



ASHLEY GRIFFIN, left, regales members of Scribblers with her short story. Enjoying it are, from left, Johnsie Holden, Jean Stanley and Dido Biddle.

Under the sun

Young Writers Get Help From Seasoned Scribblers

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN
Reann Eaton perched on the edge of the sofa in Joann Griffin's living room, took a deep breath, and launched into recital of her poem about the importance of someone's kiss, "that I'll remember all my life."

Then Leigh Ann Frink read, in a small, frightened voice, a poem she had written about depression.

The two West Brunswick High School students were among a group of creative writing students who visited the monthly meeting of Scribblers, a Brunswick County organization. One of the students was Ashley Griffin, co-hostess with her mother of the gathering.

Rita Robinson, WBHS creative writing teacher, had visited a Scribbler's meeting and saw the older, more experienced writers as a source of constructive criticism for her students. She took six young people to the Holden Beach gathering as a field trip.

They received friendly reactions from their elders. "You expressed some honest emotions and did it well," Scribbler Jean Stanley told Eaton.

And Scribbler Dido Biddle said to Frink, "That is really good! I like the way your ending hooks the reader."

Encouragement from the writers relieved teenage nervousness and stagefright. Scribblers also suggested publications where the youngsters' poetry, short stories and essays might find a favorable response.

"We're all would-be writers," Stanley said, "and we all need some feedback."

That is how Scribblers began about ten years ago, to provide feedback and support to all who had the writing "bug." It is so loosely organized, the founders can't remember the date of founding.

Betty Stone of Brown's Landing was the instigator. "I'd been in a group like this in New Jersey," she said, "and the idea in starting this one was to encourage and help writers. The only rules are that each one who belongs must read their work aloud at meetings, and we stress publication."

The original gathering of five aspiring writers has grown to about 15 who come together monthly in a member's home to read, listen and criticize.

Their purposes differ. John Clarke and Peggy Jaynes write for newspaper consumption; Biddle and Stanley are the resident poets; Stone has not only sold articles to magazines but has self-published two books; and Johnsie Holden writes for historical and church publications.

"Sometimes we get assignments, if we get a little slack," Stanley laughed. "Once we all wrote nostalgic pieces for the 'I Remember' column in The Wilmington Star, and two of us sent columns that were accepted."

Membership in Scribblers, which has no officers, by-laws or dues, has remained pretty stable over the years,

according to Stone. "Only when someone moves out of the area do they drop out," she said. Participants come from all over the county, and two men travel to the meetings from Wilmington.

The rewards are apparently substantial. "It keeps me writing, to be part of this group," Stanley admitted. "And it's useful to write, even if it's only autobiography for your family."

Stone agreed. "I'm not persistent; I write a lot, but don't try a lot, so Scribblers is great encouragement," she said.

The group experience has led to success for some. Stanley's book of Haiku poetry, published in 1979 (and sold out, she said), has been followed by several sales of her poems to literary magazines.

She was congratulated at the recent meeting on another sale to a state magazine. "It was about the N.C. Symphony and its concert by flashlight in Brunswick County last month," she explained.

Biddle has also sold her poetry, and Holden has been published frequently, in a Methodist publication and one sponsored by the Brunswick County Historical Society.

Stanley said a tradition of the group is to celebrate when a member makes a sale. However, the January celebration took a back seat to hosting the high school students.

The more timid or inexperienced members are constantly badgered to submit their work to appropriate magazines. Stanley Brooks from Wilmington, who writes humorous travel narratives, read a sample at the meeting to a wave of giggles. Then he was instructed to get the stories together for publication as a book.

This atmosphere of friendly persuasion is occasionally sparked by words of criticism. "I don't like that word you used," one member was told after reading her poem. "It sounds awfully strong."

The poet replied, "That's the way I wanted it."

A student who read her short story, then talked about relatives who were characters in it, was told, "Put those details in it. What you just said shows you have a dramatic ear and eye."

When the recent session of Scribblers was over, students remained in Griffin's kitchen to rehash their experience.

Ashley said later that all of them had been encouraged to continue their writing, and that the older writers had given valuable criticism. "They helped me figure out how to end my short story," she said.

Scribblers welcomes new members. Stanley said anyone in the area who would like to attend a meeting could call her (842-2212) or Stone (842-2320) for information about time and place.

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SECURITY SAVINGS & LOAN ASSOCIATION	
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ASSETS	
Mortgage Loans and Contracts	73,243,000.
Nonmortgage Loans	811,000.
Real Estate Owned & Repossessed Assets	71,000.
Cash and Investment	9,945,000.
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Investments in Subsidiaries	13,000.
Other Assets	939,000.
TOTAL ASSETS	86,467,000.
LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH	
Savings Deposits	81,321,000.
Federal Home Loan Bank Advance	—0—
Other Borrowed Money	—0—
Other Liabilities	286,000.
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET WORTH	86,467,000.

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