



# Missouri State Poetry Society

## Spare Mule

### Missouri State Poetry Newsletter

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From the retiring President:

When we read our October Spare Mule, the annual convention at Lebanon will be history. At the time I had to write this, we had reservations from Illinois and Arkansas besides our local chapter people. How exciting.

Please encourage the arts – poetry- to be specific in your little part of the world. Keep writing and submit to contests or for publications

Nancy LaChance

#### **Kudos:**

- **Marilyn K. Smith:** “Spoke to the Cherry Blossom Auxiliary in August, on my book “A History of Highway 65, from the middle of the road.” Published a cookbook: “Ozarks Recipes, Momma’s, Mine and Others, and maybe a Tale or Two.”

-**Lee Ann Russell:** *SALINE COUNTY BRANCH OF POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS; BETTY HEIDELBERGER MEMORIAL CONTEST:* 1st place - "Estate Sales"; 3rd place - "Who Says Neatness Counts?"; 2nd HM - "Have You Seen My Naked Face." *MISSOURI STATE POETRY SOCIETY SUMMER CONTEST:* 2nd place - Rhymed or Blank Verse: "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner"; 3rd HM – "Impulsivity"; 2nd HM -Members Only, Poet's Choice: "Insecurity"; 2nd HM -Humorous: "Who Says Neatness Counts?"

#### **Announcements:**

“Pat Laster’s third book, *Hiding Myself Into Safety: a Collection of Short Stories & Long Poems with an Occasional Essay*, is available in softback and e-book from Amazon.

She is serving as contest chair for the Poets’ Roundtable of Arkansas’s National Poetry Day Celebration to be held October 22nd in Hot Springs.

She is also poetry editor for CALLIOPE: A Writer’s Workshop by Mail based in Arizona.”

**Book Review:** by Pat Laster, Crawford County Bombadils

*“The title of Dale Ernst’s newest volume of poetry, *The Silver Cord*, is “referenced in many spiritual traditions and writings, including the Bible.” The 30-page, 29-poem book of elegies will serve as meditations for grieving and/ or remembering. Most poems are short, succinct, and will stoke the readers’ emotions.*

*This reviewer used (with permission) “Slipping the Steel,” “More and More,” and “Ashes” for a 9-11 remembrance blog. These poems resonated as if written for just that occasion. Even the author admitted feeling a “chill” after reading the blog. *The Silver Cord* can be obtained from the Book Store at: [thebookpatch.com](http://thebookpatch.com) for \$9.*

*It behooves Missouri poets (and others) to own this outpouring of the heart in recognition of the work Dale has done for the state society.”*

## **Chapter Reports:**

“On the Edge reporting. We have just been busy writing, sculpting, creating, moving, doing, etc. Some even have been published. Looking forward to the new issue of *Cantos*. Thanks Dr. John Han for being the editor. Carol and Don Horstmann are featured poets in it. They are quite a pair those two. Faye Adams, Anna Wells, Billy Adams, Terrie Jacks, as well as Dr. John Han also have some work in it. It is beyond a doubt an amazing journal. That’s enough for now. Back to writing, painting, creating, exercising, breathing, etc.” Take care and All.- Terrie Jacks, On the Edge

## **GRIST REPORT:**

As many of you learned at the convention, this year's publication of GRIST underwent a facelift! We got it out just in time for the convention. If it had not been for our friend, and faithful member, Dale Ernst, that would not be so. I would like to take this time to acknowledge, thank, and otherwise give Kudos to Dale for the Rescue of this year's publication, the fresh look, and the diligent hard work he put into

making this year's publication the very best we've had (in my opinion)!

For those of you who have placed orders and not received them yet, they were mailed the moment I obtained the printed copies after the convention. Anyone else wishing to place an order for a copy (or three,) you may do so by mailing a check made out to MSPS for \$10/copy to me at the following address and I will promptly mail yours as well.

Again, THANK YOU Dale Ernst, for the hard work, diligence, and faithful support of this great society.

Sincerely,  
Dawn Harmon  
Editor-GRIST  
351 Oak Rd  
Cuba, MO 65453

## **From Dale Ernst:**

I am stepping in as president of MSPS once again, having served for two years already ... this time as interim president only. We also have a new vice president—congratulations Anna Wells. I will be seeking a permanent replacement to serve as president soon as possible. Our last president, (Nancy LaChance) admirably served in the office over the past two years, and was going to take on the position again, but for personal reasons (even though nominated) she could not take on the duties for an unprecedented third term. Because of not having another nominee available, I volunteered to take on the office for what hopefully is a short while ... it's a privilege, but we want someone new and able to fill the office. Again, I will be seeking someone to assume the office on a permanent basis as soon as possible.

The convention went well and our featured poets/presenters did not disappoint. We also had a delightful presentation by the Lebanon chapter; if you weren't there you missed out, and try to make it next year. Also, if you haven't purchased your copy of our 2016 anthology “GRIST,” please do so, by contacting our editor Dawn Harmon, the contact information is on our website—also in the “Spare Mule.” You will also be able to purchase it this year online, in the “Bookstore”at: [thebookpatch.com](http://thebookpatch.com).

Now on to poetry: Two of my favorite months are April and October. April for its sense of renewal, and maybe just a little, because my birthday is also in that month; I really think it's just because we can pretty much count on it staying warm after the cold of winter. October, because it's just so beautiful with the changing colors of fall—it has a magical quality about it. These are both important months for poets, besides being inspirational—which I am sure they are for most of us. April is “Poetry Month” and “Poetry Day,” is in October in the USA, (it falls on the 6<sup>th</sup>) this year. Hopefully you are planning something for poetry day, maybe a reading and if you are, please print up a few copies of our upcoming winter contest rules, as well as mentioning our poetry society and our website for more information on MSPS. My point is, do something on Poetry Day to promote poetry and the love of poetry, even if it's just getting together with fellow poets. At the least, read some poetry, or reflect on what you would like to do in the coming months concerning your poetry, or helping to promote poetry in general, and enjoy the beauty October.

Dale Ernst—Interim President/Publicity Director

## **Poems by Members:**

### **Terrie Jacks, On the Edge**

#### *Sack Mystery*

The child in the cart  
Had a bag on his head,  
When asked "Why?"  
Here's what he said,  
"Sorry I can't hear  
I'm wearing a sack  
Which causes a problem  
Hearing I lack.  
I'd take it off  
But I don't want to see.  
I'm playing a game,  
Where Am I mystery?  
I'm trying to guess  
Where I might be  
Then I take off the sack  
Look and see.  
Pardon me now.  
I'm not trying to be rude  
But the bag on my head  
Is my only excuse."

### **Laurence W. Thomas**

Ypsilanti, Michigan  
life-time member

#### *At the Check-Out Counter*

The grocery of the mind,  
replete with sights, smells, and taste,  
is stocked with sensuous fare  
not decided upon with haste  
but selected for mealtime appeal.  
Chosen with care  
and laid out in alluring array,  
tempting vegetables of varied  
flavors,  
aromas of where we've been,  
and what we've seen are on display.  
Frozen foods present an array of  
adventures,  
which thawed and served, everyone  
savors.  
Meats, so tempting in their seals,  
satisfy our epicurean endeavors,  
success in our pursuit of life,

the backbone of all pursuits.  
And finally come the rich desserts  
to seduce us, should we be so  
indiscreet  
as to end our quest, our culinary zest  
for good things to top off our goals  
in life  
with sweet satisfaction.

#### *A Visit to Parker's Glen*

The years since I've been here  
peel back in layers;  
our picnics with chicken,  
playing with crayfish,  
  
walks in acres of woods  
come flooding around me  
as I arrive at the entrance  
with its old wooden gate.

I find builders hard at work;  
land movers level land,  
and draftsmen dream  
of high rising houses.

In a plot to accommodate  
space to expansion,  
the stakes are already high  
marking out streets for tomorrow,  
  
outlines of housing project  
into futures, foundations  
laid gaping as basements  
before stone and brick are imported.

My survey perturbs me:  
land laid bare by bulldozers,  
builders like bees swarming  
where my glen had once beckoned.

Our old picnic bench is now  
burdened  
with blueprints, the brook's soothing  
babbling  
drowned out by the drone of a  
dragline,  
the din of hammers and saws  
  
and my dream of a day in the  
country  
is dashed by reality: nature replaced

by demands for development,  
and I turn from my journey still  
yearning.

### **Pat Laster, Crawford County Bombadils**

#### *Posthumously*

Three months  
after Mom's death,  
five of us siblings sift  
through box after box of old cards,  
letters,  
  
diaries,  
journals, brittle  
clippings of *her* mother's,  
bequeathed to Mom as the eldest  
daughter.

Pie pans,  
cookbooks, blankets,  
mismatched silverware, odd  
purses, sweaters, glassware, aprons  
and more,

found new  
homes in exchange  
for one dollar, or two.  
Neighbors dropped by for a look-  
see,  
chatted,

picked up  
tiny trinkets  
so they would have something  
tangible of "Ms. Anna Pearl's"  
to keep.

Packing  
unsold clothing,  
a daughter found something  
in her mom's black velvet jacket:  
dried bread,

too large  
at the time for  
her to swallow during  
Holy Communion four long months  
ago. #

## Janice Canerdy

EEK! A Black Cat!  
What's wrong with these people  
tonight?  
They're screaming I gave them a  
fright.  
"A black cat!" they shriek,  
but only last week  
they held me; I purred with delight.  
These neighborhood kids are so  
weird.  
On Halloween night I am feared.  
The rest of the time,  
my life is sublime.  
To all of them, I've been endeared.  
It soon will be November First,  
and I'll be no longer accursed.  
I'll hear, "Look at that,  
a beautiful cat!"  
Man! Halloween night is the worst

## October

God in all His majesty  
gives us now His tenth great gift  
of multifarious joys.  
Ghostwinds whistle lilting tunes,  
motivating dancing leaves  
to make their scuttling noise.

Chilly winds and hoarfrost light  
do their part to signify  
that summer has lost its hold.  
Distant hills are masterpieces.  
God, the Artist, planned the blend  
of reddish brown and gold.

Now we cut and stack the wood.  
Soon we'll wear our heavy clothes  
and shut the windows tight.  
Then His last two wondrous gifts,  
siblings of the tenth, will come  
with holidays' delight.

## Marilyn K. Smith

### *Siloing Time*

Timing was everything in  
harvesting the corn for silage.  
Dad wanted the kernels to be fully  
formed on the cob,  
striving for what he called the "high  
milk" stage.  
Also, at this stage, the stalk and  
leaves were still tender,

and the pith of the stalk still sweet  
and tasty.  
The cool fall evenings signaled the  
time for filling the  
silo was at hand.

Prior to this time, a horse drawn  
corn binder cut and  
gathered the sweet smelling corn  
stalks into bundles  
with the ears still intact.  
Not wanting to lose any of the  
corn's nutrients,  
siloing time soon followed.  
Dad and the boys headed out to the  
field as soon  
as the sun came peaking over the  
horizon.

They forked the awaiting bundles  
into the wagon  
being pulled alongside.  
A silo filler chopped the bundled  
corn  
and then acted as a blower to propel  
the chopped  
silage up and into the silo through a  
blower pipe.  
It was we younger boys' job to walk  
around  
and around on the silage to tamp it  
down.

As the silage neared the top, it was  
great fun  
to look over the side to see Dad and  
my older brothers  
feeding the filler, using their three-  
tined pitchforks.  
After a very tiring week, the curved  
roof was put into place,  
protecting the silage from the  
elements.

Throughout the winter, shoveling  
the cured silage  
into our small, short-bed wagon was  
mostly my  
brothers' job.  
It was my job to ride along,  
listening to their  
far-fetched yarns.  
Growing up on a farm left lasting  
memories.

## Carol Louise Moon, Crawford County Bombadils

### *Old Crow*

See those crows out there  
in the empty lot?  
They're all looking for  
carrion, except ... there.  
Look at the old crow at  
the base of the tree trunk.  
With his beak he's  
flipping dried leaves.  
He's searching diligently  
for bobbles, coins, foil—  
anything that sparkles,  
teases the eye.

He's about to retire and  
has lost his appetite for  
competition. He's left his  
girlfriend behind. He's  
got jazz running through  
his veins. Most days he  
hums his life story of  
so many made-up tunes.

## John J. Han

### *Two Envious Events* (chain Etheree)

He  
died at  
fifty-nine.  
I had known him  
for seven hours. While  
recalling the good old  
days in Korea, he paused,  
fell from his chair, and died. Just  
like  
that. My friend who was with me  
said he  
wanted to die just like him. I  
concurred.

She  
left this  
world in her  
mid-seventies.  
After going to  
the restroom at church, she  
never returned. Just like that.  
My friend who delivers the news  
to me says she wants to die just like  
her—to pass without warning. I  
concur.

## Missouri Summer Poetry Contest Winners

### No. 1 – rhymed or blank verse

- HM #3 Lee Ann Russell; Springfield, MO; Impulsivity  
HM # 2 Judy Davies; Gautier, MS; Computer versus Poetry  
HM # 1 Jean Marie Purcell; Eugene, OR; Sometimes I Like my Infinitive Split  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Dennis Patton; Alexander, AR; Haying in June  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Lee Ann Russell; Springfield, MO; Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner  
1<sup>st</sup> – Terri Jacks; Ballwin, MO; deer dash

### No. 2 – Free Verse, any subject, serious or humorous

- HM # 3 Barbara Blanks; Garland, TX; Breaking Point  
HM # 2 Anna Wells; Festus, MO; Sarah’s Son  
HM # 1 Claire Scott; Oakland, CA; Lapsed  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Pauline Mounsey, Sun City, AZ; Cousins Once Removed  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Lisa Hase-Jackson; Charleston, SC; I Can Acquire Neither a Smile  
1<sup>st</sup> – Claire Scott; Oakland, CA; Lazarus Rising

### No. 3 – Humorous

- HM # 3 Faye Adams; DeSoto, MO; A Sonnet is a Poem?  
HM # 2 Lee Ann Russell; Springfield, MO; Who Says Neatness Counts?  
HM # 1 Dr. Emory Jones; Iuka, MS; Good Taste in Pirate  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Jean Purcell, Eugene, OR; If Hilary Wins, What Chelsea Might Want Etched on her Tombstone  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Jerri Hardesty; Brierfield, AL; Equivalent Values  
1<sup>st</sup> – Laverne McCarthy; Blair, OK; A Chip Off the Old Writer’s Block

### No. 4 – Summer Subject

- HM # 3 Laverne McCarthy; Blair, OK; Baseball Memories  
HM # 2 Laverne McCarthy; Blair, OK; The Locust  
HM # 1 Mary Ellen Letarte; Lunenburg, MA; He Gardens with his Daughter  
3<sup>rd</sup>- Dennis Patton; Alexander, AR; Our Evening Run  
2<sup>nd</sup>- Dargan Ware; Moody, AL; Nocturne  
1<sup>st</sup>- Pauline Mounsey, Sun City, AZ; Weather Signs

### No. 5 –Members Only

- HM # 3 Terri Jacks; Ballwin, MO; discarded  
HM # 2 Lee Ann Russell; Springfield, MO; Insecurity  
HM # 1 Billy Adams; DeSoto, MO; Blackbirds  
3<sup>rd</sup>- Billy Adams; DeSoto, MO; Earth Day  
2<sup>nd</sup>- Billy Adams; DeSoto, MO; Dance of the Trees  
1<sup>st</sup>- Barbara Blanks; Garland, TX; Yellow Umbrella

**Spare Mule Newsletter is a publication of the Missouri State Poetry Society and is published January, April, August and October.**