

## Minutes of the First 1997 HSA National Meeting

[as reported in the *HSA Newsletter*, Vol. XII, No. 2, spring 1997]

**Executive Committee Meeting.** (Held at the Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.) Officers present were Lee Gurga, President, Michael Dylan Welch, First Vice President, and Alice Benedict, Second Vice President.

A motion to give Kiyoko Tokutomi 1997 honorary HSA membership was passed by a majority (of officers present or absent).

Alice Benedict agreed to send letters and certificates to winners of the Merit Book Awards.

In a discussion of officers for 1998, Alice Benedict and Michael Dylan Welch said they would consider continuing next year. Lee Gurga prefers not to stand again, unless a replacement cannot be found. He will ask the other officers about their intentions.

Regarding the HSA Website, a motion to appoint a Website Committee was proposed and carried. The chair of this committee would act as Webmaster, and his or her responsibilities would be defined as follows:

- Update Information Sheet and Newsletter information on a periodic basis.
- Report to HSA Executive Committee on feedback.
- Develop proposals for additions to the HSA home page.
- Develop proposals for interactions with other Web pages.

A motion was proposed and carried to establish a committee to solicit design proposals for an HSA logo to be submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration. Michael Welch was appointed by President Lee Gurga to chair this committee.

**General Meeting.** (Based on a report by Jocelyn Conway.) This was held at Fort Mason in San Francisco, and was attended by: Lee Gurga, Michael Dylan Welch, Jocelyn Conway, Rich Krivcher, Eugenie and Emile Waldteufel, David Rice, Claire and Pat Gallagher, Helen K. Davie, Ebba Story, Dan Brady, Jerry Kilbride, Paul O. Williams, John Moelter, Tony Green, Jerry Ball, Laurie Stoelting, Fay Aoyagi, Kiyoko Tokutomi, and Paul Watsky. Introductions and a round reading were followed by President Lee Gurga's report of the Executive Committee meeting. He also briefly outlined the joint HIA/HSA conference to be held in Tokyo in April.

George Olczak gave a presentation on the possibilities that exist for the HSA with regard to an internet Website.

The Haiku Society of America currently has a bare-bones Website, and there was some lively discussion as to the extent that it should be developed. Some of the reasons that the HSA might be interested in expanding its web presence are: to serve the HSA membership, create a reputable source of quality information about haiku, to

provide teaching and learning materials for schools, and to serve as a link with haiku enthusiasts worldwide.

Claire Gallagher next gave a reading of her work, a well chosen selection of deeply moving poems mixed with others of a lighter tone.

the postman's footprint  
on a magnolia petal—  
news of her death

a fraying straw hat  
dangles from her garden chair  
the scent of thyme

After a break for refreshments, the meeting reconvened to hear a presentation by Paul O. Williams of his article "Recycled Haiku," which describes an experimental project with writing "echo poems" stimulated by reading others' work. He offered by way of example (from Timepieces for November 23) John Stevenson's

after our visit  
the cottage-lady talking  
to wildflowers

This reminded Paul of an experience he had in Maine, when he stopped to visit someone who had mowed around the wildflowers in her front yard:

her lawn filled with tufts  
where she has mowed around  
wildflowers

He emphasized that the aim is not to imitate the original poem, but to let it call up a memory from the reader's own life, the main purpose being to generate a creative flow.

Jerry Ball shared a number of his haiku and longer poems, including some that had been translated into Italian, giving them a wonderfully melodic quality. Here are two that he read:

ten thousand lira  
a face at the fleamarket  
with a look of triumph

wild strawberries  
at a place where two paths meet  
near a waterfall

Fay Aoyagi followed with a very interesting discussion of the work of Tohta Kaneko, President of the Modern Haiku Association in Japan. She read a selection of his work, and then focused on several of the poems, offering an explanation and her interpretation of each. Many of Kaneko's haiku do not follow the traditional 5-7-5 format. For example, the following poem has 20 onji in a 6-4-4-4-2 pattern when seen in the original Japanese.

ship returning north  
low clouds and  
moving clouds

Fay offered two interpretations of this poem. The clouds that are low and moving away could be Tohta bidding farewell to Truk Island and the many soldiers who died in the South Pacific, or alternatively his fellow combatants sending goodbyes from the other world.

After her presentation, Jerry Kilbride gave a brief update on the American Haiku Archive in Sacramento. The archive is growing by leaps and bounds, with new material arriving daily. It has been suggested that a (rotating) haiku adviser to assist Gary Kurutz at the library might be beneficial. Dr. Kevin Starr also asked Jerry to remind us that people should continue to send everything that might remotely have a place at the haiku archive.

The meeting concluded with a workshop on the shape of printed haiku, led by Ebba Story. She distributed a handout on the use of line breaks and indentations, and four variations of a single poem were then discussed in smaller groups.

faint stars at dusk ...  
the whistle of duck wings  
above the pine

Each group, and individuals within each group, preferred different versions for different reasons. The point of the exercise, Ebba explained, was to get people to consider the shape of the poem as enhancing its value and meaning. "Simplicity and clarity should not be sacrificed for artifice. Strive to express the spirit of the moment, of your experience. Let the form support your vision."

After the meeting a number of participants enjoyed dinner at a local restaurant, followed by an open reading at Borders Books in Union Square.

— Dee Evetts