

# Share your prose and poetry

## JANET HAAS

Do you want to write a children's book but need some inspiration and guidance to get started? Are you a closet poet ready to accept some constructive criticism? Does your short story need a facelift? The Charlotte Writers' Club may be just what you need.

A.L. Kimball founded the club in 1922. When she moved to Charlotte two years earlier, the story-writing teacher wasn't acquainted with local writers and was unaware if a writing club existed.

In a 1928 Charlotte Observer article, Kimball said, "I felt a sudden sense of homesickness."

Through notices she placed in the Observer, Kimball invited Charlotteans interested in short-story writing to meet her at the Chamber of Commerce one night in the spring of 1922. From that first writing group, the Charlotte Writers' Club emerged.

While many of its members, past and present, are among the best-known writers in the Southeast, the majority, like 2007-08 CWC president Richard Allen Taylor, have day jobs. "We write because we love the art," Taylor said.

In 2006, the group's meetings relocated from an old church in uptown Charlotte to Joseph-Beth Booksellers at SouthPark mall. In those two years, the group grew from 130 to 190 members, a fact Taylor attributes to the centrally located venue.

In addition to monthly meetings with guest speakers who are accomplished writers and editors, members can hone their craft in poetry and prose critique groups, participate in writing contests and workshops and contribute to the club's anthologies.

"The last anthology ('Only Connect: The CWC Anthology, Volume 3') was sort of a breakthrough for us, because it was the first one that included both contest winners and general submissions from the membership," Taylor said.

The deadline for the next anthology, "The Journey Without," is Sept. 16. Nonmembers have the opportunity to be published if they win one of the club's writing contests.

While the CWC seems to lean toward poetry and prose, many of its members also excel in other genres. Taylor manages a corporate magazine as part of his job as a regional manager of human resources for Hendrick Automotive Group, in addition to being a published poet.

"I think the litmus test (for writers) is, `Are you sharing it with the rest of the world?' " said Taylor. "Share your writing with someone whose opinions you value, and see what happens."

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**Want to go?**

Mark your calendars for the next Charlotte Writers' Club meeting at 7 p.m. Sept. 18. The group meets on the second level of Joseph-Beth Booksellers (4345 Barclay Downs). For more information about writing contests and membership, go to [www.charlottewritersclub.org](http://www.charlottewritersclub.org). Janet Haas