

Third 2003 HSA Quarterly Meeting Evanston, Ill., September 19–21, 2003

[as reported in the *HSA Newsletter*, Vol. XVIII, No. 4, November 2003]

[Please see the EC minutes incorporated in The President's Letter on page 11.

By all objective accounts the meeting was a splendid affair. Attendance at various activities ranged from 14 to about 35. Attendees came from the New York City area, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, downstate Illinois, Japan, and the greater Chicago area. There were even a few non-haiku poets among them.

The conference opened on Friday evening with a gathering in the University Inn lobby. From there about 14 of us went across the street to Tommy Nevins Irish Pub for dinner. Throughout the weekend, if someone was not at the session they could often be found at Nevins.

Later we went down the street to Barnes and Noble for an open-to-the-public haiku reading. A student from the local high school joined us for the entire reading. At one point she recited her first (and only) poem. Most moving. In contrast, another chap ostentatiously plopped himself down at a table directly under the nose of the reader and proceeded to bury his nose in some book on mechanics. Speaking of juxtaposition, Michael Nickels-Wisdom, who was reading at the time, continued with aplomb, missing a syllable.

Saturday was an intensive day. President Stanford Forrester opened the meeting. The first presenter was Horst Ludwig from Gustavus Adolphus College in Minnesota, who spoke on "Recent Haiku Analysis in Germany" and recounted his efforts to get the Deutsche Haiku Gesellschaft, of which he is a member, to include haiku-by-haiku criticism in their activities. Then, Michael Nichols-Wisdom, a member of Chi-ku, reviewed the scandal that ensued after World War II when a Japanese critic called haiku a second-rate art and adduced some rudimentary statistics to support his opinion. Michael, in his paper entitled "The Kuwabara Project: A Second-rate Art' Revisited" reported on his analysis of the haiku in an Internet 'Haikukai' in an attempt to validate (or discredit) Kuwabara.

After a coffee-break, Lee Gurga, a past HSA president and current editor of *Modern Haiku*, spoke about "Some Haiku Worth Reading." Lee asked "Why do some people write haiku without ever having read one?" Good question!

Attendance was at its peak by this time and people were getting hungry for lunch (and because there are no registration fees for HSA meetings) we decided the time was ripe

to pass the hat. Fortunately our strategy worked, and thanks to the generosity of all (but especially two Chi-ku members) we were able to break even financially. For lunch some of us walked over to a Lebanese restaurants. The afternoon opened with a short business meeting at which Stanford reviewed recent activities and Pamela Miller Ness, in the absence of HSA Secretary Karen Klein, read the Secretary's Report, announced the results of the logo contest (see story elsewhere in this Newsletter), and read and received seconds on the slate prepared by the Nominating Committee of HSA officers and regional coordinators for 2004

Charles Trumbull presented his paper "An Analysis of Haiku in 12-dimensional Space," an attempt at building upon A.C. Missiass normative definition of haiku. The paper neatly managed to weave in themes from the morning sessions. As a matter of fact, all sessions managed to complement each other *with* one raising an issue in one context, only to be fleshed out in another.

After another coffee break, Jeanne Emrich from Minneapolis presented a haiga workshop. It opened *with* an excellent slide show illustrating the wide range of graphic art that is being generated to accompany a haiku, from photo-montage to collage to sumi-e painting. Then, with a wide range of materials available, wet stuff and dry stuff, people dug in and produced some remarkable haiga.

Afterwards was rest time, with some of us choosing to do it at the pub. Later we assembled for a cash-bar in our conference area, followed by a catered buffet banquet. At one point Charlie introduced our "mystery speaker," Alan Watts, speaking on haiku and Zen in a 1964 radio recording. Forty years later his words are still right-on.

About eight survivors gathered for breakfast at the hotel on Sunday morning and walked the half-mile to the Lake Michigan shore.

Thanks to all the participants for their great haiku, generous contributions, and carefree purchases of haiku books. Special thanks to Bev Bloom who donated her many good ideas and much time to serve as registrar, and Scott Glander, who always seemed to be at the right spot when something needed to be set up or moved.

—Joe Kirschner