

Minutes of the Hawaii Writers Guild (HWG) Board Meeting, held *via* Zoom due to pandemic protocols. All times noted refer to Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time.

Officers and Directors present via Zoom:

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

Bruce Stern —*Vice President*

Bob Lupo —*Treasurer*

Donna Beumler —*Secretary*

Joy Fisher —*Public Relations Director*

Bryan Furer —*Volcano-area Regional Representative*

Others Members present via Zoom:

Duncan Dempster —*Webmaster*

Cecilia Johansen —*Co-editor “Member News” (telephone connection only)*

Frank Reilly —*Co-coordinator, “Readings and Responses” and Coordinator, Kauai Writers Group*

Margaret Zacharias —*Co-coordinator, “Readings and Responses”*

Carol Prescott

1. CALL TO ORDER: President Diane Revell called the meeting to order at **6:36 pm.**

2. PROPOSAL: Establishing a writers group for Kauai writers

The Board considered the written proposal, previously drafted by Frank Reilly and appended to the agenda for purposes of this meeting, to establish a writers group for HWG members on the island of Kauai with the sanction of HWG. The Board discussed this proposal favorably and extended its appreciation to Frank for moving this project along with enthusiasm. Bruce and Diane opined that this group in its initial stages should not be considered at this time a “regional subcommittee” pursuant to Bylaws §6.3.1.5, nor would its coordinator be considered a “regional director” within the meaning of HWG Bylaws. Diane clarified that “regional directors” are tasked not only with organizing local writers’ groups in their areas, but also extending the invitation to non-members to participate in activities and support groups. In this regard, Frank reiterated that the proposal is to require that membership in the Kauai Writers Group be contingent upon membership in HWG. In this way, Frank expects that members, having paid the fee to join HWG, will be vested in, and otherwise bring stability to, the group. All Board members agreed.

Diane suggested that the Kauai Writers Group be considered a “chapter” organization under the umbrella of HWG, and indicated that she would like to see this concept extended to other islands. Frank agreed that his nascent organization will be designed so as to potentially serve as a template for other islands. The only suggested change to the proposal was to note that the Guild’s YouTube channel is open to the public, and one need not be a member of HWG to access it.

Bruce moved to approve Frank’s proposal as outlined in Attachment “A.” Joy seconded the motion. No further discussion being forthcoming, **the motion passed** by a unanimous vote of all voting members of the Board.

Frank expressed his appreciation to the Board. He also extended his gratitude to Margaret Zacharias for her hard work in developing the Readings and Responses on-line writers group, which inspired him to endeavor to develop a writers group on Kauai. Joy offered to send Frank hard copies of the recently updated Guild trifold brochure.

Finally, Diane reiterated that the Kauai Writers Group, as envisioned at this time, would not qualify as a regional subcommittee as defined in the Guild’s Bylaws. It is anticipated however that HWG may wish in the future to consider changing the Bylaws in order to provide for a chapter-type organization such as this one, with its representative serving as a voting member of the Board.

3. PROPOSAL: Organizing student writing contests

The Board next considered the draft letter (Attachment “B” to the agenda) which Cece had prepared in an effort to solicit the assistance of esteemed Maui-based writer Mahealani Wendt. The query was made to Mahealani as to whether she would agree to “have you point us in a direction as to how to serve our communities in the best way possible to fulfill other parts of our works as required by our non-profit status...”. In particular, the letter references, for example, the long-considered proposal to establish a HWG student writing contest.

Diane moved to approve the letter as written and to authorize Cece to forward the letter *via* e-mail (address to be supplied by Joy) to Mahealani. Bruce seconded the motion. Cece will also endeavor to locate a mailing address for Mahealani. There were no further comments or questions. **The motion passed** by unanimous vote of all voting members of the Board.

Discussion then moved more generally to the topic of how best to structure a student writing contest. Reference was made to the draft proposal submitted by Margaret Zacharias (Attachment “C” to the agenda). Questions were raised as to whether such a contest should be extended state-wide or limited to the Big Island, whether the desired demographic would be high school students, and whether “creative writing teacher” is the correct label for teachers responsible for engaging their students in the art of writing.

Cece suggested that the Board wait to further define the details of a student writing contest until we've heard from Mahealani in response to the letter requesting her assistance in this regard, and there was general agreement from the Board on this point. There was also consensus that it would likely be appropriate to begin with a pilot project limited to the Big Island, with the potential for expansion if the contest proves to be successful.

Cece inquired as to whether Board members would be willing to make contact with the principals of local schools. She believes that a preliminary inquiry regarding whether it would be appropriate to approach English teachers generally, or "writing teachers" more specifically is a good first step. In this way, the teachers themselves might assist with the development of a student writing contest that best fits the needs of the students and teachers. Diane asked that the Regional Directors reach out to schools in their areas, in particular high schools, regarding the interest if any in participating in a student writing contest.

Cece also requested that the Board consider looking into some kind of funding to help facilitate the contest and provide for potential awards. In this regard, she proposed that the Board give some thought to naming an award in honor of Mahealani— a proposal which of course could not move forward without Mahealani's imprimatur. Joy asked that Cece report back at the March meeting and update the Board at that time as to Mahealani's response. The question was then raised as to how Carol McMillan was put in touch last year with the class on Oahu which had asked for a presentation by a Guild member. It was the Board members' recollection that an ESL teacher from a school on Oahu made the query using the form available on the Guild's website.

Margaret emphasized that her proposal, which was an early draft, was in follow up to Cece's expressed desire to move forward with discussions concerning a student writing contest. Margaret stated that it's her understanding that most schools do have "language arts" programs of some kind. She also agreed that Mahealani's leadership and/or sponsorship in this regard would be ideal. Margaret noted that, although she has offered in her written proposal to receive contest submissions, her plate is rather full, and for that and other (perhaps legal) reasons she believes it would be more appropriate for a Board member to be the official recipient of submissions. Although Margaret offered her assistance of a "secretarial" type in this regard, she opined that, because minors would be involved, an official representative of HWG should take on this responsibility. Diane indicated that she does not oppose having a Board member serving in this capacity, and inquired of Duncan as to what might be involved in forwarding those submissions to the HWG's e-mail address. Duncan responded that the Guild could consider obtaining a second e-mail address solely for this purpose, at a rate of approximately six dollars per month.

Joy and Bruce both acknowledged that the issue of how the submissions would be made and to whom are just some of the many questions which will need to be answered as this project develops.

Diane updated the Board regarding her efforts to identify grant writing training programs offered through North Kohala Community Resource Center (NKCRC), and referenced an e-mail she'd recently sent to NKCRC on this topic. She noted that Donna was under the impression that the classes had already taken place. Diane will follow up with NKCRC, and will also inquire as to whether they would recommend a particular training program or resource. Duncan advised that Tutu's house occasionally offers grant writing training, and Diane asked Duncan to look into the costs of such training as well as when it might next be made available. Diane is potentially willing to sponsor someone to attend a grant-related training program, and may also attend herself. Carol noted that she had taken the grant writing class offered through NKCRC about five years ago, and recalled that one important resource which was made available through the training was a web-based search tool designed to assist in identifying grant options. Carol mentioned that the search tool is only available for use through NKCRC.

Joy inquired as to whether the Guild is endeavoring to learn more about grant writing solely for the purpose of funding a student writing contest. Diane responded that this was not the case, and that grant funding could be sought to assist the Guild financially in a broader sense, noting that the Laura J. Musser grant, for example, is awarded for purposes of helping to defray operational costs of a non-profit organization. However, a student writing contest and/or scholarships may well be one use for grant funds. Similarly, publishing and printing hard-copy versions of *Latitudes* might be a good use of grant funding, since the goal is to distribute the books free of charge to various community organizations. Cece suggested that HWG look into whether grant writing classes are currently offered by UH Hilo, perhaps even in the Kona area. Donna remarked that there are a number of grant writing seminars and programs (introductory and more advanced) available on-line at what appears to be a reasonable cost. Donna is willing to consider participating in training of this type once HWG has more precisely identified what Guild projects would be appropriate for grant funding. Bruce and Diane agreed that more work needs to be done in order to identify projects, over and above operational costs, for which grants might be sought.

4. PROPOSAL: Expanding membership categories [Bylaws §3.11]

The proposal, which had been offered by a member at a recent meeting, to expand membership categories was discussed. Diane mentioned a possible "family" membership, and also a "support" category of membership for non-writers who engage in work which supports the Guild's goals. She noted that the current on-line membership application, which asks for a writing sample, would have to be changed or supplemented. Donna advised that changing the definition of "member" and/or expanding membership categories would require an amendment to the Bylaws. She suggested that, while she is not advocating either way, a potential positive outcome of expanding the membership would be to potentially broaden and diversify the base of people who may have expertise to offer to the Guild. Diane mentioned that, in her experience, a family-type membership can be of some value. Bruce opined that opening up membership to

those with “adjacent skills,” such as publishing and editing, could be beneficial to the Guild. Donna offered to do some research into what other writers’ groups make available in terms of affiliate, family, or associate memberships, and prepare a summary for the Board to review; this topic will then be added to the agenda for discussion at future meetings.

5. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Bruce previously e-mailed updated membership logs to the Board. There are currently 71 active members plus one student member. He noted that three people whose applications have been approved have not yet paid their annual dues, and accordingly are not counted as active members.

Bruce is also in the process of updating the “opt-in” e-mail list, wherein members can choose to have their e-mail addresses listed, along with the genre(s) in which they write, for purposes of networking with other members. He has circulated an e-mail to all active members inquiring as to whether they wish to join, or remain listed on, the opt-in list. His e-mail also requests that those members with more than one e-mail address specify which address they’d like to use for purposes of the opt-in list.

6. TREASURER’S REPORT

Bob advised that January was a busy month, and that the month ended with an ASB operating balance \$9,479.29. Inflows thus far during the month of February have resulted in a current Pro Forma ASB operating balance of \$9,887.78 as of February 22, 2023.

Bob also noted that he has completed the Guild’s 2022 IRS Form 990-N (ePostcard filing) and has submitted that to the IRS.

7. SECRETARY’S UPDATE:

Donna indicated that she has updated the Board’s information with the State of Hawaii’s Business Registration Division to reflect the election of Diane as president, and that she has donated the fee (\$11.00) to the Guild.

Donna further advised that the gathering for author Janet Evanovich which had been scheduled for February 25, 2023 has been cancelled due to illness in Janet’s family.

Finally, Donna inquired of the Board as to whether she should include on future meeting agendas an opportunity for the general membership to read their work, as has been suggested in the past. It was noted that the BOD did extend this invitation at a meeting several months ago, and there was no response. Cece mentioned that another writers group with which she is affiliated (a chapter of the California Writers Club) offers “general membership meetings” approximately four times per year at which members are invited to read from completed work

(as opposed to works in progress) and that these meetings are well-attended. These gatherings are separate and distinct from regular board meetings. She also advised that “book launch parties” are offered several times a year. After extensive discussion, it was concluded that BOD meetings are not the ideal venue at which to hold member readings, and the consensus was NOT to include member readings on the agenda for future BOD meetings. Diane suggested that, should the Board consider holding special general membership meetings at which members may read from their work, the Board *first* poll the membership to determine the level of interest in participating in such a meeting.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES:

a.) Events Committee/Expanding Events Committee: Bryan has been dealing with personal issues and has not been in a position to develop Guild events or activities. He mentioned that the Volcano-area writers group has found success in offering all-day reading events at which pupus and drinks are available. Bryan remains hopeful that he can identify people who may be willing and able to serve on the events committee, and who can keep up to date with happenings around the island. Diane noted that she intends to follow up with the Parks and Recreation Department in order to ensure that HWG has a place at future “Cherry Blossom Festivals” in Waimea, and she will also inquire of them as to other events at which the Guild may wish to reserve space for an informational table.

b.) Public Relations: Joy advised that she has previously e-mailed the BOD regarding her completion of an updated HWG informational trifold brochure, and she included a PDF version of the trifold in the e-mail. Joy has had 150 copies printed, and will forward some of these to Frank. In this regard, Joy noted that the trifold, which includes information about the many benefits of joining the Guild, could be helpful to potential members on Kauai who may wish to join the newly-formed Kauai Writers Group. She will also e-mail a PDF version of the trifold to Frank, in addition to forwarding to him some of the HWG business cards. Joy will donate the costs associated with printing the trifold brochure (\$95.81) to HWG, and will forward that information to Bob. Frank at this point excused himself to prepare to catch a flight to the mainland.

Joy also has completed two press releases, one of which describes the Annual Meeting held in January, and the other related to the election of Diane as 2023 president. Both have been distributed to newspapers on the island, and as of this date have been published in West Hawaii Today. It is Joy’s understanding that Kohala Mountain News also plans to publish the articles, although unfortunately West Hawaii Today was able to publish the articles first. The story about the Annual Meeting has been posted to the website by Duncan under “Guild News.” Joy has also included the story about the election of the new Guild president on the HWG Facebook pages, and will double check to make sure that it appears on both the members-only FB page as well as the page which is available to the public.

Finally, Joy advised that she and Cece will soon be sending out an e-mail to members soliciting articles for the next issue of the Guild's on-line newsletter *Member News*. The goal is to have the newsletter finished and posted to the website by the end of March.

c.) Website Updates: Duncan reported that he has completed and has posted a "writers support group" page to the HWG website. He has since received positive feedback with respect to this page, which contains succinct descriptions of local writers' groups which the Guild either officially sanctions or more informally recommends. Duncan has been unable to connect with Bryan in order to obtain from him details of the Volcano-area writers group for posting to this page, and is unclear as to whether the Volcano group constitutes a "writers support group." Bryan advised that the Volcano group was modeled after Tutu's House, and does have a support component. Bruce, Diane, and Joy all concurred that the Volcano group should be included on the "writers support group" webpage. Duncan asked that Bryan take a look at the webpage and forward to him a one-paragraph description of the Volcano-area group's support-related activities when he is able to do so. Diane and Joy both mentioned that another member of the Volcano group could take on this task should Bryan wish to defer to someone else.

Duncan further advised that a new member has now created her personal page, which he has posted. Reference was then made to the web calendar, which has been largely dormant due to lack of volunteers willing to keep up with it. Duncan has now started to fill in some events on the calendar, such as the BOD meetings and the open-forum Readings and Responses meetings. He solicited from all their input as to what other events, activities, meetings, etc. they would like to see posted on the calendar. Duncan also continues to work with PayPal in an effort to resolve the problem which has resulted in the inability of members to pay dues through the website unless they have their own PayPal accounts.

Duncan then indicated that he has received an e-mail from member Jan Asch inquiring as to the posting on the "writers support group" webpage details of the upcoming "Ten-minute Play" program which she is organizing and hopes to start publicizing in March. Discussion followed as to whether the "Ten-minute Play" format constitutes a writers "support" group. Joy opined that in the past this has functioned as a type of support group, in which Jan worked with writers to develop plays, and then arranged for the plays to be read, with feedback being provided from the audience. Without objection, Duncan will add the "Ten-minute Play" program to the webpage.

Duncan is also working with Bob on ironing out details of the proposed plan to produce hard-copies and/or Kindle versions of *Latitudes*.

Finally, Duncan referenced the much-discussed need for a volunteer to assist him in learning the art of website maintenance and/or management. In this regard, member Carol Prescott had previously expressed an interest in finding out more about what would be expected of a web assistant. Duncan has also identified another member who is familiar with the software

he uses, and who may be willing to consider assisting. Duncan will follow-up; in the meantime, he is comfortable continuing to maintain the website by himself.

d. Latitudes 2024: Bob reported that has been discussing with Duncan the steps which are involved in converting the current on-line text to hard-copy format. He has been in contact with several members who have experience in this regard and has received helpful input. Member Richard Bodien has volunteered to help shepherd this conversion project, indicating that Amazon facilitates this type of conversion in a fairly easy to follow fashion. It is Bob's understanding that the conversion and formatting is fairly inexpensive at about \$5 to \$6 per published copy, not including shipping, and that the total would come to roughly \$8 per copy. A member suggested to Bob that the Guild consider a possible grant opportunity with the Hawaii Counsel for the Humanities to help defray costs. Recommendations from members with experience in this area include publishing no more than one volume per year, not separating the volumes by theme, and using a 6" x 9" page size. Richard mentioned to Bob that he has a template which he can make available for this purpose.

Bob then mentioned that the issue of the cover design for the book is one which will need to be addressed. One suggestion was to hold a "cover design contest" which would be open to students. Another option would be to hold such a contest open only to HWG members, or to open up the contest to non-members. In any event, the first step will be to begin converting the text to the appropriate Amazon format, but the decision must be made initially as to which edition of *Latitudes* to start with. Because the first edition of *Latitudes* is the shortest by far, Bob opined that it makes sense to use that edition, although this question is certainly open for discussion. He noted that Richard had mentioned other publications which the Guild could consider—which Richard would be willing to edit—including a literary journal open to Guild members as well as non-members, and a "best of Hawaii" poetry journal. The proposal to open up the literary journal to non-members has been previously considered and rejected however. It was noted that a Guild member does have a background in graphic arts, and might be a good person to contact regarding the cover design. Additionally, another member is part of a group which publishes an on-line and print version of a magazine which typically includes wonderful graphics, and she might be a good contact person in this regard as well.

e. Regional Director Reports

—Volcano-area: Bryan found it necessary to end his participation in the meeting to attend to a personal issue. Diane and Joy were both aware that the Volcano-area group conducted a public reading recently which was well-received, if sparsely attended and difficult to hear because of the heavy rain.

—North Kohala-area: Diane has facilitated two Zoom meetings of the Kohala-area group since last the BOD met, and they are held every other Thursday *via* Zoom. Typical attendance at the meetings ranges from four to six people. She will follow up with those who have expressed an interest in joining the group; in particular, Diane will query those who are on

the e-mail list but who have yet to attend a meeting as to whether they'd like to remain on the list.

—Tutu's House: Joy reported that she has contacted Tutu's House and confirmed that they are making their back room available for meetings. She reviewed dates of availability, and advises that Friday evenings are open at this time for public readings, although there are other options available. Joy notes that Tutu's House does not charge for use of this meeting room, but does accept donations, and that in the past a donation of \$25 per event has been offered (the same amount which had been paid to the library for use of their space). Joy indicated that members of the public in attendance at readings are able to make donations as well. Joy suggested that Bob include this potential \$25 donation in the Guild's budget. Bruce added that the Tutu's House writers support group, currently meeting solely *via* Zoom, typically consists of four to six people with consistent and outstanding participation, although he would like to see the number of participants grow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next **Board of Directors meeting** is scheduled for March 23, 2023 at 6:30 pm. Bruce advised that he is traveling during that time frame and is very unlikely to be available, although he will be participating in the April meeting.

Due to the on-going pandemic, 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 13, 2023). The final agenda will be emailed to the full membership five days prior to the meeting.

The **meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm**.

Respectfully submitted this 8th day of March, 2023

By: __Donna Beumler_____

Donna Beumler

Secretary

Hawaii Writers Guild