

The Write Way

Newsletter of the Highland Lakes Writers' Club

April 2013

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 11, 2013, 6:30 p.m.

Marble Falls Public Library
101 Main Street, Marble Falls

April, wildflowers, springtime — a sense of new beginnings, a belief in possibilities. Please take a few minutes to read the message below from our recently elected President, Rick Copple.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From Rick Copple

New chapters in a book are both exciting and scary. What will happen next? Will he get out of his predicament or fall on his face? Sometimes as we write that next chapter, or start a new poem, we too are not sure what will happen next. Yet, if the story is to move forward, that new chapter must be written.

Our club is at one of those transition moments this year. The hard work of several in our group, after the fallout from last fall's events, has established a new set of by-laws and guidelines for the club, and last month we elected a new slate of officers to serve the remainder of this year. (Include, electing me as your president. I pray I'll live up to the job.)

Being this is a new chapter in our club's history, I thought it good to focus on what we are about, what we have to offer one another and new members. The purpose of our club, as we have stated in our new by-laws, is: "...to provide resources, opportunities, and fellowship to all persons interested in writing." In our guidelines, we also added, "...instruct, encourage, and mentor one another in the art and craft of writing, irrespective of subject matter, genre, or slant."

That's all well and good, but how does that translate into action? What do we do as an organization that fulfills those purposes and goals?

I think I can best illustrate what I want to say by telling a story. I started writing fiction in earnest in 2005. Before that I'd written perhaps three pieces of fiction, two of them in high school: a Shakespearean comedy-style play for English class, and a parody of Little Red Riding Hood. In 2000, I wrote a not-very-good short story. Everything else I'd written up to that point was sermons, devotions, and Bible studies. Never a whole book, much less a novel.

In October of 2005, that all changed. My wife, Lenita, had been reading "The City of Ember" to our kids in the car. Listening in on it gave me an idea for a story. I decided in early October to start writing the first chapter, not really knowing where it would go, but I had some concepts for the world and a very basic plot-line.

I ended up writing about a 4000-word chapter that night. Next day, I showed it to Lenita and my daughter. They both read it, and aside from comments of liking it, their main demand was that I write the next chapter. Being an obedient husband and father, that evening I sat down and wrote another 3000- to 4000-word chapter. The next day, they read it and demanded the

next chapter. And so it went until October 31st arrived and I had ended up writing a 94,000-word novel.

Writing a full novel for the first time in my life, and having my family seeing me as a best-selling author the next year (little did we know it isn't that easy!), brought me to the realization that writing novels is what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. At least one of the things. And I've been after it ever since. While that first novel sits on my hard drive unpublished, I have a total of seven published books and several short stories.

The point of this story, however, is how much having an audience influenced my decision to write fiction. If it had not been for my wife and daughter enjoying and wanting to read more, I doubt I would have finished more than a couple of chapters at most, and the stories I did finish and publish would have never been written.

Writing tends to be a solitary activity. Many people don't get the encouragement of an audience to keep writing. How many stories that could have been written never were, because someone gave up when no one took interest? Conversely, how many stories *have* been written that otherwise never would have been, because the members of the Highland Lakes Writers' Club were there to listen and encourage?

In January of 2006, I attended my first club meeting. I'd seen an ad in the club section of *The Picayune* and decided to check it out. The rest is history. I've been coming ever since. One of the main reasons I continued is that I found an encouraging community united to support writers. An audience to listen and encourage me in my quest.

Our club hosts a critique group which meets at Doc's every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. We've hosted special events, workshops, and contests. I'm sure we'll have more of those in the future, and the critique group may expand as demand increases.

But the core of what the club is about is supporting each other and encouraging each other through being an audience. Through caring participation in the writing process. Nothing encourages us more than to know our creations are heard and appreciated.

It is my hope during this new chapter that this core function of the club will be strengthened. Upon it we can build other services and aids. But a united club to encourage each other in our writing dreams is core to what this club is about. Join me as we strive to reach our writing dreams together, as a family.

MINUTES OF LAST MONTH'S MEETING

Highland Lakes Writers' Club met Thursday, March 14, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. at the Marble Falls Public Library. A social half-hour preceded the meeting; Kay Lee furnished refreshments, and Caryl Calsyn greeted members and guests as they arrived.

Those attending on March 14, besides Kay and Caryl, included Bob Allgeier, Mary Jo Collins, Rick Copple, Stephen Lay, Ed Mampel, and Ray Whelan. There were three visitors: Jerry Campbell, Cynthia Chisolm, and Linda Frazee. By paying dues, Jerry Campbell became the club's newest member. (Welcome, Jerry!)

Moderator Mary Jo Collins called the meeting to order just a minute or two before 7:00. Paper copies of revised by-laws were distributed, and members read them silently. These by-laws, compiled in late January, were discussed at the February meeting, and revisions were made at that time, with the hope that members would approve the document in March.

There being no additional corrections or additions, the by-laws as distributed were unanimously approved. Secretary Kay Lee will furnish paper copies of these by-laws — together with copies of the club's guidelines, adopted in February — at the meeting on April 11.

Officers for the remainder of 2013 were then elected — the slate presented to members was unanimously approved. New officers are: Rick Copple, President; Margery Higdon, Vice-President; Kay Lee, Secretary; and Caryl Calsyn, Treasurer — assisted by Jean LeVitt as Newsletter Editor and Stephen Lay as Publicity Chair. Rick and Caryl will each wear two hats: Caryl will continue serving as Hospitality Chair, and Rick will become the Webmaster.

The next election of officers (for calendar year 2014) will be held in November 2013.

Caryl announced a balance in the club treasury of \$434.57, with \$5.00 remaining in petty cash.

Rick reported that several names were available for the club's web site. Among them, in Rick's opinion, probably the clearest and most representative (easiest for web browsers to find) would be highlandlakeswritersclub.com. After brief discussion, members voted unanimously to adopt this name (motion, Bob A.; second, Kay). Rick will begin constructing the web site soon.

Reading on March 14 were the following: Ray Whelan, Jerry Campbell, Caryl Calsyn, Ed Mampel, Rick Copple, and Mary Jo Collins.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kay Lee, Secretary

HIGHLAND LAKES WRITERS' CLUB POETRY — APRIL 2013

Wellness

By Caryl Calsyn

I don't do well
at saying thanks
for being well.

Nor do I do well
when I am unwell.

But when I am
no longer unwell
is when I do well
at saying thanks
for again being well.

Oh, well.

Uncertain Spring: Three Haiku

By Kay Lee

1 Early March Dark clouds scattering
and suddenly — bright blue sky!
But how deceptive . . .

2 Late March Winter's last vengeance:
this cold north wind — and your words,
few, thoughtless, ill-timed

3 April Yellow iris bloomed
for a few days in April —
the week you came home

We hope to see ALL of you on Thursday evening, April 11!

Be well, stay well, and WRITE!

Let us hear from you!