

## History of WLOV

By Rita Boehm



Kenn Kincaid



Mark Newhouse

Many WLOV members are probably unaware of the organization's roots. To remedy this situation, I asked WLOV's founders, Kenn Kincaid and Mark Newhouse, to provide some background about the history of the organization, which they organized in 2011. Mark is still a very active member (and recently chaired the highly successful Expo '17). Kenn left The Villages in 2015 and currently lives in Arizona. Here are some of their comments; the full interview is posted on the WLOV website.

### What were your goals [in starting WLOV]?

**Mark:** We both felt writers deserve to be treated as artists equal to all the other artists in The Villages. We wanted to create a strong voice for authors and unpublished writers by uniting as many Villager authors as possible and offering venues for them to display pride in their accomplishments.

**Kenn:** The beginning purpose was to find an outlet for selling our craft. Very quickly the process identified a lot of writers.

### How did you choose the name?

**Mark:** We went back and forth on this, but decided Writers League of The Villages, WLOV, worked very well for websites.

**Kenn:** Within a couple months we had identified a dozen interested parties, and it seem to be geometrically expanding. Originally we called it a 'Writer's Club', it progressed to The Villages Writer's Club. The basic purpose was to find outlets, opportunities to sell our books. WLOV was a matter of trying to decide on a 'logo'. One of us suggested, "Let's simply call it what it is, The Writers Group of the Villages" I think Mark suggested 'League' was more professional. I felt the word had more 'class'.

### What was the club situation for Villages writers back in 2011?

**Mark:** There were basically two clubs: The Creative Writers Group and my Children's Authors Team (CAT), which is now called Writers 4 Kids. As these groups became more crowded, new clubs arose to meet the needs. The Writers League was never meant to be a critique group, but more like a union, providing some much needed clout for Villages writers.

**Kenn:** I do not recall any 'professional' writers [whether television, movies, etc.]. People were writing memoirs and fun stories for personal enjoyment.

### If you had to do it over, what would you do differently?

**Mark:** There were many challenges in establishing our club, but I enjoyed my two years as president and feel that the Board did a great job of establishing by-laws and elections for officers. I think the only thing I would have done differently is establish an ambassador program to all the writing groups so that all Villages writers in various clubs would know about our activities, events, and opportunities, and would have supported WLOV efforts as they did this year in the Expo.

**Kenn:** Not a whole lot really. Maybe concentrate on the publishing angle stronger from the beginning.

### Kenn, when did you leave The Villages and WLOV?

I left The Villages in late Oct 2015 – only because my son had settled into Arizona with a steady job and life situation. We wanted to be around family for the years we had left.

### Mark, how has the club changed over the years?

In the beginning WLOV had two main goals: to build membership to develop clout for Villages writers, and to establish new opportunities for authors to show their artistic creations. A lot of our early meeting time was devoted to discussing ways to reach those goals and to create new opportunities for book sales and publicity. As the club matured, and we developed specific events, the goal shifted somewhat to providing educational programs to help our writers improve writing skills, editing, publishing and marketing. I think this educational function is important, but I still feel we need to also focus on creating new opportunities for our authors and continue our work to have our art respected as a vital link in making the Villages the cultural center of all the arts. I congratulate all the presidents and Boards that followed me in volunteering to reach these goals and urge everyone who loves our art to consider volunteering a little of their time so all of us can share the benefits of "uniting to write."