



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

An educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing and appreciation of poetry in America.

## Strophes

Vol. L No. 3

www.nfspd.com

January 2014

### President's Message

### Dear NFSPS Poets: On Poetry & Diversity

*Glory be to God for dappled things –  
For skies of couple-colour as a brindled cow;  
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;*



On a gray midwinter day, poetry is often the warmest, brightest thing to find. Much of the brilliance of poetry, as I've come to understand over the years, consists less in what is said than in how it is said. As Gerard Manley Hopkins describes it elsewhere, *poetry is speech framed . . . to be heard for its own sake and interest even over and above its interest of meaning.*

That is, to some extent we don't listen to a poem for its message so much as for its sound, its play with language, its straitlaced or exuberantly disheveled way of doing things. At extremes, this can make poetry a challenge to read—the inordinately tortuous syntax of Milton, the dense allusions of Eliot, the typographic pyrotechnics of Cummings (e.g., in “r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r”), the minimalist uncertainties of Aram Saroyan (in a poem like “light”).

Poetry is a *dappled thing*, an intense variety of verbal possibilities, and this is part of what Hopkins gets at particularly well in his 10 ½ line curial sonnet, “Pied Beauty.” With his compacted language, his striking alliterations, his leaps from one sharply realized image to the next—

*Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
Landscape plotted and pieced – fold, fallow, and plough;*

—Hopkins sets up his celebration of the sheer diversity of things, not only in nature but (for Hopkins) in the whole divine creation, including those things of the human world: *fold, fallow, and plough* and *all trådes, their gear and tackle and trim.*

Hopkins' evocation of our delight in *All things counter, original, spare, strange* is—through its verbal enactment of its content—a lesson for poetry readers too caught up in formal definitions of the sonnet (or for poetry society presidents too caught up in their own ways of seeing the world). A poem like “Pied Beauty” lends the encouragement we need—perhaps especially in bleak midwinter—to treasure the diversity and fresh possibilities that our societies, our world, and our poetry offer us—that one's unique perspective, that one's queer insights, and above all, that strange, childish wonder in each of us.

Jeremy M. Downes ~ 30th NFSPS President

### NFSPS 2014 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN UTAH RENDEZVOUS OF POETS FOR ALL SEASONS

June 26-29 in Salt Lake City

#### CONVENTION ANNOUNCEMENT

More specific information will become available soon, but mark your calendars and make plans now to join fellow poets from many states at the next NFSPS Convention in Salt Lake City, UT. The “Utah Rendezvous of Poets for All Seasons,” hosted by Utah State Poetry Society, starts on Thursday, June 26 and continues through Sunday, June 29, 2014; most convention proceedings will take place at the spacious DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Salt Lake City Airport.

Regrettably, due to extenuating circumstances, a few crucial details that affect the registration process, such as room reservation rates and meal prices, had not yet been finalized before the submissions deadline passed for the January 2014 issue of *Strophes*. The convention schedule, registration form, hotel reservation details, and tour options will be included in the upcoming April issue of *Strophes*. For registration questions or concerns, please contact UTSPS Hospitality Committee Co-Chair Marney Zambrano at [mezbooker@yahoo.com](mailto:mezbooker@yahoo.com).

#### PRE-CONVENTION CONTEST

Planning to attend the NFSPS National Convention in Salt Lake City? This will give you a little extra incentive! First prize is two nights stay at the Double Tree Suites; second prize pays your convention registration fees; third prize pays for two convention meals. Just follow these simple rules:

1. Enter unpublished poems based on the convention theme, “Utah Rendezvous of Poets for All Seasons.”
2. Include a \$10 fee per poem. Make your check payable to UTSPS.
3. Poems may be any form, up to 40 lines, and in good taste.
4. Send two copies of each poem—one with no identifying information, and the other with your name, address, and email address in the upper right corner.
5. Mail your entries postmarked by March 15, 2014 to:

Contest Chair Merrijane Rice  
273 Western Drive,  
Kaysville, UT 84037

Winners will be announced at the convention. You must be in attendance to win!



**Keynote Speaker, Lance Larsen**, has had a fourth collection of poems, *Genius Loci*, recently published by University of Tampa Press. His earlier collections include *Backyard Alchemy* (2009), *In All Their Animal Brilliance* (2005), and *Erasable Walls* (1998). He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Houston. His work appears widely in such venues as *Georgia Review*, *Southern Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *River Styx*, *Orion*, *The Pushcart Prize Anthology*, *Best American Poetry 2009*, *Poetry Daily*, and elsewhere. His nonfiction has twice made the Notable Essay list in *Best American Essays*. He is currently working on *Seventeen Ways to Float*, a collection of essays about place, family, and memory which won 1st place in the 2011 Utah Original Writing Competition. He grew up in Idaho and Colorado and lived in Chile for two years while serving an LDS mission. He collects antiques, plays basketball, occasionally walks on his hands, grows daylilies, and loves Indian and Thai food. He sometimes collaborates with his wife, Jacqui Biggs Larsen, a painter and multi-media artist. Since 1993 he has taught literature and creative writing at Brigham Young University, where he currently serves as associate chair. He and Jacqui recently directed a study abroad program in Madrid. In 2012, he was named to a five-year term as Utah Poet Laureate.

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.**

Organized October 17, 1959 ~ Mary B. Wall, Founder

**Honorary Chancellor: Natasha Tretthewey**  
(Appointment made July, 2012)

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**ALABAMA: Alabama State Poetry Society**  
Barry Marks, President ~ P.O. Box 11386, Birmingham,  
AL 35202 ~ Barry@leaselawyer.com

**ARIZONA: Arizona State Poetry Society**  
Christy White, President ~ 37427 N. Ootam Rd. #104,  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331 ~ christy1@prodigy.net

**ARKANSAS: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas**  
Cathy Moran, President ~ 401 Auburn Dr.,  
Little Rock, AR 72205 ~ cmoran@arml.org

**CALIFORNIA: California State Poetry Society**  
Dr. John Forrest Harrell, Treasurer ~ P.O. Box 7126,  
Orange, CA 92863 ~ JFHarrell@gmail.com

**COLORADO: Columbine Poets**  
Julie Cummings, President ~ 9428 Fallen Rock Road,  
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**CONNECTICUT: Connecticut Poetry Society**  
Emerson Gilmore, President ~ 66 London Road,  
Hebron, CT 06248 ~ xemgil3@gmail.com

**FLORIDA: Florida State Poets Association**  
Joseph Cavanaugh, President ~ 3722 Longford Circle,  
Ormond Beach, FL 32714 ~ jcavanaugh1@gmail.com

**GEORGIA: Georgia Poetry Society**  
Sandy Hokanson, President ~ 640 Sweet Gum Forest Ln,  
Alpharetta, GA 30005 ~ hokansonga@comcast.net

**ILLINOIS: Illinois State Poetry Society**  
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Evanston, IL 60202 ~ stm48@hotmail.com

**INDIANA: Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs**  
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Lowell, IN 46358 ~ tspencer1943@comcast.net

**IOWA: Iowa Poetry Association**  
Dennis Maulsby, President ~ 2421 Westwind Drive,  
Ames, IA 50010 ~ rmaulsby@mchsi.com

**KENTUCKY: Kentucky State Poetry Society**  
Pamela Gibbs, President ~ PO Box 4811,  
Frankfort, KY 40604-4811 ~ pamg@mis.net

**LOUISIANA: Louisiana State Poetry Society**  
Mary C. Galvin, Presiding Officer ~ 1253 Kapalama  
Way, Diamondhead, MS 39525 ~ pipoet@bellsouth.net

**MAINE: Maine Poets Society**  
Carol Willette Bachofner, President ~ 12 Center St.,  
Rockland ME 04841 ~ mainepoet@me.com

**MASSACHUSETTS: Massachusetts State Poetry Society**  
Jeanette C. Maes, President ~ 64 Harrison Ave.,  
Lynn, MA 01905 ~ msps.jmaes@comcast.net

**MICHIGAN: Poetry Society of Michigan**  
Polly Opsahl, President ~ 270 Brewster Road,  
Rochester Hills, MI 48309 ~ pollyannop@comcast.net

**MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets**  
Christina M. Flaughner, President ~ P.O. Box 446,  
Mapleton, MN 56065 ~ Chrismo14@aol.com

**MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi Poetry Society**  
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Madison, MS 39110 ~ jskelly04@gmail.com

**MISSOURI: Missouri State Poetry Society**  
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MO 65453 ~ inafieldofdaisies@hotmail.com

**NEBRASKA: Nebraska State Poetry Society**  
Mary L. Maas, President ~ 601 Ivy St., Stanton,  
NE 68779 ~ cjmaas@stanton.net

**NEVADA: Nevada Poetry Society**  
Sam Wood, President ~ P.O. Box 7014, Reno, NV 89510

**NEW JERSEY: New Jersey Poetry Society**  
Edith Kaltovich, President ~ 12 Rydal Dr.,  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648 ~ luciakalt@aol.com

**NEW MEXICO: New Mexico State Poetry Society**  
Fil Peach, President ~ 3206 Gay Circle S.E., Rio Rancho,  
NM 87124-2097 ~ filsfoodfare@yahoo.com

**NEW YORK: New York Poetry Forum**  
Daniel Fernandez, President ~ 3604 Ave. S,  
Brooklyn, NY 11234

**OHIO: Ohio Poetry Association**  
Mark Hersman, President ~ 608 Logan Rd.,  
Mansfield, OH 44907 ~ turtlegy99@aol.com

**OKLAHOMA: Poetry Society of Oklahoma**  
Eddie & Joan Wilcoxon, Co-presidents ~ 712 E. Walker,  
Altus, OK 73521 ~ wilcoxens@sbcglobal.net

**OREGON: Oregon Poetry Association**  
Tiel Aisha Ansari, President ~ 1724 NE Prescott St.,  
Portland, OR 97211 ~ tielansari@gmail.com

**PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Poetry Society**  
Susan N. Vernon, President ~ 1108 Linn Dr.,  
Carlisle, PA 17013 ~ snvernon@comcast.net

**SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota State Poetry Society**  
Francie Davis, President ~ PO Box 172,  
Belvidere 57521 ~ pasque.petals@gmail.com

**TENNESSEE: Poetry Society of Tennessee**  
JoAn Robbins Howerton, President ~ 2563 Twin Woods  
Cove, Memphis TN 38134 ~ joan0620@att.net

**TEXAS: Poetry Society of Texas**  
Jimmye Inez Sessions, President ~ 1373 Beechwood Dr.,  
Lewisville, TX 75067 ~ masonsessions@yahoo.com

**UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society**  
T. Kevin Clark, President ~ 1750 East 4800 South #34,  
Holladay, UT 84117-5087 ~ kclark\_uta@comcast.net

**WYOMING: WyoPoets**  
Abbie Taylor, President ~ 352 W. Whitney, Sheridan,  
WY 82801 ~ abbie@samobile.net

**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 e-mail, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Paul Ford, *Strophes* Editor  
10239 Hickory Pt. Dr., Sandy, UT 84092  
pmford3@yahoo.com

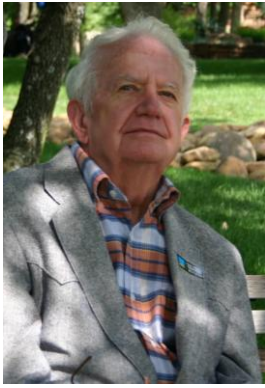
*Strophes* is available without cost to all paid-up members of NFSPS member state societies when mailed/shipped in bulk to the president or other designated person, who is responsible for ordering the number needed by the submission deadline for each issue. Individual subscriptions are \$4.00 a year 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.

\* Submission Deadlines

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\* Deceased

**CONVENTION SPEAKERS (continued)**

**Clarence P. Socwell** has won over 1,000 prizes in national contests. Named Utah State Poetry Society's Poet of the Year for *Intrinsic Tapestries*, he is also author of *Beads Along The String*, *All's Well That Pretends Well*, and *Reaching for Peaks*.

His poems have been published in numerous anthologies. He has been president of the Utah State Poetry Society, the League of Utah Writers, and the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.



**Elaine Wright Christensen** has two collections of poetry: *I Have Learned 5 Things* (NFSPS, 1996), and *At the Edges*, winner of UTSPS' Poet of the Year in 1990. Her poems have appeared in numerous journals, including

*Weber Studies*, *Ellipsis*, *Dialogue*, *Petroglyph*, and *The Comstock Review*, where she placed first in the Muriel Craft Bailey Memorial Award. Anthologies that have published her work include *The Cancer Poetry Project*, *Discoveries: Two Centuries of Poems by Mormon Women*, and recently, in *New Poets of the American West*. Elaine received a BA in German and English from Utah State University. Living in Sandy, UT, she is the mother of five, the grandmother of twelve.

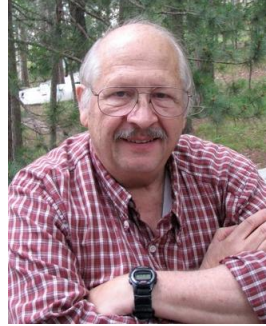
**Rob Carney** is originally from Washington state. He is the author of *Story Problems* (Somondoco Press 2011), *Weather Report* (Somondoco, 2006), *Boasts, Toasts, and Ghosts* (Pinyon Press, 2003), as well as three poetry chapbooks:



*Home Appraisals* (Plan B Press, 2012), *This Is One Sexy Planet* (Frank Cat Press, 2005), and *New Fables, Old Songs* (Dream Horse Press, 2003). He is a two-time recipient of the Utah Book Award for Poetry, winner of the Pinyon Press National Poetry Book Award, winner of the Frank Cat Press and Dream Horse Press National Chapbook Competitions, and has

been interviewed on National Public Radio's "The Poet and the Poem from the Library of Congress." His work has appeared in *Cave Wall*, *Mid-American Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Redactions*, *River Styx*, *Sugar House Review*, and dozens of other journals, as well as the Norton anthology *Flash Fiction Forward* (2006). He is a Professor of English at Utah Valley University and lives in Salt Lake City.

**John Calvin Rezmerski** ("Rez") grew up in Pennsylvania, and was educated there and in Ohio, Kansas, and Minnesota, where he taught writing, literature, and linguistics for 35 years before retiring. Published widely in



magazines, anthologies, chapbooks and full-length collections of poems (most recently *Breaking the Rules: Starting with Ghazals*, from Red Dragonfly Press), he has also participated in dramatic productions as playwright, director, actor, or magician. Currently a member of the *Cabaret le Ruse* comedy company and a long-time member of the science-fiction performance poetry group *Lady Poetesses from Hell*, he is also at work on a book of writing and reading lessons and exercises called *Building and Maintaining Poetry*. He counts as his three most treasured poetry experiences the publication of his first book, his appointment to a 5-year term as Poet Laureate of the League of Minnesota Poets, and being invited to join the Pine Nuts workshop.

**Diane Glancy** is a visiting professor at Azusa Pacific University near Los Angeles. She received two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and the Juniper Poetry Prize from the University of Massachusetts Press. Her latest collections of poetry, *Stories of the Driven World* and *It Was Then*, were published by Mammoth Publishers, Lawrence, KS, 2010 and 2012. Her latest collection of essays, *The Dream of a Broken Field*, was published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2011. A new collection of nonfiction, *Fort Marion Prisoners and the Trauma of Native Education*, is forthcoming from Nebraska in 2014.



**Joel Long** has had his most recent book, *Lessons in Disappearance*, published by Blaine Creek Press in 2012. *Knowing Time by Light*, a finalist for the Utah Book Award, was published by the same press in 2010. His *Winged Insects* won the White Pine Press Poetry Prize and was published in 1999. His chapbooks, *Chopin's Preludes* and *Saffron Beneath Every Frost*, were published from Elik Press. His poems have appeared in *Quarterly West*, *Gulf Coast*, *Rhino*, *Bitter Oleander*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Sou'wester*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Willow Springs*, *Poems and Plays*, and *Seattle Review*. His poems have also been anthologized in *American Poetry: The Next Generation*, *Essential Love*, *Fresh Water*, and *I Go to the Ruined Place*. He received the Mayor's Artist Award for Literary Arts at the Utah Arts Festival and the Writers Advocate Award from Writers at Work.

**NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS**

**ALABAMA STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S** fall meeting was held October 25-26 at the University of Montevallo. At this meeting the Board announced several new initiatives including readings and workshops for children and seniors, projects with hospital and educational institutions, and a membership drive designed to broaden the Society's demographics. The Society's website, [www.alabamapoets.org](http://www.alabamapoets.org), will be upgraded to add a blog and greater functionality while continuing to post members' poetry and our quarterly newsletter, the *Muse Messenger*. The winter meeting will be held at the Bailey Cove Library in Huntsville, AL, where the new ASPS poetry library will be housed. The spring meeting is slated for Mobile, AL.  
~ Barry Marks, President

**ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S** 43rd Annual Fall Conference began Friday, November 15th, with an all-star poetry reading and wrapped up on November 16th with record attendance, record prize money paid for poems entered in our annual contest, and record enthusiasm for the six breakout sessions. These sessions were led by renowned poet, Clive Matson, from Berkeley, CA and other well-known poets and teachers from the Phoenix metropolitan area. Other activities, discussions and music kept the day lively for over 100 participants. Open readings

**MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST**

Rules: 2014 annual competition

**1. There are two divisions: Grade 6-8 (Junior Division) and Grades 9-12 (Senior Division).** Each state may submit ten (10) top poems in each division. Poems may have been printed and/or have won previous awards. Contests at state level may have occurred anytime in 2013 or 2014.

**2. The competition is open to all USA students in grades 6 – 12.** Public, private, and home-schools are eligible for entry by individual NFSPS member states.

**3. Submit two copies of each poem.** Put the division (Junior or Senior) in the upper left corner of both copies. One copy must have student's ID in upper right corner. The ID information is student name, school name and address, student grade level, and the student's language arts/English teacher's name. The second copy must not have ID information. Do not send a copy with any other marking - there should be no indication of prior award granted by the state.

**4. Each poem must be neatly typed or computer-generated, and have no more than 50 lines.** If a poem continues more than one page, staple the pages together. Do not staple the two copies of the poem together. It is suggested that each state representative keep a copy of poems entered.

**5. There should be no large or unusual fonts or illustrations.** Times New Roman is the suggested font. No font larger than 12 point should be used. Winning poems are scanned for the award anthology and large and/or unusual fonts impede the process.

**6. Each entrant must make a declaration of originality.** The statement should appear on the bottom of the ID copy only. The form below is acceptable:

I certify that this poem is my original work, and has not been copied in whole or part from any author's poems in print or posted on the Internet.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Separate poems into respective divisions.** Within each division separate the ID copy from the anonymous copy meant for judges. Include a cover letter identifying the Manningham (Youth) Chairperson to whom the report on the contests will be mailed.

**8. Entries must be received by March 1, 2014.**

**Send entries to: Budd P. Mahan, 7059 Spring Valley Road, Dallas, TX 75254**

Ten prizes will be awarded in each division: First Place - \$75, Second Place - \$50, Third Place - \$40, Fourth Place - \$35, Fifth Place - \$30, and five Honorable Mentions - \$10 each. All winning poems will be published in the Manningham Trust Poetry Student Award Anthology. Winners will receive complimentary copies. The schools of each winning student will receive a complimentary copy for the school library. Notice of winners report will be sent to each state's Manningham (Youth) Chair no later by May 20, 2014. Awards (certificates, checks, anthologies) will also be mailed to the state chairperson. Each state is responsible for distributing prizes to winners and winning schools. The top winning poems will be read to NFSPS members at the Convention held in June, 2014.

I look forward to each state's participation in the Manningham Poetry Trust's annual contests. Questions may be directed to the chairperson at the addresses/numbers below.

Budd Powell Mahan

Manningham Trust Student Poetry Awards Chairperson

7059 Spring Valley Road

Dallas, TX 75254

972-788-4944

buddmahan@att.net

**NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS (continued)**

ranged from traditional and free verse to raves and slams. The conference was held at the Glendale Community College in conjunction with the English department there; student participation was welcomed by our group. We were very proud to have Arizona's new and first Poet Laureate Alberto Rios (pictured with ASPS member Carol Hogan) open our program with wise words encouraging poetry. Google his name to see his accomplishments from a small town border kid to a respected teacher, poet, and now leader of our state's poetry movement. Carol Hogan chaired the conference and also ran the extensive contest with \$1,550 in prize money, 12 categories, and 675 poems sent in from 38 states and Canada. A beautiful anthology of all winning poems will be printed and given free to ASPS members and winning poets. It will be sold for \$5.00 plus mailing costs to non-members. Visit [www.azpoetry.webs.com](http://www.azpoetry.webs.com) for information on how to purchase. Our website can also be reached from NFSPS site's State Links. ~ *Molly Saty, Reporter*



**POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS** celebrated National Annual Poetry Day in Hot Springs, AR. The Hot Springs chapter hosted this event. John Crawford, a chapter member, led a discussion on "Voices of the Poet," noting works by Langston Hughes and Robert Frost. Pat Durmon was awarded the annual Merit Award for her work promoting poetry in the state. Noted Arkansas author Marck Beggs signed copies of the *PRA Anthology* celebrating its 80th year in existence. Jim Barton won the Sybil Nash Abrams Award which was judged by Maine poet Anne Britting Oleson. Please see PRA's new website, [poetsroundtable.webs.com](http://poetsroundtable.webs.com), for news on the upcoming May event, the Dr. Lily Peters Spring Poetry Meeting which will be held in Fayetteville. PRA has monthly contests which are free to members. ~ *Laura Loughridge, President*

**FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION** held their annual convention October 11-13 at the Florida Mall Hotel and Conference Center in Orlando. Friday night's welcoming reception honored the three poets laureate attending this year's convention: Sue Walker, Poet Laureate of Alabama; Peter Meinke, Poet Laureate of St. Petersburg, FL; and Kevin McEneaney, Poet Laureate of Smithfield Valley, NY. Greetings, fellowship, and wine were followed by a tribute to FSPA contest winners and our youth contest winners. Following the tribute, local Spoken Word performers competed for \$100 in prize money. Saturday dawned bright and early with an Executive Board meeting and continued honors to FSPA poetry contest winners. Workshops were given by Ms. Walker on "Creating Your Unique Poetic Style" and by Mr. McEneaney, "Celebrating Beauty: Writing Nature Poetry." After lunch, members attended the General Business meeting, then were treated to a workshop by Mr. Meinke titled "Every Word Counts: Shaping Your Poetry." Workshops were also given by special guests, John Davis Jr, who presented "Transforming Inspiration into Publishable Work," and Allen James, who presented "Put Humor, Music and Rhythm into Your Poetry." Following a lively meal at an Italian restaurant, the Poets Laureate participated in a panel discussion regarding the duties of their office. They also treated us to some of their poems. During the convention, poetry books were on sale in the book store and there were several open mic's for all who wished to share their poetry. Sunday morning was wrap up time followed by the final event, an off-site workshop on writing nature poetry held at Gatorland Zoo. The perfect ending to a very successful convention. ~ *Mary-Ann Westbrook, Secretary*

**GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY's** Fall Quarterly Meeting was held in Dahlonega, GA. Guest speaker, Susan Luther, presented the morning workshop, "Tightropes and Silks." Ms. Luther received degrees in literature from LSU, UA Huntsville, and Vanderbilt University. She has lectured, taught, and given workshops in England and the US, including UA Huntsville. A former member of the editorial board of *POEM* and a founding board of director of the Alabama Writers' Forum, Ms. Luther has won writing and teaching awards, served on grant award panels for the Alabama State Council on the Arts, and as a judge for many poetry competitions, including the Byron Herbert Reece Award. In addition to two chapbooks, a book of poetry, and some 200 poems in a wide variety of periodicals and anthologies, her most recent publication is *Something More Solid Than Earth*, an anthology by the Coweeta Poets, a women's writing group that originated from a workshop that Susan Luther led. Katie Rose Dione, teen poet and finalist in River of Words competition, presented an inspired reading of three of her poems. The afternoon workshop, "Writing a Young Adult Free Verse Novel," featured Kathryn Hinds. She is an assistant editor at Macmillan Children's Books. Ms. Hinds' published works include a co-authored book on Celtic mythology and more than fifty nonfiction titles for young adults. This year has seen the release of her six-book series *Creatures of Fantasy* as well as her first poetry collection, *Candle, Thread, and Flute*. Her poetry has appeared in *The Lyric*, *Canary*, *Goblin Fruit*, *14 by 14*, and other journals, and is forthcoming in *Measure*. Her short stories recently appeared in *Luna Station Quarterly* and the anthology, *Dreams of Steam IV*. As an editor or copy editor, Ms. Hinds has worked on numerous books for children and young adults, including winners of the Newbery Honor and the National Book Award for Young People's Literature. Her current work in progress is a young adult novel in free verse, tentatively titled *Arise, Fair Sun*. Featured GPS member, Terry Hensel, brought closure to the meeting, sharing some of his poetry. GPS' 2014 edition of *The Reach of Song* anthology, edited by Karen Pickell, will accept submissions from January 1, 2014, through February 21, 2014. All current members of the Georgia Poetry Society are encouraged to submit two poems for consideration. For rules and guidelines, see [www.georgiapoetrysociety.org/books](http://www.georgiapoetrysociety.org/books). Past editions of *The Reach of Song* are available by mail only, using the ROS order form found online. ~ *DuAnne Royall Kaiser, Reporter*

**ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY** held a board meeting at which members discussed and finalized the decision to create and publish a second anthology of members' work to be published in 2014. New and repeated outlets are evolving for opportunities to read our poetry to the public and offer an open mic for interested non-members. We have also started reserving public library cases for National Poetry Month. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President*

**MAINE POETS SOCIETY** in September gathered at the Rockland Public Library. Poems on the subject of "another poet, alive or dead" were judged by Roger Finch, Senior Poet Laureate of Maine. Quatrains were judged by Dawn Potter. The next meeting will be Saturday, February 8, 2014 in the Deering Wing of the Dyer Public Library in Saco, ME. Contests, open to members only, will be: Form, Villanelle, judged by Annie Finch; and Subject, Hibernation, judged by Henry Braun. The subject poem has a 24-line limit. A \$12 meeting registration fee includes lunch. Non-members are welcome and may stay to participate in a reading-in-the-round at about 3 p.m. New membership is encouraged. For more information and to learn about the Society, please visit [mainepoetsociety.com](http://mainepoetsociety.com) or contact MPS President Carol Bachofner at [mainepoet@me.com](mailto:mainepoet@me.com) or 207-594-8954. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

**MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY** continues to enjoy several official chapters that provide energetic programs. The Louise Brogan Chapter, directed by MaryEllen Latarte, presented an "Afternoon For the Arts" in September. The poets celebrated the connection between visual arts and the written word. Members read their original poems inspired by photographs from the New England Camera Club. Guitar music by Lou Arnold opened and closed the Festival. MSPS celebrated National Poetry Day at the Winthrop Public Library on Saturday, October 5. A proclamation from Governor Deval Patrick was read by our President, Jeanette Maes. Winners of the MSPS summer contest were announced by Contest Chair, Roberta Hung. President Maes thanked sponsors past, present, and future for their ongoing support and spoke of forthcoming opportunities to submit new poems, including short pieces for the poetry page in the *Bay State Echo*. Continuing our October tradition, Waterfront CREW Poets again did a presentation for the Autumn meeting. The Chapter presented an engaging program dealing with ekphrastic poetry. Member Allen Swartz put together a video that included each painting, drawing, photograph, and other art that had inspired

the poetic effort being delivered by each CREW poet. Selections were diverse in character and media. Included were works from da Vinci, Caravaggio, Magritte, all the way forward to Eva Hesse, with nods to a factory, tartans, stone walls, spider webs, and the Internet. Allen crafted an outstanding program book for each attendee. This engrossing production and was ably hosted by Louis Piccuolo. MSPS will hold its final 2013 meeting on Saturday, December 7 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Beverly Public Library. A Yankee Swap is scheduled with a poetic twist such as a wrapped gift accompanied by a verse that 'suggests' the item within. A cash prize goes to the poet whose verse does this best. A Used Poetry Book Silent Auction will follow a festive holiday buffet. Best wishes for a poetic 2014 from MSPS. ~ *Patricia Bruen Tacelli, Reporter*

**POETRY SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN** had about twenty-five members and guests attended the October PSM meeting at Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor, MI. President James Ahearn conducted readings of original poems and presented a workshop on Contest Guidelines. He reported that the 2013 Contest was very successful and was pleased with the results. Meeting participants discussed how to get youth involved in the Manningham competition. A committee was formed to investigate possibilities. Elected officers beginning January 2014 were selected as follows: President, Polly Opsahl; Vice President, Anita Waters; Treasurer, Julie George; Secretary, Cynthia Nankee; Recording Secretary, Patricia Barnes; Newsletter editor, Janeen Rastall; Parliamentarian, Mono D'Angelo; *Peninsula Poets* Editor, Ed Moran; Historian, Inge Logenburg Kyler; Contest Chairperson, James Ahearn. After the second round of readings of poetry, Janeen Rastall won the Traveling Trophy for her poem, "The Ukrainian Egg Class." ~ *Inge Logenburg Kyler, Historian*

**MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY's** 2013 Fall Mini-fest was held at Belhaven University in Jackson, MS on Oct. 12, and hosted by Central Branch. There was a pre-festival poetry reading and welcome Friday night for out of town attendees at Julep Restaurant in Jackson, with appetizers provided by Central Branch. The guest speaker for the festival, Paula Lambert, discussed the topic, "Poetry as Healing," and signed copies of her new book, *The Sudden Seduction of Gravity*. Recipient of Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship in 2004 and a resident fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts in 2005, Mrs. Lambert

holds a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and an M.F.A. from Bowling Green State University. Patty Butkovich, MPS 2013 Poet of the Year, also signed copies of her book, *A Long-stemmed Rose*. President Jeanne Kelly conducted the business meeting and named Wynne Huddleston (Alexander) MPS 2014 Poet of the Year. Also recognized was Brenda Finnegan, who received a Lifetime Achievement Award. Contest Coordinator Dierdre Payne announced winners in the various categories of our Fall Contest. Winners are listed on our updated site [misspoetry.net](http://misspoetry.net). The MPS Spring Festival, sponsored by MPS North Branch, will be held at the Hilton Gardens Hotel in Starkville, MS on April 26-27, 2014. Spring contest details will be available on the MPS website.  
~ Wynne H. Alexander, Secretary

**NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY** has initiated ambitious and exciting new programs to promote poetry "in New Mexico and beyond." On November 3 in Santa Fe, we partnered with Red Mountain Press (owned by NMSPS member Susan Gardner) and the Institute of American Indian Arts to sponsor a gathering of state legislators, academics, arts supporters, along with past and present poets laureate. The latter included Denise Low (Kansas), Walter Barga (Missouri), Michael Glaser (Maryland), Luci Tapahonso (Navajo Nation), as well as Jon Davis (current) and Joan Logghe (past) poets laureate of Santa Fe. At that meeting, we launched a program to create the position of NM State Poet Laureate. The idea is receiving very favorable and widespread interest; in fact, the meeting made AP wire service and was picked up by several publications, including *USA Today*, and was mentioned on several area TV stations. At our Society's Annual Meeting on Nov 2, Fil Peach was given our annual Patron of Poetry Award, while Jules Nyquist, who hosted "early bards" at her home in June, received the NMSPS Mission Award. Fil has been a generous contributor of time, effort, and money; and Jules' efforts to teach, feature, and share poetry through her year-round activities at her "Poetry Playhouse" have nurtured dozens of poets living in or visiting our state. November was a very exciting month for our Society. On November 15, we received the news that NMSPS member Jane Lipman had won the NM-AZ Book Award in poetry for her exquisite poetry collection, *On the Back Porch of the Moon*. Seven of the eight finalists in the poetry category are members of NMSPS, and we had our own cheering section at the awards banquet. ~ Shirley Blackwell, Chancellor

**POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA's** October celebration of National Poetry Day and Annual Fall Awards Banquet, held at the Twin Hills Country Club in Oklahoma City, featured a tribute to the late Oklahoma Poet Maxine Austin. For virtually all of her one hundred years, she was an avid supporter of the arts and artists, as well as a gifted voice for our entire state. She is missed. PSO elected Eddie and Joan Wilcoxon to serve as Co-Presidents for 2014 and 2015. Eddie served as Oklahoma Poet Laureate for 2011 and 2012, making more than a hundred appearances across the state, sharing poems and promoting the importance of poetry in everyday life. PSO is in the process of rewriting its by-laws, establishing a new website and Facebook page, as well as undertaking a statewide membership campaign. We would welcome ideas and input from any organization that has had a recent successful membership drive. Please contact Joan with thoughts and suggestions at [wilcoxens@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wilcoxens@sbcglobal.net) or phone 580-471-9733. This summer we will begin to collect entries from our members for a poetry anthology to be published next year. ~ Joan Wilcoxon, Co-President

**OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION's** highlight of the autumn was our annual Fall Conference, held on the grounds of Pacific University, in Forest Grove, a town situated in the hills west of Portland. We had the abundant assistance of the University's English Department chair, Kathlene Postma, together with the energetic participation of University faculty and student poets. The theme of this conference was "Teaching Poetry." A family emergency forced one of our two planned presenters to cancel just before the conference, but Robbie Pock, a teacher of writing and humanities at Pacific University and of reading and writing at Portland Community College, stepped up to fill the vacancy. She gave an idea-generating workshop on wildly long-range metaphors entitled "How is a Raven Like a Writing Desk?" Stephanie Lenox, a teacher of creative writing at Willamette University, Salem, led the workshop "Public Acts of Poetry: Coaxing/Coaching Creativity In and Out of the Classroom." Among our other activities, she gave us each a fortune cookie, had us create a negative version of our fortunes, and write "Misfortune Cookie" poems from those, showing us how negativity can illuminate the mystery in a poem. We also heard a presentation from our Webmistress, Katie Eberhart, who has reconfigured [www.oregonpoets.org](http://www.oregonpoets.org). She described its new features and accessibility, also urging us to keep our unit activity news coming to her, so she can post it. At lunch on

Saturday, Contest Chair Amy Miller presented the names of the first-place, second-place, and third-place poets in the six contests we had run since our Spring Conference. Winning poems were read by the poets who were present and by Amy for those who were not. There were two open-mic sessions; student members of UniversitySlam read in both. Student members also read in a special presentation Saturday morning, which included a description of the University's M.F.A. in Writing program. We also honored Ruth Harrison, longtime member, with a Lifetime Membership. The appreciation write-up is available at [oregonpoets.org/ruth-harrison-an-appreciation/](http://oregonpoets.org/ruth-harrison-an-appreciation/). As President Tiel Ansari remarked: "Who except Ruth would think to write an Italian sonnet on the laundromat as a refuge from life's ordinary disappointments and frustrations?" On Saturday evening, there was a panel on the topic, "Teaching Poetry," followed by an open mike. On Sunday morning we held the mentoring sessions for pre-registered OPA members. Mentoring has become a regular feature of our conferences. For others, there was a koffeeklatch at a coffee house in Forest Grove. After two years' exemplary service in the position, our Newsletter Editor, Kathryn Ridall, stepped down to be replaced by Board member Kathy Pyle. Now poetry groups and organizations around the state are preparing for the centennial of William Stafford's birth, which will come in January. Dorothy Stafford, inspirational teacher, widow of William Stafford, and a long-time supporter of arts and literature in Oregon, passed away on October 27th. A celebration of her life was held on November 3rd at Lewis and Clark College, where the Stafford collection is housed. OPA President Tiel Ansari attended on behalf of OPA. Also present were many OPA members, including Oregon Poet Laureate and long-time friend of the Stafford family, Paulann Petersen. ~ Dave Harvey, Secretary

**POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE** held its annual poetry festival on Saturday October 5, 2013. The festival started the evening before with a pot luck supper at the home of Sarah Gurley. The event on Saturday was held at the Holiday Inn at the University of Memphis. Janice Hornburg, a member of our Northeast chapter, was the featured speaker. In the afternoon, winners were announce for the thirty-three contests sponsored by members and friends of the society. Russell Strauss, with the Memphis chapter, won the Best of Fest Award. In mid-September the society held an outdoor poetry reading at Overton Park in Memphis. The event, planned by JoAn Howerton and Karen Kestner, was held jointly with a local

performance poetry group. The event was so successful that a second reading was held in the park in October. Our November meeting featured Caroline Sposto reading one of her poems. The reading was enjoyed by all. Our impromptu poetry contest was won by our new student member, Joseph Goodwin. He later performed his winning poem at a local talent show held at his high school. In addition, our December meeting had a silent auction where members were encourage to bid on items either no one wanted anymore or knew someone else could use. Proceeds went to our PST treasury. We also enjoyed potluck snacks brought by various members to celebrate the Holiday Season. Our Poetry in the Park series will begin in the Spring. From PST to NFSPS, we hope you had a good holiday season and have a prosperous New Year. My goals as President are to encourage present members to attend our meetings and to acquire new members, particularly students, in 2014. ~ *JoAn Robbins Howerton, President*

**POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS'** 57th Annual Awards Banquet was held at the Doubletree Hotel near the Galleria in Dallas on November 9. The theme was "A Harvest of Words." Valerie Martin Bailey was Chairman of the event and welcomed attendees. After the meal was served, President Jimmie Inez Sessions made introductions. Greetings from the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. were brought by the 26th NFSPS president, Budd Powell Mahan. As Chairman of the Hilton Ross Greer Outstanding Service Award, he announced that the 2013 recipient was Jeannette L. Strother. In the absence of Nancy Baass, Chairman of the PST Annual Contests, who was unable to attend, her Annual Contests Report was read by Vice President Catherine L'Herisson. Vice President L'Herisson and President Jimmie Inez Sessions announced the names of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place winners. 1st Place winners who were present read their winning poems. ~ *Nancy Baass*

**WYOPOETS'** Workshop Chairman, Myra Peak, revealed the names of the workshop panelists for our spring workshop. Echo Roy Kalproth, newly appointed Poet Laureate for the State of Wyoming, will join Patricia Frolander to present a much-anticipated April Workshop in Casper, WY. Kalproth's credentials as poet, writer, teacher, and ordained pastor are well-known throughout the state. Governor Matt Mead made the appointment on July 10, in a ceremony at the Wyoming State Capitol in Cheyenne. Echo comes from a fourth-generation ranching family. She now resides in Shoshoni, WY

where she is retired from teaching and plans to continue with her writing career and dedicate her gifts to poets across the state. She greeted Wyoming pioneers and youth at the Wyoming State Fair in Douglas, participated in a reunion performance of singers and poets in Wilson, and had the honor of introducing author and keynote speaker, Terry Tempest Williams, at the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies Leadership Institute in October. Patricia Frolander, Wyoming's immediate past Poet Laureate, was the 2011 Neltje Blanchan Award winning poet and the National Senior Poet Laureate winner. She also holds the 2012 High Plains Book Award and the Western Heritage Award for Best Poetry Book of 2012. Pat will join Echo as WyoPoets celebrate Poetry month, April 2014. ~ *Lee Ann Siebken, Reporter*

## POETRY ARTICLE

### Creating Characters in Poetry

Tiel Aisha Ansari, Portland, OR  
President, Oregon Poetry Association

I think it's fair to say that character isn't as essential to poetry as we understand it, as it is to prose. After all, one can find many examples of poems in which no identifiable character appears—no narrator, no other people, sometimes no living things at all:

*framed against black rock  
a single dead branch contains  
a thousand poems*

It would be difficult to find a novel, or even a short story, without characters.

On the other hand, many poems do contain well-delineated characters. However, because poems on average are shorter than stories or novels, the process of character development in poetry tends to be compressed. (Note that I said "on average." Certainly there are book-length poems or poem collections, in which characters can be developed in a more novel-like fashion.)

Also, there's little room in a poem for characters to *evolve*. If you've read *The Three Musketeers* and any of the sequels (and if you haven't you're missing a treat), you've seen D'Artagnan grow from a boy into a complex and interesting adult. Athos gives up drinking and assumes the responsibilities of a parent. Aramis quits the soldiering life and turns to Church intrigue. Porthos... well, Porthos just becomes more Porthos. You don't get that in a poem unless it's epic-length.

Character description and development in a poem tend to rely strongly on inference.

### Aubergine Kiss

*Romance on the Big Muddy. French doll  
poised on a wrought-iron staircase among  
vines*

*drooping with heavy gourds,  
her eyes bitter as eggplant flesh.*

*Her glossy purple lips are puckered.*

*You think you'll pluck the fruit. Once that  
hook sets  
there's no extracting it.*

*All it takes is one kiss.*

Poems often depict a moment. It may be a pivotal, or potentially pivotal, moment in the life of the characters, but the consequences of the event are left to the reader's imagination.

Let's look at some of the things we can infer about the woman in the poem. "Big Muddy" and "French" set the poem in a Louisiana location, most likely the French Quarter of New Orleans or a heavily French-influenced parish. "French doll" implies something about the woman's clothing and demeanor, and also perhaps something about her self-perception: given the description of her eyes as "bitter," we may conclude she feels used or objectified. This is underlined by the words "You think you'll pluck the fruit," which suggest a rather uncompassionate attitude on the part of the person addressed in the poem.

"Vines" and "gourds" emphasize the semi-tropical setting, while "drooping" and "heavy" place us on the boundary between lushness and decadence. Does this just describe the surrounding vegetation, or might it refer to the woman's body? or her feelings? or her feelings about her body?

This layering of meanings is an example of the compression I mentioned above. It's a useful technique in a confined space. But it has another benefit: it draws readers into the text, leading them to create these connections for themselves. Readers who engage a poem (or prose—there's no reason these techniques can't be used in prose, but it seems less common) in this way find the sense of discovery exhilarating, in the same way a whodunit reader thrills over figuring out the identity of the criminal before it's revealed.

[Note from the Editor: The above article was first published online at: [wa.emergent-publishing.com/2011/05/creating-characters-in-poetry](http://wa.emergent-publishing.com/2011/05/creating-characters-in-poetry).]

## CONTESTS

### POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS

has a monthly poetry contest for members with the exception of May and October. May is the annual Lily Peters luncheon with three special prizes. The month of October holds the annual Poetry Day event with an estimated 24-36 contests. For deadlines and rules see: [poetsroundtable.webs.com](http://poetsroundtable.webs.com).

**CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY** is accepting submissions for the Connecticut Poetry Award through May 31, 2014. There are prizes of \$400, \$100, and \$50 for the winners. Winning poems will be published in the *Connecticut River Review*. For a fee of \$15 made out to CPS, poets can enter up to three poems, with an 80-line limit for each poem. Writers should include two copies of each poem, one with complete contact information and the other with NO contact information. Send submissions to Connecticut Poetry Award, CPS, PO Box 270554, W. Hartford, CT 06127. Include SASE for results.

**MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY** holds two contests each year, Spring and Fall, in conjunction with our festivals. For rules and information, write to Jeanne S. Kelly, 315 Church St., Madison, MS 39110, or email [jskelly04@gmail.com](mailto:jskelly04@gmail.com) (put "Contest Information" in the subject line), or consult the MPS website, [www.misspoetry.net](http://www.misspoetry.net).

**MISSOURI STATE POETRY SOCIETY's** Winter contest deadline is: Postmark, February 15, 2014. Two copies of each entry, category number and name in upper left corner of both copies, poet's name and address in upper right corner of one copy. If member, put "Missouri State Poetry Society" below your address, otherwise put "non-member". 40 or fewer lines. May be previously published if poet retains the rights to the poem; may enter each category as many times as poet wishes. Categories: 1) rhymed verse or blank verse, 2) free verse, 3) humorous verse, 4) any form, winter subject, 5) poet's choice, members only (any form, any subject). Members pay \$2 per entry in each category. Non-members pay \$2 per entry, categories 1-4. Payable to MSPS. Send poems and fees to Bill Lower, 21010 S. Hwy 245, Fair Play, MO 65649. Send SASE for list of winners.

## POETRY EVENTS & NOTES

### POETRY IN THE PARK – SOUTHERN UTAH

Mark March 21th, 2014, on your calendar for Poetry in the Park at Zion National Park in Utah with John Rezmerski. For details, see: [www.poetry-in-the-park.com](http://www.poetry-in-the-park.com).

### INTERESTED IN SLAM POETRY?

Steven Concert, NFSPS Chancellor, is looking to form a NFSPS Slam Team. Want to join? Email Steven for details at: [paperlesspoetsonline@hotmail.com](mailto:paperlesspoetsonline@hotmail.com).

## ENCORE COVER SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN

NFSPS members are encouraged to share original art or photos that would be appropriate for the cover of *Encore*. Be sure to send material in a vertical format unless the photo or art can be used as a "wrap around" cover. In horizontal wrap formats, care must be taken that the focal point is on the right side so it will be on the front cover and not the back. You may submit digitally, using a high resolution jpeg. If the photo is grainy or fuzzy, I cannot use it. Send digital submissions to [vbailey@satx.rr.com](mailto:vbailey@satx.rr.com). If you send hard copy, it must fit on my scanner—no larger than 8.5 x 14. Those who want to send original art should take a photograph of the art and send the photograph digitally or as hard copy. I do not want to be responsible for someone's only copy of original art.

I like to keep all the submissions to consider again each year. If you do not want me to keep your photo, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope so I can return it to you. If you do not send an envelope, I will assume I can keep it on file. Some years, submissions are sparse; other years I am inundated. Please send your submissions to: Valerie Martin Bailey, *Encore* Editor, 2207 Parhaven Drive, San Antonio, TX 78232. The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2014.