

## A Brief History of "Prairie Pens" Writing Group (2001)

The Prairie Pens writing group of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, was organized February 10, 1991, in the local library. Its founding owes much to its first director, Gertrude Story, at that time Moose Jaw's Writer-in-Residence. Also, a generous grant in excess of \$2000, received from "New Horizons", provided the needed finances to obtain resource personnel.

Because the grant expired December 31, 1992, the twenty founding members, soon joined by others, quickly made plans to arrange writing workshops and invite published writers of various genres, funded by the grant. These resource people were recommended by SWG and gave invaluable help to the fledgling group.

One of the Prairie Pens' first actions was to request Moose Jaw City Hall to declare local writers Robert Currie and Gary Hyland Honorary Poets Laureate, April 8, 1991.

Several members of the group gave their first public readings at the 'Readout' held in SIAST's Macoun Lounge, June 1991. They have since participated in the annual Readouts, now held in the library.


Prairie Pens membership is open to any age, but because we meet on a weekday, it consists mostly of seniors: farmers' wives, retired teachers, semi-retired teachers, semi-retired clergy and just anyone interested in writing. Meetings are held the second Monday of each month from January to December, with a hiatus in July and August. There is a small membership fee.

The first meetings convened in the old library until renovations there necessitated a move to the Discovery Gallery of the Art Museum, then (once) to the Natatorium, before coming to the Grayson Room of the renovated library, our present 'home'.

Each year several Prairie Pens writers win medals in the Zone 3 Saskatchewan Senior Fitness competitions, which include writing. Also, they help, as they can, with the Festival of Words, now an annual event in Moose Jaw.

Two members of Prairie Pens have had their books accepted for publication and published. Others have self-published their work and most have seen their writings in various periodicals.

Now, ten years after inception, Prairie Pens is proud to publish this anthology of our writings. To Gertrude Story, who prompted us to begin, to New Horizons, who gave initial funding, to the many resource people who shared valuable writing skills, to the library, who provides our meeting room charge-free, to the "Times-Herald" which publishes our activities and finally, to the Executives and the faithful core of members over these ten years, we say "Thank-you".

... Elizabeth Byggdin   
Prairie Pens' first president



Feb. 11/91

A meeting was held at the library to organize a writers' group.

Elected were:

Beth Byggdin - Pres. 694-0172

Leila Duffin - Vice Pres.

Dorothy McKechnie - Sec. 692-5260

Agnes Vangen - Treas.

It was agreed to call our club "Prairie Pens"

We are to meet at the library March 04/91 with Norma Wallace from New Horizons re: a grant for the club.

Mon. March 04 | 1:30 p.m. R  
Grayson