

Minutes of the HSA 2000 Fourth Quarterly Meeting San Francisco, California

[as reported in the *HSA Newsletter*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, winter 2000]

The Fourth HSA Quarterly Meeting of 2000 was hosted by the California Region in San Francisco on Saturday, December 2 at the Best Western Miyako Hotel in Japantown.

Executive Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m. Committee Members present: Jerry Ball, 1st Vice President, presiding Raffael de Gruttola, Treasurer Alice Benedict, 2nd Vice President Guest: Pamela Miller Ness, HSA Education Committee chair and 1st Vice President-elect.

We discussed the following items:

President: nothing in particular to report

Secretary: Howard Kilby reports the following (communicated by Raffael):

The results of the HSA election of Officers and Regional Coordinators for 2001 are appended to these minutes. All EC members received them by e-mail as well. Thanks to Howard, once again, for the timely results!

Howard once again proposes splitting the office of HSA Secretary into a Membership Secretary and a Corresponding Secretary to help deal with the increased workload. Those present agreed with the idea.

It seems we need an amendment to the By-laws and a vote of the membership. We now need to draft an amendment to the bylaws that can be voted upon, preferably between now and the next quarterly meeting.

Treasurer's Report. Raffael reports the current account stands at \$4,592. Though finances are workable for now, HSA should think seriously about finding other ways to raise funds than largely by membership fees. Some ideas were discussed and proposals for further action made: (1) Look into possible grant funding, especially education-related grants (for example from NEA). Sylvia Forges-Ryan at one time worked on this; Raffael volunteered to talk with her, with a view to making a serious attempt to submit a new grant proposal. (2) A possible re-issue of *A Haiku Path*. We should begin discussing what this would involve. (3) Better advertising, especially getting the word out about HSA to teachers. This might be something Regional Coordinators could help with, and that could also be pursued through materials for teachers posted to the web page. A special membership rate for teachers, libraries, etc. was also suggested. This would decrease revenue at first, but perhaps increase overall membership later. (4) Make it clearer that additional donations are accepted and greatly appreciated.

First Vice President's Report: (Jerry Ball) Tentative meeting dates and locations for 2001 were proposed: First Quarterly Meeting: Arkansas, March 24 (Howard Kilby) [this was later changed —ed.]; Second Quarterly Meeting: Haiku North America, Boston June 29 (Raffael de Gruttola); Third Quarterly Meeting: New York City, September 22 (Pamela Miller Ness); Fourth Quarterly meeting: Long Beach, December 1 (Jerry Ball).

Jerry had a thought for a traveling poets' hospitality network. There could be a list of HSA members who would be happy to host a traveling poet for a few days during a meeting or other poetry journey. Something like this exists in an informal way now, nevertheless, those present liked the idea. A notice to the members, by e-mail, or possibly a notice on the Web site asking for people to sign up could move this ahead.

Second Vice President: Alice Benedict reports that the Henderson, Brady, and Virgilio contests for 2000 have been successfully concluded. The judges are still deliberating in the Einbond Renku Contest. They will try to finish before the holidays; failing that it will be complete in January 2001.

I am gathering the Contest library of *Frogponds*, mailing lists, and general correspondence and will send it to John Stevenson, the new contest chairman. Also, I will send Charlie winning renku for inclusion on the HSA Web site.

I express, once again, my pleasure in having coordinated contests for HSA, and thanks to all the judges (36 of them, all nice to work with) and contest participants.

Electronic Communications Officer: Dave Russo (via Raffael) reports that the HSA Web site is up and running. Response has been very positive indeed. Congratulations to Dave and Charlie for their hard work! Suggestions for things to add at some point: Education material, a membership application (so people can join).

Education Committee Report: Pamela Miller Ness reported that the education packets have been selling well: 43 packets are sold, and 28 remain. At \$15 each, the revenues cover expenses. The response of teachers using the packets as been very good: they are thrilled to have something this reliable and usable all in one place. We discussed the possibility of putting something from the packet onto the Web page (such as the suggestions for running a haiku workshop): this would be a promotion for the packet, and a freebie that teachers can print and use (something of a web tradition). Pamela and the Education Committee will propose something; maybe Dave could look at what's possible and simple enough.

Other Business: Raffael brought up having an official logo and letterhead. All agreed that it's overdue. Suggestions were that it carry through some elements of design and/or typography from the web page (so everything looks pulled together). There have been ideas for this in the past, but all were rejected. It's probably best to start over.

Upcoming Haiku Events: Haiku North America: Raffael gave a detailed outline of exciting plans for HNA in Boston, June 28–July 1. The theme is Haiku and Beyond. (See pages 20–21.).

Jerry reported good progress on plans for Haiku Pacific Rim 2002, to be held in Long Beach, Calif., an event to celebrate haiku and bring together haiku poets of this large region of the world and beyond. He has secured meeting space through California State University at Long Beach, early participation of organizations such as the Japan Society, and interest from poets in Japan and elsewhere in the region.

The EC meeting was adjourned at about 10:00.

— Alice Benedict,
(for Howard Lee Kilby, HSA Secretary)

General Meeting. Early arrivals met Friday evening for dinner and lively conversation at a local noodle house.

Saturday morning while the Executive Committee met, attendees gathered in the conference room to meet, greet, and browse the book, literature, and poetry displays. Claire Gallagher opened the General Meeting at 10:00 a.m. with words of welcome. Approximately 55 people from near and far — including several new to HSA or HPNC — attended part or all of Saturday's events. Each poets introduced herself or himself and read a poem before First Vice President Jerry Ball presented a summary of the Executive Committee meeting, including the Treasurer's report and a tally of the HSA election results.

The keynote presentation was a memorable event focusing on "The Mystery of Haiku." Poet Vincent Tripi read a moving selection of poems, groups of which were prefaced by quotes from other writers who illuminate the mystery of life for him. Vincent's readings were interspersed with, and sometimes spoken over, Native American flute music played by Gary Topper.

Vincent gave attendees a letterpress bookmark with the words haiku and tribe imprinted in close juxtaposition in gold and black near an exquisite feather.

We are surrounded by a rich and fertile mystery ... may we not probe it, pry into it, employ ourselves about it — a little?

— Henry Thoreau

The season's last loon
in the mist
seeing it anyway

vincent tripi

The program continued with Patrick Gallagher's description of the San Francisco Bay Area Haiku Season Word Project. This project was initiated over a year ago by Bay Area poets to compile appropriate local season words. Patrick presented the goal of the project as the strengthening of the use of season words in English-language haiku and developing sensitivity for local season words. Prototype pages of an anticipated

publication of a local dictionary of season words were displayed. Patrick read several poems that showed the use of a local season word. The poem below by Laurie Stoelting uses soap root flowers, a Bay Area summer season word.

picking soap root flowers at sunset
my hands
fill with stars

A break provided time for small-group lunches at various venues in Japantown, visiting a few small shops or the Kinokuniya Bookstore, and brief sightseeing.

Participants reconvened for Raffael de Gruttola's presentation, "Haiku vs. Plagiarism: A Farmer's Market." One of Raffael's main points was that poets can not avoid writing and rewriting poems that have been written previously if we continue to use only classical methods and conventional subjects.

Next on the program was David G. Lanoue's reading from his novel, Haiku Guy. As David introduced Cup-of-Tea (Issa), the bumpkin haiku student Buck Teeth, Lord Kaga as personification of Edo period culture, and the 20th century writer/protagonist in New Orleans, the audience learned about haiku. David's exquisite eye for detail, wry humor, and haiku lessons left us on the edge of our seats wanting more.

We'd stop at the curb, and every time before crossing over to the church or back to the school, we'd hear a life-saving litany recited at the top of Sister Agoniste's drill sergeant lungs: "Stop, look, and listen, children!"

This, it turned out was my first lesson in the art of haiku.

— from Haiku Guy

After a social break, we resumed with poetry readings, beginning with Laurie Stoelting, who read from her new book, Light on the Mountain:

whitewater
it took the moonlight
to show me

For about an hour poets in succession read 5–10 poems in what many considered to be one of the finest readings ever heard.

Following this there was a call for reading what turned out to be a handful of poems written in Japantown that day; they were uniformly senryu or approximations:

Japantown shop
the identical bellies
of Buddha and Santa

Claire Gallagher

The day's program began and ended with music accompanying a haiku reading. Raffael de Gruttola closed the program by reading a *jūnicho* (twelve-link) renku written by himself and Tadashi Kondo. Electric cello improvisation by Danielle de Gruttola prefaced and followed echoing and expanding each link of another bay. Listeners carried an enthralled buoyancy away.

Many conferees attended a group dinner at a Korean barbecue as well as an evening social at the home of member Paul Watsky.

— *Claire Gallagher*