margaret Zacharias, Joy Fisher, and the entire *Latitudes* selection committee for their hard work and personal commitment to this important project.

Additionally, the second issue of the Guild's newsletter, *Member News*, was posted to the website on March 11, 2022. The newsletter is a result of the dedication, diligence, and creative vision of Joy Fisher and Cecilia Johansen. Joy extended her gratitude to Cece for her assistance with the newsletter, and to Duncan for utilizing his vast computer skills to bring *Member News* to the screen via the Guild's website in record time. In addition to feature articles and a genre column, the newsletter is the place to read about new members and to find out who published what recently. Joy hopes to be able to produce the newsletter twice per year.

Cece inquired as to whether members could purchase advertising in the newsletter in order to sell their books. This query was unable to be answered, absent additional consideration, as well as research into the rules pertaining to non-profit organizations. She also suggested adding links to members' blogs and websites in the newsletter, and including a book review column wherein books by members are reviewed. These suggestions were well-received. Cece observed that the past practice of staffing tables at events to sell members' books was not helpful to off-island members, and that her suggestions could allow for more equitable support without running afoul of non-profit rules. Bruce reiterated that the purpose of the Guild's informational tables is to promote HWG, and not to sell books. Joy noted that the Guild would like to establish a book club, which could well tie-in to a book review column.

Bryan noted that the Volcano-area writers plan to produce a podcast after their anthology is published, and proposed that HWG also consider it's own podcast.

Margaret extended an offer to participate as a book reviewer, and this discussion led more fully to the consideration of an earlier proposal that the Guild establish a book club which would focus on members' books. She recalled that Virginia Fortner and Donna Maltz may have previously expressed an interest in organizing and facilitating a book club.

On the issue of members who've published books, Bryan proposed creating a print catalogue of all of the books published by members. On this note, Joy mentioned that *Member News* does include stories which highlight all members who have recently published. Bruce opined that a print catalogue could be cost-prohibitive, but that it would be fairly straightforward to prepare a digital-format catalog and post it to the website. Duncan made mention of the "Gallery" section of the Guild's website, which is a photo array of the covers of members' published works. The array is about 75-80% complete at this time, and can serve to operate as a "catalogue" until Bryan's proposal can be explored in greater detail.

#### Review of Current Projects- Opt-in E-mail List and Mentorship:

Bruce referenced the "opt-in" e-mail list which he created for those members who wish to share their e-mail contact information with other members. He reiterated that this list is not to be used for promotional or commercial purposes. Rather the list is intended to be a vehicle for members to reach out to others for mentorship, support, and/or advice regarding their writing projects. Bruce expects to generate an updated opt-in list next month, and notes that about two-thirds of guild members have "opted-in."

#### Review of Current Projects - Radio Theatre Podcast and Regional Report [Volcano-area]:

Bryan referenced the anthology which the Volcano-area writers are in the process of publishing, and shared the completed cover art. Once the anthology is published, he and his colleagues will move on to develop a radio theatre podcast. They are in search of a venue

(ideally at no cost) which will serve as a sound studio, and of people who will read the works of those writers who would prefer not to read. Bryan envisions short works (poetry and short stories) along with serialized novels. The longer or novel-length works will include more intensive production values, and may include actors, sound effects, music, etc. in the fashion of a traditional radio play. He is considering approaching local businesses to help sponsor this project and would like to see this happen prior to the summer. Bryan also intends to approach Eila Algood, who is affiliated with the Hawi radio station KNKR, about any assistance or support the station may be able to provide. Ideally, Bryan would like to see HWG develop its own podcast, and this suggestion was well-received.

#### Review of Current Projects - *Reading and Responses* and *Write On*:

Margaret Zacharias coordinates the team of facilitators for the on-line writers group known as *Readings and Responses*, which meets via Zoom every Saturday. Margaret had previously provided to the BOD via e-mail detailed concerns about the efficiency of the group in light of the increasing number of new members with diverse backgrounds and little familiarity with the core group. At Margaret's request, Donna had previously distributed to the Board via e-mail a proposed "transition plan" prepared by the team of facilitators. This plan is intended to refine the parameters of *Readings and Responses*, in order to better address the needs and concerns of its members. This transition plan was discussed more fully later in the meeting during the agenda item "Members' Suggestions." Margaret emphasized that there may soon be a need to establish a second on-line writers group, but that currently there are no resources available to move in that direction.

Inquiry was made as to the status of *Write On*, the YouTube program created and hosted by Diann Wilson, but no information was available at this time.

#### Members' Suggestions:

Among the suggestions previously proposed by members were facilitating a book club and engaging in community outreach. Other ideas, such as publishing an anthology and creating a position for a marketing/publishing coordinator were all considered possible future Guild activities, but would require members who are willing to volunteer to establish and support these activities.

Margaret then asked for guidance regarding the proposed transition plan prepared by the on-line writers group facilitators team, which they would like to implement May through August. Bruce advised that he supported diversity among the writers' groups, and that it would be best if each group developed its own structure, as well as fashioned rules that best suited that particular group's participants. He noted that he has long been a member of the writers group which meets at Tutu's House in Waimea, and that this group has been a successful forum for writers, but that it operates somewhat differently than *Readings and Responses*. Bruce did express confusion as to what the team meant by "closing" some of the on-line meetings.

Margaret sought to clarify a few of the teams' more salient points, including allowing a long-standing core group to focus on sequential projects, while incorporating new members into the group in an efficient fashion. The team suggested that three (or four) meetings per month would be closed to new members, allowing the continuity the current writers desire, and that one meeting per month would be more inclusive. The team also proposed transitioning to a system which would require that members who wish to attend RSVP in advance, and indicate the genre of the writing they wished to read. It was noted again that ideally a second on-line writers group could be developed, but limited resources prevent that at this time.

Bruce responded again by encouraging autonomy, inclusiveness, and diversity amongst the various writers groups, and requested that Donna add the topic of the team's four-month transition plan to the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting scheduled for March 23rd.

As time was running short, only brief reference was made to the proposal for a new member orientation program, and, like many of the other suggestions, it was agreed that this is an idea certainly to be pursued, but that volunteers will be needed to coordinate this and many of the other proposed future activities and programs suggested by members.

Bruce then advised that he had been approached by a member (who wishes to remain anonymous) who may be questioning the decision to seek non-profit status for HWG, and a discussion ensued. Reference was made to the potential availability of grant funding for non-profit organizations as an important factor guiding the Guild's decision in this regard. Joy made mention of the Laura Jane Musser Rural Arts grant, for which the Guild is eligible to apply. Discussion then focused on what the Guild would spend grant money on, and whether those projects would be consistent with the Guild's primary stated goals. It was agreed that more concrete ideas for the expenditure of grant funds would need to be developed. Diane remarked that the Volcano-area writers upcoming radio theatre podcast might be supported financially in part by grant funds.

Margaret pointed out that one of the Guild's goals is to become involved with mentoring students and helping to develop their writing skills. She further suggested that the Guild consider partnering with high school English teachers to establish and implement a scholarship program for students, and utilizing grant funding to provide scholarship awards. This idea was well-received, but again, would require someone willing to take on an outreach role. Diane made mention of members living on other islands who were affiliated with schools and colleges, and who might be willing to help HWG explore the proposal of an HWG scholarship program in greater detail. Joy suggested that the Guild consider a writing contest for students, with the winner(s) being both published in *Latitudes* and receiving a cash award.

The need and/or desire for non-profit training (pursuant to §501(c)(3), IRS Code) was raised, and in this regard, Joy requested that Donna add the topic of ethics training to the agenda for the upcoming BOD meeting on March 23rd.

### Brainstorming Session:

Endeavoring to keep the meeting to the scheduled 90 minute time period allowed, Bruce summarized the Guild's emphasis on future activities as: out-reach to schools, extending the Guild's on-line writers groups, and support (including possible financial assistance) for the radio theatre podcast.

It was also agreed that substantial efforts will need to be made to solicit more participation from Guild members, and to engage members' involvement in long-term planning. Bruce proposed directly soliciting members to help out with Guild activities, and mentioned the need to find an understudy for the webmaster position. Bruce emphasized the need to maintain a YouTube presence, and to follow-up with respect to the status of the Guild's current YouTube productions.

### Financial Planning:

Prior to the meeting, Bob had distributed to the BOD an HWG annual budget, 2018-2021, which includes a draft of the proposed annual budget for 2022. (Please see Attachment "A"). The budget was compiled in anticipation of a more normalized year, in terms of typical, pre-pandemic Guild activities. He noted that the Guild's decision to change the manner in which dues are paid has resulted in less income being generated than in past years. His calculations suggest a projected deficit for the year of \$504.45, although some of these line-items are rough estimates. The annual budget will be presented at the March BOD meeting for review and approval by the Board. Bruce commented that, as Joy had pointed out, grant funding from the Laura Jane Musser Rural Arts grant program is intended to supplement general operating expenses, and that the Guild's current source of income is limited to membership dues. Donna added that the Guild would require the assistance of someone with non-profit grant-writing experience in this regard. Joy mentioned that members Holly Algood and Janet Carpenter may have previous grant-writing experience. Brian commented that he believes the Volcano-area writers have received grant-funding to attend the certification program offered by Na Leo TV, and that Janet may have been instrumental in pursuing this source of funding. Brian and Joy agreed to follow up on this issue.

### Final Comments:

Bruce provided each attendee an opportunity to be heard before adjourning.

Duncan mentioned that a consideration of future projects should include not only web and on-line material, but printed material as well. Although projects like a non-digitized, print version of the newsletter *Member News* may be cost prohibitive, there could be some projects that would be more affordably rendered into print. Donna agreed that promoting printed materials in addition to digitized projects is important. She mentioned that a new member (Circe Woessner) is currently publishing a print magazine, and that a founding member (Eila Algood)

has expressed an interest in putting together an anthology, similar to that published by the Volcano-area writers.

Bob expressed an interest in the Guild expanding its efforts regarding writing workshops, mentorship programs, and writing support groups. Margaret indicated her appreciation for the enthusiasm and ideas the attendees brought to the meeting.

Joy will follow-up with Virginia Fortner with respect to the proposal of establishing and facilitating a book club; she will also plan on adding a “book review” column to the newsletter. Joy reminded Donna that the issue of scheduling ethics training will need to be added to the agenda for the next BOD meeting.

Diane remarked that CherylAnn Farrell and another member may have educational contacts on other islands and could be resources to tap regarding the establishment of a scholarship program or student writing contest. Also, she will contact Diann Wilson to inquire as to her availability to continue producing *Write On*. In the event that Diann is willing to continue with this YouTube production, Diane will suggest that a session on what makes a *Latitudes* submission successful, with Bob Lupo, might be helpful.

Donna Maltz was given a chance to weigh in, but was unable to participate at this time.

Bryan reiterated a vision for the future which included his assistance in developing a podcast not only for the Volcano-area writers but for the Guild as well.

Bruce expressed his appreciation to all for sharing their ideas, and for their significant contributions to the Guild.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next **Board of Directors meeting will be held on March 23, 2022 at 1:00 pm**. Due to pandemic restrictions, all meetings for the foreseeable future will be **held via Zoom ONLY and will be hosted by Duncan**. The **meeting adjourned at 2:34 pm**.

Respectfully submitted this 23rd day of March, 2022.

By: \_\_\_*Donna Beumler*\_\_\_

Donna Beumler

Secretary

Hawaii Writers Guild



ATTACHMENT “A”:

<b>Hawaii Writers Guild Budget, 2018 to 2021 Actual; 3rd Draft 2022 Estimated:</b>					
<b>Revenues - Expenses = Retained Earnings Surplus / (DEFICIT)</b>					
	2018 A	2019 A	2020 A	2021 A	<i>Draft</i> 2022E
<b>Retained Earnings Balance as of January 1</b>	\$958.43	\$2,737.35	\$2,392.63	\$3,479.18	\$ 6,134.17
<b>Revenues (Gross Receipts):</b>					
<i>Dues--Existing Members (43 , '17; 51 , '18, 60 , '19, 55 '20, 78, '21, 88, '22E )</i>	\$2,040.00	\$2,414.76	\$2,199.37	\$3,061.71	\$2,155.55
<i>Cash Donations + Year Ahead Dues (paid 2020 for '21 Dues)</i>	\$2,320.00	\$709.98	380.00	234.55	300.00
<i>T-Shirt Revenues + C Card Exp. Donations + Refunds + Rebates + Grants</i>		\$470.80	789.59	1,062.13	996.17
<b>Total Operating Revenues</b>	<b>\$4,360.00</b>	<b>\$3,595.54</b>	<b>\$3,368.96</b>	<b>\$4,358.39</b>	<b>\$3,451.72</b>
<b>Less Operating Expenses:</b>					
ASB Setup Deposit + Monthly Account Fee		157.85	60.00	60.00	60.00
501-c-3 Legal Expenses/Misc. Legal / Tax, Hano Membership	\$ 600.00	1,300.00	372.25	665.44	<b>800.00</b>
Anna Ranch-- Dinner Rental	\$208.33	\$250.66	0.00	0.00	275.00
Dinner Supplies / Program Expenses	\$560.00	\$774.87	886.08	0.00	1200.00
Pop-Up Events	\$0.00	\$511.81	275.36	0.00	0.00
Thelma Parker Library Rental	\$275.00	\$0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
Room Workshop Rentals/BOD Meetings/Tutu's	\$50.00	\$100.00	25.00	0.00	<b>200.00</b>
Speaker/Microphone Rental/TV Setup	\$0.00	\$100.00	0.00	0.00	<b>100.00</b>
Kamehameha Christmas / July Festival	\$0.00	\$110.00	0.00	110.00	110.00
Kamehameha Christmas / November Festival(JoAnn Williams)	\$225.00	\$200.00	0.00	215.00	215.00
Cherry Blossom Festival	\$0.00	\$90.00	100.00	0.00	<b>100.00</b>
Vinyl Banner/T-Shirts/Trifold	\$490.80	\$49.22	0.00	100.00	150.00
Zoom Link, YouTube Events	\$0.00	\$0.00	180.00	156.96	<b>250.00</b>
Website Hosting/Net Setup Fees	\$0.00	\$0.00	149.22	187.00	<b>195.81</b>
Domain Email Accounts (2 in '18, 4 in '19)	\$0.00	\$0.00	100.00	75.00	75.36
Posters (6 in '18, 8 in '19))	\$89.95	\$65.00	0.00	0.00	75.00
New Business Cards/Expense Reimbursements/Supplies/P.O.Box	\$82.00	\$230.85	134.50	134.00	150.00
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$2,581.08</b>	<b>\$3,940.26</b>	<b>\$2,282.41</b>	<b>\$ 1,703.40</b>	<b>\$ 3,956.17</b>
<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>\$1,778.92</b>	<b>(\$344.72)</b>	<b>\$1,086.55</b>	<b>\$ 2,654.99</b>	<b>(\$504.45)</b>
<b>Estimated Retained Earnings</b>	<b>\$2,737.35</b>	<b>\$2,392.63</b>	<b>\$3,479.18</b>	<b>\$ 6,134.17</b>	<b>\$ 5,629.72</b>