

**The Constitution and By-Laws of the Gulf Coast Poets Chapter
Webster, Texas**

Founded on September 11, 2006

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**CONSTITUTION**  
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ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Poetry Society of Texas - Gulf Coast Poets Chapter, aka Gulf Coast Poets, hereinafter referred to as the Chapter. The Chapter shall be located within the city of Webster, Texas.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Chapter shall be to promote recognition of the art of poetry, to kindle a finer and more intelligent appreciation of poetry, and to encourage the writing, reading, and performance of poetry.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in this Chapter is automatic upon payment of dues.

Section 2. Only Active and Lifetime Members shall be eligible to hold elective office, to vote in the election of officers, and to vote upon proposed amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws.

Section 3. Subject to the approval of this Chapter, Honorary Membership shall be bestowed on outstanding poets who have made an extraordinary contribution to the purposes of this Chapter.

Section 4. Members who have made a one-time contribution of \$100 to this Chapter and/or current members of the Poetry Society of Texas shall be awarded Lifetime Membership, with permanent voting rights.

Section 5. Founding members are those who joined this Chapter before October 15, 2006. The dues of Founding Members shall permanently remain \$10.00 as long as their membership has not lapsed.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS

The Officers of this Chapter shall be President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, and may also include Corresponding Secretary and Historian. Each term of office shall be for two years with no term limits.

ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall consist of the President (Chairman of the Board), officers of the Chapter and two members-at-large appointed by the Chairman of the Board. A quorum consisting of a simple majority will be required for the transaction of business. In order to

assure a quorum, up to three alternate members may be appointed by the board. Voting by the board may be conducted in person, by electronic means, or conference call. Only members of the Executive Board may vote during Executive Board meetings.

ARTICLE VI - ELECTIONS

Elections for board members shall be held at the first meeting in even numbered years.

ARTICLE VII - APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

As soon as may be feasible after election, the President shall appoint two members-at-large to the Executive Committee, and Chairpersons for the following Standing Committees, to serve for one year: Monthly Contest, Membership, Publicity, Audit and other committees as necessary. Any member of the Executive Board may be appointed by the President to serve as Liaison to the Poetry Society of Texas, unless a current member of the Chapter has been chosen by the Poetry Society of Texas to serve as a Councilor, in which case that person will automatically serve as Liaison. All Committee Chairs are welcome to attend and comment during Executive Board meetings.

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS ~ GULF COAST POETS CHAPTER

~~~~~ BYLAWS ~~~~~

ARTICLE I NAME - ADDRESS

The name of this chapter shall be the Poetry Society of Texas - Gulf Coast Poets Chapter, hereinafter referred to as the Chapter. The Chapter shall be located within the city of Webster, Texas.

The Chapter, by a majority vote of the Active Members in attendance may change its name at any given membership meeting provided that all Members are notified fifteen days prior to said meeting, and prior approval in writing has been given by the Poetry Society of Texas which has granted us charter status.

The Executive Board may establish and maintain an address of record at a location to be selected by the Board and may change that location upon notice to members. At this time the mailing address of record is Gulf Coast Poets, c/o P.O. Box 580037, Houston, Texas, 77258-0037. If this address ever changes, each president shall be responsible for maintaining a Post Office Box to be used exclusively by the Chapter.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

Mission statement: The purpose of this Chapter shall be to promote recognition of the art of poetry, to kindle a finer and more intelligent appreciation of poetry, and to encourage the writing, reading, and performance of poetry. This Chapter is formed for charitable, literary and educational purposes.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

1. Eligibility Definitions:

A. Active Member: All who have applied for and have been granted membership and renew their memberships where required, are Active Members of the Chapter, and may attend meetings, presentations and events.

An Active Member shall be any person who has been granted membership and is current with Chapter dues, or is an Honorary Lifetime Member of the Chapter. Only Active Members have full voting privileges, may occupy an elected or appointed office, and may participate in the general business activities of the Chapter.

B. Founding Member: A Founding Member shall be any member of The Poetry Society of Texas who applied for and was granted Gulf Coast Poets membership before the PST Charter was applied for. Founding Members shall pay dues at the reduced rate of \$10.00 per year as long as they remain Active Members.

- C. Associate Member: A citizen of any other state or country may join the Gulf Coast Poets Chapter as an Associate Member if they wish. Associate members do not have voting privileges, even if present at a meeting.
- D. Honorary Lifetime Member: Honorary Lifetime membership honors exceptional and long service to the cause of poetry, and shall be open to any person nominated by the Executive Board and approved by a majority vote of the membership. Honorary Lifetime Members shall be considered Active Members, but shall pay no dues.
- E. Lifetime Members: Anyone who is a current member of the Poetry Society of Texas and pays the designated one-time fee. Lifetime Members shall be considered Active Members, but shall pay no further dues.
- F. Student Member: A Student Member is a) any student age 14 years or older who applies for membership with a permission note from a parent and has been granted membership and is current with Chapter dues, or b) a student in College who applies for membership with a photo copy of a current student id, and has been granted membership and is current with Chapter dues. Student members must furnish a new copy of parental permission or current student id each time they renew membership. This copy shall be kept in the membership file. Voting privileges are not granted to students until all conditions of membership as explained here have been met. Those 18 or older do not need to furnish parental permission, but must still provide proof of current school attendance by providing a photo copy of a current student id. Student Members must be 18 or older to hold office.

2. Dues:

- A. Annual dues shall be set by the Executive Board, change of dues shall be approved by a majority vote of Active Members at a regular business meeting.
- B. Dues are payable each year starting on December 1st. Any member whose dues are not paid before the first general meeting of the following year will lose their active status.
- C. Any Founding Member whose dues are not paid before the first meeting of each year shall lose their status as a Charter Member, and may only be reinstated as an Active Member.
- D. Member Dues: January through December: \$15.00. Prorated dues September through December: \$10.00. All dues must be paid by check.
- E. Types of Memberships:

Student:	\$	5.00 (with current student I.D. and if under 18, parental permission slip is necessary.)
Founding:	\$	10.00
Active:	\$	15.00
Associate	\$	25.00
Lifetime:	\$	100.00 (One time fee)
Honorary Lifetime:		No fee

ARTICLE IV POLICIES

- A. After this date, operational and charitable fund raising activities may be initiated by members or by the Executive Board, but must be approved by a majority vote of the Active Members present at a general membership meeting.
- B. Monthly Contest fees and contest sponsor donations are specifically designated for the use of Speaker Honorariums unless otherwise voted upon by the Executive Board.
- C. No part of the accumulated funds or net earnings of the Chapter shall contribute to the benefit of or be distributed to its members or officers except as follows:
1. Members or officers may be reimbursed for petty cash expenditures approved by the Executive Board. Expenditures over \$100.00 must be pre-approved by the membership at a general business meeting.
 2. A small honorarium may be offered to a member speaker if wished by the Board, but not to an Officer of the Chapter. An honorarium to be determined by the Executive Board may be offered to a non-member speaker. Non-member speakers may also be honored with a certificate or plaque of appreciation.
 3. Monthly or Annual poetry contests may be held that offer prizes to any who enter, including all officers and members except the judge/critic of those competitions, but the money for these competitions must arise from contest fees rather than from the net earnings of the Chapter, unless a set amount is raised, donated, or set aside for that purpose.
- D. Financial records of the Chapter will be audited every two years and upon change of Treasurer by an Audit Committee appointed by the Executive Board. Chapter expenditures, except for petty cash, will be made by check, signed by one or both authorized officers. The President and Treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks. Original receipts must be provided for all reimbursement of expenses.
- E. The fiscal year shall commence on January 1st of each year.
- F. The Chapter shall be guided by Robert's Rules of Order (latest revision) in all cases where advice on parliamentary procedure is needed, and when Robert's Rules of Order is not in conflict with these By-laws.
- G. The Executive Board will have the authority to make expenditures in the amount of \$100.00 or less without the majority vote.
- H. Members who are not Officers or Committee Chairs of the Gulf Coast Poets, are not to represent themselves as such. Any such action taken by a member will be construed as an unauthorized act. Members agree to indemnify, release and hold harmless the Poetry Society of Texas, the Gulf Coast Poets Chapter, its officers, and members for any results of any action taken by individuals on their own initiative.

ARTICLE V OFFICERS, DUTIES AND TERMS

The Officers of this Chapter shall be President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, and may also include Corresponding Secretary and Historian. Each term of office shall be for two years, and there shall be no term limits.
All Officers are members of the Executive Board.

Officers of the Chapter shall be elected every two years at the first general meeting by a majority vote of attending Active Members. Any officer may serve any number of terms as long as he or she is an Active Member and was elected or appointed temporarily to fill a vacated office.

The President will:

- A. Be the Chief Executive of the Chapter.
- B. Preside at all meetings, both Membership and Executive Board meetings.
- C. Have the power to convene special meetings of the Membership and the Executive Board.
- D. Have the power to appoint all committee chairs.
- E. Have the power to appoint a member to fill any vacancy created on the Executive Board, until the next election. Such appointment shall be for the balance of an unexpired term.
- F. Shall act as Corresponding Secretary and/or as Historian where one has not been elected, or may appoint the Vice President or another officer to act in either capacity.
- G. Coordinate creation of an annual budget to be approved by the Executive Board.
- H. Appoint the Newsletter Editor to a yearly appointment by suggestion to the Executive Board, which must be approved unanimously by the Board. The Newsletter Editor may not be a member of the Executive Board.

The Vice President will:

- A. Perform duties as prescribed by the President.
 - B. Serve in the President's stead when necessary.
 - C. Serve as Program Coordinator.
 - D. Assume duties of the President if the President dies or resigns. The Vice President will serve as the President for the balance of the unexpired term.
- The Vice-President is automatically the Gulf Coast Poets Program Coordinator unless another has been appointed by the Board, and shall act as a Liaison between the Chapter and speakers, reporting activities and progress to interested parties within the Chapter and providing assistance (suggesting speakers and contacts etc.) to the Chapter, and may serve on any committee.

The Recording Secretary will:

- A. Be responsible for keeping and reporting the minutes of all executive board and general membership meetings, making reports available at the next meeting.
- B. Submit the final minutes of all meeting minutes to the audit committee if requested.
- C. Will maintain and provide a current and accurate membership list each month.

The Corresponding Secretary (if any) will:

- A. File certificates or reports required by any local, state or federal statutes.
- B. Submit to the membership as appropriate any communication addressed to the Office of Secretary, and to give and serve all notices to the members.

C. After approval of the Executive Board, attend to all correspondence.
If no Corresponding Secretary is elected, these duties shall be performed by the President and/or Vice-President or other officer appointed by the President.

The Treasurer will:

- A. Have custody of all funds of the Chapter, maintaining such funds at a financial institution approved by the Executive Board.
- B. Keep accurate financial records of the Chapter, including bank statements, paid receipts, invoices and budgets.
- C. Make disbursements as authorized by the Executive Board and/or the general Membership
- D. Make available a complete financial statement at all membership and Executive Board meetings and such other times as requested by the Executive Board or the Membership. This report shall contain the closing balance of the last report, all income and expenditures itemized, and a closing balance.
- E. Submit financial records and copies of the annual budget to the audit committee.

The Historian (if any) will:

- A. Keep a copy of all minutes, awards, honors, and competition results for the Chapter.
- B. Keep a copy of all election results and compile an annual report to the Chapter that lists all past officers.

ARTICLE VI ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Elections shall be held every two years. By December 15th of the year preceding an election, the Nominating Committee shall present names and biographies of Executive Officer Candidates to the membership. At the first meeting of the following year, further nominations will be accepted from the floor. The Nominating Committee shall then add those names, if any, to their list of Candidates. If no names are added to the list, the election shall be held at the first meeting of a year in which there is to be an election. If names are added to the list, the election will be held at the second meeting of a year in which there is to be an election. Elections shall be conducted by ballot or hand count. Nominees receiving the majority vote shall be elected. The Officers-Elect shall be sworn in at the meeting in which they are elected, and shall immediately assume duties.

- A. Every Active Member present shall have one vote in matters before the Membership.
- B. Each Officer shall have one vote.
- C. Voting must be done in person when voting to fill an office, changing the name of the chapter, or amend the bylaws.
- D. Other voting may be done by e-mail.

ARTICLE VII MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Meetings will occur at least once a month from January through December, except when members have voted to:

- A. Attend a workshop held by this Chapter or another poetry society.
- B. Members have voted to take a vacation for one to three months during the summer or over the December holidays.

C. Circumstances force a delay. The number of Active Members present will represent a quorum necessary to conduct the business of the Chapter.

ARTICLE VIII AMENDMENTS

These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed at any General membership meeting of the Chapter provided that the amendments have been submitted in writing at a previous membership meeting, and all members have been notified by whatever means necessary (email, published in the Gulf Coast Poets Newsletter or web site, and/or U.S. Mail.) The adoption of any alteration(s) or amendment(s) will require a two-thirds affirmative vote of Active Members present at a general membership meeting.