



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

Strophes

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April 2015



Eleanor Berry
31st NFSPS
President

Dear NFSPS Poets:

Winter can be a difficult season, keeping us isolated from one another or at least making us feel that way. This past winter, when part of the country experienced record snows and frigid temperatures even as another part had drought and record warmth, our different states seemed worlds apart. Nonetheless, we members of state poetry societies north and south, east and west, share a passion for poetry and a commitment to support its writing and reading.

An important benefit of affiliation with NFSPS is the connection it creates among our separate state societies. As members of affiliated societies, all of us get news of the other societies' activities. Probably most of us would rather read

poems than prose reports, but the member society news in each issue of *Strophes* can be a rich source of ideas and inspiration. Other societies' activities can suggest possibilities for our own society.

Poring over the state news from the past year, I've been struck by several sorts of activities that I think many state society members would find valuable. Several individual societies have developed effective ways of partnering with other organizations, honoring achievement, publishing books and chapbooks of members' work, offering critique, involving youth, raising funds, and enriching their meetings and contests. Here, then, is a compendium of possibilities from what I've gleaned.

Partnerships with other organizations can be occasional or ongoing, and can be with other literary or cultural organizations or with an entirely different kind of organization, which provides space, publicity, and perhaps other support for society programs. State societies are engaged in all these types of partnerships. The Illinois State Poetry Society has held National Poetry Month displays in libraries throughout the state; a club in the Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs has coordinated with an arts group to produce a book of poet-painter collaborations; the Ohio Poetry Association partners with a museum to conduct workshops on ekphrasis. The Utah State Poetry Society has a longstanding partnership with Zion Canyon Field Institute to conduct a "Poetry in the Park" workshop in Zion National Park each spring. The Ohio Poetry Association has embarked on a partnership with a university, bringing poetry programs to campus and giving students internship opportunities in exchange for space for its programs.

Honoring the achievements of their members is an important way for state societies to support poets and poetry. In addition to contests for single poems, state societies have various ways to recognize members' work. The Arizona State Poetry Society has instituted an annual service award. The WyoPoets profile featured poets on their website. Several societies, including the Indiana Federation of State Poetry Clubs and the Poetry Society of Michigan, have a "Premier Poet" or "Poet of the Year." The Poetry Society of Oklahoma has both a "Poet Laureate" and a "Senior Poet Laureate"; in 2014, the latter honor was bestowed on NFSPS board member Dena Gorrell.

A laureateship not only honors a particular poet and his or her work, but brings attention and respect to poets and poetry more broadly. Over the past couple of years, the Florida State Poets Association has conducted a successful campaign to reinstate a state Poet Laureate position. Members of the Ohio Poetry Association have worked in support of legislation creating the position there—and seen the bill signed into law last December.

Publication is, of course, an important way of recognizing literary achievement—and of making the work in question available to readers. The Poetry Society of Texas and the Utah State Poetry Society both conduct annual poetry book manuscript competitions and publish the winning manuscript. Every two years, the Georgia Poetry Society conducts a chapbook contest, awarding publication to the winner.

A number of state societies publish anthologies of members' poetry, either regularly (most often annually) or occasionally. The Poetry Society of Michigan publishes an anthology every five years. Last year the Illinois State Poetry Society published its second anthology, the WyoPoets published a chapbook of members' poetry to mark National Poetry Month, and the Poetry Society of Oklahoma published an anthology in celebration of its 80th anniversary.

State societies not only honor and publish members' poetry; they also help to foster members' development as poets. Critiquing services [continued on page 8]

NFSPS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN ST. PETERSBURG, FL

Hilton Bayfront Hotel, June 24-28, 2015

Discover the Treasure - Poetry's Place in the Sun

Program

Wednesday, June 24 — Early Arrivals

1PM Early Arrival Registration and Activities

>> Registration form included as pages 11-12 and available at floridastatepoetsassociation.org. Look for the link: NFSPS Registration Form (Detailed).

Thursday, June 25

9AM-3PM Choice of Optional Group Activities:

* Sarasota Ringling Museum and Tour

* Old Town Tampa-Ybor City Tour

* St. Pete Beach Day on the white sands

12-5PM Registration

3:30-5:30PM NFSPS Board Meeting

6:30PM Welcome Reception, Entertainment

8:30PM-Midnight Open Readings

Friday, June 26

7:30-8:30AM Open Readings

9AM-6PM Registration

9AM Bookstore Opens

9-10:30AM First Plenary Session

10:30-11AM *Florida's Poetic Heritage*: Dr. Maurice O'Sullivan

11:15AM-12PM *Lola Haskins, Reads her work and speaks about being a Florida Poet*

12:30PM Lunch, Manningham Winners, Contest Awards

3-5PM *Florida's Roots*: Doyle Rigdon, Sean Sexton

5:30PM Hosted Reception, Entertainment

6:30PM Dinner, College/University Winners, Contest Awards

9PM Performance Poetry

10:30PM-Midnight Open Readings Last Poet(s) Standing Awards

Saturday, June 27

7:45-8:45AM Open Readings

9AM Bookstore Opens

9-10:30AM Sylvia Curbelo and Mary Elizabeth "Bettie" Perez,

Cuban Influence, Readings; Plus Workshop led by Janet Watson on *Heritage and Poetry*

10:45AM-12PM *Florida Poetry Coast to Coast*: Greg Byrd, Jeff

Karon, Curtis X. Meyer, Bob Calabrese, Rosemary Voltz

12:30PM Lunch, Contest Awards

3-4:30PM *The Power of Partnership*: Peter Meinke/Jeanne Meinke;

Melanie Hubbard/Mac Miller; Judy Krum/Randy Krum;

Shirley Cavanaugh/Joe Cavanaugh

4:30-5:30PM State Presidents Meeting

6PM Dinner, Stevens Manuscript Winner, Contest Awards

9-10:30 PM Performance Poets: Spoken Word Competition

10:30PM Open Reading, Last Poet Standing Award

Sunday, June 28

8-8:45AM Open Readings

9AM NFSPS Board Meeting

9AM-12PM Bookstore Open

11:30AM-12:45PM Second Plenary Session

1PM Lunch, Contest Awards, Special Award

2:30-4:30PM *Dali Museum/Surrealist Poetry Workshop*:

Melanie Hubbard, Dan Pels

5-6:30PM Reception, Book Signings, Music

7PM Closing Banquet, Contest Awards, *Keynote Speaker*:

Peter Meinke

10PM-Midnight Open Readings

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

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

Honorary Chancellor: [to be appointed]

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FLORIDA: Florida State Poets Association

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GEORGIA: Georgia Poetry Society

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INDIANA: Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs

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IOWA: Iowa Poetry Association

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WYOMING: WyoPoets

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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

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* Submission Deadlines

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.

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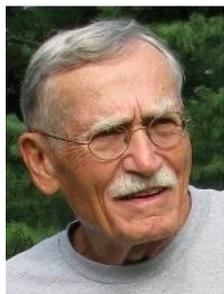
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Nancy Baass

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* Deceased



Honorary Chairman and Keynote Speaker

Peter Meinke: In *The Shape of Poetry*, he writes “I think those in the profession—the calling—of writing poetry should be knowledgeable and skilled as any carpenter, passionate

and dignified as any priest. I believe those who are able to spend large stretches of their lives engaged in this activity are the luckiest people in the world.”

Peter Meinke has published 14 books of poems in the prestigious Pitt Poetry Series, the most recent being *Lucky Bones* (2014). His first book of short stories, *The Piano Tuner* (U. of Georgia Press, 1986), received the Flannery O’Connor Award; his second, *Unheard Music*, was published in 2007 by Jefferson Press. In the last few years, the U. of Tampa has published *Lines from Neuchâtel: 35th Anniversary Edition* (2009), *The Shape of Poetry: A Practical Guide to Writing & Reading Poems* (2012) new and revised edition, and *Truth and Affection: The ‘Poet’s Notebook’ Columns from Creative Loafing* (2013), all illustrated by his wife, Jeanne Meinke, along with a collection of Jeanne’s drawings from *The New Yorker*, other publications, and *Lines from Wildwood Lane* (2010). In 2009 Peter was appointed the first Poet Laureate of St. Petersburg, Florida, where he has lived with his wife since 1966.

Dr. Maurice J. O’Sullivan is a literary scholar

and historian who specializes in the history of Florida. As the Kenneth Curry Professor of Literature at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, Professor O’Sullivan has lectured and published extensively on the state’s art and history, religion and



politics, literature and culture. He and Rollins History Professor Jack Lane have been recognized as founders of the interdisciplinary Florida Studies movement with their book, *The Florida Reader* (Pineapple Press), 1991, the first comprehensive collection of writings about Florida. As a part of the complete Florida Poets Project, Professor O’Sullivan in collaboration with Bill Dudley, the Angel Alley Press, and the Central Florida English Speaking Union, created a film and book bringing to life the works of twenty-eight Florida poets. Professor O’Sullivan currently lives in Orlando.



Lola Haskins has published ten collections of poetry. Her work has appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The London Review of Books*, *Southern Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Beloit Poetry Review*, *Georgia Review* and elsewhere. She has collaborated

often with musicians and other artists. Most recently, she wrote the libretto for a ballet about Mata Hari, in which she participated as “the speaking Mata Hari.” Ms. Haskins lives on a farm outside Gainesville, Florida, and has taught Computer Science at the University of Florida since the late 1970s. She also teaches in Pacific Lutheran University’s low residency MFA program. Ms. Haskins’ tenth book of poems is *The Grace to Leave* (Anhinga, 2012). Her ninth, *Still, the Mountain* (Paper Kite Press), won the Silver Medal for Poetry in the 2010 Florida Book Awards.



Silvia Curbelo was born in Matanzas, Cuba, and as a child emigrated to the U.S. with her parents. Her numerous awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the

Arts, the Cintas Foundation, the Florida Arts Council, and an Atlantic Center for the Arts Cultural Exchange Fellowship to La Napoule Arts Foundation in France. Her poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Tampa Review*, and many other publications. She is the recipient of a James Wright Award for Poetry from *Mid-American Review*, an Escape to Create Fellowship from the Seaside Institute, and the 1996 Jessica Nobel-Maxwell Memorial Prize from the *American Poetry Review*. Silvia lives in Tampa, Florida, and works as an editor for *Organica Quarterly*. Ms. Curbelo’s *The Secret History of Water* is the inaugural volume in Anhinga Press’ Van K. Brock Florida Poetry Series.

Doyle Rigdon is a sixth generation Floridian and a fifth generation cowhunter, the term cowboys were traditionally called in Florida.

Today, ‘cowboy’ is typically heard. Cow work is still commonly called “cowhunting.” Listening to stories told by his grandfather and uncles instilled in Doyle the desire to follow in their footsteps, or rather their boots. His grandfather is 70 years old and still works full time on a ranch in Brighton, Florida, breaking colts. At age 13, Doyle wrote his first poem about how much better horses were than women. In high school he wrote poems trying to woo women, which although it usually didn’t work, still got high praise. Doyle started writing cowboy poetry a few years ago. He does day-work and breaks horses on area ranches while making time to perform his cowboy poetry at trail rides, agricultural associations and wherever an audience wants to hear his work. Doyle and his poems were discovered through the Poets Project at Rollins College several years ago.



Sean Sexton was born in Indian River County and grew up on his family’s Treasure Hammock Ranch, eight miles west of Vero Beach, Florida. He divides his time between



taking care of a 600 acre cow-calf and seedstock operation and his painting and writing. He is married to artist Sharon Sexton, and they live on the ranch with their

two children in a house they built with their hands. His book, *Blood Writing*, was published by Anhinga Press in 2010. As reviewed by Peter Meinke: “There’s a lot of blood, both human and animal, in Sean Sexton’s stirring first book of poetry. His poems, which include several rare and passionate longer poems, evoke the violence and beauty of life on a Florida cattle farm with clear-eyed eloquence, and their gritty details make Robert Frost seem like a New England gentleman farmer. ‘If you would love, learn / the power of life’ Sexton writes, and BLOOD WRITING is a mature and Whitmanesque embrace of a fully realized world.” Sean Sexton is a painter as well as a poet. His chapbook, *The Empty Tomb*, was published November 14, 2013, by Slash Pine Press at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Melanie Hubbard received her Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University and was awarded an NEH



Fellowship in 2006 to pursue her research on Emily Dickinson’s manuscripts and their contexts, a project which has increasingly focused on Dickinson’s philosophical education and commitments. Hubbard also maintains

a lively scholarly interest in and creative involvement with contemporary experimental poetry and poetics; her poetry collection, *We Have With Us Your Sky* (Subito 2012), marks both a practical and a theoretical engagement. Her teaching interests include American Poetry from 19th to 21st Centuries, British Romanticism, Victorian Aesthetic Theory, Experimental Prose, and Poetics. Melanie Hubbard lives in a small town on the west coast of Florida with her husband. She has taught at the New College of Florida, Eckerd College, and the University of Tampa. Poems, reviews, scholarly articles, and personal essays have appeared in a variety of periodicals. A chapbook, *Gilbi Winco Swags*, was published by Cannibal Books in 2008.



Dan Pels was born in Paris, France, in 1944. He started writing poetry as a teenager in France. He immigrated to the U.S. with his family in 1958, and lived in Syracuse, New York. He

earned his B.A. degree in Education at Syracuse University where he met and married his wife. He moved to central Florida in 2004, and is now a member of the Daytona Live Poets Society. Today he writes mostly in English, but still finds inspiration in French surrealists. He's a Vietnam veteran, retired mailman, and retired teacher. His first book of poems, *Untying Woodknots*, has been widely praised. Dan is a frequent performer in the Daytona area as well as a member of the Florida State Poets Association.

Greg Byrd in 2001 earned his Ph.D. in American and Nineteenth Century British Literature at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He also has an M.A. in Creative Writing and a B.A. in Literature and Creative Writing. In 2009, he was a finalist for the Snake Nation Prize and the Pinyon Press Prize. In 2008, he was a finalist for the National Poetry Series. In 1998, he earned a Pushcart Prize nomination, *Tampa Review*. Greg Byrd's poetry has been published in many journals and reviews, including *The Eckerd Review*, *Apalachee Review*, *Cortland Review*, *Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Journal of Florida Literature*, *Snake Nation Review*, *The Rambler*, *Gulf Stream*, *Ekphrasis*, *Tampa Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *The Siren*. Dr. Byrd's poetry publications include *Salt and Iron* (Snake Nation Press, 2014), *At Penuel* (chapbook, Split Oak Press, 2011), and *Florida Straits* (chapbook, Yellow Jacket Press, 2005). A native Floridian, Dr. Byrd is an avid commuter cyclist, riding to work as Professor of Communications at the Clearwater Campus of St. Petersburg College.



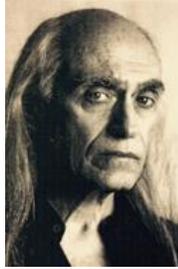
Curtis X. Meyer is currently a 6-time participant at The National Poetry Slam as a member of Team Orlando. He is the 2007 and 2008 Broken Speech Poetry Slam Grand Slam champion and the 2009 Broken Speech Poetry Slam Grand Slam runner-up. Curtis is an accomplished poet, beatboxer, event host and coordinator, author, journalist, essayist, satirist, and performance artist. He lives in Winter Park, Florida. His works have appeared in various publications and clips of his Spoken Word performances can be watched on YouTube.



Rosemary Voltz was born in Brooklyn, NY, and attended Queens College where she graduated with a double major in Creative Writing and Journalism. While at Queens, she won numerous awards,

including the Sandra Schor Writing Award and the Norman Silverstein Memorial Prize. Her short stories have been published in *Blueline*, *Event*, and *Another Chicago Magazine*. Her poetry has appeared in *Evening Street Review*, *Reader's Choice*, *Earth's Daughter*, *Conversations Across Borders*, *Hospital Drive*, *Pinyon*, *Third Wednesday*, and others. She won the Flagler County Art League Prize for Poetry. She lives in Ponce Inlet, Florida.

Robert Calabrese was born and raised in New York City, where he went on to earn a BFA from Pratt Institute in 1958. Diploma in hand,



he launched a career as a "Mad Man" in Madison Avenue's advertising world. During his 35 challenging years as an Art Director/Creative Director, he traveled far and wide. Bob retired to New Smyrna Beach, Florida, in 1996. With confidence in his

writing skills from advertising, Bob joined several local poetry workshops in 2002. He continues to write with The Poet's Corner poetry workshop of New Smyrna Beach, which he now leads. He created the theme "Wham! Bam! Poetry Slam!" for the Atlantic Center For The Arts, now in its tenth season. He has recently taken up the challenge of mastering watercolor painting during breaks from editing material for his first book of poetry.

Dr. Jeff Karon, a Tampa resident, is a former English professor with a background in literature ranging from technical writing to philosophy and critical thinking to creative writing. He is becoming well known for his haikus. Graduating from New College of Florida with a B.A. in Philosophy, Mr.



Karon went on to receive a Ph.D. in English (Rhetoric and Composition) from the University of South Florida. Dr. Karon is committed to the belief in the clarity and importance of language, illustrated by his powerful poetry. An active poet and essayist, he currently serves as a board member and webmaster of a non-profit poetry publisher. Dr. Karon is the founder of The Honorable Classroom, a tutoring and training service dedicated to helping young writers improve their style and delivery while maintaining a code of ethics.

Jeanne Meinke, artist and illustrator, in collaboration with her husband, Peter Meinke, has published their latest book of poetry, *Lines from Neuchatel*, a family retrospective in verse of an idyllic year abroad. She has also published *Lines from Wildwood Lane*, a collection of drawings.



Joe Cavanaugh's first book of poetry, *Poetry Jam with Toast and Tea*, was published in 2011 while a second edition was published by



Writer's Ink Press the following year. His collection of poems about Carmel, California, entitled *California Dreamin* was published by the Creative Happiness Institute in 2012. His new book of poems, *Love Happens: A Target On My Chest*, was published in

2014 by Create Space and is available on Amazon.com. In addition to his professional writing and personal journaling, he worked as a reporter for the *East African Standard* in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, wrote his Masters Thesis, "Bargaining Tactics in the Vietnamese Conflict," wrote a short history of the Cavanaugh family, and won a New York Times Writing Award. Now President of the Florida State Poets Association (FSPA), Joe and his wife, Shirley, live in Ormond Beach, Florida.

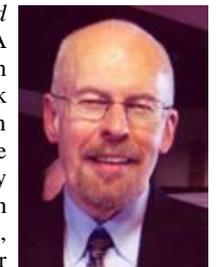
Shirley Cavanaugh writes: "From the time I

was a child I knew my life would be filled with great creative and artistic adventures. I graduated from North Texas State University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Drawing, Painting and Sculpture. The 70's were the



beginning of the early women's liberation movement and I felt so determined as an artist because of the times. Over the years I worked in the Fiber Arts . . . Wood Carved Sculptures. . . Fashion Design. . . Interior Designers . . . My personal art continues to pursue classic art forms such as sculpture and painting. I am currently in the 'early stages' of working on a theme for a future one woman show. This will combine different forms of expression like ceramic sculpture, painting, poetry, and also some fabric art. . . And with my creative soul leading me, I will never run out of inspiration." Shirley is a member of FSPA and married to FSPA President Joe Cavanaugh.

Randall Krum is the Editor of the FSPA newsletter, *Of Poets and Poetry*, and FSPA Webmaster. He was born and raised in New York state. Upon graduation from high school, he entered the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland, where he earned Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Organ Performance and Church Music. Following graduation he served as music teacher and music curriculum developer for the Baltimore City Public Schools. He also served as organist and choir director for several churches in Baltimore, living there until 1973. After marrying Judy and moving to Vermont, Randy became intensely involved with computers. He



eventually gained certification to teach computer technology and was engaged by Southern Vermont College in Bennington, Vermont to teach Information Technology. Randy retired from Southern Vermont College and moved to Florida in 2010. He is presently employed as organist-choirmaster at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Lake Mary, FL.



Judith Krum received a BA in English from Marietta College (Ohio). She received a M.ED. in Counseling from McDaniel College (Maryland) in 1972. An extensive teaching career, along with a role as disability rights advocate, have shaped much of her professional background. Judy was born in Manhattan, raised on Long Island, attended college in Ohio, began her career in Maryland, is a Vermonter by philosophy, and became a Floridian by choice. Judy and her husband, Randy, relocated to Florida. Anglophiles to the core, they have traveled to the British Isles more than ten times. Judy is Treasurer of the FSPA. She has received many awards for her poetry and has had her work published in a number of journals and anthologies, including *The Berkshire Review*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Breath and Shadow*, *Wordgathering*, *Sandcutters*, *Lifting Women's Voices*. Judy is also the author of *In the Crayon Box*, *There is Peace: Poems*, and *Gossamer Threads to Catch the Soul: Spiritual Reflections for the Church Year*.

Bettie Perez just celebrated her 90th birthday as well as having her first book of poetry, *How Old Is Fresh*, nationally published by Finishing Line Press. Bettie says that her heritage is Spanish as she is the granddaughter of the founder of the first newspaper in Ybor City, Florida. Her father was a strawberry farmer, a Florida Cracker, and her mother was a writer and musician. She attended a Senior program at the University of South Florida for three years and took every poetry course that was offered. She won an emerging poet award at USF, and one of her teachers suggested she apply for the Hillsborough County Arts Council's emerging artist award. She applied and she won funding to allow her to attend the Iowa Summer Writing Program for two weeks. That is when she met poet William Stafford who gave her a little book about writing that encouraged her to keep writing and to "listen to herself." And now she says that "Poetry is mostly listening. You pick up on what other people say. You make notes. You're always eavesdropping." She writes lines on backs of envelopes and whatever is around. And she has a million notebooks and folders full of things she thinks are going to be a poem someday. But the poem doesn't come until she gets something sent to her—she calls it



inspiration—right out of the air. "Maybe I'll have a lot of lines and then I'll hear something that brings it all together." This fascinating poet will join Sylvia Curbelo as they read some of their poems, talk about their Cuban heritage and what goes into writing poetry.

NFSPS 2015 CONVENTION INFO

HOTEL

The convention hotel is the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront. Our group code is FSP. Room rate is \$119/night plus taxes. The hotel address is 333 1st St S, St. Petersburg, FL 33701-4342; phone number 800-445-8667.

To facilitate room reservations for those planning to attend the convention, Hilton has set up a personalized web page:

hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/S/SPTSHHF-FSP-20150624/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Interested in Sharing a Room?

There have been requests from poets from various states who wish to attend the Convention and would like to share a room and the costs with another poet. If you are planning to attend the Convention and wish to share a room, please email FSPA Treasurer Judy Krum at judithkrum@att.net. She will provide you with the contact information for poets who have inquired about room sharing.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The following are three group activities available on Thursday, June 25th, departing from the hotel at 9 am and returning by 3 pm at the latest.

1) Travel to Sarasota to visit the beautiful bayside gardens and grounds of the Ringling compound with the historic owner's villa, the Ringling Circus Museum and Fine Arts Gallery. \$45 per person, 20 person minimum.

2) Visit Old Town Tampa, see historic Ybor City, Photography Museum, Fine Arts Gallery, scenic river walk, and the flamboyant Moorish buildings on the University of Tampa's historic campus. Lunch at Columbia Restaurant. \$50 per person, 20 person minimum.

3) Take an unforgettable trip to beautiful St. Pete Beach for picnicking, beachcombing, shell collecting and sunning in the warm inviting waters of the Gulf of Mexico while enjoying one of the world's finest beaches. \$25 per person, 10 person minimum.

An additional group activity, the Dali Museum / Surrealist Poetry Workshop, will be held Sunday, June 28, from 2:30-4:30 pm at the Dali Museum (across the street from the hotel), participants will experience an exciting afternoon of Surrealist poetry writing with Paris-born surrealist author and poet, Dan Pels, and Melanie Hubbard, a celebrated poet, author and teacher. \$25 includes museum admission and self-guided audio tour.

EXPLORE ST. PETERSBURG

The following 'explore on your own' options are but a sampling of the many activities available in St. Pete:

- * See the Dali Museum across the street from the convention hotel
- * Walk or take a trolley to the cultural arts district (St. Pete is rated the #1 arts destination in the USA for midsized cities)
- * Visit the Museum of Fine Arts

- * See the Chihuly Glass Collection
- * Visit the Sunken Gardens, a 100-year-old botanical paradise
- * Enjoy galleries including Florida's finest arts & crafts
- * Check out the shops, boutiques, coffee houses and fine dining indoor and outdoor restaurants
- * Visit the marina and yacht basin, take a ferry or boat ride
- * Rent a Segway, kayak or paddleboard
- * Check out the Museum of History next to Spa Beach
- * Visit Hazlam's, Florida's largest new and used bookstore
- * Take the Central Trolley to Florida's finest beaches
- * Enjoy lunch and a tour of the classic Vinoy Renaissance Hotel
- * See the Tampa Bay Rays play the Boston Red Sox at the Ray's stadium near the hotel
- * Visit the nearby private airport for a scenic flight or enjoy a meal at the unique Hangar Restaurant.

BOOKSTORE

All poets registered for the 2015 convention will have the opportunity to sell their books in our safe and secure bookstore at no cost.

If you are shipping books to the hotel, the following rules must be followed: 1) all shipments must arrive at the hotel by June 15; 2) shipments should be clearly marked ATTENTION NFSPS BOOKSTORE with the name of the conference; 3) ship books to Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront Hotel, 333 1st Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Note that there may be a small handling charge. All shipments will be received and placed in safe storage until the bookstore is set up.

Those authors and publishers bringing their books for sale at the convention should bring them to the bookstore as their first order of business to be sure they are processed and placed on the shelves. Promotional signs and clearly marked prices are encouraged.

SPONSORSHIPS

To help defray convention expenses, the Florida State Poets Association is soliciting sponsorships of convention events. Details are available on floridastatepoetsassociation.org. Look for the NFSPS Convention Sponsorship link.

STEVENS POETRY MANUSCRIPT AWARD



The 2014 Stevens Manuscript Award was won by Mara Adamitz Scrupe of Philadelphia for her collection *Beast*, which will be published and available at the NFSPS convention in Florida in June, 2015.

A graduate of Macalester College and the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts of

Bard College, Scrupe has taught and lectured both nationally and internationally, and currently teaches at The University of Arts in Philadelphia. She previously published a chapbook titled *Sky Pilot*, which was nominated for a Library of Virginia Literary Award. She will be present to read from her manuscript in St. Petersburg in June.

The manuscript was chosen by judge John Witte, of Eugene, OR. Dr. Witte also named Chad Hanson of Casper, WY, as runner-up, and for honorable mentions: Bryanne Nanfito of Wallingford, CT; Michael Owens of Cypress, TX; John Ronan of Gloucester, MA; and Phillip White of Danville, KY.

Amy Jo Zook, Stevens Award Chairman

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS will be celebrating the annual Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration this year in Benton. The Saline County branch is hosting the event on Saturday, May 2nd. Jim Barton will be the featured speaker. Jim is an award-winning poet, published author, PRA State Treasurer, as well as National 1st Vice President and Membership Chair for NFSPS. Members are invited to send one to two poems to Dennis Patton by April 1st for Jim's critique. His comments on these poems will be presented as part of the day's program. Arkansas' annual Poetry Day contests will be published on poetsroundtable.webs.com. We usually have between 25-30 contests to enter. Poets from all states are encouraged to check them out. PRA has one contest, the Sybil Nash Abrams poetry contest, that is worth \$1,000. This contest is available only for Arkansas residents. Poetry Day will be held in Little Rock on October 3rd. PRA has been celebrating the life of former U.S. Poet Laureate Miller Williams with readings, studies and more. We are very proud and blessed to be a part of his life. ~ *Laura Loughridge, Reporter*

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY has a new website: ctpoetry.net. We are happy with our new online look. Because the president of our group has relocated, Tony Fusco has taken over as the new president. We are looking forward to several events in the spring. CPS is hosting a poetry book club to be called POP (Poets on Poetry) in conjunction with the Hartford Public Library. Each month we will meet to discuss a book by a different poet, including works by Mark Doty, Pablo Neruda, Wallace Stevens, Galway Kinnell, Jane Hirshfield, Richard Blanco, and Lucille Clifton. Our poetry society will donate copies of books by these authors to the library. The general public is invited to these meetings. In April we'll be hosting our annual Poetry Blast, also open to the general public, which will feature presentations and readings. The Connecticut Poetry Award contest, open to all poets, will be accepting submissions through the end of May. There is a \$400 first prize. Guidelines can be found on our new website. ~ *Ginny Connors, Reporter*

FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION is all tied up in conventions. Yes, that's plural. Our annual Spring Fling will be held in April in Leesburg with the theme "Telling Our Stories in Poetry." Along with a business meeting and a few

workshops, FSPA member and professional story teller Country Joe Rosier will present "An American Poet: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow." Music will be provided by a local duo, radio personality Atticus Black and his wife, Yvonne Peterson, interspersed with open poetry readings. Fresh from the fun of Spring Fling we will step into the excitement of hosting the annual NFSPS convention in our beautiful city on the bay St. Petersburg. The theme "Discover the Treasure - Poetry's Place in the Sun" tells it all. St. Petersburg is a treasure in itself. We will add to that over and over. At the close of the convention all poets will leave far richer than they arrived. Poetry will flow through your hearts and minds. You will leave footprints behind that your new friends will walk in forever. You will be delighted that you came to claim the treasure and so will we: Ringling Brothers, white sand beaches, Dali Museum, Chiluhly Glass, pirates and much, much more. No jingle in your pockets or perhaps there will be. We are looking forward to meeting you. Please come. ~ *Mary-Ann Westbrook, Secretary*

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY on March 21 hosted a "Writing About Chicago" workshop led by Wilda Morris and Caroline Johnson at Powell's Bookstore on Halsted in Chicago. There are twelve libraries throughout the state where ISPS members' poems will be on display for April Poetry Month. The locations include Bloomington, Downers Grove, Glenview, Highland Park, Hinsdale, Lemont, Lisle, Pontiac, West Branch Aurora, Westmont, Wilmette and Winnetka. In May we shall also have a display at the Indian Prairie library. This year ISPS will share a table with Poets and Patrons at the Printers Row Literary Fest on June 6-7. This popular event is held in Chicago each year. Among other things, membership information, recent submissions of members' poetry and future chapter meetings are listed on our website, illinoispoets.org, as are poems listed by poet and titles. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President*

INDIANA STATE FEDERATION OF POETRY CLUBS is looking forward to its Spring Meeting on May 2nd at Conner Prairie, the Interactive History Park in Fishers, IN. The event, provided by and for poets from around the state, will feature workshops on self-publishing, poetry and song, the poet James Whitcomb Riley, painting and poetry, and opportunities for open readings. Set in the historical timeframe of 1836, Conner Prairie has a national reputation as an excellent site for hands-on learning. All are welcome. The ISFPC welcomes into its ranks a new group named the Last Stanza Poetry Association from Elwood, Indiana. They meet in the local hospital twice a month, led by Jenny and Patrick Kalahar. Founded by Dottie Mack in Fort Wayne in 1990, the Northeast Indiana Poets Club is celebrating 25 years of existence. Now part of Arts United of Ft. Wayne, the club will celebrate their silver anniversary with a poetry contest, the printing of a poetry book, and public readings. Congratulations to them, and best wishes for continued success in Fort Wayne. Noble Poets in Noblesville, IN, are collaborating with painters associated with the Nickel Plate Arts organization and looking forward to public displays of poetry and painting. ~ *Dr. David W. Stocking, President*

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY held our winter meeting and many member poets came with guests on Saturday, December 6 to the Beverly Public Library. Holiday Poetry Contest winners were announced: 1st prize went to Charles Frimage of Boise, ID; 2nd to Barbara Blanks, Garland, TX; 3rd to Mary Niceli, Danvers, MA. President Jeanette Maes presented a workshop, "Signs of Change," as they pertain to this holiday time. Attendees read their efforts aloud and we were quiet as church mice as we travelled down memory lane. At lunch, all gravitated to the festive holiday buffet tables that groaned under bowls and platters of savory and sweet offerings. Sated, we settled down for the next fun-filled raucous hour of The Yankee Swap. This is our favorite meeting of the year as everyone brings a wrapped gift accompanied by a verse that suggests the contents therein! Tom McDonald was the winner of the most apt piece of verse. The most coveted swap gift was....postage stamps! Kudos to the one who brought that. The members of the Waterfront Crew are proud to announce a book of their collected poems is 'hot off the press.' This effort was partially funded by the Winthrop Cultural Council and Mass Cultural Council, our state agency. ~ *Patricia Bruen Tacelli, Reporter*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY members are making plans to attend their annual Spring Poetry Festival, which will be held in beautiful Ocean Springs, situated on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Ocean Springs is a quaint "Hurricane Katrina-surviving" town boasting the famous Walter Anderson Museum of Art, antique shops, and several nice gift shops. South Branch is gearing up to host this festival April 18-19 at the lovely Gulf Hills Hotel and Conference Center. Keynote speaker will be 1st VP of NFSPS Jim Barton from Arkansas. Out-of-state attendees to our festival are also encouraged and welcome. Reservation information is included in MPS' newsletter, *The Magnolia Muse*, available at misspoetry.net. Locally, South Branch members are hoping to involve more Harrison and Hancock county poets along the 26-mile stretch of Mississippi Gulf Coast in their monthly meetings by occasionally meeting at the Biloxi Library, which is a little more centrally located on the Coast. In the Central Branch, congratulations are extended to Ms. Wynne Huddleston for completing her National Board Certification in Music Education. Ms. Huddleston is the 2014 MPS Poet of the Year and received her National Board Certificate this past January. From the North Branch comes Poet of the Year for 2015, Sandra Bounds. Her biographical information is included in *The Magnolia Muse*, and she will be signing her chapbook, *From the Heart of the Deep South*, at the festival in April. Sadly, age and infirmity has taken its toll on many of the North Branch members. As the North Branch President Michael Shelton writes, "we are 'An Aging Branch.'" He continues, "The North branch of the Mississippi Poetry Society is sadly dwindling into shades of gray and white that cannot be covered by any amount of hair dye for women or men. Age is inevitable, especially the latter end of it. Our only hope to avoid obligatory extinction is for the young bucks, and does, and even fawns in our area to step up and fill our poetic shoes with love, pain, insight and observation, to put pen to paper or key to screen and CREATE! . . . Words

fail me at this point, a rare occurrence, as ink gives way to tears, but I must send out an urgent plea to those youthful poets, for 'I have promises to keep!'" ~ *Dorothy Wiman, Secretary*

OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION is happy to report that Ohio Governor Kasich signed Senate Bill 84 into state law on Dec. 21st, 2014. The Buckeyes will finally have a Poet Laureate. The position will be a two-year term beginning January, 2016. The Ohio Arts Council was assigned the responsibility of over-seeing and legislating this process and will receive assistance from the OPA. The end result will be a serious consideration from both the academic and non-academic poets of this state. OPA testified before both the senate and house subcommittees beginning in May and concluding in early December. We also had a significant campaign to encourage all interested parties (poets and non-poets, university and other wise) to write, email, or phone their legislators with positive, kind voices asking for support of S.B. Bill 84. Both academics and non-academics were involved with personal testimonies before the Senate and the House. Our goal was "ONE clear, unified voice" speaking statewide. We will keep you posted as the search process moves forward. Currently we are setting up our own search committee and will pass along our recommendations to the Ohio Arts Council. For more detail on how OPA successfully campaigned for a state Poet Laureate, contact Mark Hersman at mark@ohiopoetryassn.org. ~ *Mark Hersman, Reporter*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA members are busy judging entries from school children across the state of Oklahoma in our Annual Oklahoma Lore Youth Poetry Contest. Each year, hundreds of students Grades 1-12 write their own original poems about some aspect of our state. Best poets in each group are recognized, and awards include a Gubernatorial Citation. Southern Nazarene University graciously hosts the event and a reception, as well as tours of their beautiful campus for the students and their parents. In March our Annual Spring Awards Presentations and Banquet was held at the Twin Hills Golf and Country Club in Oklahoma City with entrants from Poetry Society of Oklahoma members across Oklahoma and many other states. In celebration of our 80th year of promoting poetry in Oklahoma, the finishing touches are being made to an anthology, *Red Earth Revisited*, which will be available later this summer. ~ *Joan and Eddie Wilcoxon, Co-Presidents*

PENNSYLVANIA POETRY SOCIETY, like most traditional organizations, is looking at ways to better serve its members as the world forges ahead in this fast-moving electronic age. Our most successful venture so far is our poetry-sharing project called *Pennessence*, described as "the essence of PPS, Inc." *Pennessence* is a monthly online poetry journal in which members may share their poems with the world. Each month a member may submit by email one poem of 28 lines or less on any subject, any form, for the main section of *Pennessence*, and one poem of 28 lines or less that is rhymed, metered, and humorous, for the "On the Light Side" section of *Pennessence*. What makes this project unique is that each poem is

accompanied by a full-color illustration which can be a photograph sent by the poet, or digital artwork or a digital collage by the editor. The journal is sent as a PDF file to all PPS members and to the NFSPS webmaster, who posts it on the PPS website for the world to see. Members can forward the file by email to families and friends, or print out their pages each month and eventually form them into an illustrated hard copy or e-book if they desire to do so, or they may mail hard copy of their pages to friends who do not have computers. Participation in the project has been growing until about a third of our members are regular contributors. To check out *Pennessence*, go to nfsp.com/pa and click the Publications link. ~ *Ann Gasser, Pennessence Editor and PPS Secretary*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE's January meeting was held in the White Station Library. A pre-meeting critique challenge was led by Florence Bruce on the traditional sonnet. Our guest presenter was poet John Richard Reed. Mr. Reed has been published in top tier magazines including *Poetry Magazine* and *The Paris Review*, which garnered about twenty visitors for the program segment of our meeting. Our speaker for the March meeting will be Anita Norman, a high school senior who attends Arlington High School. She is the winner of the 2014 Grizzlie's Slam Poetry Award for students. Maya Angelou retweeted a media story written about her in Memphis. We welcomed new members at our January meeting and one new member at our February meeting. The February program, which is our traditional critiquing, was led by Russell Strauss. Our 3 critiquers were Russell Strauss, Karen Kestner, and Randy Stoker. Whoever wanted to could send in a poem to be critiqued and the best ones would be picked by Russell to critique. Note that the winners of our January and February contests are listed on the Contests page of poetrysocietytn.org. Our student contest is scheduled for our April meeting. Students from various Mid-South schools will be participating and prizes will be given in separate categories: Elementary, Middle School, and High School. We are fortunate that we had several student members win in the national in 2014. We do plan to have a Poetry in the Park in the near future and several poetry readings scheduled in establishments or arts venues in Memphis with the next months. ~ *JoAn Howerton, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS meetings are presently held September through May on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 2:30 pm at the Preston Royal Library in Dallas, Texas (exception: the Annual Awards Banquet, held at a Dallas hotel, takes the place of a November meeting). In June, attendance at the NFSPS Convention is encouraged. In July, the 3-day PST Summer Conference is held at different sites around the state. The 2014-15 Executive Board is comprised of President Catherine L'Herisson, Vice President Budd Powell Mahan, Corresponding Secretary Jessica Gonsoulin, Recording Secretary Barbara Blanks, Treasurer Aman Khan, and Directors Beth Ayers, Susan Maxwell Campbell and Barbara Terrell Goerdel. ~ *Nancy Baass*

UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY has had a challenging year. We continue to work together to survive and support our poetry goals. Our two most recent presidents have resigned early because of personal reasons. Several of our long-standing and supportive members have died and we deeply feel the loss. Other members have health issues or spouses with health issues. However, there are bright spots. With many volunteers working under the direction of Clarence Socwell, we hosted a very successful National Convention in June, 2014. We have revived our Junior Creative student contest. Joyce Kohler was the winner of our book contest in 2014, and how she did shine at her reading! Our Chapters continue to meet regularly, and our annual contest continues to be well supported. This year we will hear the winners at our April Festival in Midway, Utah. We are pleased that Pattiann Rogers is our guest speaker. Several of our members have won prestigious Utah Arts Council recognition including Shane Williams, Candy Fowler and Markay Brown. We are also pleased that Poetry-in-the-Park held in Zion National Park continues to grow in numbers and prestige, and that the annual Redrocks Creative Writing Seminar also in March provides members the opportunity to continue to hone their writing skills. We love poetry in Utah. ~ *Dawnell Griffin, President*

WYOPOETS' Nancy Ruskowsky is a name we, who have entered the Eugene V. Shea National Contest, all recognize. She is chairman of the contest and a "Featured Member" at the WyoPoets' website. Nancy's greatest pleasure is "to encourage poets using her experience to draw out others." She will be the one introducing the 2014 contest winner at the WyoPoet's Spring Workshop in Casper, Wyoming on April 18. Another "Featured Member" on our website is Christinea Kamnikar, the 2013 winner of the Eugene V. Shea National Contest. "We often wish we could choose our dreams. As poets, the best we can do is choose our words and still, like a dream and our inner emotions, the words take us where they need to be." In her winning poem, "Dream Request," Christina's words took her where they needed to be and that happened to be at the top of the winners' list. Nancy Ruskowsky will be introducing the 2014 winner in Casper as WyoPoets celebrate National Poetry Month with Rick Kempa, this year's presenter. In keeping with Wyoming's celebration of one hundred twenty-five years of statehood, the workshop sessions will be held at Fort Caspar, one of Wyoming's early forts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Log onto www.wyopoets.org for a look at our quarterly newsletter and a complete schedule of the year's events. ~ *Lee Ann Siebken, Reporter*

President's Message continued from page 1
are a means to this end, and societies have devised several different ways of providing critiques for their members. The Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas has a state critic who provides not only an email critique, but a recorded reading, of up to one poem a month for any society member. The Illinois State Poetry Society has organized online critiquing groups for its members, and the Mississippi Poetry Society had a panel for critiquing members' poetry at its Spring Festival last year.

Fostering the development of our states' young poets is essential to the health of our art and to the vitality of our societies. Many state societies conduct student poetry contests and enter their middle and high school winners in the annual Manningham Competition conducted by NFSPS. Such contests provide important encouragement to talented young poets, especially when they culminate in a Student Awards Festival such as the Poetry Society of Texas holds—last year with nearly 180 attendees. Societies have also found other ways of providing opportunities for young poets. The Columbine Poets of Colorado place teen poetry on placards in Denver city buses. The Poetry Society of Michigan has worked with the Rustbelt Regional Poetry Slam to add a youth slam to this annual event.

Some of the projects we want to undertake in our societies require funding beyond what affordable dues and fees can provide. State arts and cultural councils are good sources of grants for such activities, and a number of societies have been successful in obtaining them. Last year, a chapter of the Massachusetts State Poetry Society received a grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to help finance a book of members' poetry. This year, the WyoPoets' Spring Workshop is supported by a grant from the Wyoming Arts Council.

All of us in NFSPS-affiliated state poetry societies can look to the other societies in the Federation for examples of innovative programming and funding that we can emulate in our home states, and we can contact our counterparts in other societies to get tips on how to do so. The NFSPS Convention in St. Petersburg, Florida, this June will provide a wonderful opportunity to exchange ideas in person.

Between now and then, we can read and write poetry and share it with those around us. On my reading table now are both new books of poetry and some favorite older ones. Among the latter are several by Philip Levine, who died this February. Like Whitman, Levine gave voice to lives otherwise unheard and lifted them into music. Here are the closing lines of his poem "Breakfasts with Joachim" from his 2006 book *Breath*:

Even when he was most alive I doubt
he knew he embodied what he worshipped,
the exquisite in the commonplace, or that
he dreamed the daily world could turn
that fast and all he treasured turn to dust
or nothing and leave me hunting
everywhere for what I'd never find
in all the years to come, salt for the spirit.

CONTESTS

ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S John and Miriam Morris Memorial Chapbook Competition has a deadline of May 31, 2015. For details on this contest, refer to the ASPSP Contests page: alabamapoets.org/poetry_contests.php.

ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY is supporting our newly reorganized Tucson chapter with a state poetry contest using our favorite theme, "The Southwest." You may enter as many unpublished poems as you wish, using any form, but sticking to the theme. Line limit is 40. (1) Submit \$5.00 by check to the contest chairman, for each poem entered and mailed by June 1st. (2) Send two copies of each poem, with the poet's contact information on the right hand corner of the second copy only. There will be just one winner in this contest, who will receive half of all entry fees collected. The winning poem will be printed in *Sandcutters*, the ASPSP quarterly. You may contact Contest Chairman Stuart Watkins, at 36251 S. Golf Course Dr., Tucson, AZ 85704 or by email at watkins4az@gmail.com.

KENTUCKY STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S 2015 contest has a deadline of June 30th. Contest includes 21 categories, 20 of which are open to non-members. For details go to kystatepoetrysociety.org/contests and look for the link to the 2015 contest brochure.

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS'S 2015 annual contest's deadline: August 15, 2015 (Postmark). The brochure listing all contests, procedures and rules can be obtained by visiting: poetrysocietyoftexas.org or by mailing a SASE to: PST Annual Contests Chairman Nancy Baass, 408 E. Warren Ave., Victoria, TX 77901-4847.

NFSPS STEVENS MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION WINNERS

Winning books from twenty of the past Stevens Manuscript competitions are available and can be ordered from NFSPS. For ordering details, refer to the Stevens Manuscript section of the NFSPS Publications page: nfsps.com/publication.htm.

A NOTICE FROM THE EDITOR OF *ENCORE*

I have had many inquiries during the past few years from poets who have won an NFSPS contest and have a poem published in *Encore*. They ask why they have not received their complimentary copy. Apparently there is a need to clarify that we do not give complimentary *Encores* to winning poets. Winners receive cash awards for their poems, and everyone must pay to purchase an *Encore* and the postage to mail it. This helps offset the cost of publishing and mailing. Thanks for your understanding. ~Valerie Martin Bailey

ORDER THE NEW *ENCORE* OR PAST EDITIONS OF *ENCORE*

Below are details on 2014 *Encore* availability (Note: the winning poems in an *Encore* issue are from the contest year reflected in the issue's title.) and pricing. Postage & handling costs are additional. No books may be returned. Questions may be directed to me as the *Encore* Editor, Valerie Martin Bailey, at vbailey@satx.rr.com. With your order, please send your complete address and either your email or phone number in case I need to contact you. Make checks payable to NFSPS and send with your order to: 2207 Parhaven Drive, San Antonio, TX 78232. *Encore* prices are as follows:

Year	Price	Year	Price
2014	\$15.00	2006	\$8.00
2013	\$15.00	2005	\$5.00
2012	\$15.00	2004	\$5.00
2011	\$10.00	2003	\$5.00
2010	\$10.00	2002	\$4.00
2009	\$10.00	2001	\$4.00
2008	\$8.00	2000	\$4.00
2007	\$8.00		

Postage and handling (P&H) costs are:

Books Ordered	P&H Cost	Books Ordered	P&H Cost
1	\$3.70	4	\$5.70
2	\$3.70	5	\$6.30
3	\$4.40	6	\$7.00

To order more than six books, add \$0.40 for each additional book. Also add \$1.02 for each additional mailing bag (3 books can fit in a mailing bag).

Strophes Web Edition Content

POETRY ARTICLES

ASPIRE TO JUDGE POETRY

by Charmaine Pappas Donovan,
NFSPS Judges Chair

Judging poetry takes specialized skills just as learning to craft poems takes time and effort. If someone contacts you to judge a poetry contest, they have confidence in your ability to think critically about poems. You have impressed them through your poetry and achievements. You are serious about poetry and ready to assume the responsibility of judging.

Immerse yourself in a variety of poetry. You will increase your discernment regarding good writing. Acquaint yourself with the scope of poetry in our literary world. Attend readings and workshops, buy books, and surf poetry websites to better understand poetry's diversity.

Increase your tolerance for different styles and forms. Become a more versatile judge. Not all contests are divided into form poetry and free verse. In NFSPS' 2015 Poetry Contest there are 49 adult contests. Only three of these are "Free Verse Only" contests. There are eleven form/rhyming/ metered contests. The thirty-five remaining contests are "Any Form" which includes free verse and prose poetry. While you may know a form, mastering that form is another way to gauge the difficulty and level of skill a particular form requires. Buy books on form and add these to your poetry library.

Be fair to the poem by reading it thoroughly when you have the time, are rested and undistracted. Some judges say they can judge a poem by the title and first line. Is this how you would want your poem handled? Ideally, wouldn't you like a judge to read your poem through at least twice? First readings may not catch the nuances of the poem (e.g. internal rhyming, subtle word usage, extended metaphor). Read those final poems aloud. Ted Kooser said in a Lake Superior Writers' Workshop that only 25% of people can hear sounds internally while three-fourths *need to hear sounds read aloud*.

In Michael Dennis Browne's book, *What the Poem Wants: Prose on Poetry*, he asks readers to consider the intent of the poem. Compelling poetry should be free from cliché and trite sentimentality. Poems that haunt us, those to which we repeatedly return, ones that rattle our emotions, delight, disturb, and give us pause; these are the poems that should be winners.

Poem topography concerns how poems look on the page. A poem's initial appearance can be deceiving. Watch for spaces between stanzas; how spaces and line breaks allow the

poem to breathe. Note how the overall poem is arranged on the page, whether the font is easy to read. Is the poem constructed in a way that makes it visually appealing? What about that soiled poem with the boot print on it? Even its battered look cannot prevent the words from shining through. Typographical errors may lower the ranking of a potentially prize-winning poem.

Although subject matter should have little bearing on your choice, this often becomes a factor in contests where subjects are designated. How subject matter is interpreted is discretionary for the poet as well as the judge. Why do judges complain about poems that look or sound alike? Pre-conceived ideas may creep into the creative process—as Frost said, "No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader." A unique approach to subject matter breathes life into the poem.

Ethical judging acknowledges your personal biases and limitations. If a poem sounds familiar, you may have seen or heard it before. Setting aside a poem you helped shape in a workshop is the correct response. Share some poems with a poet you trust if you feel it will help you judge more fairly. Your choices are final. Know others would make different ones. Live with it.

The process of judging poems well is as satisfying as writing them well. The pleasure you experience when hearing poems you've chosen read at the podium, or included in an anthology of prize-winning poems like NFSPS' *Encore*, may surprise you. More importantly you will grow in your appreciation for those who love poetry as much as you do.

NONCE FORMS

by Dave Harvey, Oregon Poetry Association

I noticed it the first time I wrote a haiku that successfully conformed to the 5-7-5 pattern: somehow, my mundane words seemed less mundane, more "poetical," because they fit the same form used by so many famous poets such as Basho, Issa, Teriyaki, and their friends. Because of my success, I somehow found it easier to write more in that pattern. My students, when they wrote haiku, seemed to write them in flocks, herds, swarms—whatever you would call a group of them. We got to referring to haiku and other such short, easily-repeated forms as "Fritos poems" because nobody seemed to be able to write just one.

During forty years of teaching English in junior-high and high school, I ran across a few less-familiar forms. The trilet (3-6-9 syllables), the Crapsey cinquain (2-4-6-8-2 syllables), and the lanterne (1-2-3-4-1 syllables) were three.

I estimate that I attended about seven hundred faculty meetings as I taught, and it will surprise no one to learn that they eventually acquired a sameness that led to me doodle, so the meeting leaders might think I was assiduously taking notes. During a faculty meeting of surpassing inanity, I gave up doodling and began playing at making up new patterns and giving them names.

Just for fun, I tried writing to some of my newly-invented forms. I enjoyed the exercise, and I often liked the results.

One was the **nihakasesto**, really a tanka, a 3-syllable line, and then a reverse tanka: eleven lines in a 5-7-5-7-7-3-7-7-5-7-5 pattern. My two earliest efforts follow: in one convention the nihakasesto is a list of images, all tending to a single effect. An example:

**A Moment While Climbing the
South Slope of the Unicorn—
Sierra Nevada, Above Tuolumne Meadows**

Stopped to blow, I see
my companion climbing up
through the sagebrush, and
stopping to catch his breath; he
looks up at me, and, grinning,
sets his boot
on the next step above him,
but waits, letting his heartbeat
slow a little, and
gets his wind back. So I wait
and enjoy the view.

A second convention of the **nihakasesto** uses two contrasting images for a single effect. The "pivot," also called the "turn," between them is nearly always the three-syllable line. An example:

**Coming Home: San Francisco to Humboldt
County**

Morning lights buildings
as streets roar to teeming life.
A siren tells of
urgent trips through the city,
and people hurry to work.
But evening
lights shaggy forests and long,
wild, canyons; we watch for bears
on 101, as
sunset sees us closing on
our North Country home.

One day, during the 491st time I'd "listened" to colleagues debating the rules about students chewing gum in class, I created one of my favorites, the **nonette**. It's three three-line stanzas, usually iambic trimeter, and can be rhymed:

Snow Showers in Ketchum, Idaho

An idle afternoon
sitting in the Children's Room
of their fine library;

Overhead the snow-seed gods
in pillow-fights their pods
split open over Idaho.

Outside the trees grow dark;
white feathers fill a park.
They dance a grand fandango.

A Detail Man, Drawing Pictures of Trains

See my little smile
as I draw a tiny trash heap,
create weedpatches,

delighting in humble things!
Scatter down small boulders,
show mud smears on box cars.

Such is my pleasure:
to drink in and love the world
by reproducing it.

As I read my Miller Williams, a "nonce form" is a form created and used for a single poem. I'm suggesting here that using the same form for several poems can be an interesting challenge, and may eventually result in keepers. The discipline of hewing to a dictated form, even if you are the dictator, can't hurt your poetic craft, and might be good for it. During my attending-faculty-meetings career, I created and wrote to thirteen such forms. On the days when I'm really feeling uninspired, sometimes I choose one of my forms at random and write a new poem in that form. The result is seldom memorable, but we all know how a bad poem can be the manure that nourishes a brilliant one later.

THE WAY OF ALL THE WORLD: Creating a Poetry Society that Takes the Poet Beyond the Technical Experience by Mira Evans, Utah State Poetry Society

We were saddened to hear at the National Federation of State Poetry Society's convention in Salt Lake City that several state poetry societies had disbanded in the last year. It is a difficult task in the 21st century to make a poetry society that can compete with the online opportunities. If the state society is to survive, we must consider what we can offer one another that the Internet lacks.

Why would a poet pay to attend a convention when she or he can hear free lectures at ted.com? Why would a poet enter a competition that requires a SASE and a trip to

the post office when all the major journals have online submissions? (I was pleased to see in the last *Strophes* that the NFSPS 2015 College/University competition will be conducted through Submittable.com.) Today's poet leaving college has received extensive training in current literary techniques. Do our critiques push the members to the next level as effectively, or are the recent graduates seeking an online crowd with similar training?

Our local societies have strengths that the Internet cannot offer. We must enhance and capitalize on these in our publicity and make them the foci of our meetings so that new members will be more likely to continue their membership.

1. We welcome poets of every type, technique, and experience. We learn more and branch out more when we are exposed to writing that differs from our own.
2. Lessons on the process of creating. In the modern world, the finished product is all around us: on the radio, the television, paintings, blogs, books, architecture, all are so easily accessible that we don't often get to see the hours of creation that go into that product. A society dedicated to works-in-progress is important in a fast-paced world. We must play to this strength and use our societies to heighten the experience of creating.
3. Face-to-face interaction. In the world of online anonymity, page names, and avatars, the reality of the face-to-face meeting with other writers could not be more important. Our social media pages are filled with "friends" we hardly know, and we follow celebrities we'll never meet. Against that background, we offer a group of actual people that we get to know better with time who care about our craft, our growth and our success.
4. Regularly scheduled meetings. We all work better with a deadline.

Our societies can also use today's technology better.

1. Are the states' websites focused on bringing in potential members or only on informing current members? Are there phrases on the websites that people would type into a search engine (e.g. *poetry readings Arkansas, writing groups Chattanooga*)?
2. If you can't beat them, join them! Is there an email round robin option available?
3. Contests are harder for the Contest Chairs if they're done online, but submitters love to have the option! Let's learn from the National Society and get Submittable accounts.
4. Blogs with open discussions allow people from within and without our societies to

participate in conversations about poems, poetic craft, poets, and related topics.

Obviously, our societies do some things very well. However, we must heighten the effect of these aspects and seek ways to remain relevant in today's world. As insightful as the founders of our societies were, we should revisit our constitutions and update them to take into account the changing world so that our societies may continue in perpetuity.

CRAFT OF WRITING POETRY

by Dave Stocking, President of the Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs

A quotation by Bill Heller is scotch taped onto the surface of my desk: "I prefer craft to spontaneity, accessible to esoteric, and poems that engage both head and heart, but that's just me."

His advice seems to come from a person who has written hundreds of poems over many years, and in so doing has learned the difference between "having potential" and "proven." Generally speaking, most junior high school students write drafts of poems that are spontaneous, replete with contemporary lingo from their social peer group, and engaged with their hearts more than their heads. These drafts do not take long to write, and they are rarely revised.

The teacher may give such a student a high grade, but grades are used as encouragement rather than assessment. If the teacher were to tell the student, "Good start, but it needs about five more re-writes over the next ten days if you want it to be your best work," chances are the student would not say what she/he really felt and thought. In her or his imagination, the 7th grader would probably start throwing darts at a picture of the teacher. To the student, the idea would sound like *work*, defined as what you do when you'd rather be doing something else.

A good teacher knows that if a student can be shown how crafting a poem can be enjoyable process, like reading or painting or acting can be an enjoyable process, then the attractiveness and value of *work* changes and the student is a willing participant.

When a student is smitten by poetry, and finds the process of writing and re-writing and re-writing a poem to be a labor of love, and draws ever closer to an appreciation of Mr. Heller's concepts of diligent craft, coherent diction, and the winning chemistry of intellectual and emotional engagement, then the writing and reading of poetry can be an exquisite pleasure for all learners, be they young or old.

Discover the Treasure - - - Poetry's Place in the Sun

June 24 - 28, 2015 in St. Petersburg, Florida

Florida State Poetry Association hosts the

Annual Convention of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies

Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront Hotel

333 1st Street S, Saint Petersburg, FL 33701-4342

Book by May 25th to reserve your room: call Carolyn at the Hilton Bayfront, her direct line: 727-825-7094.

If Carolyn is not available, the Hilton reservation number is: (800) 445-8667.

Ask for Special Poetry Convention Rate, \$119.00 USD/Night

Airport shuttle: **Super Shuttle: (800) 258-3826**

for a one-way trip for one passenger: \$25.00; two passengers: \$48.00

(Please make a copy of your completed form to keep for your own records.

Please submit Registration by May 25, 2015)

NFSPS Convention Registration

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Guests or family names: _____

Will any attendee require any particular accommodations (please indicate name on line)

_____ ASL Sign Language Interpreter

_____ Lift-equipped ground transportation

_____ Other - Please specify _____

Registration Fees:	How many	Total
Members/Participant (s)	_____ @ \$75.00	_____
Student (s).....	_____ @ \$25.00	_____
Guest/family*	_____ No Charge.....	_____
Registration Total		_____

*Not attending workshops, receiving *Encore*, handouts nor *Florida Anthology*, but welcome at meals, entertainment and tours. Suggested optional donation of \$10.00.

Thursday, June 25, 2015; 9 AM to 3 PM

Optional Group Activities: for details, check FSPA website www.floridastatepoetsassociation.org

How many		Total
_____	To Sarasota, Ringling Museum \$45.00 per person _____ (20 person minimum; includes transportation and entrance fees)	
_____	Old Town Tampa, Ybor City \$ 50.00 per person _____ (20 person minimum; includes transportation and entrance fees)	
_____	St. Pete Beach \$ 25.00 _____ (10 person minimum; includes transportation)	

All tours start at 9:00 AM and return to hotel by 3:00 PM. Lunch on your own for all tours. Tour charges will be refunded if minimum sign-ups are not met.)

Name(s) of Participant(s): _____

Total for Thursday Activity Trip Fees \$ _____

Meals* Please enter the name(s) of person(s) requesting meal on the line to the left of the menu option. Enter number, prices and totals in the chart below.

- _____ Friday Lunch A: Florida Cobb Salad
- _____ Friday Lunch B: Sandwich: Sliced roasted turkey w/Swiss Cheese **or** vegetarian option
- _____ Friday Dinner A: London Broil Marsala
- _____ Friday Dinner B: Vegetarian option
- _____ Saturday Lunch A: Caribbean Island Salad
- _____ Saturday Lunch B: Sandwich: Sliced Ham and turkey w/ bacon **or** vegetarian option
- _____ Saturday Dinner A: Chicken Piccata
- _____ Saturday Dinner B: Vegetarian option
- _____ Sunday Lunch A: Asian Chicken Salad
- _____ Sunday Lunch B: Sandwich: sliced tenderloin of beef **or** vegetarian option
- _____ Sunday Banquet A: Caribbean Mahi-Mahi
- _____ Sunday Banquet B: Vegetarian option
- _____ * I need a special diet; please list particular requirements (e.g. gluten-free, sugar-free, lactose-free);
be specific: _____

Meals	Number	Price	Total
Friday lunch	_____	@ \$28.50.....	_____
Friday dinner	_____	@ \$42.50	_____
Saturday lunch	_____	@ \$28.50.....	_____
Saturday dinner	_____	@ \$42.50	_____
Sunday lunch	_____	@ \$28.50	_____
Sunday dinner	_____	@ \$42.50	_____
Full 6-Meal Package - discounted rate for full meal package per person			
		_____ @ \$ 198.00	_____
Meals Total			\$ _____

Sunday, June 28, 2015, 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Dali Museum and Surrealism Poetry Workshop with Dan Pels and Melanie Hubbard
Presented by Florida State Poets Association and the Dali Museum

Please place name(s) of attendee(s) on line for admission to the Dali Museum.

_____ \$20.00 per person; Discounted Ticket includes admission to the Museum, the Galleries, the Exhibits, the audio self-guided tour and the poetry workshop.

Convention Fee Summary:

Total Registration	\$ _____
Total Meals	\$ _____
Total Thursday Activity Trip ..	\$ _____
Total Dali Museum	\$ _____
Grand Total.....	\$ _____

Make checks payable to Florida State Poets Association, Inc.
Send check and registration to:

Judith Krum, FSPA Treasurer/Convention Registrar
2614 S. Marshall Ave.
Sanford, FL 32773

Questions: Judith Krum, email: judithkrum@att.net; cell phone: (386) 624-3402

Additional details about meals, tours and activities are available at the FSPA website: www.floridastatepoetsassociation.org