



Valley Byliners Newsletter

Harlingen, TX

May 8, 2011

Notes from the April 9 Meeting

The April meeting began with Don recognizing new members and guests Sue Groves and Lupita Ochoa. I would like to join Don in welcoming our new members. Don announced to the group that the Harlingen Public Library had initiated a new program that allows local authors to read excerpts of their writing on the second Monday of each month. He also announced that the Byliners have been invited to judge a children's writing contest for the Harlingen Public Library. The judging will be performed by Don and Hellene Futanilla, with Frank Cortazo as a back up judge. The judging is to be done on April 25th at 6:00 PM. Don introduced Erin Batten, a graduate student from the university of Wisconsin who is in the Valley to study the effect of Mexican drug violence on the access to health care on the southern border of the US.

Jack King announced the winner of the the April contest. April's entries were Canadian Prairie 1915 (by Joan Soggie.), Feeding the Fishes in Cojimar (by Jose Alvarez), Lace Stockings (by BG Webber), Only Yesterday (by Don Clifford), The Clothes that Make the Man (by Frank Cortazo), The Easter Egg (by Edna Ratliff), The House on Acacia Drive (by Milo Kearney), The North Forty (by Mary Jo Bogatto), and To-Do List (by Judy Stevens). The winner of the contest was BG Webber and her short story titled Lace Stockings. It was announced after the voting that there will be no Byliner's meeting in the month of July. June's meeting will be held as scheduled on the second Saturday of the month.

Our guest speaker at the April meeting was Charles M. Robinson III, the author of several historical articles and books about the history of Texas. Mr Robinson regaled us with tales of his experiences as a writer and gave us advice on how to get our writing published. He told the group that it was easiest to get published in regional magazines and to get non-fiction articles published. He said that once you are established as a known author, it is easier to get published in other genres. His advice was well received by the group, and we were glad to have him share his experience with us. I would like to thank Mr Robinson again for sharing his experiences with our group.

The May meeting will be used in part to hold elections for offices for the Valley Byliners. Offices being filled, and those nominated to fill them are: President - Sue Groves; VP for Publicity - Bruce Nelson; VP for Programing and Special events - Frank Cortazo; Treasurer - Jose Alvarez; and Member of the Board - Vivian (BG) Weber. Since there is only one person nominated for each position, the vote will be a simple up or down vote to accept each nominee for the position (Yay or Nay). I wish each nominee the best, and would like to thank them for stepping up to serve.

Don writes: “Susanna E. Groves, president nominee for the Valley Byliners is scheduled as guest speaker for the Byliners meeting May 14. Sue is an experienced writer who specialized in producing freelance documentaries and investigative videos. She won a State of Florida Emmy Award for “Jaxscam”, a best investigative report as editor /videographer. She recently relocated from southern California to Harlingen in order to be with kinfolk who reside here. Currently, she is a lay minister with St. Anthony’s Parish in Brownsville.”

Don also writes:

“Several Byliners participated in the 2nd Annual Artist’s Night that featured Writers Forum members at the Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center in San Benito. The April 16 event included Edgar Clinton, Kamala Platt, Diana Dominguez, Don Clifford, Gene Novogrodsky, Brenda Riojas, Jose Alvarez, Julieta Corpus, and Travis Whitehead. Other participating Writers Forum members were Meliton Hinojosa, Joe and Rosa Perez, Ken Trevino and Edward Vidaurri.

The rules allowed each participant eight minutes to read, recite or sing whatever he or she wished to present to the public. Beto and Rita Conde organized and hosted the event with the support of the San Benito Chamber of Commerce and the City of San Benito. Also featured were two galleries of paintings by local artists, Lisa Irby and Nora M. Garza.

Brenda Riojas pointed out that the Writers Forum will celebrate its tenth anniversary May 21 with the release of a publication anthology and other special events. She mentioned, also, that the Writers Forum is the ‘grand-daddy’ of all the so-called open mic venues that are scattered throughout the Valley – an indication of a growing artistic awareness.”