



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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October 2020



Julie Cummings
34th NFSPS
President

Dear Poetry Family,

As I write this, so much is still going on in the world; it is still just as crazy as it has been for the past several months. I often wonder if it will ever stop being this way! I know it will get better and settle down, but I often don't remember that I know that. Lately, I have been thinking about the Mary Oliver poem, "Wild Geese". I believe this poem is telling me to unburden myself and get back to what matters—not just what matters as there are so many things, but get back to those that matter the most—to what matters the most to me and for me and what matters the most to you and for you. I

see this particularly in these lines in her poem:

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.

These words of Mary Oliver speak to me in that we can share our despair, and continue with life as we know it, and not be weighed down in despair. Hopefully, in time, the result will be healing ourselves and continuing with a positive attitude about our future. I must remind myself of this! Thankfully, I am always encouraged by, and comforted by, poetry. My state society, Columbine Poets of Colorado, meets online every Saturday using a combination of Slack and Google Meet or Zoom. Our Poets Fest has come and gone, all done virtually and safely with only a small number of glitches. I encourage other societies to do the same as I know a few societies and chapters that have. I would love for you to share with me, individually or as a society, what you have done to keep poetry alive and well!

I want to again mention ways to stay safe, specifically in our ever-evolving digital world. With COVID-19 I am hoping we all are doing the right things to ensure our health and the health of those around us. The digital world which has gained so much more attention as of late also poses some great threats. For those of you who do not know, the way I make a living is that I am an Instructional Technology Coordinator in a middle school in Colorado. As such, I manage user accounts, program computers, teach people how to use technology, and a host of other duties associated with our digital world. One of the more noticeable uses of technology, by some very bad people, is when you get an email that seemingly comes from me and the email is requesting you to buy something (other than a publication from NFSPS), send gift cards, send money (other than for contest sponsorship); I want you to know this email it is NOT from me. I will never ask you to send me money or anything other than what is required for NFSPS. Technological advances enables these bad people, whose fraud we refer to as "phishing," to place my name and email address in the "from" line in the email header to make you think the correspondence is coming from me. They have not hacked my email—they are just using my name to make you think it is coming from me. If you look at the actual 'address' behind the from 'email address', it will reveal that the message was sent from some other email account, not mine (see page 2 for my listed email address). This is where these phishers have advanced in their criminal scheme by appearing to be me. If an email is stressing a sense of urgency to send money or gift cards, has grammatical errors, or is not signed with my tag line, then it is most definitely not from me. Please be cautious and do not respond to these types of emails. Do not even respond to these as they will see that you are a 'real person' and they may continue to get you to participate in other schemes. *(continued on page 8)*

2021 NFSPS ANNUAL POETRY CONTESTS

For contest rules and how to submit, refer to the Annual Poetry Contests page: nfspd.com/poetry_contests.htm.

1. NFSPS FOUNDERS AWARD (to honor Mary B. Wall)

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 100 line limit.

Sponsored by NFSPS, Inc.

1st Prize: \$1,000. 2nd Prize: \$500. 3rd Prize: \$250.

Entry fee – members and non-members: \$5 per poem.

Limit: 4 poems per contestant.

2. THE NFSPS BOARD AWARD

Subject: Piece(s) Form: Any.

Sponsored by the NFSPS Executive and Appointive boards.

1st Prize: \$225. 2nd Prize: \$75. 3rd Prize: \$50.

3. THE MARGO AWARD

In memory of Margo LaGattuta who encouraged poetry in everyone she met. Subject: Wolves. Form: Any.

50 line limit. Sponsored by her friends.

1st Prize: \$200. 2nd Prize: \$100. 3rd Prize: \$50.

*4. DONALD STODGHILL MEMORIAL AWARD

(*Members Only)

To honor the memory of Don Stodghill, who served as President of the Poetry Society of Texas and Legal Advisor of NFSPS. Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit.

Sponsored by Pat Stodghill.

1st Prize: \$200. 2nd Prize: \$100. 3rd Prize: \$50.

*5 GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

(*Members Only)

Subject: Life in the Future, beyond Earth or on it.

Form: Any Rhyming Form, slant acceptable, no nonce forms, identify form on entry. 40 line limit.

Sponsored by the Georgia Poetry Society.

1st Prize: \$150. 2nd Prize: \$75. 3rd Prize: \$25.

6. WINNERS' CIRCLE AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 80 line limit. Sponsored by previous prize winners in Contest 1, NFSPS Founders Award: Diane Glancy, Harriet Stovall Kelley, Pat Stodghill, Pat Underwood.

1st Prize: \$150. 2nd Prize: \$70. 3rd Prize: \$40.

7. STONE GATHERING AWARD

Subject: The Natural World. Form: Prose. 40 line limit.

Sponsored by Danielle Dufy Literary/French Press Editions. Winning poems considered for publication in the print quarterly, *Stone Gathering: A Reader*.

1st Prize: \$125. 2nd Prize: \$75. 3rd Prize: \$50.

*8. POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS AWARD

(*Members Only)

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Texas.

1st Prize: \$125. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.

(continued on page 3)

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

Organized October 17, 1959 ~ Mary B. Wall, Founder
Honorary Chancellor: David J. Rothman

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Elected, NFSPS Online Voting, July 2020

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Patti Koch, President ~ 5101 N.W. 20th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73127-2312 ~ pattikoch0@gmail.com

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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 email, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

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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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NFSPS 2021 ANNUAL POETRY CONTESTS (continued from page 1)

9. ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: When the Door Opens. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Arizona State Poetry Society (ASPS).
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.

10. JIM BARTON, BARD OF THE PINES AWARD

In memory of James Nathan Barton, Past President of NFSPS and cheerleader to all writers, who saw wonder and poetry everywhere in nature.
Subject: In the Pines Form: Any.
Sponsored by the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines.
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$60. 3rd Prize: \$40.

***11. AL LASTER MEMORIAL AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: An Ekphrastic Poem—written in response to viewing a painting, photograph, sculpture, drawing, or other piece of visual art. Form: Any. 50 line limit.
Sponsored by Diana Gagne.
1st Prize: \$100. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$50.

***12. JIM BARTON MEMORIAL AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit.
Sponsored by Poets Roundtable of Arkansas.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.

***13. ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD (*Members Only)**

In honor of John Chambers, Riley Kelly, Helen Norris, and all the other ASPS poets we have lost. Subject: Tell Me Something Beautiful. Form: Any. 50 line limit.
Sponsored by the Alabama State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.

14. LAND OF ENCHANTMENT AWARD

To honor the memory of Susan Paquet. Subject: A Poem Related to "Borders," real or imagined. Form: Any. 40 line limit.
Sponsored by New Mexico State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.

15. POET'S WORK AWARD

Subject: Life as Other. Form: Persona Poem. Sponsored by Paul Ford & Marie Andrews.
1st Prize: \$75. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$25.

16. POWER OF WOMEN AWARD

Subject: The Power of Women. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by Sue Chambers and Christina Flaughter.
1st Prize: \$70. 2nd Prize: \$50. 3rd Prize: \$20.

17. THE VIRGINIA CORRIE-COZART MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Mutability. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Honoring the author of *A Mutable Place* and *Wavering Reflection*.
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.

***18. MILDRED VORPAHL BAASS REMEMBRANCE AWARD (*Members Only)**

In loving remembrance of Mildred Vorpahl Baass, who served two terms as Poet Laureate of Texas, 1993-1994 and 1994-1995. Subject: Domestic Cats—their endearing habits, intelligence, loyalty, beauty, etc. (no reference to cruelty or abuse). Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by her daughter, Nancy Baass.
1st Prize: \$60, 2nd Prize: \$40, 3rd Prize: \$20.

19. LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA POETS AWARD

In memory of John Rezmerski. Subject: Any. Form: Free Verse. 45 line limit. Sponsored by the League of Minnesota Poets.
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.

20. JESSICA C. SAUNDERS MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Villanelle. 19 line limit. Sponsored by the Shavano Poets Society of Colorado.
1st Prize: \$60. 2nd Prize: \$40. 3rd Prize: \$20.

21. POETRY SOCIETY OF INDIANA AWARD

Subject: A Daily Ritual. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Indiana.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

22. NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: 2020, A Year to Forget? Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Nevada Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

23. WILLIAM STAFFORD MEMORIAL AWARD

In memory of William Stafford, Oregon's late Poet Laureate and twice Honorary Chancellor of NFSPS. Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Oregon Poetry Association and Friends of William Stafford.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

24. THE NEW YORK POETRY FORUM AWARD

Subject: The Art of Poetry. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the New York Poetry Forum.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

***25. COLUMBINE POETS OF COLORADO AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: 2020 In Review. Form: Any. 30 line limit. Sponsored by the Columbine Poets of Colorado.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

26. MORTON D. PROUTY & ELSIE S. PROUTY MEMORIAL AWARD

In memory of Morton D. Prouty Jr., who served as NFSPS Treasurer and Poet Laureate of Alabama and Elsie S. Prouty.

Subject: A Nature Poem. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by daughters, Catherine P. Horn and Carol P. Ostberg and their families.

1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

27. LOUISIANA STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Louisiana State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

***28. NAOMI STROUD SIMMONS AWARD (*Members Only)**

In memory of Naomi Stroud Simmons. Subject: Any. Form: Any. 28 line limit. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Texas.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

29. UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: Heritage. Form: Any. 50 line limit. Sponsored by the Utah State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

30. CSPS JAMES E. MACWHINNEY MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Blank Verse—iambic Pentameter. 50 line limit. Sponsored by the California State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

31. ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: Books. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Illinois State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

32. THE ROBBIE AWARD

Subject: Loss of a Child. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by Joyce Wilson.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$30. 3rd Prize: \$20.

33. OHIO AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Ohio Poetry Association.
1st Prize: \$50. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

34. FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION, INC. AWARD

Subject: A Celebration of Florida History or Culture—or any other Florida topic, historic or contemporary. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Florida State Poets Association, Inc.
1st Prize: \$35. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

35. POETRY SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Free Verse. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Michigan.
1st Prize: \$35. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

36. MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Sonnet (indicate sonnet pattern on entry). Sponsored by the Mississippi Poetry Society, Inc.
1st Prize: \$35. 2nd Prize: \$25. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***37. JESSE STUART MEMORIAL AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Kentucky State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

38. MISSOURI STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: The Show Me State. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Missouri State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

39. BARBARA STEVENS MEMORIAL AWARD

Subject: Any Serious Theme. Form: Any. 12 line limit. Sponsored by the South Dakota State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***40. ALICE MAKENZIE SWAIM MEMORIAL AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Traditional Sonnet (indicate sonnet pattern on entry). Sponsored by the Pennsylvania Poetry Society, Inc.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***41. POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: Any Form: Pantoum –16 line limit. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Oklahoma.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

42. SAVE OUR EARTH AWARD

In memory of David F. Balph. Subject: Environmental Issues. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by Martha H. Balph.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

43. MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Massachusetts State Poetry Society.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***44. POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE AWARD (*Members Only)**

In memory of Jeanine Mah. Subject: Music-any type (classical, popular, country, etc.). Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Poetry Society of Tennessee.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

45. IOWA POETRY ASSOCIATION AWARD

Subject: Poetry for Children. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Iowa Poetry Association.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

46. WYOPOETS AWARD

Subject: Wyoming or the West. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the WyoPoets of Wyoming.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***47. SAN ANTONIO POETS ASSOCIATION AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: Homemade with Love. Form: Any, no Haiku or Prose. 32 line limit. Sponsored by the San Antonio Poets Association, a chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas for 40 years.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

48. MAINE POETS SOCIETY AWARD

Subject: The Sea or Seacoast. Form: Any. 40 line limit. Sponsored by the Maine Poets Society, fostering poetry since 1936.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***49. MIRIAM S. STRAUSS MEMORIAL AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: A Burma Shave poem. Form: comic rhymed poem suitable for a series of road signs. 5-6 line limit. Sponsored by Russell H. Strauss.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

***50. THE POETS NORTHWEST AWARD (*Members Only)**

Subject: Any. Form: Any. 36 line limit. Sponsored by Poets Northwest, a chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas, celebrating 32 years of encouraging and inspiring poets in their craft.
1st Prize: \$25. 2nd Prize: \$20. 3rd Prize: \$15.

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS**ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY:**

To connect us with our members and remind them that we are part of a larger poetry community, our branches have gotten creative with three of them meeting monthly via Zoom. As it looks like our world has been upended for the time being, this will probably continue for several more months. Our board has been holding Zoom meetings as well since April. In our last meeting we decided to hold quarterly Zoom poetry readings to promote connection across the state and across the nation as some of our more remote members are not in Arizona right now. We are considering a cross-state Zoom poetry reading sometime this fall to promote our connection with other state poetry societies. We have also decided to invite youths 13 to 18 years old to join the society with special annual dues of \$5.00. January 2021 promises to be a busy month as we are planning a Zoom conference. What a great way to support one another! Hopefully, I will see some of you on Zoom.
~ Christy White, President

POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS' original Poetry Day in Arkansas has been canceled. A team is now working on an

alternative plan involving videos strung together of our speaker, Sandy Longhorn, PRA business, annual Merit Award, and the top three contest winner announcements. Longhorn received the Porter Fund Literary Prize for Arkansas authors and the Collins Prize from the *Birmingham Poetry Review*. She is the author of three books of poetry: *The Alchemy of My Mortal Form*, *The Girlhood Book of Prairie Myths*, and *Blood Almanac*. Her poems have appeared in *The Cincinnati Review*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *North American Review*, *Oxford American*, and elsewhere. Longhorn teaches in the Arkansas Writer's MFA program at the University of Central Arkansas, where she directs the C.D. Wright Women Writers Conference. State Poet Laureate Jo McDougall sponsored a live Youth Poetry Day in April with the help of the Hot Springs group, Wednesday Night Poetry. Youth from all over the state submitted videos which were strung together. McDougall even had the governor sign a special proclamation for the event and day. Member Stacy Pendergrast was a critical help in the event. PRA recently lost two long time members: Marcia Camp and Helene Stallcup. ~ *Laura Bridges, Reporter*

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY:

Poetry is alive and well in our state. Many Connecticut chapters have continued meeting online or in other ways that make use of technology. *Connecticut River Review*, a national poetry journal sponsored by the Connecticut Poetry Society, was published in August and is available through our website or through amazon.com. Our state poet laureate, Margaret Gibson, is coordinating submissions from Connecticut poets only for an anthology of poetry related to environmental issues. Winners of the Connecticut Poetry Award have been announced. The award winners are James Miller (1st prize), Meredith Bergmann (2nd prize), and Charles Chase (3rd prize). Submissions are accepted through September 30 for the Connecticut River Review Poetry Contest. Each of these contests offers a top prize of \$400. See ctpoetry.net for guidelines. ~ *Ginny Connors, Reporter*

GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY

is celebrating our contest winners: 2019 Byron Herbert Reece Poetry Competition winner Greg Emilio for his poem, "For Everything in Paradise" (judged by Jericho Brown, director of the Creative Writing Program at Emory University in Atlanta); 2019 Charles Dickson Chapbook Competition winner James Green for his chapbook, *Long Journey Home* (judged by Barry Marks, 1999 Alabama Poet of the Year); 2019

Member Excellence Competition winner Kimberly Wright for her poem, "Elvis Never Left My Mother's Bathroom". Second prize went to Lou Jones for his poem, "Once upon a Time in Georgia", and third prize was awarded to Ann Willis for her poem, "North Georgia" (judged by Dan Veach, Editor Emeritus of the *Atlanta Review*). GPS president Steven Shields announced the publication of *The Reach of Song 2020* as well as the Charles Dickson Chapbook 2020, *Long Journey Home*, by James Green. We mourn the passing of GPS Past President Dr. Ira E. Harrison. The University of Illinois Press on May 6, 2020, featured in its blog an enlightening excerpt from Alisha R. Winn's chapter entitled "Ira E. Harrison: Activist, Scholar, and Visionary Pioneer" in *The Second Generation of African American Pioneers in Anthropology*. See more info at:

press.uillinois.edu/wordpress/remembering-ira-e-harrison/

~ Duanne Kaiser, Reporting

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY:

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, ISPS has adapted to the challenges and positives that Zoom meetings offer. The number of poets who can easily and safely join chapter meetings has soared. With so many more it is a little difficult to give everyone adequate time for detailed critiques. However, the efforts far outweigh the lack of having virtual gatherings. The board meetings have had great success getting a quorum with members from all over the state "attending" and participating in lively discussions. Our annual poetry contest has a submission period of September 1 to October 31, 2020. Details can be found on illinoispoets.org. In the past we have had as many as thirty states and Canada represented with some fine poetry. The ISPS biennial anthology *Distilled Lives Volume 5* is close to completion and will be available in the early fall. Illinois State Poetry Society sends greetings and good wishes to all the members of NFSPS. ~ Susan T. Moss, President

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY:

With the COVID-19 situation and closing of library meeting places, all our meetings have been canceled, however we continue to hold our contests. Our National Poetry Day Contest presented 24 contests of various subjects and forms. Other annual contests coming up are Poets Choice Contest, deadline Nov. 1st and Arthur (Skip) Potter Memorial Contest, deadline Dec. 15th. First prize for both is \$50. Contact: Roberta Hung, Contest Chairman, roberte02@yahoo.com. We continue to have a round robin for critiquing each other's

poems by mail. Hopefully, our end-of-year meeting will be able to be held Dec. 5th; it will include a workshop, lunch, and Yankee Swap with poetry attached. ~ Beverley Barnes, Reporting

MAINE POETS SOCIETY met on Zoom on Saturday, September 19th, from 10 am to noon. Results of the members-only contest, "What America Means Now," were offered by contest judge Adrian Blevins, professor of English at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. She is the author of several full-length poetry collections. After sharing the contest results, she had an opportunity to share selections of her own work. On the following Saturday, September 26, from 2 to 4 pm, a workshop entitled "The Secret Lives of Words: Etymology in Poetry" was presented on Zoom to interested members by Linda Aldrich. Linda received an MFA in poetry from Vermont College and teaches English at Southern Maine Community College. She has published two collections of poetry, was awarded the Emily Dickinson Award for Poetry from Universities West Press and was inaugurated Poet Laureate of Portland, Maine in June 2018. ~ Sally Joy, Reporter

POETRY SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

cancelled its spring meeting like most organizations. As it became clear that things would not be returning to normal soon, I thought about what I could do to connect us as an organization through this. I decided to post a writing prompt each day on our Facebook page (and then our web page) to at least try and keep us writing and feeling like a community of writers. We do not put response poems on the Facebook page, but there is a space on our site. Additionally, in April our newsletter editor, Phillip Sterling, put out the best-ever newsletter, which contained pandemic poems as well as the usual news and updates. Our spring issue of *Peninsula Poets* was delayed when the printer closed, but they have now been distributed. We will not be hosting an October in-person meeting, but something will happen. Count on it. ~ Elizabeth Kerlikowske, President

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY

has been holding meetings on Zoom, thanks to the efforts of Patty Butkovich, our Executive Committee Chair. She has been meeting with the branches and is planning a society-wide meeting on Zoom for September. MPS will host its annual poetry contest, open to all poets; plans will begin soon. Details will be posted on misspoetry.net in November. MPS is proud to announce some members who have published books recently and a few who are awaiting publication: Barbara

Blanks, with both *Out of My Mind: Flights of Truth and Fiction* (on Amazon) and *Resisting the Ground*, winner of the Alabama State Poetry Society 2020 Book of the Year Award (also available on Amazon); Robert Harkins, *Autumn Leaves and Other Poems*, to be published by Doctors Dreams Publishing, Biloxi, MS; Tracy Miller and Michael Shelton; *Cracks in the Mississippi Mud*, to be published by Burkhart Books, Texas; and Mary Beth Magee, *Devotions from the Road of Life: When the Road Gets Rough* (on Amazon). ~ Janice Canerdy, Secretary

OHIO POETRY ASSOCIATION

adapted to the pandemic with several virtual events since April. We hosted our annual picnic and fundraiser on Facebook and eBay, with readings by some of our members, a watch party, trivia, and creation of a communal "potluck" poem by the attendees. The picnic is our annual fundraiser, so we used eBay to auction off several items. We also raised money for the writers group at Richland Correctional. When it is socially distancing safe, we will again hold workshops with the group. We have established a monthly (fourth Monday) open-mic series using Zoom. OPA members who sign up in advance may read and non-members may attend as audience members. In October we will host two virtual events. The first will be to host Ohio Poetry Day on Zoom. The afternoon will feature Ohio Poet of the Year and our newest state poet laureate, Kari Gunter-Seymour, as well as contest winners. At our second virtual event on Oct. 10 we will welcome Ohioana Book Award winner Marcus Jackson, who will lead a virtual workshop. Both events are free and open to the public. We have published a new anthology, *Eclipsing the Dark*, which includes work by poets who were featured at our festivals. Visit our web site for details. ~ Chuck Salmons, President

Editor's Note: you can easily find an NFSPS state society's website by simply going to nfsp.com and clicking on the State Links tab which leads to: nfsp.com/states.html.

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA

will be celebrating National Poetry Day on October 10th at our annual business meeting. National Poetry Day is a celebration of poetry that takes place on the first of October. The theme this year is Vision. We will be discussing and sharing poems about Vision. It is a busy time as we celebrate, present awards, read winning poems from our National Poetry Day contests and give out door prizes—all celebrating poetry's power to bring people together. An In-House Workshop is also

scheduled on this day—something we all enjoy and look forward to participating in and learning from. Our PSO Poetry Day meeting also involves a delicious noontime luncheon. PSO's July Workshop was cancelled due to COVID-19. Winners of the Workshop contests were notified and were mailed their awards. Mark your calendars for December 15th, the deadline date to enter PSO's annual spring contest (March 2021). It will be here before you know it! We encourage you to check our website angelfire.com/poetry/ps/ and our Facebook page for current PSO information. We welcome all to "Come and grow with PSO." ~ *Patti Koch, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE would like to thank everyone who entered our Festival Contest, which closed on August 10th. Winners will be announced at our Virtual Festival on October 24th and will be posted on our website (poetrytennessee.org). John Mannone will be our 64th Annual Festival's workshop leader, and his theme will be the intersection of poetry and science. For more information about our Festival, please contact Lori Goetz poetrytennessee@gmail.com. PST chapters report ongoing success with virtual meetings and poetry readings—we have enjoyed connecting/re-connecting with members living in different areas, and we've shared some lovely poetry. Stay safe! Write poetry! ~ *Lori Goetz, President*

PENNSYLVANIA POETRY SOCIETY'S 2020 Fall Conference and Luncheon that was set for October 17, 2020, has been cancelled. Instead, a Video Conference will take its place, which will include a reading of winning poems from the 2020 Poetry Contest. The election of officers and trustees will take place via email as well as USPS mail. Then the results of the election will be announced on the 17th of October. As usual, the Annual Poetry Contest for 2021 will be announced via our newsletter and website as well as printed brochures. PPS Membership renewals will commence in September through the Fall season. ~ *Emiliano Martín, President*

UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S Ben Lomond chapter met several times outdoors following CDC guidelines; poems were read and critiques offered. Rhyme and Reason chapter conducted email poetry readings and critiquing. Red Rock Writers chapter members submitted works to the Museum of Fine Arts at Dixie State University as part of their COVID-19 art display. Plans are being made for their annual creative writing seminar in St. George, on March 6, 2021. Willow Winds

chapter met via Zoom meetings. Five members shared their poetry at the 14th Annual Amazing Earthfest's Invocation to Sustainability on July 18. They will continue Zoom meetings. Dixie Poets Chapter hasn't been meeting regularly but are sharing poems with each other. Member Reuben Wadsworth held his annual Creative Writing and Poetry contest with the local Washington County school district. Dixie Poets chapter is planning their 2021 Poetry in the Park in Zion National Park on March 5th. PIP and the follow-on creative writing seminar draw poets from across the region to enjoy two days of poetry. The Hinterland online chapter continues to meet electronically. UTSPS poets fared well in this year's NFSPS annual poetry contest with over 50 awards and recognitions. ~ *Steven Leitch, President*

WYOPOETS: The end of summer has been busy for WyoPoets. Going into fall we are preparing for some wonderful changes of our own. WyoPoets held a diversity discussion to determine any needs that are not being met within the organization; also to discuss and consider how to encourage diverse voices within the group, how to grow and diversify the membership and create a scholarship to assist in attracting underrepresented voices and new members. Our Annual Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest for 2021 opens October 1st and closes December 31, 2020. It is open to all poets. Poems must be original and unpublished at the time of submission. Rules and entry details for the contest will be available at wyopoets.org/shea-contest.html. Best of Luck. ~ *Angel Mizner, Reporter*

ADDITIONAL POETRY CONTESTS

NFSPS 2021 BLACKBERRYPEACH PRIZES FOR POETRY: SPOKEN & HEARD

Awards: 1st Prize \$1,000, 2nd Prize \$500, and 3rd Prize \$250. This competition blends "stage" and "page" poetry, equal weight will be given to performance and poetics. A submission consists of four poems, each with a separate audio file, and a transcript of the four poems in a single electronic document. Submissions will be accepted between January 1st and March 15th, 2021, using Submittable.com. For the complete set of guidelines on how to submit, see: nfsp.com/BBP3Guidelines.html

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY ISPS' annual contest is now accepting entries. Details are on illinoispoets.org. Deadline for submissions is October 31, 2020. If you have any questions, contact Jim Lambert at jim@jimlambert.net or you can mail him a note at: 300 Twin Lakes Rd.,

Carterville, IL 62918. This contest has 13 categories including one for Cinquain poems.

MONTHLY POETRY CONTEST

Wilda Morris, former president of the Illinois State Poetry Society, posts a contest for other poets each month on her blog. New contests are posted on the first of the month; deadline is the 15th of the month. No charge to enter. Previously published poems are okay, but not simultaneous submissions. Winning poems are published. View the guidelines at: wildamorris.blogspot.com.

POETRY ARTICLES & NEWS

WARMING UP: SETTING A PLAYFUL TONE FOR KIDS' POETRY WORKSHOPS

By Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer, NFSPS Youth Chair

Kids love to play. Let's capitalize on that in how we bring poetry into the classroom—a fun warmup exercise can lead to a more open, more creative, more imaginative atmosphere for the rest of the writing session. Here are two of my favorite ways to achieve this, each should take about five minutes.

Play Two Realsies and a Whopper: Have the students write two true things about themselves on a sheet of paper, and then a lie. Put them in pairs and have them share with another student. The partner must guess which is a lie. Sometimes it helps to have you model this with the teacher first. At the end, ask a few kids to share some of the best whoppers.

This simple game is a good starter for a poetry play session because 1) it tends to be funny and can relax people, especially those nervous about poetry, and 2) it's a little bit like writing a poem—something true, something imaginary.

Do a Poetry Mad-Lib: I got this idea from Kathryn Bass decades ago, and it works like a dream with students of all ages! Take a relatively short poem, for instance "Stone" by Charles Simic. I sometimes use the poem that we will be discussing later in the class. BEFORE the class, choose about 20 words for the students to fill in. I've noticed it can work best if you guide their answers toward specificity—for instance, instead of saying "animal" you say "sea animal." Once you've read the mad lib, you can talk about specificity can bring more energy to the poem.

Sometimes it helps to give them a line and have them fill in the blank. Give the prompt and give students a minute or two to write a few lines down on their own pages, then you write them all on the board to create an impromptu poem. Lots of room here for

teaching, too—like about how to vary a line, how to break a pattern, how specificity and generality can tug against each other.

If you have ideas you would like to share with other people in our organization about any aspect of successful youth programs, please write to me and I will share it in the next newsletter! rosemerryt@gmail.com

IT'S MORE THAN A READING

By Ron Weber, Poetry Society of Michigan

A poetry reading is more than a poetry reading. I'm not certain why, but more often than not there's an expectation that writers and poets should be able to perform on stage, or at least in front of people. I can recall the old joke that, if the poet is outnumbered by the audience, then it's a successful reading. Not so in this audio-visual age we live in where the written word is orphaned by any number of devices.

Having poked around this universe of verse for a number of decades, I thought I'd offer some tips I learned along the way. These will probably be more relevant the less experience you've had. Performing live fits for musicians, singers, comedians and actors; but authors? I've engaged many poets and audience members on this subject over the years and there is an element of "performance" with a poetry reading.

People do look forward to the presentation beyond a recital of words and stanzas that make up some poems. Lovers of poetry do want to be compelled to listen to the poems, to share the drama or excitement of the message, to feel the verse and not just hear it. Poetry started out as, and in many respects remains, a spoken word art form. As I remind people in my own presentations, poetry was 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. Through word of mouth the poet, the minstrel, the storyteller preserved in verse man's history, culture and heroes. Only you can present your poetry in the dynamic context which led to its creation to begin with. Honor that.

Here's the deal, being able to present before a crowd is great for promoting your poetry, your book, yourself, and poetry in general. If you learn to do it and do it well, you're going to get people excited about you as a person and you as a poet. So, on to the tips.

Stage fright: Keep in mind that this is temporary. It's less of an issue with practice and experience. If you're in a venue where there are other authors involved, ask to go first. The longer you sit and worry, the worse you're going to feel. You can then relax and even learn from the others.

Honor and respect the adrenalin. It's what fuels your energy so use it to channel your performance. It's a natural occurrence. A wise old poet told me many years ago that it's okay to have butterflies in your stomach at the outset. The key is to get them to fly in formation and then ride their current to a good performance.

Don't try to be something you're not. Especially as you begin to give readings. Be honest, be genuine, and be sincere. Most people respond to honesty. If you're nervous on stage, that's okay. People will respect you for stepping outside of your comfort zone and taking the chance.

Select comfortable material. Be sure the poems fit the theme of the reading, if there happens to be one. Otherwise, choose poems you like, can do well and are very comfortable with in terms of your eyes making contact with the audience and knowing exactly where you left off when your eyes return to the page.

Practice. Rehearse. This is how you grow that stable of poems you are comfortable with and know you can do well.

Pause marks. I still use these myself. Put a readily visible slash mark where you want to be sure to pause. It beats trying to find a tiny comma and you can be more certain the reading is going to match your own breathing pattern.

You don't need a humorous anecdote. If you have one that relates to poetry, writing, or your own experiences, fine. But you're not a comedian, you're a poet. However, there is always a human interest side to a reading so feel free to share with the audience what brought you to poetry, who your favorite poets are, what poem first grabbed you by the lapels and still hasn't let go, etc. The audience is going to be informal about just who you are. I like an informal exchange throughout my readings. Communicating with our audience is the only way a poet has of doing R & D. You know, research and development.

One last thing. Don't be afraid to say no if reading before an audience just isn't for you. It's paramount that you are comfortable in your own skin. That will assure that you are conveying your poetry in the best way possible, no matter what that might be.

WHY BOTHER WRITING POETRY...OR ANYTHING, FOR THAT MATTER!

By Inge Logenburg Kyler, Poetry Society of Michigan Historian

Someone asked me, "you mean you are still writing that stuff?" His question startled me as I should have replied "you mean you still spend time fishing?" But I didn't think quick enough.

Like a lot of you, I also write other "stuff" including the *Brigitta, Little Girl in the Allegheny Mountains: Growing Up in the 1940's* which is basically my life. In *Brigitta* I mention writing my first poem at the age of ten. So, yes, I have been writing for a long long time. I am now working on *Brigitta, Book two*, as *Brigitta (me!)* goes to Junior High School and beyond. In that book I will be including some of the many poems I wrote while "growing up."

The many books I have written are all self-published except for the history of Delhi Charter Township which I was asked to do by Arcade Publishing. I am not good at promoting myself, although a lot of it is available on Amazon.

And yet, I know there are people out there who appreciate some of the things I publish, and that alone makes me happy. Even though sometimes it feels like an act of futility, I still think there is a place for, yes, everyone's poetry. Just like the forest is full of trees, there are no two trees absolutely alike. And that's why we write.

Writing that "stuff" is something I can't quit doing any more than I could quit planting a garden every spring, or painting a watercolor of the wildflower bouquet that my husband just brought in from down in the field. Writing poetry, especially, is a part of who I am. I can't change that.

Through the years my poems seem to have circumvented the world in this or that article or brochure. No, I haven't gotten rich. Nor am I famous. But I have received great pleasure in knowing that someone out there enjoys my work, or feels uplifted or encouraged by something I just wrote. I still enter contests and submit work here and there. I enjoy competing with the younger poets!

There are places out there for poetry today if we are patient and willing to put forth some effort. A poem that I wrote lately about the recent virus turmoil has been published in a number of newsletters, etc., not because I sent them there but because I shared it with several people who include them in other mailings and newsletters. A poem is like a snowball. It can go far, if we take the effort to roll it. That's what poetry is all about: sharing our own thoughts which in turn, might help someone else with their own.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

Please know, I only send official business, include "NFSPS" in the subject, and if you do hit respond, look at the email address that is in your "To:" line. These types of scammers are very sneaky. They obtain our names and email addresses from our website by using trolling technology from high-powered computers and continue until they get a 'hit'—a valid email from which they can pretend to be me. We must be diligent. It is better to be safe than sorry. If you need to know if I actually sent something, look for visual clues.

1. I always sign emails to members with my tag line that is at the bottom of this article.
2. I always address the email in the same manner this is addressed.
3. I never ask for money or gift cards.
4. I write in complete sentences and use proper grammar and punctuation.

Please stay safe online. If it is an important email I sent, I'll send it again if I don't hear from you and most likely to another officer or officers in your state society. Deleting the 'phishing' email is also important and never, ever click on any of the links they send you—as they may be attempting to gain access into your computer to hide and do some terrible digital things to you. What a world we have evolved into!

Now, back to poetry!

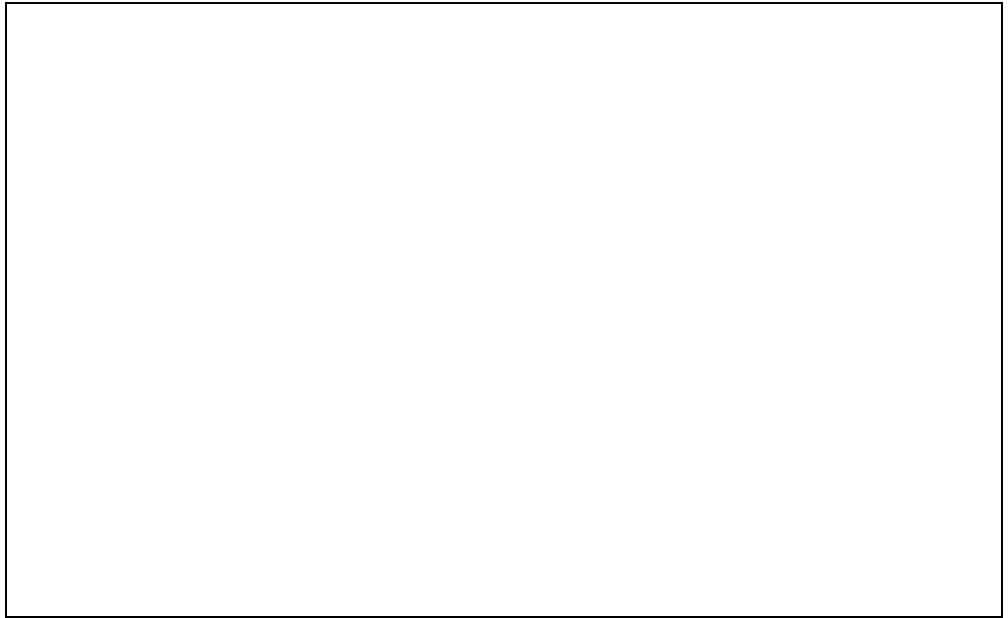
The NFSPS contests are gearing up! The Stevens Manuscript contest is in full swing as is the College Undergraduate Poetry (CUP) contest. Enter your Stevens manuscript before December 31st at NFSPS.submittable.com and if you are a college student or know someone who is, enter the CUP. In January, the annual 50 contests and the BlackBerry Peach will be live. The contest descriptions are listed in this issue and on nfsp.com. Your societies should be sending you the brochure if you receive paper copies of *Strophes*. I have extras if you send me a SASE. My address is in *Strophes*. I encourage you all to enter.

I also want to take the time to thank individual and state contest sponsors. The gathering of information and checks (written to NFSPS!) for the brochure is a huge undertaking and quick response is always appreciated. So, THANK YOU! We could not do this without these sponsors.

Does your society need help on figuring out what to do virtually to keep members in the poetry loop? Do you want to understand how technology can help you (not just hurt you as mentioned above)? Let me know. I'll try to help.

Your sister in words,

Julie Cummings, 34th NFSPS President



SHARING POETRY IN A VIDEOCONFERENCE

By Paul Ford, NFSPS 1st VP, *Strophes* Editor

As you may have read in the above Utah State Poetry Society news report by President Steven Leitch, we have started sharing poetry among our society members by way of Zoom meetings. We have not used Zoom for explicit critique sessions but simply open mic poetry readings. I thought we could use *Strophes* to share what has worked well and things that didn't in video sessions across our 30+ state societies. Below is a set of suggestions sent out to our UTSPS Valley Winds chapter members on how to better prepare for and participate in a Zoom session. Primarily these suggestions are for members who have little or no prior experience with Zoom (or other video apps such as Google Meet, Skype, and WebEx). I would like to hear from other NFSPS members on tips for using virtual technologies to share poetry, as well as host poetry events online such as an annual poetry festival or presenting winning poems in a poetry contest.

Here are the suggestions on how to prepare and participate in a scheduled Zoom meeting as sent with the invite to our Valley Winds members:

To fully participate in our scheduled Zoom meeting, you will need:

- 1) A connection to the Internet (or a phone if you are only going to call in to our session)
- 2) A computer/tablet/smartphone with a working camera, mic, and speakers (or a headphone with a mic and earphones plugged into your desktop computer)
- 3) The Zoom app installed on your computer, tablet or smartphone (although Zoom can be used with just a web browser, often it difficult to get the Zoom browser app to access the device's camera, mic, and speakers)

4) Optionally, a Zoom account, which is free to set up (having an account enables you to schedule your own Zoom sessions, limited to 40 minutes with the free version)

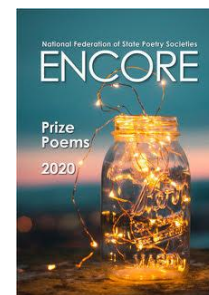
5) Use the zoom.us link in this invite to connect to our session. With the installed Zoom app, you will see a pop-up message asking to use your Zoom app, which you want to do.

During the session, PLEASE keep your mic muted when you are not the open mic presenter. This will prevent all sorts of stray noises from distracting while the presenter is reading a poem. When you are introduced as the next presenter, unmute your mic, introduce yourself, and read your poem. Once you are finished, please again mute your mic.

Tips to improve how your video (of your face) looks to others:

- * Position the device so it is stationary (not held in your hand)
- * Position the camera so it displays your face (not too much of a close up!)
- * Position the camera so there is no bright light directly behind you (such as sunlight through a window)
- * If you can, place a light on the other side of the camera so that it shines on your face

ENCORE 2020



The anthology of our top 159 prize-winning poems from NFSPS 2020 contests is on Amazon for \$13. The 2019 edition that would have been distributed at this year's convention is also available. All royalties support NFSPS. ~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor