

# SPARE MULE



Missouri State Poetry Society Newsletter  
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<http://www.nfsps.com/> Click *Strophes* online.



## Message from the MSPS Vice President

What Membership Means

Michelle Foster, MSPS Vice President

I often reflect on the reasons I choose to be a member of the Howell County Bards, especially when a meeting is coming up and I'm scrambling to remember and complete duties I committed myself to do. Then there is the poetry and the guilt if I haven't written anything since the last meeting or the intensity of reviewing and revising what I have written and plan to share with the other members. In the end though, getting ready for and attending a meeting can be compared to having a baby. It can be a real pain to get organized and go, but afterward what a great reward! When I asked a fellow Bard, Elizabeth Hykes, what being a member of our poetry chapter meant to her, she responded "Membership in the Howell County Bards keeps me reading, thinking and sometimes even writing poetry as other members encourage me. Attending meetings keeps me in touch with creative people I would not otherwise know. It also gives me people to pass books to when I am done with them. It keeps me in touch with other activities in the arts and gets me out of the rut of my daily routine." For myself, in the many years that I have been coming to meetings, I have been able to clearly see growth in my knowledge of poetry and growth in my personal writing as well. At our meetings we all have the opportunity to share poems from other writers. Through this activity, I have been introduced to writers that I might never have been exposed to otherwise. We also may choose to bring poetry for "gentle critique." This has been the most valuable asset for me as a poet. It not only keeps me humble knowing that there is always room for improvement, but it keeps me challenged to write better poetry. Elverda Oellig, another Bard related that being a Bard "Reminds me to write poetry. I like listening to other members' poetry. I enjoy being around my friends in the group." Having friends who are poets makes it possible for us to interact with other people who understand just how important it is to have a pen and paper handy at all times in case inspiration strikes us.

### Hoping

He's waiting.  
Just across the fence  
is that big bale of hay.

Maybe some of it will  
float over to him.

Sometimes I just don't  
understand horse sense.

Elverda Oelling  
Member Howell County Bards

### Muse

Where are you, you dirty little gremlin?  
Here I sit  
Waiting  
Pen in hand  
Paper poised for the beautiful lines of poetry  
You are supposed to give me,  
And YOU,  
'YOU' won't show your face!

Elverda Oelling  
Member Howell County Bards

### RIVER LIFE

Driftwood along the Ohio bank  
 traces its most recent high water mark.  
 It suggests the crusted ring of cream  
 formed in a forgotten cup of coffee.  
 Limbs and twigs and logs are piled,  
 building lumber and firewood  
 and fine lamp bases for someone  
 willing to craft them.

Higher up, nested in bushes,  
 an abandoned drifter camp. A fire pit  
 with ash and charred driftwood ends.  
 Milk crates for seats, styrofoam cups,  
 newspaper, a shirt hanging on a limb.  
 A tarpaulin roof has collapsed.  
 In the night of the first winter flood  
 the wood will move on a southward flow  
 toward a muddy shore near Paducah,  
 little the worse for wear

Henry M. Spottswood  
 Member at Large

### Cold Feet

I come in from the cold,  
 Craving a cup of something hot and sweet  
 I stand by the fire  
 Wishing I had little pipes to take that  
 heat down to my feet

Elverda Oelling  
 Member Howell County Bards

### Christmas Preparation

Today we took down the Christmas tree  
 Ornaments collected for almost 50 years  
 Individually, lovingly, wrapped, boxed, and stored  
 for another season.  
 One day our children will open these mementos  
 of Christmas' past  
 They will recall their youth  
 when they helped make the ornaments of plaster  
 or thread spool or flash cube.  
 They will remember seasons we shared  
 and smile  
 through the tears  
 Maybe they will share their memories  
 with their kids and grandkids.  
 We are preparing for many future Christmas seasons.  
 Today we took down the Christmas tree.

Don DePriest.



<h3>DUES &amp; NAMES &amp; NAMES &amp; DUES</h3> <p><b>If you have not done so it is time to send in your dues for 2011. State dues are \$7 per year, and \$13 for members at large. This includes the national dues.</b></p> <p><b>When the chapter treasurer or representative sends in the chapter dues, <u>be sure</u> to include the member information that the check covers: name, address, phone, e-mail. If you send your check without the list we have no idea who your chapter members are! Members at large should include the same information with your check.</b></p> <p><b>Mail your check and list to our state treasurer: Bill Lower, 21010 S. Hwy 245, Fair Play, MO 65649.</b></p>
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### CHAPTER REPORTS:

Chapter report for the:  
 HOWELL COUNTY BARDS

Our chapter the "HOWELL COUNTY BARDS," formally the Mountain View Poetry Society, of Mountain View, MO is now meeting in our new space at the West Plains Library, in West Plains, MO. It's a private meeting room set aside for

us, on the second Saturday of each month at 2:00 P.M. The Library has a great conference room as well, it's fairly large with a private entrance. We will be hosting the state convention next year and we are trying to make arrangements for use of the conference room for the convention.

A couple of our members attended the convention in September... Michelle Foster and myself. We would like to think the CRAWFORD COUNTY BOMBADILS, especially Dawn Harmon for her work, and we hope to do as well with the convention as she and the BOMBADILS.

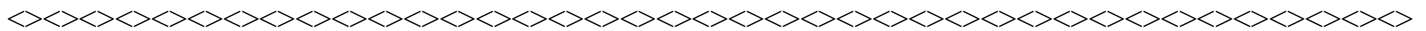
Our chapter's goal in the coming year is to increase membership, and to promote the appreciation of poetry in the area. I think hosting the convention will go along way in establishing our chapter, as well as the society as a whole in the area and help in a achieving those goals.

Dale Ernst  
President and State Representative  
Of the, HOWELL COUNTY BARDS



**LEE ANN RUSSELL**

1. Missouri Writers' Guild [August](#) Newsletter - 1,000 word article about and entitled, "Poetry."
2. Siloam Springs Writers - 1st for Shakespearean Sonnet, "Crossroads"  
2nd for Japanese Tanka, "Persuasion"  
3rd for Villanelle, "Regret"
3. Ozark Creative Writers - 1st place, Bob and Faye Williams Jones Poetry Award for "Swinging in a Shed," and 1st HM, Non-Fiction Essay for "First and Lasting Impressions"
4. Poets Roundtable of Arkansas - 3rd place for "Old Books," 1st HM for "Good Neighbor," 1st HM for "Rosy Rose O'Neill," 2nd HM for "Fertility Rites," 2nd HM for "Stuffed Stuffing Stuff," 3rd HM for "Crossroads"
5. Florida State Poets Association - 1st HM for "Mentor"
6. A short story, "Not Quite Soon Enough" in a Fiction Anthology, *A Shaker of Mrgaritas, Hot Flash Mommas* by Mozark Press.
7. A statement and photo of Birdle Mannon's wood cook stove on the back cover of the winter 2010 edition of the White River Valley Historical Society Quarterly based in Forsyth. Birdle lived from 1909 to 1999 near Brown Branch/Bradleyville, MO in a cabin with no electricity or running water. Her cabin has been reconstructed in Silver Dollar City. I was privileged to meet and photograph Birdle in 1998.
8. Poets & Friends - 1st place, Humorous for "Fertility Rites," 1st HM, Formal, Structured Poems for "Horizon" and 2nd HM P&F Members Only for "Staff of Life."



**MSPS WINTER 2011 CONTEST:** Here are the guidelines for the MSPS Winter 2011 Contest:

**Deadline:** Postmarked [February 15, 2011](#)

**Format:** Submit two copies of each entry, category number and name in upper left-hand corner of both copies, poet's name and address in upper right-hand corner of one copy. If you are a member, put "Missouri State Poetry Society" below your address. Put "Non-Member" if you are not.

**Limits:** Poems [may](#) be 40 or fewer lines. They [may](#) be unpublished or previously published if the poet retains the rights to the poem. Poets [may](#) enter each category as many times as they wish. No poems will be returned.

