

THE WINDSOR GARDENS WRITERS GROUP  
A BRIEF HISTORY  
by  
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The initial meeting of the Windsor Gardens Writers Group was held on Monday June 16, 1986. Isabelle Farnham was the founding mother as well as teacher and chair-person for over two years. A long-time writer herself, she had found inspiration for starting such a group while visiting Leisure World, a retirement community in California. Among those attending that first day, in addition to Isabelle, were Evie Shuster, Jane Pitts, Ruth Coffman, Gerry Biram, Sarah Newton, and Florence Rush.

Jane Pitts, as Editor of Windsor World, has been a motivating force from the beginning. She utilizes the group as free-lance columnists and almost every issue contains by-lines of Writers Group members. Several members have also had works published in other markets.

An early activity was participation in Windsor Garden's 25th anniversary celebration. We were represented in the parade by a car with a typewriter riding on the hood and a large fabricated pen and quill on the roof. The group continued under Isabelle's direction until August of 1988 when circumstances forced her to move to Lakewood for a year. Without her leadership,

the members decided to continue meeting, but made a significant change in format. Henceforth, each person would take a turn as chairperson, and, as such, would suggest a topic. Assignments were given priority in reading, but any material was acceptable.

On December 3, 1989, a Sunday afternoon, Sarah Newton hosted an open house for members and their spouses. The festive occasion was well-attended and has continued as an annual Christmas event.

In January of 1990, the group decided to self-publish a book. Nineteen members contributed to the one-hundred fifty-four pages which were typed for uniform appearance, then copied and bound. It was entitled *SCRIBES AND SCRIBBLES*. Betty Allen designed the cover and the title page contains special thanks to Isabelle Farnham, G. C. Kehmeier and Doris Auger for time expended on the project.

On January 8, 1990, due to increased attendance and the need for more time, we began meeting at 8:45 a.m.

On February 11, 1990, another tradition began when we held our first TEA TIME READINGS. We and our guests assembled in the Colorado Room where each writer read a selection which had been critiqued on a Monday morning. Following the one-hour presentation, tea and cookies were served. It was an enjoyable occasion and has become an annual affair.

On February 19, 1990, we began the custom of going for coffee after the meeting on any Mondays which were holidays. On July 8, 1991, at the suggestion of Harald Prommel, coffee after Monday morning meetings became routine. A pleasing activity, the custom was extended to the Tuesday afternoon groups as well.

On July 24, 1990, nine members met at the home of Sarah Newton to organize two extensions of the Writers Group. They were designated as Literary Critique and Composition 101. Literary Critique was to meet the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 2:30 to 3:30 and Composition 101 on the alternate Tuesdays.

The groups began in September, 1990, and met at Sarah Newton's until February of 1991 when the new activity center was completed and the French Room became available.

Isabelle Farnham taught Comp 101. The expressed goal was the improvement of writing skills by becoming more aware of the rules of grammar,

punctuation, sentence structure, and vocabulary. The intent of Literary Critique was to enhance writing skills by examining and analyzing published works, both contemporary and classic, as represented by articles, columns, editorials, short stories, and novels. Each participant was responsible for selecting, copying, and distributing in advance the work she had chosen.

The first meeting of Literary Critique was held September 4, 1990. Kay Mauser was chair, and the topic of study was an article selected from Time magazine. Those attending were Isabelle Farnham, Clara Trout, Ida Belle, Jane Pitts, Gerry Biram, G. C. Kehmeier, Flora Webb, Florence Rush, Meta Lentz, Betty Allen, Lillian Mitchell, and the hostess, Sarah Newton. Through the balance of 1990 we studied a column by Gene Amole, a short story by O. Henry, a short story by Mark Twain, an article by humorist Dave Barry, a travel article from Modern Maturity, and the novel, the *LADIES OF MISSALONGHI* by Coleen McCullough.

Meanwhile, on alternate Tuesdays, Isabelle held class for Sarah Newton, Kay Mauser, G. C. Kehmeier, Meta Lentz, Gerry Biram, Ruth Gant, Betty Allen and Ruth Coffman.

The groups continued through the first quarter of 1991. Critique studied a science-fiction story by Harry Turtledove, an essay from Time by Melvin Maddocks, a short-story by Jack Ritchie appearing in Ellery Queen Mystery, a love story from a current women's magazine, a how-to article, an adventure short story by John Russell, and the book *ALL I EVER NEEDED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARDEN* by Robert Fulghum.

In April of 1991 Isabelle completed the composition course, and, at the request of the group, began a poetry writing class which continued until March of 1993. As its replacement, a Poetry Appreciation group began on April 14, 1993, with Donna Jones as first chair and Kay Mauser arranging for the necessary publicity. The purpose of this gathering is the sharing of favorite poems. Those attending the initial meeting were Donna Jones, G. C. Kehmeier, Velma Pendell, Laverne Kirch, Kay Mauser, Meta Lentz, Sarah Newton, Eloise Garland, Janet Palmer, and Ida Belle. The meeting was followed by the usual coffee and fellowship at the Gardens Restaurant.

Literary Critique concluded its study of material by published authors in May of 1991 and began its present mode of operation. The expectation is an original near-final draft of at least a thousand words which is distributed to the group two weeks in advance. Editing is done prior to the meeting, and an oral critique conducted when the group assembles.

On April 30, 1991, we met at the Inn for our first 5th Tuesday tea. Initiated by the poetry class, all writers are welcome. It has been the custom to bring a favorite poem to read while we sip and chat.

It is probable that at least fifty individuals have at one time or another been a part of the Windsor Gardens Writers Group. All have made unique contributions as they have committed their memories, dreams, opinions, and experiences to paper--and from paper to the minds of their fellow writers. All have been enriched by the sharing,

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