

Hawaii Writers Guild
-MINUTES of the Board of Directors Meeting-
February 22, 2024

Minutes of the Hawaii Writers Guild (HWG) Board of Directors meeting, held *via Zoom*. All times noted refer to Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time. Action items identified for follow-up are italicized and underlined.

Officers and Directors present via Zoom:

Diane Revell —*President and North Kohala-area Regional Director*

Bruce Stern — *Vice President*

Catherine Tripp —*Treasurer*

Donna Beumler —*Secretary*

Joy Fisher —*Public Relations Director*

Frank Reilly —*Kauai Regional Director*

Gwyn Gorg —*Events Director, joins at 6:55 pm*

Other Members present via Zoom:

Duncan Dempster —*Webmaster*

Margaret Zacharias —*Managing Editor, “Latitudes V”*

[For purposes of assisting the secretary with the preparation of the Minutes of the meeting, Duncan activated the “record” function of the Zoom platform without objection.]

REGULAR SESSION (open to general membership)—

1. PRESIDENT DIANE REVELL CALLED THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE MEETING TO ORDER at 6:39 pm.

2. *LATITUDES* —

Margaret Zacharias, Managing Editor of *Latitudes V*, reported that 28 HWG members have submitted a total of 105 manuscripts for consideration (78 of which were poems). 19 members have had their work passed into the second round at this point. Margaret noted that the one drama submission needs more work and was not accepted. In addition, she observed that several of the poems submitted have been previously published.

With respect to the on-going discussion regarding authors' permission to publish and related copyright concerns, Margaret advised that, for purposes of this edition of *Latitudes*, the authors will be asked simply to agree to one-time electronic publishing rights, as has been done in the past. The topic of literary rights more broadly, however, will require extensive research and discussion going forward, especially in light of the fact that the Guild would like to publish a print version of *Latitudes* in the future. Margaret also mentioned that she would like to change the current manner in which submissions are rated; traditionally, the editors are given four options concerning a particular work: “yes/maybe/no/recuse.” Margaret would prefer a ranking system on a scale to be applied by all editors, not just the genre editors. For example, with respect to the 12 non-fiction submissions, editors would be asked to rank them numerically from 1 through 12, with the works ranked 9 through 12 being deemed unacceptable for publication. Additionally, for purposes of future editions of *Latitudes*, Margaret requested that the Board reconsider the current practice of allowing submissions of previously published work, and also give some thought to limiting the number of submissions per author.

Bruce responded that he is very comfortable with moving to a ranking system as mentioned, and that he is in favor of changing the *Latitudes* guidelines to require in the future that submissions not have been previously published. Frank, Diane, and Donna all agreed, indicating that the Guild's preference moving forward would be to provide a platform for new and diverse voices, rather than re-publishing work which has already appeared elsewhere. It was a strongly held opinion of Board members that work which has been previously published in earlier editions of *Latitudes* should not be eligible to be submitted again to *Latitudes* for consideration. Re-publishing work which has been previously published could also potentially give rise to conflicts with respect to the parameters of the permission previously granted. The Board expressed a desire that the requirement for previously unpublished submissions be consistent across all genres. Additionally, Diane agreed that it would be appropriate to allow the editors to set limits in the future in terms of the number of submissions per person, and there was no objection to this approach. Finally, the Board agreed with Margaret's suggestion that the “word count” requirements be changed slightly in the future to maintain a *maximum* word count limit, but to change the *minimum* word count to a *suggestion* rather than a requirement.

3. WEBSITES ISSUES —

Webmaster Duncan Dempster reported on the topic of the Guild’s website generally, and more specifically on the desire to move to a different web platform. Duncan reiterated that there is no such thing as a “conversion” from one web platform to another. He stated that, although photos can be transferred, other data such as code, files, artwork, and design cannot be automatically converted. Duncan noted that there are many available web platforms, such as Weebly—which the Guild currently uses—and Wordpress, which receives positive reviews. In assessing whether to move to a new platform and how that might be accomplished, Duncan mentioned that there are two basic steps involved: deciding on an authoring software system and finding a host to distribute the website. The Board would need to agree either to start wholly from scratch and build a new website, or to try to replicate the current website, both of which can be expected to be quite time-consuming. Most significantly, it was noted that the Guild needs to find someone with the requisite expertise to agree to do this work, **and** to continue to maintain the website on a regular basis, either as a volunteer or in a paid position. Despite many requests of Guild members over the past several years, no one has come forward and expressed any interest in this regard. Diane indicated that she will give some thought to contacting former member Zack Royer, who has experience in this area. Also, Donna will draft a flyer specifically soliciting interest in a website management position, and will distribute that via e-mail to the general membership.

Margaret noted how important the website is to the Guild, including its function in publishing the on-line literary journal, and stated that she would feel comfortable spending money as may be necessary to bring someone on board. Bruce agreed, and he and Joy discussed developing a selection process in this regard. Duncan expressed a preference for hiring a Guild member, in the event that no volunteers are forthcoming. He also advised that the rules with respect to domain-name management can be complicated, and we would need a candidate with familiarity in that area. Frank agreed that an individual selected to fill this role would have to specifically commit to spending the necessary time to maintain the website over the long-term. Catherine mentioned that the web platform Square has purchased Weebly, and seems intent on phasing it out. She and Duncan agree that Weebly no longer allows efficient access, and that the Guild will need to move to another platform this year. Catherine believes that the Guild does not need a marketplace-based platform such as Square, and that Wordpress would better suit our needs. She referenced “Kilauea Web Works” as a local web designer which only uses Wordpress, and suggested inserting a placeholder in the 2024 budget for re-platforming. It was the consensus of all present that finding someone who is willing to make a commitment to spend the time necessary to not only re-platform but also manage the website on a regular basis is crucial.

With respect to the upcoming youth poetry contest being organized by members Carol Prescott and Michael Foley, Duncan mentioned that he has a page set aside on the website to advertise and promote the contest. Donna mentioned that she just received via e-mail from Carol the contest guidelines and criteria, and that she would forward that to all at the conclusion of the meeting.

4. MEMBERSHIP REPORT—

Prior to the meeting, Bruce e-mailed to Board members updated Membership Logs and the most recent “Opt-in List.” Current active HWG members total 77, including one student member. Bruce will need to clarify the manner in which Bob Lupo had been handling the dues of the student member. Additionally, 42 members have asked to have their e-mail information included on the Guild’s “Opt-in List.” Bruce noted that three people have had their applications accepted but have not yet paid their dues in order to activate their memberships. Bruce raised the issue of how best to handle membership expiration dates in coordination with invoicing. He emphasized how important it is to make sure that members feel acknowledged and respected when sending out dues’ reminders or invoices. Diane mentioned that the invoicing process could include a request to members to let us know if they’ve decided not to renew their memberships.

5. TREASURER’S REPORT—

Catherine indicated that she felt she had drafted polite and respectful “reminder” invoices. She noted that she has ceased sending out reminders to those 23 people who’ve not yet renewed for 2024, as she received some complaints. Bruce advised that these people will be moved to the delinquent list soon if dues are not paid. Frank stated that he felt an e-mail directed to only those who have not paid may not be the best approach, and he agreed to draft for Catherine’s use a less personal and “softer” e-mail that is designed to not isolate or embarrass those who’ve not yet paid. Joy mentioned the possibility of telephone outreach to members who are delinquent in their dues, and also noted that, in the past, the Guild has offered financial assistance to those for whom the payment of dues might result in hardship. However, Gwyn, Diane, and Catherine felt that personal phone calls would be extremely time consuming, with Diane noting that many people don’t answer their phone unless they can identify the caller with caller i.d. It was agreed that reminder e-mails should be tailored to be less personal, and to focus on respect and appreciation for Guild members. Diane acknowledged that this process can be complicated by the fact that some members use more than one e-mail address, and Gwyn suggested that annual an e-mail to all members requesting that they update their contact information might be helpful.

Approval of Annual Budget: The Board engaged in a discussion concerning the proposed Annual Budget which Catherine had e-mailed prior to the meeting. It was agreed generally that the Guild should start looking into spending some of the funds which it saved over the past few years due to the restrictions on gatherings caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Suggestions to specifically include line-item expenses for membership in HANO (\$100), the use of Tutu’s House (\$300), liability insurance (\$500), the Waimea Cherry Blossom Festival (\$100), and “new suggestions” (\$3000) were agreed upon. It was clarified that the Kahilu Theatre expense (\$1000) would be for use of a small room, not the actual theatre, and that the Guild would be utilizing the space at Tutu’s House *in lieu of* the Thelma Parker Library. Joy stated that

she would like to see the Board set aside some funds for the purpose of rental of the small room at Kahilu Theatre. Diane noted that the North Kohala Library in Kapa'au did not in the past charge for use of their space to hold public readings, and that the Tutu's House expense is considered a donation. Bruce moved to approve the Annual Budget with the changes discussed, Catherine seconded the motion, and it passed with a unanimous vote of all voting members present. Gwyn suggested establishing a scholarship fund to send students to the Kauai Writers Conference in an effort to encourage local kids to express themselves *via* writing and to honor their academic efforts; Donna agreed to put this topic on the agenda for the March meeting, and Catherine advised that this type of project would be covered in the budget under "new suggestions."

6. SECRETARY'S UPDATE—

Donna updated the Board with respect to the North Kohala Youth Poetry Contest and the two e-mails she received from Carol Prescott just prior to the meeting. The organizers of the Contest, members Carol Prescott and Michael Foley, set forth guidelines and criteria for the Contest which they would like to have posted on the Guild's website. Donna reminded the Board that the Guild's BOD has agreed to promote the contest and to provide \$500 in matching funds for second- and third-place award winners. Donna indicated that she would forward those guidelines to the Board members for their consideration, and —unless there is an objection— for posting to the website. A second e-mail requested that the Guild hold a public reading at the library in Kapa'au and combine that event with the awards presentation for the Youth Poetry Contest winners. Discussion followed and it was agreed that this approach would be ideal, and among the possible dates and times provided, the Board selected Monday, June 17, 2024 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Donna will send an e-mail to Carol requesting that she reserve this date/time at the library. Donna requested that Gwyn, as the Guild's new Events Director, coordinate with Carol Prescott on the "public reading" aspect of the event. Joy will take care of press releases, and Diane advised that the library also typically advertises these events.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES—

a.) EVENTS COMMITTEE: Gwyn mentioned that, in honor of Women's History Month, there will be a gathering at Tutu's House in Waimea on March 23, 2024 to share writings by women. Gwyn will follow up with the time of the event. Additionally, this Sunday at the East Hawaii Cultural Center in Hilo from 4:00 -5:30 pm Gwyn will be doing a reading and invited all to attend.

b.) PUBLIC RELATIONS: Joy indicated that she sent out an e-mail to the general membership concerning Gwyn's reading. She further advised that she will be traveling the entire month of March, and that her Guild-related activities will be curtailed until her return.

c.) WEBSITE UPDATES: Duncan mentioned that he forwarded to the membership information concerning the annual Kauai Writers Conference and the benefits which members receive in registering for and attending the Conference. In response, he heard from two members inquiring further. Duncan replied to them that the precise amount of the discount and the special code have yet to be determined. Diane will contact the organizer of the event, David Katz, in order to pin down the specifics.

d.) REGIONAL DIRECTOR REPORTS:

—**Volcano-area**: Bryan Furer was not available to report this date.

—**North Kohala-area**: Diane reported that attendance has been small, but that she is hoping for greater participation at the upcoming meeting next Thursday.

—**Tutu's House**: Bruce reported that a core group (about 2 to 4 people) tends to participate in the Tuesday Zoom meetings, and that they are going well.

—**Kauai Readings and Responses**: Frank reported that the Kauai-based group continues to meet the first and third Thursday evenings of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm *via* Zoom, and is well attended with active and supportive participation. He invited Board members to e-mail him if they are interested in attending and getting helpful feedback with respect to their writing.

—**Other reports - Non-fiction Focus Writers Group/Readings and Responses-Open Forum Writers Group**: Joy reported that Angela Leslee has agreed to facilitate the two meetings of the Non-fiction Focus writers group while Joy is traveling during the month of March. Cheryl Ann Farrell was not available to report on the Readings and Responses Open Forum group at this time; however, Margaret attended several weeks ago and was very pleased with how the group was interacting.

OTHER BUSINESS/PARKING LOT:

—**Pending vacancies**

—**Finalizing the Bylaws changes**

—**Policies and Procedures**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next **Board of Directors meeting** is scheduled for Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 5:30 pm (one hour earlier than we have been meeting). Both Bruce and Joy will be traveling throughout the month of March and will not be available, however.

All meetings for the foreseeable future will be **held via Zoom ONLY and will be 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 March 18, 2024). The final agenda will be emailed to the full membership five days prior to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm.

Respectfully submitted this 18th day of March, 2024.

By: *Donna Beumler*

Donna Beumler
Secretary, Hawaii Writers Guild