

First 1998 HSA Quarterly Meeting

[as reported in the *HSA Newsletter*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, spring 1998]

The Executive Committee Meeting was held at the Federal Way Regional Library on March 7, 1998, before the First 1998 National Meeting. HSA President Kristen Deming was in the chair, with Vice President Jerry Ball also attending. Only two of the Officers being present, some issues for decision were polled by telephone and/or E-mail.

HSA Treasurer Raffael de Gruttola proposed an increase in domestic membership dues to \$25, starting in 1999, and this was approved.

Newsletter Editor Charles Trumbull proposed a motion asking the HSA to provide funds for updating and publishing a list of haiku-related periodicals as an insert with the Newsletter as Doris Heitmeyer had done. This was approved.

President Kristen Deming has asked Lee Gurga to chair this year's Nominating Committee, and he has accepted. Meanwhile Garry Gay has agreed to serve as editor of the HSA Members' Anthology in 1999, and will announce his deadline for submissions shortly. With regret the Executive Committee has accepted the retirement of HSA Secretary Dee Evetts, effective at the end of 1998.

Various ideas for marking the 30th anniversary of the HSA were discussed, including a proposal from Michael Dylan Welch for a haiku retreat in California, tied in with an event at the American Haiku Archive. Other ideas: an exhibit of *shikishi* by famous haiku masters, and asking HSA founding members to write a statement marking the anniversary. These statements then would be sent to the Archive. Kristen Deming made a motion for planting a cherry tree on the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., in honor of HSA founding members. This was approved.

General Meeting. A gathering of 33 people was welcomed by Connie Hutchison, Northwest Region Coordinator. Kristen Deming began by reading haiku written during her 13-year stay in Japan. This was followed by a round of introductions and haiku from each participant.

At the business meeting that followed, the discussions of the Executive Committee were outlined. It was announced that Ken Leibman's final issue of frogpond would be mailed before June and that the new editor would be Jim Kacian. Although it is not an HSA event, members will be interested to note that the next Haiku North America conference will take place in Chicago in 1999 and in Boston in 2001. Jean Emrich proposed expanding the Website of the American haiku Archive to include an interactive haiku tutorial.

The program began with featured speaker Ruth Yarrow, formerly of Ithaca, N.Y., and now living in Seattle, speaking about "Haiku at Work." After reviewing more than 8,000 haiku, Ruth has found only 100 that focus on work. She wondered, "do we feel that our time isn't our own so that we are uneasy writing haiku about work? Are we not in touch with our emotions at work?" She read haiku about alienation, anger, struggle, and hardship and suggested that these emotions may help us become activists and work for

change. She read other examples of haiku that might make us feel more human in the workplace.

Marc Thompson led a workshop on the history of work in haiku from Bashô and Issa to 20th century poets. he asked, “if the Way of Poetry is an alternative to the New World Order, then is writing haiku a subversive act?” Using an interactive approach, Marc posed questions and encouraged discussion.

The concept of work was developed from several perspectives; work according to the IRS is often different than work we do for pleasure. With the rise of a merchant class in Japan, a person’s identity became less associated with class (peasant, samurai) and more associated with occupation (farmer, poet), what one “is” vs. what one “does.” A global economy, the downsizing of corporations and the increase in temporary workers are factors in the New World Order. Consider these examples in light of his question:

staff meeting
how quiet we become
when the cloudburst begins

John Sheirer

cautious movements
making a business call
from the bathtub

Dee Evetts

dog day afternoon
the street sweeper’s brushes
kicking up dust

Anthony Pupello

“The haiku is like a fireplace in summer or a fan in winter. Contrary to popular belief, it has no immediate utility.” — Matsuo Bashô

—Marilyn Sandall