



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 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.

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 6th) 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
3rd – Dennis Patton; Alexander, AR; Haying in June
2nd – Lee Ann Russell; Springfield, MO; Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner
1st – 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
3rd – Pauline Mounsey, Sun City, AZ; Cousins Once Removed
2nd – Lisa Hase-Jackson; Charleston, SC; I Can Acquire Neither a Smile
1st – 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
3rd – Jean Purcell, Eugene, OR; If Hilary Wins, What Chelsea Might Want Etched on her Tombstone
2nd – Jerri Hardesty; Brierfield, AL; Equivalent Values
1st – 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
3rd- Dennis Patton; Alexander, AR; Our Evening Run
2nd- Dargan Ware; Moody, AL; Nocturne
1st- 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
3rd- Billy Adams; DeSoto, MO; Earth Day
2nd- Billy Adams; DeSoto, MO; Dance of the Trees
1st- 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.