



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

Strophes

Vol. LII No. 4

www.nfspd.com

April 2016



Eleanor Berry
31st NFSPS
President

Dear NFSPS Poets:

My term as NFSPS President will end this June, so this will be my last message. In it, I want to review what the board has done over the past two years and to highlight some of the challenges and opportunities for the next president and the new board. First, though, I want to thank all the elective and appointive board members who have served with me. It has been a privilege to work with colleagues so passionately committed to preserving and enhancing the vitality of the Federation. That common purpose has enabled us to work through any differences on specific issues.

All the board has done during these past two years has been directed toward increasing the value of NFSPS affiliation and helping to strengthen member societies. We have sought to improve our communication with state societies and to help them to attract and engage younger members. We have sought to make convention hosting more manageable for state societies and convention attendance more affordable for individual members. We are working to make the Federation components of convention programs more engaging and valuable for convention veterans and first-timers alike.

To facilitate communication between the national organization and the affiliated societies, I appointed Russell Strauss, a past NFSPS President and the current President of the Poetry Society of Tennessee, as Board Liaison to the State Societies. His experience of both state and national perspectives helps him to be effective in conveying state societies' concerns to the Federation board and explaining the board's intentions to the societies. He is always ready to help poet-colleagues in other state societies and can be reached via email at rstrpoet@cs.com.

The board has been especially concerned to help state societies to attract and retain younger members and to induce them to become actively involved. At the 2015 convention, the Youth Activities Committee, chaired by Steven Concert, gave awards recognizing exceptional efforts to encourage youth participation by 13 societies and three chapters, as well as "above and beyond" efforts by 14 individual members. A compilation of effective programs for youth, with contact people, is being prepared for dissemination to all the state societies. We hope it will be available by the convention this June.

Besides recognizing state societies' programs for youth, the Federation also runs two annual national competitions primarily for young poets—the Manningham Poetry Trust Competition for students in grades 6-12 and the College Undergraduate Poetry Competition (CUP) for college freshmen through seniors. Manningham Competition Chair Budd Powell Mahan and CUP Competition Chair Shirley Blackwell are both passionate advocates for the young poets whose work they help to honor.

Over the past two years the board has worked to make both the Manningham and CUP Competitions more accessible and attractive to young poets. Students living in states with no affiliated society, or ones in which the society does not submit entries to the Manningham Competition, can now submit their work directly to the Manningham Chair by the same deadline as societies, rather than having to submit by an earlier deadline to the Youth Activities Chair. For the CUP Competition, both the submission process and the two winners' chapbooks have been enhanced. College undergraduates can now submit their manuscripts online, via Submittable, and by [continued on page 8]

MAGNETIC MINNESOTA: ATTRACTING A NATION OF POETS — June 9-13, 2016

Take a true writing vacation to the 2016 NFSPS Poetry Convention in Minnesota at Oak Ridge Hotel & Convention Center, overlooking Lake McKnight and enveloped by woods. We will have active writing workshops to break through writer's block and get the words flowing like our many lakes and river. Share your poems at the open mics and sell them at our bookstore. Learn from our panels about small presses, set up of an organization, and the craft of writing. Sample the flavor of Minnesota on tours to our world renowned arboretum and the Excelsior Brewery. We will also hear from speakers that include some of Minnesota's finest poets. All this while being well fed at our buffet-style meals. This spectacular array of poetics will kick off with a BBQ overlooking the lake and the "Layers" presentation blending poetry with music, and culminate with words of wisdom from Natalie Goldberg. Visit our website for registration and for more information: nfspdconvention.com.

2016 CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Wednesday, June 8

7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Early Arrival Meet and Greet

Thursday, June 9

10:30 am – 12:30 pm Arboretum Tour & Writing Exercise
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch (on your own)
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Excelsior Brewery Tour with Poetry Tasting
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm Small Group Peer Feedback Session
4:30 pm – 6:00 pm NFSPS Board Meeting
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Welcome BBQ Dinner
7:30 pm – 9:00 pm LAYERS
9:30 pm – 10:30 pm Open Mic

Friday, June 10

7:30 am – 8:15 am Open Mic
8:30 am – 9:15 am Organization Panel Discussion
9:30 am – 10:30 am State Presidents Meeting
9:30 am – 10:30 am Guided Writing Workshop
10:45 am – 11:45 am Kathryn Kysar
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch Buffet
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Manningham Winners and NFSPS Results
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm Plenary Session
2:45 pm – 4:00 pm Guided Writing Workshop
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Moheb Soliman
6:00 pm – 6:45 pm Dinner Buffet
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm College Undergraduate Winners and NFSPS Results
9:15 pm – 10:30 pm Open Mic

Saturday, June 11

7:30 am – 8:30 am Open Mic
9:00 am – 10:00 am Guided Writing Workshop
9:00 am – 10:00 am Publishing Panel
10:30 am – 11:30 am Speaker (TBA)
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch Buffet
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Speaker Reading and NFSPS Results
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm Guided Writing Workshop
4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Matt Rasmussen
6:00 pm – 6:45 pm Dinner Buffet
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm Stevens Book Manuscript Award, Saturday Keynote: Matt Rasmussen
8:00 pm – 9:00 pm NFSPS Results
9:15 pm – 10:00 pm Open Mic

[Convention schedule continued on page 7]

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

Honorary Chancellor: Peter Meinke

EXECUTIVE BOARD ~ 2014-2016

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

PRESIDENT: Eleanor Berry

22614 N. Santiam Hwy., Lyons, OR 97358
eberry@wvi.com

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: James Barton

Membership Chair

P.O. Box 263, Huttig, AR 71747
jbob214@yahoo.com

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: Polly Opsahl

Convention Coordinator

7316 Huntington Dr., Oscoda, MI 48750
pollyopsahl@gmail.com

3RD VICE PRESIDENT: Diane Glancy

Special Awards Chair

3508 West 73rd Terr., Shawnee Mission, KS 66208
glancy@macalester.edu

4TH VICE PRESIDENT: Paul Ford

Strophes Editor

10239 Hickory Point Dr., Sandy, UT 84092-3960
pford3@yahoo.com

CHANCELLOR: Steven Concert

Youth Chair

49 Kitchen Ave., Harveys Lake, PA 18618
paperlesspoets@gmail.com

1ST VICE CHANCELLOR: Dena R. Gorrell

Poetry Day/Poetry Month Liaison

14024 Gateway Dr., Edmond, OK 73013
thepoetlady@cox.net

2ND VICE CHANCELLOR: Valerie Martin Bailey

Encore Editor

2207 Parhaven Dr., San Antonio, TX 78232
vbailey@satx.rr.com

TREASURER: Lucille Morgan Wilson

2325 61st St., Des Moines, IA 50322
lucille_e_wilson@hotmail.com

SECRETARY: Julie Cummings

Publicity Chair, Electronic Media

9428 Fallen Rock Rd., Conifer, CO 80433
jcummings3@gmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Jeremy M. Downes

Presidential Advisors Chair

832 Tacoma Dr., Auburn, AL 36830
downejm@auburn.edu

APPOINTIVE BOARD

Board Liaison to State Societies: Russell H. Strauss

18 S. Rembert St., Memphis, TN 38104
RSTRpoet@cs.com

College Undergraduate Poetry Competition Chair:

Shirley Blackwell, P.O. Box 1352, Los Lunas, NM 87031 ~ sonneteer@earthlink.net

Contest Chair 2016: Charlotte Abernathy

1375 Greenmeadows Way, Ashland, OR 97520
artistca@mind.net

Contest Sponsors/Brochure Chair:

Sharon Martin Turner, 10807 Silhouette Dr., San Antonio, TX 78216 ~ sdmtturner@aol.com

Historian: Nancy Baass

408 E. Warren Ave., Victoria, TX 77901-4847
nancy.baass@gmail.com

Judges Chair: Charmaine Pappas Donovan

18755 Tracside Rd., Brainerd, MN 56401-5317
charmaine@charter.net

Legal Counselor: Susan Stevens Chambers

57310 166th Lane, Good Thunder, MN 56037
schambersmediator@yahoo.com

Librarian: Catherine L'Herisson, 518 Grinnell Dr.,

Garland, TX 75043 ~ catherinepoet@juno.com

Manningham Trust Competition Chair:

Budd Powell Mahan, 7059 Spring Valley Rd., Dallas, TX 75254 ~ buddmahan@att.net

Manningham Trust Advisor: Sam Wood

1570 Auburn Way, Reno, NV 89502

Publicity Chair, Traditional Media: Amy Jo Zook

3520 State Route 56, Mechanicsburg, OH 43044

Stevens Manuscript Competition Chair: Wilda Morris

499 Falcon Ridge Way, Bolingbrook, IL 60449-2242
stevens.nfsps@gmail.com

Webmaster: Billy Pennington, P.O. Box 7842,

Moore, OK 73153 ~ zodnoyeb@aol.com

NFSPS MEMBER STATE SOCIETIES AND PRESIDENTS

ALABAMA: Alabama State Poetry Society

Jerri Hardesty, President ~ 1830 Marvel Rd., Brierfield, AL 35035 ~ wytrabbit1@aol.com

ARIZONA: Arizona State Poetry Society

Carol Hogan, President ~ 10401 N. Cave Creek Rd #116, Phoenix AZ 85020 ~ carolhogan@cox.net

ARKANSAS: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Dennis R. Patton, President ~ 2512 Springhill Cir., Alexander, AR 72002 ~ patton_dr@hotmail.com

CALIFORNIA: California State Poetry Society

Dr. John Forrest Harrell, Treasurer ~ P.O. Box 7126, Orange, CA 92863 ~ JFHarrell@gmail.com

COLORADO: Columbine Poets

Julie Cummings, President ~ 9428 Fallen Rock Rd., Conifer, CO 80433 ~ jcummings3@gmail.com

CONNECTICUT: Connecticut Poetry Society

Tony Fusco, President ~ 311 Shingle Hill Rd., West Haven, CT 06516 ~ tfusco357@gmail.com

FLORIDA: Florida State Poets Association

Joseph Cavanaugh, President ~ 3722 Longford Cir., Ormond Beach, FL 32174 ~ jcvavanaugh1@gmail.com

GEORGIA: Georgia Poetry Society

Ira E. Harrison, President ~ 3047 Lynhurst Cir. SW, Atlanta, GA 30311-1909 ~ iharrisio@utk.edu

ILLINOIS: Illinois State Poetry Society

Susan T. Moss, President ~ 1209 Michigan Ave., Evanston, IL 60202 ~ stm48@hotmail.com

INDIANA: Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs

Sandra J. Nantais, President ~ 1634 Deer Valley Rd., Crown Point, IN 46307 ~ sjr00@yahoo.com

IOWA: Iowa Poetry Association

Marilyn Baszczynski, President ~ 16096 320th Way, Earlham, IA 50072 ~ ipa@iowapoetry.com

KENTUCKY: Kentucky State Poetry Society

Morgan Adams, President ~ 371 S. Limestone St. Suite 220, Lexington, KY 40508
morgankirstenadams@gmail.com

LOUISIANA: Louisiana State Poetry Society

Pat Juelg, President ~ 12972 Arlington Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70815

MAINE: Maine Poets Society

Carol Willette Bachofner, President ~ 12 Center St., Rockland, ME 04841 ~ mainepoet@me.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts State Poetry Society

Jeanette C. Maes, President ~ 64 Harrison Ave., Lynn, MA 01905 ~ msps.jmaes@comcast.net

MICHIGAN: Poetry Society of Michigan

Polly Opsahl, President ~ 7316 Huntington, Oscoda, MI 48750 ~ pollyopsahl@gmail.com

MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets

Peter Stein, President ~ 5216 23rd Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55417 ~ pwilliamstein@yahoo.com

MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi Poetry Society

Judy Davies, President ~ 1418 Louis Alexis Trail, Gautier, MS 39553 ~ judydavies@cablone.net

MISSOURI: Missouri State Poetry Society

Dawn Stiller-Harmon, President ~ 351 Oak Rd., Cuba, MO 65453 ~ inafieldofdaisies@hotmail.com

NEVADA: Nevada Poetry Society

Sam Wood, President ~ P.O. Box 7014, Reno, NV 89510

NEW MEXICO: New Mexico State Poetry Society

Andrea M. Penner, President ~ P.O. Box 21825, Albuquerque, NM 87154 ~ president@nmpoetry.com

NEW YORK: New York Poetry Forum

Daniel Fernandez, President ~ 3604 Ave. S, Brooklyn, NY 11234

OHIO: Ohio Poetry Association

Chuck Salmons, President ~ 6519 Crab Apple Dr., Canal Winchester, OH 43110 ~ charles@ohiopoetryassn.org

OKLAHOMA: Poetry Society of Oklahoma

Patti Koch, President ~ 5101 N.W. 20th St, Oklahoma City, OK 73127-2312 ~ pkoch7@cox.net

OREGON: Oregon Poetry Association

Tiel Aisha Ansari, President ~ 1724 NE Prescott St., Portland, OR 97211 ~ tielansari@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Poetry Society

Marilyn Downing, President ~ 137 Apple Lane, Hershey, PA 17033 ~ mmdowning1@verizon.net

SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota State Poetry Society

Bruce Roseland, President ~ 16894 US Highway 47, Seneca, SD 57473 ~ bbroseland@venturecomm.net

TENNESSEE: Poetry Society of Tennessee

Russell H. Strauss, President ~ 18 S. Rembert St, Memphis, TN 38104 ~ RSTRpoet@cs.com

TEXAS: Poetry Society of Texas

Catherine L'Herisson, President ~ 518 Grinnell Dr., Garland, TX 75043 ~ catherinepoet@juno.com

UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society

Dawnell Griffin, President ~ 565 East 12400 North, Cove, UT 84320-2031 ~ dawnellgriffin@gmail.com

WYOMING: WyoPoets

Myra L. Peak, President ~ P. O. Box 404, Green River, WY 82935 ~ myrapeak@gmail.com

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
pford3@yahoo.com

* 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.

NFSPS PAST PRESIDENTS (Presidential Advisors)

*Cecilia Parsons Miller	*Barbara Stevens
*Clinton Larson	*Henrietta Kroah
*Robert D. West	*Jerry Robbins
*Edna Meudt	Pat Stodghill
*Marvin Davis Winsett	*Wanda Blaisdell
*Max Golightly	*Ralph Hammond
*Hans Juergensen	Amy Jo Zook
*Russell Ferrall	Susan Stevens Chambers
*Jean Jenkins	Clarence P. Socwell
*Catherine Case Lubbe	Madelyn Eastlund
*Glenn Sweetman	Budd Powell Mahan
*Carl Morton	Doris Stengel
*Alice Briley	Nancy Baass
*Wauneta Hackleman	Russell H. Strauss
*Jack Murphy	Jeremy M. Downes

* Deceased

2016 CONVENTION SPEAKERS

Natalie Goldberg, keynote speaker, is the author of *Writing Down The Bones: Freeing The Writer Within* (1986), which broke open the world of creativity and started a revolution in the way we practice writing in this country. The 30th anniversary edition came out in February, 2016. The book has sold over one million copies and been translated into fourteen languages. Since then she has written fourteen other books, including the novel *Banana Rose*. Her new book, *The Great Spring: Writing Zen and this Zigzag Life*, will also be out in February.

Natalie is a prolific painter. Her book, *Living Color: Painting, Writing, and the Bones of Seeing*, describes painting as her second art form. Her paintings can be seen on her website nataliegoldberg.com.

Top of My Lungs (Overlook Press), contains forty poems, twenty of her paintings in color and an essay, "How Poetry Saved My Life."

Natalie has been teaching seminars in writing as a practice for the last thirty years. People from around the world attend her life-changing workshops and she has earned a reputation as a great teacher. The Oprah Winfrey Show sent a film crew to spend the day with Natalie for a segment on Spirituality that covered her writing, teaching, painting, and walking meditation. She currently lives in Northern New Mexico.

Matt Rasmussen is the author of *Black Aperture*, which was selected by Jane Hirshfield as the winner of the 2013 Walt Whitman Award. *Black Aperture* was also awarded the 2014 Minnesota Book Award for Poetry and was a finalist for the National Book Award. His poems have been published in *The Literary Review*, *Gulf Coast*, *Water~Stone Review*, *Revolver*, *Paper Darts*, *Poets.org* and elsewhere. He is the recipient of grants and residencies from the McKnight Foundation, Bush Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board, Jerome Foundation, The Anderson Center, and The Corporation of Yaddo.

He received a 2014 Pushcart Prize and was awarded the 2015 Holmes National Poetry Prize by the creative writing faculty at Princeton University. A founder and editor of the independent poetry press Birds, LLC, he lives in Robbinsdale, Minnesota. You can find links to poems and reviews at mattrasmussen.net.

Kathryn Kysar is the author of two books of poetry, *Dark Lake* and *Pretend the World*, and she edited the anthology *Riding Shotgun: Women Write About Their Mothers*. She has received fellowships and residencies from Banfill-Locke Center for the Arts, the Minnesota State Arts Board, the National

Endowment for the Humanities, and the Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, and she recently served on the board of directors for the Association of Writers. She has a B.A. from Hamline University and an M.F.A. from Wichita State University. She chairs the creative writing program at Anoka-Ramsey Community College in Minneapolis and lives with her family in Saint Paul.

Moheb Soliman is a poet and performance artist interested in issues of identity, modernity, belonging, and the limits of language in capturing human experience. For over 15 years he presented and curated performance, literary, and video work in the US and Canada in varied shows and festivals. His performance poetry show, "Habib Albi is...Not a Man," about romance, gender, and Arab-American identity in the Midwest in light of 9/11, has played at established venues in New York, Toronto, and Montreal, where in September, 2011, it was commissioned as the MAI's season-opener for the 10-year commemoration of 9/11. In 2013 he was awarded a Pillsbury House Naked Stages grant and in 2014 was commissioned for a participatory installation at the Northern Spark art festival. For 2015, he has been awarded a specialized Joyce Foundation fellowship for an on-going interdisciplinary project about Great Lakes nature and culture.

CONVENTION BOOKSTORE

All poets registered for the 2016 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 9th;
- 2) Shipments should be clearly marked ATTENTION NFSPS BOOKSTORE with the name of the conference;
- 3) Ship books to 1 Oak Ridge Drive, Chaska, MN 55318, USA.

Note that there may be a small handling charge. Contact the hotel for details. 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.

MINNESOTA POET WINS STEVENS MANUSCRIPT COMPETITION

Laura Hansen's manuscript, *Midnight River*, was chosen winner of the 2015 Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition. Judge Bruce Dethlefsen, who served two years as Wisconsin Poet Laureate, stated that this book

is "what great poetry is and what great poetry does right. Here are word pictures painted perfectly with the most careful attention to image and sound." Hansen, from Little Falls, Minnesota, is a member of the League of Minnesota Poets. She will read a selection of poems from her manuscript at the 2016 NFSPS Convention, where the book will be offered for sale.

Runner-Up in the competition was Terry Jude Miller of Richmond, Texas. Of his manuscript, *Hard and Tender Fields*, Dethlefsen says, "These are strong and resilient poems, made rich in imagery and musicality by close attention." Terry is a member of the Poetry Society of Texas.

Finalists were Milton Bates (Michigan), Elizabeth Bodien (Pennsylvania), Ginny Lowe Connors (Connecticut), YvetteViets Flaten (Wisconsin), Anand Prahlad (Missouri), Donna Prinzmatal (Oregon), Kerry Trautman (Ohio), and Barbara Ungar (New York).

This was the first Stevens Manuscript Competition to allow submissions via Submittable.com, which proved to be the most popular option. There were 157 entries of which all but sixteen were submitted electronically.

Thirty-five NFSPS members entered. State organizations represented were: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas, Arizona State Poetry Society, Connecticut Poetry Society, Georgia Poetry Society, Florida State Poets Association, Illinois State Poetry Society, Iowa Poetry Association, Poetry Society of Michigan, League of Minnesota Poets, New Mexico State Poetry Society, Ohio Poetry Association, Poetry Society of Oklahoma, Oregon Poetry Association, Pennsylvania Poetry Society, South Dakota State Poetry Society, and Poetry Society of Texas.

The contest was advertised in *Poets & Writers* and *The American Poetry Review* again this year. We also advertised for the first time through [Creative Writers Opportunities List](http://CreativeWritersOpportunitiesList), poetrykit.org and Facebook, each of which provide free announcements of contests.

I want to thank Marilyn Huntman Giese, who was my assistant, removing contact information from hard copies and tracking memberships for both hard copies and electronic submissions. This made it possible for me to read entries blind, which is important for maintaining the integrity of the process. Thanks also to Amy Zook and Eleanor Berry who provided helpful information and advice, and to Shirley Blackwell and Kathy Cotton who helped me set the contest up on Submittable.com. ~ Wilda Morris, Stevens Manuscript Competition Chair

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS'

annual Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration was hosted by the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines in El Dorado April 22 and 23. Friday night's event was an open mic poetry reading at PJ's Coffee Shop in El Dorado's famous downtown square. PRA's own Karen Hayes was the featured performer. Saturday's main event included contests and speaker Betty Heidelberger. Betty is a former president of PRA and is a multi-award winning poet. The celebration also showcased 2016 student poet winners from Arkansas middle and high schools. This year PRA is partnering with the Arkansas State Fair to sponsor Best-in-Show poetry for four age groups. This is a test year for this partnership as PRA finds more ways to reach out to aspiring poets all over the state. The State Fair will produce a Creative Arts Handbook online which will include a link to poetsroundtableofarkansas.org. PRA's first annual Collegiate Contest is underway and finished up in March. Members have reached out to all 50 colleges and universities across the state between October and January. All entrants receive a free 1-year membership in PRA. An exploratory committee worked long and hard to push the success of this project. This quarter we said goodbye to poets Magdalene Collums of Hope and C.D. (Carolyn) Wright. Wright was a National Book Award finalist and a National Book Critics Circle Award winner. ~ *Laura Loughridge, Secretary*

FLORIDA STATE POETS

ASSOCIATION is busy preparing for their annual Spring Fling event to be held April 15-16 in Orlando. Our International theme will have us studying poetry with a Frenchman, Spaniard and Scotsman. What a fascinating weekend this will be. Yes! There will be a Piper. We will also be celebrating National Poetry month as part of a multi-organizational event. This will be held at The Casements in Ormond Beach. The Casements was the winter home of John D. Rockefeller. It will include four officers of FSPA along with two local chapters. Also included will be Arts and Community Organizations as well as poets from local colleges and Universities and one of Volusia County's two Poets Laureate, Dr. David Axelrod. It plans to be an outstanding day. Check floridastatepoetsassociation.org for topics, rules and deadlines for our annual poetry contest. There's money to be made and you don't want to miss out on that. ~ *Mary-Ann Westbrook, Secretary*

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY

will be displaying members' poetry in twelve community libraries during April Poetry Month. The locations include Bloomington,

Carbondale, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Hinsdale, Lisle, Northbrook, Pontiac, Wheaton, Wilmette, Winnetka and Woodridge. This year ISPS will also share a table to sell members' books and offer society information at the Harold Washington Public Library at the annual Poetry Fest on April 30. A poetry month event on April 8 will be held at the Lisle Library where members will have an opportunity to read their poems influenced by artists work that will be on display. Another future gathering will be sponsored by ISPS and the Oak Brook Public Library during the afternoon of June 18. Members will have an opportunity to read their poetry to a public gathering. The first meeting of our sixth and newest chapter was held at the Northbrook Public Library on February 21. This latest chapter is strictly focused on writing, critiquing and exploring Modern Haiku. All are invited to check the ISPS website, illinoispoets.org, in order to find where and when various chapters meet and to download membership as well forthcoming contest information. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President*

INDIANA STATE FEDERATION OF POETRY CLUBS

is heading into a significant year, as not only is the state of Indiana celebrating its bicentennial, we are celebrating ISFPC's 75th year of "Keeping Poetry Alive in Indiana." Throughout the year, ISFPC will participate through the Indiana Bicentennial Commission's Bicentennial Legacy Project. ISFPC 1st VP, Caroline Dewey, began forming a committee of ISFPC members last year that she has diligently organized into the ISFPC Indiana Bicentennial committee. They have twice gathered to discuss how ISFPC can be involved with this exciting year in Indiana. The committee hopes to encourage members to hold readings and workshops at libraries, schools, senior centers and to motivate libraries to display books by Indiana poets that will tie in with the ISFPC Legacy Project motto, "Poetry Is The Language Of Legacy." In May we will kick off our 75th year celebration with ISFPC's affiliate club, NI POETS of Fort Wayne, Indiana, hosting our Annual Spring Meet, "Gemstones of Poetry and History." This one-day gathering of poets from around the state will be held at the inspiring Fox Island County Park in Fort Wayne. ISFPC has been moving forward with the times! Our website isfpc.org now includes a blog which our secretary, Sarah E. Morin, keeps updated with interviews and events. We've also created a Facebook page and are looking forward to reaching more poets to learn and grow ISFPC. ~ *Sandra J. Nantais, President*

MAINE POETS SOCIETY held three regional gatherings in different communities,

each with a workshop format. This was a change from the traditional full-society February meeting. The first of these regional meetings was in January with President Carol Bachofner leading, the second in February with James Breslin, and the third in March with Jenny Doughty. The next general meeting will be Saturday, May 21, 2016, at the University of Maine at Augusta. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. There is a \$12 registration fee for all attendees. Lunch is complimentary. Non-members are welcome and may stay to participate in a reading-in-the-round at about 3:00 p.m. Contests, open to members only, will be on the subject, "Wild Animals," to be judged by MPS member Woody Woodsum and Ekphrastic poems (based on works of art) to be judged by guest judge Carl Little. There is a 24-line limit for the poems. New membership is encouraged. For more information and to learn about the Society, please visit mainepoetsociety.com or contact MPS President Carol Bachofner at mainepoet@me.com or 207-594-8954. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA POETS

—June will be here faster than you think, and we don't want you be left out of all the excitement that the upcoming NFSPS convention is generating. The convention committee of LOMP has put together a marvelous program that includes gifted speakers, fun activities and great banquets held at a venue with a distinct Minnesota flavor. Plan to attend and enjoy beautiful walking trails, spend time at the University of Minnesota Arboretum where you can visit demonstration gardens or simply relax and breath the refreshing Minnesota air. Please visit the League's website at mnpoets.com for all the details. With the good Lord willin' and if the creek don't rise, we'll see you in June! ~ *Dennis Herschbach, President*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY

is divided into three branches—North, Central, and South. The three branches alternate hosting the Spring Poetry Festival each April during National Poetry Month. Hosting the Festival this year is Central Branch, whose capable leader is Ms. Deirdre Payne. Central Branch has planned an exciting time of poetry awards, people-pleasing door-prizes, plenty of palatable plates, and perfect Southern pastries! In a recent issue of *Strophes*, we announced that North Branch member, Patricia Neely-Dorsey, was named as an ambassador for the state of Mississippi. We are delighted to inform everyone that she will be our keynote speaker on Saturday night at our Festival banquet. For more information, please visit misspoetry.net. We would love to see poets from other states as well, so may I say from Mississippi, "Y'all come!" While Central

Branch is busy preparing for the Spring Festival, South Branch has been busy selecting their Poet of the Year. In the words of South Branch president, Brenda Finnegan: "MPS South Branch selected our 2015 South Branch Poet of the Year, who is Judy Davies of Gautier. Judy is presently serving her final year as Mississippi Poetry Society (State) President, and has won many contests and is well published. She attended the NFSPS connection in 2015, and continues to challenge herself in her literary ventures, including collaborating with her composer-husband, Ken. MPS South Branch also had a very successful 44th annual literary contest, awarding over \$1,000 in prizes to adults and students with our sister club, Writers Unlimited. MPS South Branch continues to meet monthly at the Gautier Library." ~ *Dorothy Wiman, Secretary*

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY celebrates its 40th anniversary in April of this year. It was established in April, 1976, with Sister Margaret McCarran, member of a prominent Nevada family, as its first president. In its earlier years, it had as many as 40 members. Its earliest publication was a poetry cookbook. Other anthologies have been *Rime With a View* (1988) and *Nevada Poets' Calendar* (1994 and 1995). It also sponsored a national poetry contest for several years. Time has taken a heavy toll on membership, but current members are enthusiastic about continuing. Sister Margaret was president for roughly half of its existence, and Sam Wood has continued as president for most of the latter half. Members have been prize-winning poets and publishers of several books. ~ *Sam Wood, President*

OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION has hosted two well-received workshops in recent months. We led an ekphrastic poetry event in Toledo in February and delved into the world of the *avant-garde* with John and Cathy Bennett in April. The month of May features another retreat in the beautiful setting of Malabar Farm State Park in Lucas, Ohio. And the summer season will kick off with OPA taking part in the Summer Solstice Celebration at Serpent Mound State Memorial, located in the rustic hills of Adams County in southern Ohio. We also are celebrating the winners of our Ides of March contest as well as our High School Poetry Contests. The winners are featured in the latest issue of the OPA newsletter, *Workshopping Our Words*, and will be invited to read at our annual summer picnic in July. After submission of our application to The Columbus Foundation (TCF), we await word on whether OPA will receive another grant from the TCF Community Arts Fund. Finally, we are extremely grateful to an OPA member,

the late Lucile B. Quinn, who bequeathed a very generous donation to OPA upon her recent passing. The officers are currently discussing ways to best use these funds while honoring Lucile's long-time membership. ~ *Chuck Salmons, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA wishes everyone Happy Springtime Greetings even though it is still winter as this goes to press. By the time you receive this April issue of *Strophes*, PSO will have held its annual spring banquet at Twin Hills Country Club in Oklahoma City. This is always a special time as the winners of our PSO Spring contest are recognized and awarded prizes for their winning poems. Our banquet theme this year is Easter. Also, with April being National Poetry month, PSO is looking forward to the OKC City Council issuing the Proclamation of April as National Poetry Month in Oklahoma City (for the fifth year in a row!). And, our Oklahoma State Legislators will present a Resolution stating April as National Poetry month for the State of Oklahoma (again, for the fifth year in a row!). We like to celebrate National Poetry month in Oklahoma. PSO is very honored to have Dr. Benjamin Meyers, Oklahoma State Laureate for 2015 through 2016, as a current member of the Poetry Society of Oklahoma. Dr. Meyers is a literature professor at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, OK. He teaches poetry and literature and is an award-winning author and scholar whose poems have appeared in prominent international journals. We are looking ahead to an exciting spring and summer in PSO. In May we will have morning and afternoon workshops with two outside speakers who will indeed make our members work and participate in a learning and educational day of poetry. Then in July, PSO will host another workshop; this will be an in-house (morning and afternoon) workshop presented by PSO members. We will also be presenting awards for the July contest winners at this workshop. Both workshops include delicious noontime buffets. PSO has an exciting year ahead and the best is yet to come. ~ *Patti Koch, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE in the fall of 2015 was grieved to lose a long-time cherished member and supporter, Michael Riley Denington of Bartlett, TN. Mick was an admired poet and teacher, who over the years served the organization in many positions, including president. He will be greatly missed. Two long-time members, Florence Bruce and Sarah Hull Gurley, were recently rewarded for service by being named Honorary Members of the society. JoAn Howerton has agreed to serve again this year as Director of the Mid-South Poetry Festival, our big annual celebration of poetry. The

Festival will take place the first Saturday in October, and is kicked off the night before by a party hosted by Sarah Hull Gurley. The Festival contest brochure should be available around June 1 on poetrysocietytn.org. I (Florence Bruce) will serve again as Contest Coordinator. JoAn and I work well together, and our hope is to make this year's event a productive and enjoyable experience for poets nationwide. Non-members may participate. Our year runs September through May. We take the summer months off except for one social event in August. Dues are \$25/year, and that will include a copy of the 2015-16 yearbook. Members are entitled to enter our monthly contests for prizes and recognition, as well as extra contests that enthusiastic members volunteer to sponsor from time to time. We are definitely about learning how to write memorable, publishable poetry. We would welcome your application. Contact me at fbruce1@att.net or our Membership Chairperson, Leslie Blakeburn, at leslieblakeburn@yahoo.com. ~ *Florence Bruce, Corresponding Secretary*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS meetings are presently held September through May on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 2:30 p.m. at the Preston Royal Library in Dallas (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 2015-16 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 Turner Ayers, Susan Maxwell Campbell and Barbara Terrell Goerdel. ~ *Nancy Baass*

WYOPOETS—the following are the results of WyoPoets' 2016 Eugene V. Shea National Contest winners: 1st place, Mary Jo Maguire for "10 Years after Katrina;" 2nd place, Sandra Lake Lassen for "George Faulkner, Dying at Daysboro;" 3rd place, Barb Blanks for "Breaking Point." Honorable mentions include Marian Kaplun Shapiro, Jerri Hardesty, Barbara Brannon, Cathy Moran and Christina Kamnikar. The contest was judged by David Mason, Poet Laureate of Colorado from 2010-2014. WyoPoets are looking toward Riverton, Wyoming, where they will be treated to Linda Hasselstrom's all-day workshop on Saturday, April 23, 2016. A new chapbook will be introduced on Friday evening, April 22. There will also be a public reading by Hasselstrom and the poets included in this new volume to be held in the Riverton Branch of the Fremont County Libraries. Log

on to wyopoets.org for information about featured poets, judges, winners and upcoming events at wyopoets.org. ~ *Lee Ann Siebken, Reporter*

CONTESTS

ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY is accepting submissions for the Annual John and Miriam Morris Memorial Chapbook Competition. Deadline is May 31, 2016. Winner receives \$100 and 25 copies of their winning chapbook. Poems may be previously published if poet retains all rights. Send 20-24 total pages of poetry (poems may be longer than one page, but total page count must be 20-24, and no more than one poem per page) with two (2) title pages: one with author identification, and one with NO author identification. Send manuscript with a \$15 reading fee payable to New Dawn Unlimited, Inc. Mail to: NEW DAWN UNLIMITED, INC., ASPS 2016 Morris Memorial Chapbook Competition, 1830 Marvel Road, Brierfield, AL 35035. See NewDawnUnlimited.com for info.

Poets & Patrons 60th Annual CHICAGOLAND Poetry Contest with twelve of the thirteen categories open to non-members. Deadline: September 1, 2016. For guidelines, see the Contests page on poetsandpatrons.net.

POETRY ARTICLES

Springtime Anywhere

By James Ahearn, Poetry Society of Michigan

This isn't for you, you who receive this publication are in the proverbial choir and already know the secret I reveal in this article. Perhaps, however, it is something you can use to pass on to others who have not discovered the seeds contained in a packet of poetry.

With another season about to change, as if calendar pages were caught in a breeze, I must tell you a not-so-secret secret of mine: regardless of the season, I find daily a springtime moment. I live poetry and read several poems every day until such a moment is found, either in a new poem or one in my file of favorites. Most of them are written in plain English and lack the obscurity that drove people away from this genre during the previous century.

That is not to say I don't enjoy poems written in earlier times; it's difficult to keep one's heart from rising slightly toward the throat while reading "I Wondered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth, first published in 1807. Emily Dickinson's poems are also some of my favorites. I especially love her explanation of how one recognizes good poetry: "If I read a book [and] it makes my whole body so cold no fire ever can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I

know that is poetry." However, most of the poems in my personally selected anthology are works written by living poets.

It wasn't until my retirement that I rediscovered poetry. That is when I uncovered the secret that no matter what one's physical condition is, one way to exercise the heart is by reading poems. It was pure joy for me to find that much of present day poems are written in accessible, understandable, everyday English. That was not always the case. The obscure poetry written during the two middle quarters of the 20th century drove many people away from the genre, and drove me nuts. Billy Collins, the United States Poet Laureate from 2002 through 2004, is one of the poets responsible for again making poetry accessible to ordinary people. He likes to use the word "hospitable" when speaking about what he tries to include in his poems. After reading most of his published poems, I've concluded that the word "hospitable" fits his work perfectly. If you haven't read a Billy Collins poem Google his name, or pick up one of his books.

Poetry tries to put the reader in touch with the mysteries of life, tries to involve the reader in experiences that move both mind and emotion. A modern day poet, Linda Gregg, says, "The art of finding poetry is the art of marrying the sacred to the world, the invisible to the human." My favorite nature poet, Mary Oliver, says, "For poems are not words, after all, but fires for the cold, ropes let down to the lost, something as necessary as bread in the pockets of the hungry." My criteria for a poem's inclusion into my file of favorites is, when read repeatedly, each reading causes crocuses to spring from the soil of winter.

So let me conclude by saying, if you would like sunshine to invade each day of your life, regardless of the weather, consider poetry. If you would like to experience goose bumps on your heart, read poetry. Be aware, however, some of the poems may catch in your right ventricle and sprout there.

In Consideration of Words

By Ron Weber, Poetry Society of Michigan

There are those who think I live in my own little world, but that's ok. They know me here. If I get writer's block, I might go off in pursuit of literary trivia. Or, as in this case, wander off into contemplating the fascination of writing and what we all use to do so.

Ah, the wonderfulness of words. Confucius back in 500 B.C. had it right: "Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know human beings." As unrelenting seekers of the Muse, we all have that compelling need to be the most proficient wordsmiths we can be. I offer the following reflections in this regard to my versifyin' amigos.

Words are both tangible in terms of their

literal definition as well as amorphous in terms of their figurative capabilities and qualities. It is the figurative that is the stuff of the truly creative writer in general, and the poet in particular. As those of us know who are afflicted with this cursed need to write and find the right words in verse, poetry is essentially figurative language. It is words focused in a way that is both expressive and evocative.

So, what do we mean by this expressive/evocative gizmo (a little high tech language there)? Figurative language is the literary tool box from which we as poets extract the tools necessary for the words and phrases we're shaping; i.e., metaphor, simile, alliteration, repetition, personification, onomatopoeia, etc. As Coleridge said, "The best words in the best order."

The challenge to poets is to master words within the appropriate context of our message while using these figurative tools to make that message evocative. Our goal is to evoke the feeling of an experience for others whether or not they were actually present. Otherwise, what's the use? One might as well be reporting on the hog auction at the county fair.

You may not realize it, but we owe a debt of gratitude to the words of verse. They were here long before the first marks were put on papyrus or the first symbols were put on parchment and the dawn of written communication began. The poet, the minstrel, the storyteller preserved in verse man's history, culture and heroes. They passed them on through memory and word-of-mouth to each succeeding generation.

Personally, in all of the years I've been a poet, it never ceases to amaze me that individual words can be arranged on a piece of paper and end up touching someone's heart, soul, mind, or memory. Words arranged in such a way so as to lay a soothing hand on the pulse of someone's sorrow and grief. Or words arranged in such a way so as to highlight someone's great joy and happiness.

The writer, critic and columnist H.L. Mencken defined the excitement of it all perfectly. He pointed out that for the person searching painfully for the perfect word, and puts the way of saying a thing above the thing said, there is in writing the constant joy of sudden discovery, "of happy accident," as he put it.

I hold fast to the belief that the words that give us the language of literature and, whether in poetry or prose, convey man's stories of joy, heartache, hope and despair, are one of the leading ways mankind turns knowledge into wisdom. The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightening bug.

The words of prose tell us how to bake a

pie. The words of prose tells us how to wash our long underwear so it doesn't shrink; how to open and reseal the limburger cheese so it stays fresh; how to use odor-eaters in our shoes so we don't alienate our fellow man. The words of poetry, on the other hand, help us appreciate. The words of poetry help us express. The words of poetry help us grieve. They give voice to our feelings and help us preserve our humanity. Prose is knowledge. Poetry is wisdom!

Well compadres, for those of us who don't take ourselves too seriously, there's your bit of balderdash for today, although I do hope it's more than that for most of us. In this day and age, it too often seems you can get more depth out of a damp rag than you can the cultural gene pool.

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 me to 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.

2016 CONVENTION SCHEDULE

(continued from page 1)

Sunday, June 12

7:30 am – 8:15 am	Open Mic
8:30 am – 10:00 am	Plenary Session
10:30 am – 12:30 pm	NFSPS Board Meeting
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Guided Writing Workshop
12:30 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch Buffet
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	NFSPS Contest Results
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Panel: Crafting Poetry
4:00 pm – 4:30 pm	Autograph session
5:30 pm – 6:30 pm	Reception
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm	Seated Dinner
7:30 pm – 8:00 pm	Convention Keynote: Natalie Goldberg
8:00 pm – 9:00 pm	NFSPS Contest Results
9:15 pm – 10:00 pm	Open Mic

Monday, June 13

7:30 am – 8:30 am	Farewell Open Mic
9:00 am – 12:00 pm	NFSPS Strategic Planning
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Arboretum Tour

President's Message continued from page 1

far the majority of those entering choose that option. The chapbooks, elegant productions edited and designed by Kathleen Cotton of the Illinois State Poetry Society, are printed and perfect bound by CreateSpace and available for sale on Amazon. The 2015 chapbooks sold in quantities that we older poets rarely match.

Emphasis on attracting young poets has not kept the board from attending to the Federation's programs for adult poets. Our most visible national competition, offering our most valuable award, is the annual Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition. Recognizing that adult poets, too, are coming to prefer the convenience of online submissions, the new Stevens Competition Chair, Wilda Morris, made entries via Submittable an option this year, and the great majority of manuscripts were submitted this way. Laura Hansen's forthcoming Stevens Award book, *Midnight River*, will be printed by CreateSpace and immediately available on Amazon.

As we work to update our programs, all of us benefit from the willingness of those who first try new approaches to share what they have learned. Shirley Blackwell and Kathy Cotton drew on their experience with the CUP Competition to ease the way for Wilda Morris with the Stevens. The Founder's Award, our largest award for a single poem and one which draws entries from members and non-members all over the country, will become even more attractive if it, too, has the option of online submission. The experience with new online resources gained in the CUP and Stevens competitions, and the generosity of those who pioneered using them, will make the next such transition that much easier.

Besides utilizing publicly available online resources, we have been seeking to develop one of our own—a secure area of the NFSPS website where internal documents can be posted and available to board members and state presidents. Our Webmaster, Billy Pennington, has set up such an area, and board members are now testing its security.

Even with multiplying avenues for online communication, the opportunity for face-to-face interaction at conventions is essential for sustaining the fellowship that is central to the mission of NFSPS. However, the cost of hosting and attending conventions has been increasing. In the past two years, the board has responded to this challenge with several measures that relieve the cost strain on host societies without raising the cap on registration fees.

This year it launched a program of fellowships for convention attendance, funded principally by the Federation's 50% share of profits from past conventions.

At the convention this June, the board will be modifying the NFSPS elements of the program to provide more opportunity for discussing issues and concerns, as well as leaving more time for informal interaction and for presentations and workshops organized by the host society. The contest awards presentation and readings will be streamlined. If the secure area of the website proves out, board members' and state presidents' reports will be posted there before the convention rather than presented at the board meetings and plenary sessions.

This year's convention will be immediately followed by a strategic planning session, which will serve in part to help the new board to set goals for accomplishment over the next biennium. I hope it will also help everyone to envision goals for future terms and possible paths toward them.

A principal challenge for both the immediate and the long-term future is membership. Those of you who heard First Vice-President Jim Barton's report at last year's convention on his work as Membership Chair will remember his spirited resolve to build the Federation from the 31 state societies it then was—and still is—to 51 affiliates representing all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. No one could exceed Jim in his conviction of the value of affiliation with NFSPS or his eloquence in conveying it. Nonetheless, all his efforts to convince unaffiliated state societies to join NFSPS this year, and poets in states without an affiliated society to establish a poetry society and apply for affiliation, have so far yielded only "a few nibbles and a few maybes."

As we seek to sustain and build the Federation, we face strong headwinds. With the increased professionalization of poetry in the United States, an organization like NFSPS may seem less valuable to young poets than a professionally oriented one like the Association of Writers and Writing Programs. With the growing pervasiveness of social media and decentralization of poetry activities, individual poets can readily build their own communities, both local and worldwide, so may feel less need for state and national organizations.

Our state societies and our national federation bring together academically trained poets and self-taught poets, published and unpublished, traditional and experimental, from diverse regions. They strive to bring them together not only online but also in person. They create opportunities, which I have not seen replicated in other poetry organizations, for poets to enlarge their sense of the possibilities for poetry and of its value for life. They are worth preserving, strengthening, and enlarging. I invite all of you reading this to contribute your ideas for doing so, whether by participating in discussions at the plenary sessions and strategic planning session at the convention this June or by writing to me or other current NFSPS board members.

Eleanor Berry ~ 31st NFSPS President



2016 NSFPS Poetry Convention Registration Form

To register, please fill out this form and mail with payment to the address below. Once we have received your payment, we will send you an email to confirm your registration. **Contact us at nfspdconvention@gmail.com or call 651-216-6729. Reserve your room at oakridgeminneapolis.com or call 952-368-3100. Use discount code NSFPS for group rate.**

Name: _____ Telephone: _____
Address: _____ Email: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Circle Registration Type: Full-\$75.00 Single Day: Th Fri Sat Sun -\$45.00 Guest -\$10.00

MEALS
Place a check mark by the meals you would like to purchase for the Convention.

Thursday Meal
LAKESIDE BBQ ___ Buffet **\$42.00**

Friday Meals
LUNCH ___ Buffet **\$35.00**
DINNER ___ Buffet **\$42.00**

Saturday Meals
LUNCH ___ Buffet **\$35.00**
DINNER ___ Buffet **\$42.00**

Sunday Meals
LUNCH ___ Buffet **\$35.00**
DINNER ___ **Banquet Served*** **\$48.00**

***Choose Your Entrée:**

___ Grilled Vegetable Napoleon with Roasted Red Pepper Coulis & Parmesan Crisp

___ Grilled Salmon served with Leek Fondue

___ Chicken Breast stuffed with Wild Rice and Mushrooms, served with Cabernet Sauce

TOURS
Place a check mark by the tours you would like to purchase for the Convention.

___ Tour #1-Thursday: Poetry with Taste **\$65.00**
___ Tour #2-Thursday: Chaska Arboretum **\$20.00**
___ Tour #3-Thursday: Excelsior Brewing **\$15.00**
___ Tour #4-Monday: Chaska Arboretum **\$20.00**

**Register by February 10th, 2016
to receive a FREE Book of Poetry
by a Minnesota Author!**

Complete	Quantity	Total
Total Registration	_____	\$ _____
Total Meals	_____	\$ _____
Total Tours	_____	\$ _____
Total Enclosed:	_____	\$ _____

We are unable to provide refunds for any payments made for the Convention after May 15th, 2016.

Complete the registration form and mail check made out to: LOMP c/o Susan McMillan, Treasurer
6327 Oak Meadow Ln NW
Rochester, MN 55901