



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

An educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing
and appreciation of poetry in America.

Strophes

Vol. LI No. 2

www.nfspd.com

October 2014



Eleanor Berry
31st NFSPS
President

Dear NFSPS Poets:

From what I've experienced in the past dozen years, the more one is involved in NFSPS, the more rewarding it becomes—both for a state society and for an individual member.

My first exposure to NFSPS came in 2002 when the society in my home state of Oregon hosted the convention.

Under the presidency of David Hedges, the Oregon State Poetry Association (now OPA, without the "State") had recently re-affiliated with NFSPS after a lapse of several years, and now NFSPS was coming to Oregon. At that time, I was a new member of OSPA and had not yet been recruited to its board, so I was not involved in the work of organizing the convention. I just got to attend it without having to travel to a distant state.

For me, the main sources of excitement in that convention were that a member of my poetry critique group, Jane Bailey, had won the Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition and would be reading from her new book, and that there would be a feast of workshops by eminent Oregon poets. Having moved to Oregon from Wisconsin less than a decade before, I was still getting acquainted with the poetry community here.

During those three days in Coos Bay, I attended every workshop but only briefly listened in on a plenary session, which I thought was "just boring reports," and barely sampled the annual contest awards announcements with the readings of the winning poems, which, to my unaccustomed ears, seemed to drone on and on.

Hosting that convention was an exhausting project for the team that did it, but the event itself generated a great deal of enthusiasm for OSPA among the many Oregonians who attended. I was only one of those who got involved in our state society at that time. Hosting the convention proved to be a way of recruiting a new round of leaders.

My awareness of the national organization began to grow a few years later when I was recommended by my OSPA mentor, David Hedges, to chair the NFSPS poetry book competition that two fellow Oregon poets—Karen Braucher as well as Jane Bailey—had recently won. In my first year chairing the Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition, I frequently exchanged emails with my predecessor, Doris Stengel, who had appointed me to the position when she became NFSPS President. I plied her with questions about my new job, and her answers were always prompt, helpful, and supportive.

Besides emails back and forth with Doris in Minnesota, I had phone and email contact with Margo LaGattuta in Michigan. Margo was serving as editor for the Stevens books, but, in our first long phone conversation, it was her passion for teaching writing and for awakening others to the writer within them that resonated with me. Now that she herself is, unthinkably, gone, her [continued on page 8]

2015 NFSPS COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY LEVEL POETRY COMPETITION: *Something Old, Something New*

Through its annual College/University Level Poetry Competition, NFSPS again will offer recognition and publication to poets who are college undergraduates. The 2015 Competition has a new twist, in that students will be able to submit their manuscripts in either electronic form through submittable.com, the publishing industry's top submissions manager, or on paper, as they have in the past. The guidelines for both methods are on the NFSPS website.

Two awards—the Edna Meudt Memorial Award and Florence Kahn Memorial Award—are given for manuscripts of ten poems each. Each award recipient receives \$500 plus publication of his or her winning manuscript as a chapbook. Each winner is also given 75 copies of the chapbook to sell or give to friends and family. Recipients are invited to read from their work at the NFSPS Convention; if they attend, they are offered a \$300 stipend to offset travel expenses.

The submission period for both electronic and paper entries opens January 1 and closes at midnight, February 14. Unless online contestants already have a personal Submittable account, they will have to open one. Doing so is a simple process, it is free, and the account can be used by the author in future years for other literary venues. **Do not even attempt to email entries.** Submittable and email are two different species, and only disaster awaits emailed poems.

Those sending paper copies (not before January 1, 2015, please) must mail the Awards Chair four copies of a manuscript of ten poems, postmarked by midnight, February 14, 2015. All entries (online or hard copy) require a separate, completed application form with notarized affidavit that the work is original; send it to the Awards Chair by first-class mail and postmarked no later than February 14. Complete submission guidelines for the College/University Level Poetry Competition are on the NFSPS website at nfspd.com/scholarship.htm. The required application form and affidavit can be downloaded from there. Anyone with questions about the competition is welcome to email the College/University Competition Chair, Shirley Blackwell, at sonneteer@earthlink.net.

A panel of three judges will select the two winning manuscripts from those that meet the guidelines. The two award recipients will be announced by April 15, 2015, and their chapbooks will be published in time for the 2015 NFSPS Convention.

Please help spread the word about this exceptional opportunity for poetically talented undergraduates. Encourage your own friends or family to enter, and inform any college or university creative writing teachers you know about this program. Because we are offering electronic submissions this year, we anticipate more entries; we will rely heavily on word of mouth advertising until we can gauge the response.

NFSPS 2015 CONVENTION • JUNE 25-28 IN FLORIDA

Florida State Poets Association is in the final planning stages for next year's NFSPS convention. The Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront hotel was completely renovated this year, including the Dali Bar, a focal point for the handsome lobby and beautifully furnished, intimate alcoves where our themed open poetry readings will be held. An incredible program, featuring a highly talented cross section of Florida's best poets, will include a welcoming by St. Pete Poet Laureate Peter Meinke, a potential invasion by poetry-provoking pirates, and a surrealist poetry workshop at the Dali museum by Parisian-born surrealist poet, Dan Pels. Save the dates, June 25-28, 2015, for a treasure of poetry in the Florida sunshine near the world's finest beaches and the vibrant cultural opportunities readily available in the Tampa area. Tampa Airport is one of the cheapest and most convenient airports in Florida. Book your flights early for substantial savings and low rates. Visit floridastatepoetsassociation.org for more information and registration details. ~ Joe Cavanaugh, FSPA President

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.**

Organized October 17, 1959 ~ Mary B. Wall, Founder

Honorary Chancellor: [to be appointed]

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Elected, NFSPS Convention ~ Salt Lake City, UT, June, 2014

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STROPHES

Strophes, the newsletter of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc., is published four times a year: August (*June 25th) ~ October (*August 25th) ~ January (*November 25th) ~ April (*February 25th). News items and information on contests may be sent via regular mail or e-mail, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Paul Ford, *Strophes* Editor
10239 Hickory Pt. Dr., Sandy, UT 84092-3960
pmford3@yahoo.com

Strophes is available without cost to all paid-up members of NFSPS member state societies when mailed/shipped in bulk to the president or other designated person, who is responsible for ordering the number needed by the submission deadline for each issue. Individual subscriptions are \$4.00 a year to cover handling costs. Special orders are mailed separately. To order a single issue: specify the issue ordered, include a #10 SASE and \$1.00 per copy.

* Submission Deadlines

**NFSPS PAST PRESIDENTS
(Presidential Advisors)**

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*Wauneta Hackleman	Russell H. Strauss
*Jack Murphy	Jeremy M. Downes

* Deceased

MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

Rules: 2015 annual competition

1. There are two divisions: Grade 6-8 (Junior Division) and Grades 9-12 (Senior Division). Each state may submit ten (10) top poems in each division. Poems may have been printed and/or have won previous awards. Contests at state level may have occurred anytime in 2014 or 2015.

2. The competition is open to all USA students in grades 6 – 12. Public, private, and home-schools are eligible for entry by individual NFSPS member states.

3. Submit two copies of each poem. Put the division (Junior or Senior) in the upper left corner of both copies. One copy must have student's ID in upper right corner. The ID information is student name, school name and address, student grade level, and the student's language arts/English teacher's name. The second copy must not have ID information. Do not send a copy with any other marking - there should be no indication of prior award granted by the state.

4. Each poem must be neatly typed or computer-generated, and have no more than 30 lines. If a poem continues more than one page, staple the pages together. Do not staple the two copies of the poem together. It is suggested that each state representative keep a copy of poems entered.

5. There should be no large or unusual fonts or illustrations. Times New Roman is the suggested font. No font larger than 12 point should be used. Winning poems are scanned for the award anthology and large and/or unusual fonts impede the process.

6. Each entrant must make a declaration of originality. The statement should appear on the bottom of the ID copy only. The form below is acceptable:

I certify that this poem is my original work, and has not been copied in whole or part from any author's poems in print or posted on the Internet.

Signed:

7. Separate poems into respective divisions. Within each division separate the ID copy from the anonymous copy meant for judges. Include a cover letter identifying the Manningham (Youth) Chairperson to whom the report on the contests will be mailed.

8. Entries must be received by March 1, 2015.

Send entries to: Budd P. Mahan, 7059 Spring Valley Road, Dallas, TX 75254

Ten prizes will be awarded in each division: First Place - \$75, Second Place - \$50, Third Place - \$40, Fourth Place - \$35, Fifth Place - \$30, and five Honorable Mentions - \$10 each. All winning poems will be published in the Manningham Trust Poetry Student Award Anthology. Winners will receive complimentary copies. The schools of each winning student will receive a complimentary copy for the school library. Notice of winners report will be sent to each state's Manningham (Youth) Chair no later by May 20, 2015. Awards (certificates, checks, anthologies) will also be mailed to the state chairperson. Each state is responsible for distributing prizes to winners and winning schools. The top winning poems will be read to NFSPS members at the Convention held in June, 2015.

I look forward to each state's participation in the Manningham Poetry Trust's annual contests. Questions may be directed to the chairperson at the addresses/numbers below.

Budd Powell Mahan

Manningham Trust Student Poetry Awards Chairperson

7059 Spring Valley Road

Dallas, TX 75254

972-788-4944

buddmahan@att.net

NFSPS YOUTH AWARDS

Due to a mix-up, the NFSPS Youth Awards given to societies who worked with young poets during the year were not issued at the convention as usual. Societies were notified at the convention and by email that the awards would be issued later this year to all societies that responded describing their youth programs. The following state societies have responded and certificates have been mailed to state presidents:

- Arizona State Poetry Society
- Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas
- Columbine Poets (Colorado)
- Iowa Poetry Association
- Mississippi Poetry Society
- New Mexico State Poetry Society
- Poetry Society of Oklahoma
- Oregon Poetry Association
- Pennsylvania Poetry Society
- Poetry Society of Tennessee
- Poetry Society of Texas

We regret that some societies with youth programs never responded to our requests. Our congratulations to the eleven societies who responded that they have been working with youth. Our young poets will determine the future of poetry in America.

~ Respectfully submitted, Russell H. Strauss

2014 STEVENS POETRY MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Awarding \$1,000 + publication + 50 books

- * Except for previous Stevens winners, open to all poets writing in English
 - * 48-70 page poetry manuscript by a single author
 - * Typewritten or computer printed, one side of page only, maximum of 65 characters (including spaces) per line with NO illustrations
 - * No author identification anywhere in manuscript
 - * Pages numbered, no more than one poem per page
 - * May include previously published poems (Acknowledgments on separate sheet)
 - * Simultaneous and multiple submissions permitted
 - * Enclosed in a plain file folder and/or held by a manuscript clip; NO staples or binding
 - * No certified or registered mail; no disks
- Include two title pages, one with no author ID, the other with name, address including zip, and phone. If applicable, state poetry society membership, and which state. Include a table of contents.

Enclose a business-size (#10) self-addressed, stamped envelope to be notified of the results in January, 2015. Manuscripts will be recycled.

Notify us immediately if your manuscript is accepted elsewhere.

All manuscripts will be reviewed for compliance with guidelines and overall quality by the competitions Chairman. Approximately 100 will be sent, without identification or acknowledgments, to an independent judge, who will remain anonymous until the results are announced.

The winning manuscript will be published by the NFSPS Press, and the book will be available for sale at the NFSPS annual convention, on the web, and elsewhere in June, 2015.

Address for Submissions:

Amy Jo Zook, Chairman
NFSPS Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition
3520 State Route 56
Mechanicsburg, OH 43044
Phone 937-834-2666

SUBMISSION PERIOD: August 1-October 15, 2014 (postmark deadline)

ENTRY FEE: \$20 for NFSPS members, \$25 for nonmembers (Members of state poetry societies affiliated with NFSPS are members.)

PAST JUDGES: David Baker, Michael Dennis Browne, Michael Bugeja, Anne Marx, Sue Brannan Walker, Kenneth Brewer, David Sutherland, Donna Salli, Bruce Eastman, Ruth Berman, Peter Meinke, Lawson Inada, Patricia Fagnoli, Jeff Gundy, Carolyne Wright, Ralph Burns, Lola Haskins, Jessica Garratt, Maggie Anderson, Glenna Holloway.

RECENT WINNER: Copies of the current winning volume of the Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition, Betsy Hughes's *Breaking Weather*, are available through the NFSPS website.

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS is lucky to have Professor Todd Sukany as the Arkansas State Critic. Each month, members can submit one poem to Dr. Sukany and he gives a verbal reading via email plus a critique. Many members have reported how useful this has been for them and how much they enjoy the taped reading. Dr. Sukany will be the main speaker for the Arkansas Poetry Day celebration hosted on October 17th and 18th by the Free Verse Poetry Group of Mountain Home. Mountain Home, located near Lake Norfolk is known for its spectacular views. The South Arkansas Poets of the Pines hosted a "take over downtown El Dorado" night on August 22nd. Historic downtown El Dorado is home to some very interesting art and specialty shops. A poetry reading was given at PJ's, a coffee bar in El Dorado. The group, lead by Marilyn Joyner, brought poets from all over Arkansas to the event. PRA was founded in 1931 and can be found on poetsroundtable.webs.com and Facebook. Come check us out. ~ *Laura Loughridge, Reporter*

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY'S spring Poetry Blast took place on May 17th and was well-attended. Highlights included a presentation on contemporary American poets with video clips, presented by Evelyn Atreya, and a roundtable discussion featuring the presidents of several CPS chapters. Attendees also enjoyed the book fair, which included representation from several local presses. Refreshments included a cake marking the celebration of the 40th anniversary of CPS! ~ *Ginny Connors, Contest Chair and Newsletter Editor*

FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION is rejoicing in our successful campaign to re-instate the position of Florida Poet Laureate. We will be working with our state legislators and hope to have one named soon. One of our chapters has even been successful in the creation of Poet Laureate for their county. Planning is ongoing for our annual Fall Convention to be held in Daytona Beach. We have a wonderful program planned and will be celebrating our 40th birthday. Along with that we are putting together a fun Florida adventure for the NFSPS 2015 Convention to be held in St. Petersburg. We hope you will all join us for sunshine, salt air, palm trees and ocean waves. ~ *Mary-Ann Westbrook, Secretary*

GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY'S quarterly meeting was held July 19, 2014, at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. The morning program included readings from fellow

members and a workshop on marketing your poetry presented by Lucinda Clark of the Poetry Matters Project, Augusta, Georgia. The afternoon session featured a workshop on handling submission rejection by Michael Diebert, Poetry Editor for *The Chattahoochee Review*. Members were treated to the unveiling of the 2014 edition of the *Reach of Song* anthology by editor Karen Pickell. It was also editor Pickell's farewell as she will be relocating to Florida in the fall. The next scheduled quarterly meeting will take place on October 25, 2014, at Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia. Maureen Ryan Griffin will discuss in the morning session, "The Fine Art of Cooking Up a Poem," and Karen Paul Holmes will lead an afternoon workshop titled "Showing Emotion in your Poetry without sounding like a Hallmark Card." A special appearance by North Georgia writer and artist Laurence Holden is also scheduled. ~ *Lucinda Clark, Reporter*

INDIANA STATE FEDERATION OF POETRY CLUBS on May 17th enjoyed a Spring Meeting in Noblesville, hosted by the local Noble Poets chapter. Participants enjoyed a full day of poetry-oriented activities, including an inspiring presentation by Indiana's new Poet Laureate, George Kalamaras, Professor of English at IU-PU Fort Wayne. Also during the meeting ISFPC'S new Premier Poet, Mary A. Couch, debuted readings of her poetry. ISFPC will host its 36th Fall Rendezvous at the beautiful Clifty Falls State Park in Madison, Indiana on October 10-12, 2014. A featured event will be a presentation by an up-and-coming, four-man poetry ensemble called "Reservoir Dogwoods." Clifty Falls overlooks the scenic Ohio River. Registration forms and information are available online at isfpc.org. Do join us for workshops, fine speakers, Rendezvous poetry contest winners, round-robin readings, and healthy nature walks. Next year, our Rendezvous will be held October 9-11, 2015, at McCormick's Creek State Park in Spencer, IN. ~ *Dr. David W. Stocking, President*

KENTUCKY STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S annual meeting will be held in Berea, KY, October 31-November 2. The program will include workshops and readings plus conversations on publishing and ways to foster the love of poetry. A student registration rate is available. Lodging is available at the Historic Boone Tavern, where the Saturday evening awards banquet will be held. For more information, visit kystatepoetrysociety.org or contact Libby Jones (libby_jones@berea.edu; 859-985-3757). ~ *Libby Falk Jones, President*

MAINE POETS SOCIETY'S next meeting will be Saturday, February 21, 2015, in the Deering Wing of the Dyer Public Library, in Saco, Maine. Contests (open to members only) will be announced at a later date. Details should be available on the society's website by mid-December and included in the January issue of *Strophes*. Registration begins 9:30 a.m. As usual there will be a \$12 registration fee which includes lunch. Non-members are welcome and may stay to participate in a reading-in-the-round at about 3:00 p.m. New membership is encouraged. For more information and to learn about the Society, visit mainepoetsociety.com or contact MPS President Carol Bachofner at mainepoet@me.com or 207-594-8954. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY continues to thrive under the exuberant leadership of President Jeanette Maes. The vagaries of New England weather forced a cancellation of the widely anticipated August Picnic Meeting at the historic Saugus Iron Works. Calendars are routinely so full lately that no optional rain date was possible. Twenty-five National Poetry Day contests sponsored by members and MSPS Chapters are underway and now in the hands of readers and raters. Next MSPS meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 18, at the Hazlett Room of the Winthrop Public Library. Waterfront CREW Poets, a chapter of MSPS, will present a program that honors the late, great author, dramatist, educator and poet, Dr. Maya Angelou. Governor Deval Patrick has been petitioned to declare October 15th National Poetry Day in Massachusetts with the entire month dedicated to the celebration of poetry. National Poetry Day Contest winners will be announced by Roberta Hung, Chair. President Maes has announced she will conduct a workshop dealing with "On the Light Side," a holdover from the cancelled August meeting. Waterfront CREW Poets have kept busy following their celebrated Readings at the Summer Solstice event by offering public poetry readings at the Winthrop Book Depot and Cafe, and at Simon's Book Shop during the spring and summer. All venues welcomed some high school students who attended for the sheer love of poetry and agreed to read a selection of their own. CREW Chapter is preparing a book of members' poetry. Publication is due in the fall. This project is partially funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council through the local Winthrop Cultural Council. ~ *Patricia Bruen Tacelli, Reporter*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY's Mrs. Brenda Brown Finnegan, a South Branch member, was recently honored by the Mississippi House of Representatives with a proclamation for her Lifetime Achievement Award and her work with the Mississippi Poetry Society. South Branch member Dr. Phillip Levin has published a 200-photo book, *On a Mission*, which documents his 10 years in medical missions and especially his work in the mountains of Kenya. All proceeds of this book will go to support his mission work. His website is www.DoctorsDreams.net. Jim Booth has published *Terrapin Scratch: Who Put the Body Under the School House?* It is available at bookstores or through Tate Publishing. Jim is the founder of Poets Anonymous and a Central Branch member. Congratulations to Janice Canerdy for both her third place win and HM as well as to Tommy Little for his HM in this year's NFSPS contest. Congratulations also goes to our at-large members Jim Barton, Barbara Blanks, Von S. Bourland, Gail Denham, Sarah Hull Gurley, Catherine Moran and Russell Strauss who won or placed in the NFSPS competition. Our membership is gradually growing—a couple of new members for North Branch and a new addition to South Branch and some new at-large members. Dues for 2014-15 will be due in September and are \$25.00 for both resident and at-large members. The MPS contest for Spring Festival will be available on our website in early October for download from the contest page. We hope many of our poet friends will participate. Contact contest chair Sheila Grieco at sheilak1603@cableone.net. Deadline for entries to be received will be March 16, 2015, with awards at our Spring Festival April 18-19, 2015. The Spring Festival Awards event will held at the Gulf Hills Inn and Conference Center, Ocean Springs, MS. Our festival guest speaker will be the fabulous Jim Barton. ~ *Dorothy Wiman, MPS Secretary*

OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION held its summer picnic this past July and also elected new officers for the 2014-16 biennium. This September, OPA will host its annual Fall Writers Retreat at Malabar Farm State Park featuring workshop leader Diane Kendig (dianekendig.com) with an emphasis on poetry of place. In October, OPA will hold the second of its Ekphrasis 3-C poetry workshop series at the Cleveland Museum of Art, with workshop leader Clarissa Jakobsons. Finally, editor Steve Abbott is compiling the poems for the next issue of the OPA journal, *Common Threads*, to be released around the holidays. This will wrap up the 2014

programming year. The OPA officers also are currently in the process of planning the 2015 programming year.
~ *Chuck Salmons, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA is publishing an anthology, *Red Earth Revisited*, to celebrate PSO's 80th anniversary. The anthology will include poems from PSO members who are invited to submit up to three poems for consideration. Also please include a short biography. PSO membership is only \$20 per year for adults and \$10 for youth members. Complete details are available at oklahomapoets.com. Entry deadline and publishing date are yet to be finalized, but we urge you to enter as soon as possible. Mail poetry selections, and if not a member, member fees to PSO, 712 East Walker St., Altus, OK 73521 or email to us at wilcoxens@sbcglobal.net. Congratulations to PSO members who won awards in the 2014 NFSPS Contests! Our winners from Oklahoma are: Karen Kay Bailey, Trina Lee and Dena R. Gorrell. PSO winners from out of state are: Von Bourland, Barbara Blanks, Joyce Shiver, Madelyn Eastlund, and Jeani Picklesimer. PSO was honored to receive a Certificate for Participation in Poetry Day and Poetry Month Activities at the NFSPS Convention. Congratulations also to PSO author Ed Roberts who presented at our July workshops. Ed is drawing terrific interest in local poetry in the Oklahoma City area with the release of new editions of his books with createspace.com and has three book signings scheduled already. We will celebrate National Poetry Day at our next meeting with a banquet at the Twin Hills Country Club in Oklahoma City on Saturday, October 11, 2014. Our program will be "Remembering the Music of Poetry," featuring author Karen Kay (Knauss) Bailey and the vocal duo Heart & Soul, Karen Kay and Pam Barrymore. The musical voice of poetry will enlighten and entertain with readings by author Karen Kay Knauss, a tribute to some of the most memorable poems of all time, and a performance of a few poems that have become favorite song lyrics by this vocal duo. This will also be the launch of Karen's newest book, *A Gathering of Pearls*. We ask everyone attending to bring a favorite poem of theirs and signed by the poet, along with a small piece of memorabilia that may have inspired the poem. We will have a table set up to display these poems and memorabilia so people can browse and read during breaks in our celebration. Bring a friend, a family member, teacher, or anyone you like, to take part in this event! ~ *Joan Wilcoxon, Co-President*

OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION is celebrating three Big Things: the beginning of

the two-year term of our newest Poet Laureate, Peter Sears, of Corvallis; the election to the NFSPS Presidency of Eleanor Berry, of Lyons; and the continuing Centennial Year of Oregon Poet William Stafford. Peter has opened a Facebook page and is campaigning to get a thousand "Likes" from us. At last count, he was nearing 300. He continues to give well-received readings and workshops all over the state, with a reading and workshop scheduled for the Rogue Valley Unit in September. He has begun to seek poets from other cultures to read with him, in their own languages. Eleanor has long been known in Oregon for her awe-inspiring energy in support of poetry organizations, especially the OPA. She served as our President for several terms and on the Board of Directors in supporting roles for many other years. She has helped shepherd us through many challenges, not least of them the recent realization that the Oregon Poetry Collection can no longer be housed at the State Library in Salem. That has led to prolonged negotiations, ending with the current plan for the Collection to be housed at the University of Oregon in Eugene. The Stafford Centennial climaxed in January, the month of his birth, but one of his best-remembered projects, writing a poem every day, has led to any number of Poem-a-Day marathons by individuals and groups around the state. Dorothy Mack, of Depoe Bay, has been organizing our Fall Conference to be held October 3-5 in Bandon, on the coast. The theme is "Stafford by the Sea—and More . . ." She plans at least 12 one-hour workshops, panels, presentations, and readings to fill the days. Oregon poets were also encouraged to enter poems in the State Fair this year. At this writing, winners had not yet been announced. ~ *Dave Harvey, Reporter*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE members have been busy writing and winning. We had a good number of winners in the National contests with Russell Strauss having 6th Honorable Mention in contest #1. As usual, he brought home "money winners" for other contests as did Caroline Sposto and Sarah Hull Gurley. We won't dare forget to mention Jim Barton who is also a member of PST and is a big winner in our PST contests every year. I am proud to say that the 1st place winner of the #1 contest was from my home state of Kentucky, Deborah Kuss of Corbin, and I had the pleasure of letting her know she won. We also had our summer Poetry in the Park but due to vacations and sickness it was not as well attended as we would have liked. That won't let us down though because we are planning another one for the fall. On August 17th, we had our summer Annual Poetry Meeting at my home and to my surprise, was attended by 19

persons. One of our youngest and newest poets performed his work in memory of Robin Williams who passed away and who incidentally had contacts with the Poetry Society of Tennessee. One of our former members, Pat Smith-Williams who passed away several years ago, was a relative of Robin Williams and she and his family visited with him in California every year. We are looking forward to a great year with our 58th Poetry Festival October 10 and 11 with Caki Wilkinson, a professor at Rhodes College, and are thinking of creative new programs to inspire our members as well as bring in new members. ~ *JoAn Robbins Howerton, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE

addendum: PST is currently accepting submissions for our annual anthology, *Fresh Breath*. Submissions should be received by November 30, 2014. Winners will be announced at the end of January. First prize is \$150, second prize is \$75, and third prize is \$50. Publication is limited to 75 poems and entries are being accepted from members and non-members, alike. Publication will be perfect bound and approximately 100 pages. This will count as a publishing credit and will include an ISBN number. Currently, we are seeking two independent judges from the local educational and writing community. ~ *Todd M. Bailey, Northeast PST Chapter President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS' Summer Conference was hosted by the Poets Northwest Chapter at the Hyatt North Houston, July 10-12. Chairman of "On the Wings of Poetry" was Lynn Roberts Grice and serving in various capacities were chapter members Bob and Maxine B. Kohanski, Lisa Salinas, Sharon Young, David Orchard and Michael Owens. After the Thursday night dinner, memorial tributes were given to four well-known and well loved PST poets who have passed away, their poetry read by those who were close to them. Those honored were: Mildred Vorpahl Baass (presenter: Nancy Baass, her daughter), Roberta Pipes Bowman (presenter: Naomi Stroud Simmons), Violette Newton (presenter: Birma C. Castle) and Claire Ottenstein-Ross (presenter: Maxine B. Kohanski). Presenting a variety of programs and workshops were Lisa Salinas, Terry Jude Miller, Sharon Young, Stephen J. Mendonca, Scarlett Czarnopis and Michael Owens who presented with Dale Terry and Dick Klein. Michael Owens was also moderator of panel members Leslie Ann Engle, Karen Mastacchio, David Orchard and Carol A. Taylor. The Keynote Speaker at the Friday night dinner was the 2013 Poet Laureate of Texas, Rosemary Catacalos. Winners of the

Conference poetry contest, "You Be There," were: 1st Place, Susan Maxwell Campbell; 2nd Place, Sharon Young; 3rd Place, Carol A. Taylor; 4th Place, Beth Ayers; and 5th Place, Catherine L'Herisson. Valerie Martin Bailey and Barbara Lewie Berry tied for 1st Place and Laurie Kolp and Lisa Salinas tied for 2nd Place in the PST sponsored "You Be the Judge" poetry contest. A special feature was the placement on the meeting room walls of white boards for attendees to write poems on during the Conference. ~ *Nancy Baass*

WYOPOETS election of new officers took place at the WyoPoets April business meeting followed by a brilliant presentation by Wyoming Poet Laureate, Echo Kalproth. Ms Kalproth will be serving the state organization as secretary. WyoPoets' president Myra Peak of Rock Springs, WY began her two-year term by thanking past president, Abbie Taylor. Newly-elected Vice-President David Polhamus and Treasurer Art Elser round out the officers for the 2014-2015 year. The only business pending this fall is the Eugene V. Shea National Contest event which runs from October 1, 2014 to December 1, 2014. ~ *Lee Ann Siebken, Reporter*

CONTESTS

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY

October 15, 2014, is the submission deadline for this year's 21st ISPS poetry contest. The themed category is "journey," either literal or metaphoric. Please check illinoispoets.org for details.

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY holds one contest each Spring in conjunction with its Spring Festival. For rules and information, write to Judy Davies, 1418 Louis Alexis Trail, Gautier, MS 39553, or email judydavies@cableone.net (put "Contest Information" in the subject line). You may also consult www.misspoetry.net and download contest information from the contest page.

MISSOURI STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S

Winter contest deadline: Postmark February 15, 2015. Two copies of each entry, category number and name in upper left corner of both copies, poet's name and address in upper right corner of one copy. If a member, put "Missouri State Poetry Society" below your address; otherwise put "non-member". 40 or fewer lines. May be previously published if poet retains the rights to the poem; may enter each category as many times as poet wishes. Categories: 1) rhymed verse or blank verse, 2) free verse, 3) humorous verse, 4) any form, winter subject, 5) poet's choice (only MSPS members, any form, any subject). Members

pay \$1 per entry and \$2 per category 5 entry. Non-members pay \$2 per entry. Payable to MSPS. Mail poems and fees to Bill Lower, 21010 S. Highway 245, Fair Play, MO 65649.

POETS AND FRIENDS OF SPRINGFIELD

(a chapter of the MISSOURI STATE POETRY SOCIETY) is sponsoring its 14th annual contest with four categories: Free Verse, Formal Structure, Humorous, and Haiku/Senryu. Entry fee is \$1.00. Prizes: \$25, \$15, \$10. Deadline: November 30, 2014. Judged in December, 2014. No Internet entries. For contest guidelines and questions: M.J. Becco, Contest Chair, 3025 N. East Ave, Springfield, MO 65803, or mjbecco@hotmail.com.

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA'S

2015 Annual Spring Contest categories and details are available at oklahomapoets.com. The Contest Postmark Deadline is November 30, 2014, for submitting entries. Mail contest entries to: Marsha Kay Oldham, PO Box 612 Garber, OK 73738-0612. PSO members include check, cashier's check, or money order for \$5.00 'Flat Fee' for one or all category entries. Non-PSO entrants please include \$3.00 per poem. Submit only one entry per category.

WYOPOETS is sponsoring the 2014 Eugene V. Shea Annual National Contest which opens October 1, 2014, with a deadline of December 1, 2014. Prize awards will be as follows: 1st, \$100; 2nd, \$50; 3rd, \$30; and 4th, \$20. For contest guidelines, contact Contest Chair Nancy Ruskowsky at nrusk59@gmail.com or send a SASE to her at 331 Road 6RT, Cody, WY 82414. Additionally, contest guidelines will be posted on the Contests & Events page of wyopoets.org.

NFSPS 2015 ANNUAL CONTESTS

information is available on nfsp.com. Look for the Poetry Contests link. Entries cannot be postmarked before January 1, 2015, and must be postmarked no later than March 15, 2015.

BREAKING WEATHER

by Betsy Hughes Now Available

Breaking Weather, by Betsy Hughes, the winner of the 2013 NFSPS Stevens Manuscript competition, is a collection of sonnets by a poet whom the judge, Glenna Holloway, describes as a master sonneteer. However, as Holloway indicates, their interest lies as much in their content as in the handling of the form. Here, says David Lee Garrison, “are sonnets on the seasons of the year, emotions, mythological figures, the arts, the end of life, and much more. . . . *Breaking Weather* bears witness to a life lived deeply, to the poet’s keen eye for detail and her joyful embrace of the world.” Retired from 30 years of teaching at the Miami Valley School in Ohio, Betsy Hughes has continued to convey her passion for poetry through moderating courses in literature and creative writing for the University of Dayton Lifelong Learning Institute. Her poems have appeared in various Ohio Poetry Association publications and in literary journals.

To order send \$15 per book plus \$2.00 postage (add 50 cents per book if ordering more than one book) to Polly Opsahl, 270 Brewster Rd, Rochester Hills, MI 48309. We accept check or money order, payable to NFSPS.

Recent past winners of the Stevens Award are available at Amazon.com and *Breaking Weather* will also soon be available. Ordering information is available for all NFSPS titles at nfspss.com/publication.htm.

POETRY ARTICLES**The Importance of Mentoring**Inge Logenburg Kyler, Historian,
Poetry Society of Michigan

Like many of you, I started writing poetry when I was very young, ten, as a matter of fact. When I was nineteen my poetry caught the attention of Nora S. Hines, a member of the Lansing Poetry Club as well as the Poetry Society of Michigan. Through her encouragement and mentoring, I started improving my work and sending things out to newspapers and those wonderful little literary magazines, most of which are no longer around. As I think back on those years, I realize how very important her encouragement was. Not only Nora encouraged me, but it seems that many of the members of PSM also encouraged me by writing letters, phone calls and such. Obviously, things have changed today, but the value of mentorship cannot be understated. At one time, one of the groups started a round-robin where we would send poems out to each other, adding our thoughts, ideas or corrections, along the way.

Many years later, I still have many of those wonderful letters. When we talk about how to encourage youth in writing poetry, mentoring can go a long way. Just letting someone know that someone else is interested and supportive, is of great value. Again, like many of you, I have scrapbooks of poems I have published throughout the years, along with at least two dozen published books of poetry, as well as non-fiction. These days I am also involved in history, and recently was asked by Arcadia Publishing to do the history for the Holt/Delhi Township, which I completed last summer. Because of the Arcadia book I have been asked to give various programs and such, and I include my love of poetry along with the programs.

I am now in my seventies, still writing and still working on various “big” writing projects. I am thankful for those poets who, years ago, believed in me, encouraged me and supported me. We need to do that today, especially with the younger people. With the electronic means we have now, it should be easier. Mentoring can go a long way, and is the best way, I believe, to support new poets of any age.

Do Your Poems Show or Tell?Valerie Martin Bailey, NFSPS 2nd Vice
Chancellor and *Encore* Editor

Define your purpose. As an editor, when someone brings a book to me for editing, he or she may be surprised by my first question: “Why did you write this book?” If the author does not know the answer, you can bet he won’t sell many books. Before you begin, ask yourself *why* you want to write this poem. Poets write for the joy of writing, and the answer often given by poets when asked why they write is: “Because I *must!*” But just as builders build with plans, likewise, poets need a plan to build a poem; each poem needs a purpose. Do you want to express an emotion? Give an opinion? Present an idea or insight? Give information on a particular subject? Share an experience? Voice a complaint? Entertain with humor or whimsy? Inspire someone? It helps to ask yourself why you are writing. Once you know your purpose, writing gets easier because you will be focused and won’t distract yourself or your reader by wandering around through your poem. It helps you stay on the path to your point.

Paint powerful word pictures. Poets talk a lot about imagery and painting pictures with words, yet judges still write this critique on our poems: SHOW me, don’t TELL me! How do we do this? We don’t come home from vacations and *tell* our friends what we saw and did. We pull out photos and *show* them what we saw. We take them on our trip via our

photo album. If you apply the following suggestions, your poems will be transformed from *reports* about events, ideas, and experiences into *journeys* your readers take *with* you so they see what you saw, hear what you heard, and feel what you felt.

Poetry demands precision. A poet’s job is to create a picture in the mind and an emotion in the heart with an economy of words. Every word counts. Use precise words that say what you mean. You don’t need stanza after stanza to get your point across. Choose the most accurate words in your vocabulary in relation to your subject. The novelist has a story plot to pull the reader along, so he or she may get away with a few failures to be precise, but the poet must constantly pursue precision in order to distill the subject to its essence.

Don’t try to impress the reader with seldom used, fancy words. Sending your reader to the dictionary is not your goal. Know your subject instead and choose the value of your authentic voice over a fancy word. But if you are comfortable with the fancy word, if it fits well in the poem and is precisely what is needed, use it.

Avoid lazy adverbs and weak verbs. If we rely on adverbs and adjectives and weak verbs for the imagery in our poems, they will lack power. Imagery doesn’t mean flowery descriptions, it means taking a verbal snapshot of the experience to show to the reader. We have a colorful language palette to use in painting word pictures. We just need to know how to use it.

Don’t clutter your poems. Avoid unnecessary “helper” words like *really*, *truly*, *very*, *surely*, *actually*, *literally*, and all their kinfolk. What do those words add your poem? Nothing; they are used so routinely, they are invisible. Pick strong words that don’t need any help to carry your poem. Another deadly form of cluttering is trite, forced rhymes. If each rhyming line is not relevant or necessary, write free verse instead.

Don’t support words with other words that mean the same thing: *free gift*, *continue on*, *blend together*, *close proximity*, *kneel down*, *lift up*—you get the idea. Don’t be redundant. Precision means power.

Walk, don’t drive to your destination. This doesn’t mean to meander around without getting to your point. It means when you walk to your destination, you see more than when you drive focused on traffic instead of scenery. It’s easier to take verbal snapshots when you are close enough to observe the subject. Be observant.

POETRY EVENTS & NOTES

POETRY IN THE PARK

This year's PIP will be held Friday, March 20, 2015, in Zion National Park. Let the spring beauty of Zion's landscape inspire you. Poetry workshop 9 am - 4 pm on "Beginnings and Endings" with Lola



Lola Haskins

Haskins, award-winning poet, author of thirteen books of poetry, MFA instructor and writing coach. Enjoy Utah's unique red rock cliffs on a guided walk by naturalist Michael Plyler.

Bring your camera and sack lunch. Join us for an unforgettable experience: picnic with new friends, explore your creativity and *find your muse*. Presented by Utah State Poetry Society and Zion Canyon Field Institute, funded in part by grants from the Utah Arts and Museums as well as the National Endowment for the Arts. Fee is \$60 (includes free one-day park entrance) while only \$48 for members of UTSPS and ZCFI. To register contact Michael Plyler 800-635-3959. More info available at poetry-in-the-park.com or contact UTSPS PIP Chair Lin Floyd 435-628-8522. Housing and carpools available in nearby St. George, UT.

INTERESTED IN SLAM POETRY?

Steven Concert, NFSPS Chancellor and Youth Chair, is looking to form a NFSPS Slam Team. Want to join? Email Steven at: paperlesspoetsonline@hotmail.com for details.

POETRY COMMENTARY

(Article recommended by the *Strophes* Editor)

In the *New York Times*, a July, 2014 article by David Biespiel is entitled: "Poems Hold the Mysteries of the Present, Dreams of the Future." Mr. Biespiel presents his answer to the question, perhaps unarticulated but nagging for many poets, "Does poetry matter?" You can find his article at:

nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/07/18/does-poetry-matter/poems-hold-the-mysteries-of-the-present-dreams-of-the-future

President's Message continued from page 1

passion still resonates in my mind, along with prize-winning poems that I later heard her read at conventions.

Part of my job as chair of the Stevens Competition was to introduce the year's winner for his or her reading at the convention. Thus it was that I attended the 2007 convention in Oklahoma City. There I finally met Doris and Margo in person, and I had my first contacts with many NFSPS members from other states. This time, as an Oregon delegate, I attended the plenary sessions, avidly listening to the "boring" state reports and taking notes on other societies' programs that I wanted to recommend to our board. As OSPA president, I also attended my first state presidents' meeting, and relished the lively exchange about problems we had in our states and solutions we'd found.

On the shuttle back to the airport, I found myself sitting next to Utah's Ned Snell and had the chance to ask him about his society's Poet of the Year book award and its Poetry in Park program, which had been mentioned in the Utah state report. Our conversation was a fitting coda to a convention experience that had awakened me to the possibilities of interchange with other state societies.

I have now attended eight consecutive conventions, enjoying the hospitality of Utah (twice), Minnesota, Tennessee (with Mississippi and Arkansas), Michigan, Indiana, and New Mexico, as well as Oklahoma. Each new location has given me the opportunity not only to get a taste of a particular place but to encounter a large number of the host society's active members. Each year's workshops have given me the opportunity to learn from accomplished poets whom I'd have been unlikely to encounter outside their respective states. Each convention has been flavored not only by the geography of its region but by the

particular character of its host society. I've savored those distinctive flavors.

As much as I've enjoyed experiencing something new at each successive convention, I've valued what I can count on finding every year—regular attendees from other state societies, with whom I've developed bonds of friendship, and institutional customs, some of which initially struck me as silly, but which I've come over time to appreciate. The presentation of the awards for the 50 annual contests, with readings of the three "place" poems for each, makes for marathon sessions, often physically taxing, but those readings have developed my ability to listen to poems, and they have given me many examples of effective performance of poetry.

Among the customary convention activities are the early bird and night owl open mics. It took me a while to discover and avail myself of these. Hearing so many poems in the awards presentations, I had little appetite for more, and little energy to stay up late, still less to get up early. Eventually, though, I discovered that these events were often extraordinary conversations in poetry among people from all over the country who gathered to share their work. I also came to admire—and even, occasionally, to emulate—the stamina of poets who managed to be *both* early birds *and* night owls.

NFSPS provides a space where poets from all parts of the country, of all levels, orientations, and aesthetics, come together in fellowship. Academics, street poets, Sunday poets, widely published, unpublished, regional, cosmopolitan—we come together not in controversy but in recognition that we are all, in our various ways, devoted to an essential verbal art.