

In Summer 2018, the writers in Sandpoint and the founding director of The Academy of Northwest Writers & Publishers dba Lost Horse Press, Christine Holbert, organized a literary organization (501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization) for writers—Sandpoint Literary Collective (SLC)—with the mission:

. . . a community of writers and writing professionals—publishers, editors, book marketing professionals, indexers, book designers, etc—dedicated to literary writing through practice, education, and promotion.

Since its inception, SLC has organized a series of creative writing and publishing workshops at the Sandpoint Library that were open to our members as well as to the public; these workshops have been well-attended, informative, and well-received. In addition, we've conducted a POP-UP OPEN MIC series that is packed to the rafters with readers and listeners, held once every two or three months at various venues in Sandpoint and Hope. SLC also offers writers a critique class, whose members currently meet monthly to evaluate, critique, discuss, and improve their writing. And, we have organized the upcoming Author Dinner in conjunction with the Pack River Store that will feature Spokane writers, Sam Ligon, who is publishing a serial novel—*Miller Cane: A True & Exact History*—which appears in fifty installments in Spokane's weekly newspaper, *The Inlander*, as well as online, on Spokane Public Radio, and as a podcast, along with Kate Lebo, whose first collection of nonfiction, *The Book of Difficult Fruit*, is forthcoming. She is the author of *Pie School* and co-editor (with Samuel Ligon) of *Pie & Whiskey: Writers Under the Influence of Butter and Booze*.

We have many literary projects in mind to benefit writers as well as our larger community, including one project where literary plaques containing excerpts of poetry and prose by famous Idaho writers—Marilynne Robinson, Ernest Hemingway, Diane Raptosh, Shawn Vestal, Jonathan Johnson, Vardis Fisher, Tom Spanbauer, Brady Udall, Pat McMannis, Ezra Pound, Kim Barnes, Robert Wrigley, Cort Conoley, Anthony Doerr, Alan Heathcock, Denis Johnson, Lance Olsen, and others—would be installed downtown, along the Shoreline Trail, at City Beach, or anywhere that is appropriate. Poems and excerpts of prose written by local students along with student artwork could also be used to create some of the plaques. A similar project exists on a walking trail along the Methow River in Twisp, Washington, that inspired SLC to pursue this idea to promote Idaho literature. It's a delightful and educational addition to downtown or a trail walk, plus this project would recognize and promote Idaho writers past and present, and serve to educate our citizens as well as tourists who may not be aware of the rich writing community and culture that exists in Sandpoint and Idaho.

Through grants and donations, SLC intends to raise the funding needed to create the plaques, as well as the money necessary for installation and maintenance of the plaques. We hope to work with a local group like MakerPoint Studio to design and produce the plaques locally. We have once met with Elle Susnis of the Sandpoint Arts Commission to discuss the best place to install the plaques, and it seems the downtown area would be easiest to install and maintain plaques. The downtown streets would be an ideal location to roll out this project and the plaques would be most noticeable there.

We have gathered examples of different treatments used in other cities and towns, and we will present photos of these examples to be discussed by all relevant city entities before a decision is made on a particular design. Plaques—framed like paintings—could be installed on the sides of downtown businesses; bronze plaques can be installed in sidewalks or incorporated into manhole covers; they can be installed on a metal or stone stand. There are various options that need to be discussed with city planners before a final decision can be made about the presentation. When a design is chosen, we can then begin to lock down the funding needed to create and install the plaques.