



# SPARE MULE



Missouri State Poetry Society Newsletter  
Vol. 17, No. 2 [www.nfmps.com/mo](http://www.nfmps.com/mo) Apr. 1, 2014

*Strophes*, the national newsletter is available online at  
<http://www.nfmps.com/> Click Strophes online.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is with my face turned toward Spring that I turn the page on my calendar. Our board members will want to mark their calendars for our Spring Board Meeting which will be held at First Baptist Church in Rolla, Missouri. In times past we have started our meeting at 10:30 a.m. and concluded it at a local restaurant some time later. In keeping with that tradition we will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 10, 2014, where we will discuss the fall convention and naming of the next president.

Each season brings changes to the world around us and the biggest change we will see with this Spare Mule is the announcement of a new web master for our society.

Most of you know that Tom Padgett's head belongs on the Mount Rushmore of MSPS—in that spot on the mount's far left that tourists see first as they look up from the highway. Simply put, without Tom, the state society would not exist. Not only did he father it, but he taught it to crawl and walk. Then, like a good parent, he ushered it into the wider world and showed it how to live up to its adult responsibilities. Others have come along to play key roles in making the society what it is today, but Tom was the prime mover, the godfather, and, in addition, for years he fulfilled the role of community organizer, lending vision and direction to the local clubs and the state board.

You may know that Tom deserves the state society's salute, but you may not know about his background. Raised in Mountain View, Missouri, Tom holds two master's degrees and a Ph.D. in English from Mizzou, where he specialized in American literature and wrote his dissertation on American short-story writer Flannery O'Connor. At Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, he inspired generations of students in a long collegiate teaching career that began in 1963 before he retired in 1992. He lives in Bolivar with his wife, Shirley.

Besides founding the state society, Tom has served at various times as its president, secretary, and web master, and he has edited the e-zine *Thirty-Seven Cents*, which has provided poetry instruction and a forum for the work of many of the society's poets. What's more, if you haven't noticed, in his poetry, Tom has provided society members with models of wonderful art, both accessible and insightful. His poems have appeared in many literary journals, and his most recent collection is *The Way We Live*.

Recently Tom stepped down as the society's web master, a position now held by Todd Sukany, an instructor of English at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar and a member of MSPS's local chapter Author Unknown. While I imagine you would like to join me in welcoming Todd Sukany to this new position, let us first raise our











