



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

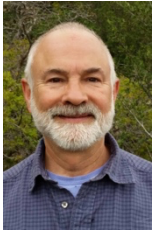
An educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing and appreciation of poetry in America.

## Strophes

Vol. LIX No. 4

www.nfspd.com

April 2023



### Dear NFSPS Poets,

This year's NFSPS annual convention, *Catch Poetry: Stage & Page*, will be held June 21-26 in Des Moines, Iowa. Here are two important innovations this year:

1. The NFSPS board is acting as the primary organizer and host of this year's hybrid (i.e., in-person & virtual) convention in Des Moines, Iowa. This is the first time the NFSPS board, rather than a state society, is hosting an in-person annual convention. We are partnering with the Iowa Poetry Association to plan the convention's program and to connect with noted poets in the state. IPA has arranged for us to include many Iowa presenters, provided local tour options along with IPA volunteers to help with convention activities. IPA's involvement will significantly improve how the convention is conducted and, hopefully, make it more enjoyable for the attendees. A big thanks is due to IPA and their leadership team.
2. The NFSPS BlackBerryPeach National Slam Competition has for the first time been integrated into an NFSPS annual convention. This will provide convention attendees with an extensive set of performance poetry events. And for those who register as Zoom attendees, they will also be able to watch the slam competition events as well as the convention's traditional events such as the announcing of contest results and the scheduled poetry workshops/presentations.

Consider joining us for *Catch Poetry: Stage & Page*, either in person or by Zoom. This latter option worked well for virtual attendees to last June's NFSPS convention hosted by the Ohio Poetry Association. This year's convention registration, both for in-person and virtual attendance, can be made by visiting the convention website: [nfspd.net](https://nfspd.net) (note: ".net", not ".com"). For registration, there are a variety of in-person and virtual options to choose from. Scrolling below the registration options you will see the current program schedule, which starts Wednesday afternoon and goes through Monday morning. The cost to attend for either in-person or virtual is \$75, a great value for more than three evenings of performance poetry voiced on stage, presentations by noted poets, along with the announcing of Honorable Mentions and the reading of winning poems from this year's 50 categories. See this issue for more details.

Shifting to a topic relevant to all our state poetry societies, I held a Zoom session in mid-February for state society presidents. Almost a dozen state presidents attended. One topic in this session that prompted much discussion was whether reaching out to performance poets and slam competitors will ultimately bring in new members to our societies. Some state presidents were very positive in that they had already seen significant interest in their society in response to promoting performance poetry and slam competitions. Some also found partnering with slam groups in their state to be a win-win: A) the slam groups knew how to conduct competitions to select a slam poet to represent their society in the national slam competition; B) society members were made aware of slam events that they might be interested in attending; and C) slam poets found out about the poetry society and its chapters across their state. A few state societies have even formed slam chapters. However, in the Zoom session, some state presidents expressed concern about the cost of "investing" in performance/slam and the uncertainty that these poets will join their state societies. Needless to say, this topic doesn't have a clear answer for each of the 33 NFSPS state societies. However, our intent is

to identify ways that successful poetry societies have found to grow membership, document these successful approaches in PDFs or videos, and then make this content available to all the other NFSPS societies.

This sharing of successful practices leads to my final topic for this message: NFSPS Learning Central. As I mentioned in my October 2022 *Strophes* message, we have the new Board role of Learning Coordinator, filled by 2nd Vice Chancellor Peter Stein, and assisted by Chancellor Deborah Petersen. In January they hosted a discussion via Zoom on Membership, again with almost a dozen state presidents attending. Both Peter for the League of Minnesota Poets and Deborah for the Poetry Society of Indiana have been presidents of their societies. This experience helped them facilitate a highly informative conversation on Membership. We recorded this Zoom session (as a video) and took meeting notes. Both the video and the notes document capture a good number of ways state societies have found to bring in new members. Our Learning Central content is currently hosted on the web in a temporary storage location. We are working to move this Membership content and other Learning Central work-in-progress content to a permanent site that will be web-accessible. As I introduced this new initiative in my August 2022 *Strophes* president's message, the vision for Learning Central is to: 1) help societies improve the benefits they provide to members, and 2) offer guides on the craft of writing and performing poetry. On this first objective, by identifying and documenting good practices some of our poetry societies have had success with, other interested societies can take up these practices and, so too, improve. A poetry society that delivers high quality benefits valued by its members has a bright future. All our societies are competing for poets' attention, both within our states and nationally. NFSPS is committed to helping each of our poetry societies as they meet their challenges. Learning Central is at its core a 'teach them how to fish' approach. Across our 33 state poetry societies we have many excellent "fishing techniques" to share with each other. And as more effective and innovative your state poetry society becomes; this will benefit each of you.

Your servant in poetry,  
Paul Ford, 35th NFSPS President  
"Poetry belongs to everyone" ~ Joy Harjo

### 2023 NFSPS CONVENTION



Members of the Iowa Poetry Association joyfully invite all members of NFSPS to West Des Moines, Iowa, June 21-26 for the National Convention and BlackBerryPeach National Slam Poetry Competition. Register now for *Catch Poetry: Stage and Page*, and join us for NFSPS's first national event featuring panels, workshops, performances and contests for both page and stage poets! Register at [NFSPS.net](https://nfspd.net) or using the enclosed form.

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

Organized October 17, 1959 ~ Mary B. Wall, Founder  
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Elected, NFSPS Convention, June 2022

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**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) ~ April (\*November 25th) ~ April (\*February 25th). News items and information on contests may be sent via regular mail or email, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Julie Cummings, *Strophes* Editor  
9428 Fallen Rock Road, Conifer, CO. 80433  
jcummings3@gmail.com

\* Submission Deadlines

*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.

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## MINNESOTA POET WINS BARBARA STEVENS AWARD



This June NFSPS will release *Petrichor*, a book by Nancy Hengeveld of Minnesota. It is being published as the winner of the 2022 Barbara Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition, judged by Ellen Bass. A retired licensed psychologist and former op-ed columnist for the Rochester *Post Bulletin*, Hengeveld lives with her husband in Preston, MN.

When I first saw Hengeveld's manuscript, I didn't know the meaning of "petrichor," so was glad that its title page included a definition: "the scent of rain falling on dry soil." That scent is beautiful and has strong positive associations, and the word "petrichor" is likewise pleasant on the tongue and in the ear.

Much of the beauty of *petrichor* comes from the promise of refreshment after long drought. Likewise, the poems in Hengeveld's *Petrichor* bring us through prolonged struggles to hard-won peace. Here is how Ellen Bass describes the arc of the book: "Nancy Hengeveld takes us into the life of a woman with a son in prison, an abusive husband, and her challenges in beginning again. . . . These spare poems hold a compelling transformation. By the end, we are moved to follow her imperative: 'When you think of me, don't visit a graveyard. Wear walking shoes, bring drinking water, bring your children.'"

As I began reading the manuscript, I was immediately struck by the poems' style: "spare" but not flat, with pacing and spacing to allow each successive image and narrative element to have full impact. It's a style that helps me trust the speaker. When she feels fear or rage or grief, so do I; when she finds or achieves release, so do I.

"Learn to Caw" is a poem that appears late in the manuscript. It addresses a "you" who might be any of us. The poem begins, "You don't know how strong you are. / You don't feel strong." It concedes, "You only know you're tired," and recognizes, "You don't know that what you carry / is more / than most people will lift." Notwithstanding, it urges,

But here's something you can do:  
Learn to caw with the crows.  
It takes practice.  
They'll answer you.

Hengeveld's manuscript almost didn't have a chance to win the Barbara Stevens Award—because she almost didn't enter it in the competition! She had been using our guidelines as an aid in preparing it for self-publishing. Once it was ready, her daughter convinced her to submit it.

Nancy Hengeveld entered the Barbara Stevens Competition as a non-member, but she is actually a long-time member of the League of Minnesota Poets. She had let her membership lapse during the pandemic and was advised not to renew late in 2022 but to wait until this January, when her dues would cover a full year instead of just a couple of months.

NFSPS 2nd Vice-President Steven Concert is now editing and designing *Petrichor* as a book. Hengeveld told me that he had designed a beautiful cover for it.

At every NFSPS Convention, the winner of the Barbara Stevens Competition reads from their new book and signs copies for those who have purchased them at the special convention price. I am especially looking forward to hearing Nancy Hengeveld read from *Petrichor* at the lunch on Friday, June 23, in Des Moines, and then to re-reading the entire work in book form. ~ *Eleanor Berry*

## THE BLACKBERRY PEACH NATIONAL SLAM POETRY COMPETITION WILL BE HELD AT THE 2023 NFSPS CONVENTION IN DES MOINES, IOWA ON JUNE 21-26

The Blackberry Peach poetry competitions will enter its seventh successful year of the Spoken and Written Word contest. This year's winners will perform at the awards ceremony on Sunday night, June 25<sup>th</sup>. And this year for the first time the Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam Competition will be held as part of the NFSPS annual convention, building on the successful partnership with the Florida State Poets Association last year, when the first annual Blackberry Peach National Slam Competition ran concurrently with the FSPA Convention in October in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida.

The slam competition will run from June 21<sup>st</sup> thru June 24<sup>th</sup>, with the entire tournament including Finals slated to occur at the host hotel. In addition, there will be a Youth Mini-Festival on Friday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, most likely happening a short car ride from the host hotel. The Mini-Festival will feature workshops from esteemed presenters, a National Youth Poetry Slam, and a National Youth Open Mic. The Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam will also offer many side events, including a NUPIC and an Erotic Poetry Open Mic. The mixture and integration of Stage and Page poets will provide an exciting opportunity for all types of poets from all over the country to gather together for performances and competitions at the highest level, readings, presentations, meals and face to face get togethers. And others who are not able to be at the convention in person will be able to participate via livestream and enjoy the happenings from the comfort of their homes, saving money, travel expense and time.

Registration details for participation in this year's National Poetry Slam Competition and the total Convention Program are available on the NFSPS website or at NFSPS.us.

If you have any questions, or need any additional information about our Blackberry Peach Family of contests, including the opportunity to become a Silver, Gold or Platinum Sponsor or about the Blackberry Peach participation in this year's convention, please contact me at [Jcavanaugh1@gmail.com](mailto:Jcavanaugh1@gmail.com). ~ *Joseph Cavanaugh, First Vice President; Kevin Campbell, NFSPS Performance Poetry Advocate*

## PAGE AND STAGE SPEAKER BIOS

More information available at [nfsp.net/speaker\\_bios](http://nfsp.net/speaker_bios) and in *Strophes April Web edition*

**Sunday Keynote: Thomas Sayers Ellis** co-founded The Dark Room Collective (1989) and (with James Brandon Lewis) Heroes Are Gang Leaders (2014), a Free Jazz literary band of musicians and writers who were awarded the American Book Award for Oral Literature in 2018. HAGL has released six CDs and has performed in Paris, Berlin, New York City, Gdansk, Lisbon and the Hague. Ellis is also the author of *The Maverick Room*, *Skin Inc.: Identity Repair Poems*, *The Corny Toys*, *Crank Shaped Notes* (2021) and *Mexico* (2021), a book of photographs. His poems have appeared in *Best American Poetry* (1997, 2001, 2010, 2015); *The Paris Review*; *Poetry*; *Grand Street*, *Tin House* and *The Nation* and numerous anthologies. Ellis was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry in 2015. In 2019 and 2022 his photography has been the focus of two solo exhibitions: "Manually Forcing All Modes of ReSKINstance Into Fo(lk)cus" and "Photosynchronologies: Fragments of a Poetic Time" both presented at Studiottantuno Contemporary Art Projects in Mantova, Italy. In addition, he writes a column on photography, poetics and culture called "Fo(lk)cal fir-aim" for the Arrowsmith Journal.

**Andrew Latona** is a guitarist raised in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he studied with the late Paul Wingo and got experience playing at Church, Go Go spots, and Jazz clubs. He attended university at Purchase College where he studied with the late Vic Juris, and first met Jon Faddis. He graduated as Outstanding Senior, and was awarded the James Moody Scholarship. Upon graduating in 2017 he has gone on to work with Faddis, Jazzmia Horn, Julius Rodriguez Trio, and many more. He currently resides in Bed Stuy Brooklyn with his brother, Christopher Latona and they co-lead their own group The Latona Brothers, paying homage to the experiences that have shaped their musical journeys.

**Luke Stewart** is a DC/NYC-based musician and cultural organizer, with a presence in the national and international professional music community. His ensembles include Irreversible Entanglements featuring Moor Mother, Blacks' Myths, Heroes are Gang Leaders, and has performed in a myriad of other notable collaborations.

**Friday Keynote: Vince Gotera** teaches at the University of Northern Iowa, where he was Editor of the *North American Review* (2000-2016). He is also former Editor of *Star\*Line*, the print journal of the international Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association (2017-2020). His poetry collections include *Dragonfly*, *Ghost Wars*, *Fighting Kite*, *The Coolest Month*, and the upcoming *Pacific Crossing*. Recent poems appeared in *Altered Reality Magazine*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Dreams & Nightmares*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Philippines Graphic (Philippines)*, *Rosebud*, *The Wild Word (Germany)* and the anthologies *Multiverse (UK)*, *Dear America*, and *Hay(na)ku 15*. He blogs at The Man with the Blue Guitar <http://vincegotera.blogspot.com>.

#### Iowa Showcase Poets:

**Paul Brooke** is the author of five books of poetry and one book of nonfiction. He combines book design, photography, and poetry together in many of his collections. Once he was chased by a bear, once he was stalked by a mountain lion, and once he stepped on a caiman. He is a professor in English and the Endowed Chair of Creative Writing at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jennifer L. Knox's** most recent book of poetry is *Crushing It* (Copper Canyon Press, 2019). Her poems have appeared five times in *The Best American Poetry* series, as well as in publications such as *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, and *American Poetry Review*. She has taught poetry writing at Iowa State University, Hunter College, Cornell College, and in classes across the country.

**Linda Brown** is a Black 24 year old artist who is also a Taurus from Des Moines, IA. During the day Linda is a part of an organization named SAY Poetry, whose mission is to support and empower youth on their journey to become self-sustaining artists, providing youth spaces to exist safely, be celebrated and heard. Linda is an artist who uses words and performance as a transformative exchange of energy, documenting moments on earth as it spins.

**Ralph James Savarese** is the author, co-author and co-editor of nine books. His most recent collection of poetry, written with Stephen Kuusisto, is *Someone Falls Overboard: Talking through Poems* (Nine Mile Books 2021). His poems have appeared, among other places, in *American Poetry Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Galway Review*, *Poetry International*, *Rattle*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, *Seneca Review*, *Sewanee Review*, *Southwest Review*, and *Threepenny Review*. He teaches at Grinnell College and lives in Iowa City.

**David James "D.J." Savarese** is a 2022/23 Iowa Arts Fellow who teaches poetry writing for the LYNX Project/Chicago. He is the author of *Swoon* (2022); *Studies in Brotherly Love* (2021); and *A Doorknob for the Eye* (2017) and the co-producer, narrative commentator, and subject of the Peabody award-winning, Emmy-nominated documentary *Deej: Inclusion Shouldn't Be a Lottery* (2017).

### Draft Schedule Catch Poetry: Stage and Page June 21 - June 26, 2023 All times Central Time Zone

#### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21

12:00-4:00 pm Optional Tour  
2:00 – 5:00 pm Registration table open  
2:00 - 4:00 pm Bookroom Open for setup\*  
4:00 Slam Orientation  
4:30 pm Dinner on your own  
6:30 – 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
6:30 – 11:00 pm STAGE: ROUND ONE Blackberry Peach Slam

#### THURSDAY, JUNE 22

9:30 – 5:00 pm Registration table open  
9:30 – 12:00 pm Book room open for setup\*  
9:00 - 12:30 pm NFSPS, Inc Board Meeting  
12:30 pm Lunch on your own  
1:00- 4:00 pm Book Room open for sales  
1:30 – 4:00 pm STAGE & PAGE: PANEL DISCUSSION  
How to conduct a slam competition (State organizers) Kevin Campbell, Moderator  
4:00 Break  
5:00 – 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
5:00 - 6:15 pm OPENING DINNER MEET THE POETS—Paggers & Stagers Convention Madness Winners  
6:30 – 11:00 pm STAGE: ROUND TWO Blackberry Peach Slam  
10:00 pm Open Mic Poetry Reading

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 23

7:30 - 8:30 am Open Mic Poetry Reading  
9:00 - 5:30 pm Book Room Open  
8:30 - 10:30 am NFSPS Inc Contest Awards  
10:30- 10:45 am Break  
10:45- 11:45 am PAGE: Jennifer L. Knox Strange Times for Rhymes: Writing Poetry After the Pandemic  
12:00 - 2:15 pm Luncheon Invocation Poem Barbara Stevens Manuscript Award  
1:00 - 1:15 pm Break  
1:15 - 2:15 pm NFSPS Inc Contest Awards  
2:15 - 2:45 pm Break  
2:45 - 5:00 pm PAGE & STAGE: IOWA SHOWCASE  
Co-Emcees Paul Rudolph and Dawn Terpstra  
5:00 - 5:45 pm Autograph signing at book room for Speakers  
5:00– 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
6:30 - 7:30 pm Dinner Invocation Poem  
7:30 - 8:30 pm IOWA KEYNOTE VINCE GOTERA  
8:30 - 8:45 pm Break  
8:45– 10:00 pm Open Mic Poetry Reading  
9:30 - 11:30 pm TBA—Surprise event

**SATURDAY, JUNE 24**

7:30 - 8:30 am Open Mic Poetry Reading  
 9:00 - 5:30 pm Book Room Open  
 8:30 - 5:00 pm Registration Open  
 8:30 - 9:30 am State President's Meeting  
 9:30 - 9:45 am Break  
 9:45 - 12:00 pm Plenary Session  
 12:15 - 12:45 pm Luncheon  
     Invocation Poem  
     Manningham Winners  
 12:45 - 1:00 pm Break  
 1:00 - 3:00 pm STAGE & PAGE: Caleb Rainey  
 3:00 - 5:00 pm NFSPS Inc Contest Awards  
 5:00 - 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
 5:00 - 6:30 pm Dinner Invocation Poem College Undergraduate Poetry Contest Winners  
 6:30 - 11:00 pm STAGE: FINALS Blackberry Peach Slam  
 10:00 pm Open Mic Poetry Reading

**SUNDAY, JUNE 25**

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Open Mic Poetry Reading  
 9:30 - 2:15 pm Book Room Open  
 9:30 - 11:45 am Stage: Workshop  
 12:00 - 2:00 pm Luncheon Invocation Poem  
     Blackberry Peach Spoken and Written Poetry  
 2:00 - 2:15 pm Break  
 2:15 - 4:00 pm Thomas Sayer Ellis WORKSHOP  
 4:00 - 4:30 pm Autograph signing for keynote  
 4:00 to 5:00 Bookroom-pick up all books (no sales)  
 6:00 - 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
 6:00 - 8:30 pm Dinner  
     Invocation Poem  
 7:30 - 8:30 pm KEYNOTE SPEAKER Thomas Sayers Ellis and Stereo Fight Tree Yo  
 8:30 - 8:45 pm Break  
 8:45 pm to finish NFSPS Inc Contest Awards  
 10:00 pm Open Mic Poetry Reading

**MONDAY, JUNE 26**

9:00 am - noon Optional Tour

**\*Are you attending convention and want to sell books in the bookroom? The guidelines and forms are available on the convention website at [nfsp.net](http://nfsp.net) or email [jcumings3@gmail.com](mailto:jcumings3@gmail.com)\***

**NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS**

**POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS'** Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration is scheduled for April 15, 2023, at Parkview United Methodist Church, 514 North Border Street, Benton, AR. Registration will begin at 9:00 and the conference will begin at 9:30. There is no registration fee, and lunch will be available for a fee. The featured speaker is Arkansas's eighth Poet Laureate, Suzanne Underwood Rhodes. Suzanne was appointed Poet Laureate in January 2022, and serves on the board of the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas. She's the author of *Flying Yellow: New and Selected Poems*, and was named a semi-finalist in the 2022 North American Book Award through the Poetry Society of Virginia. Her poems have appeared in many journals, books, and anthologies. She is currently finishing work on a chapbook and a third full-length poetry collection. Awards include nominations for the Pushcart prize, first place in the Dr. Lily Peter Memorial Award, the Richard Lewis Haiku contest, the Virginia Highlands Creative

Writing Contest, and other awards. A retired college professor, she lives in Fayetteville, and teaches virtual poetry workshops through The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, Virginia. Each year this conference honors Dr. Lily Peter, in recognition of her efforts to promote poetry in Arkansas. For conference questions, contact John McPherson at [mmcpherson8391@gmail.com](mailto:mmcpherson8391@gmail.com). ~ *Laura Bridges, Vice President*

**CALIFORNIA STATE POETRY SOCIETY** is pleased to announce the following nominations for the Pushcart Prize 2022, from the *California Quarterly*, vol. 48, issues 1- 4: "Waterfall Symphony," by Dana Stamps II; "Light," by Frederick Livingston; "The Land I Long For," by Michael Fraley; "The Calling," by Ella Czajkowska; "Tule Elk Preserve in March," by Vivian Underhill; and "Morning at Moore's Lake, Again," by Kimberly Nunes. The winners of the 35th Annual Contest. selected by Contest Judge Frank Iosue of Arizona, were published in the CQ 48:4. First Prize: Jeanne Wagner: "Dolores Street;" Second Prize: Susan Wolbarst - "After;" Third Prize: Claire Scott: "Ariadne Auf Naxos." Of the six honorary mentions, four went to Claire Scott. The two other honorary mentions went to Susan Wolbarst and Sunny Yim Alperson. The *California Quarterly* had two guest editors in 2022: Margaret Saine and Deborah P. Kolodji. Dr. Maja Trochimczyk, CSPA President, edits the *CSPA Poetry Letter*, which presents monthly contest winners, featured poets, and book reviews. Along with William Scott Galasso and Sharmagne Leland St. John, Dr. Trochimczyk was recently honored by State Senator Anthony Portantino for service to the California community through poetry and cultural activities. ~ *Maja Trochimczyk, Ph.D., President*

**THE CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY** provides six poetry contests with cash prizes each year and publishes a beautiful national poetry journal, *Connecticut River Review*, which garners submissions from across the country. We are currently accepting submissions for the 2023 edition of *Connecticut River Review*. The submission period ends April 15 (see our website for details). Two additional contests are currently in play: The Margaret Gibson Poet Laureate Poetry Award, themed *nature in the time of global climate change*, open through April 15th, and the Lynn De Caro Poetry Competition for Connecticut high school students. Winner of our 2022 Experimental Poetry Contest is Brandon Kelley, for his poem *Straight White Guys*. Winner of the Vivian Shipley Poetry Award this year is Srinivas Mandavilli for his poem *Blackout*. Congratulations to both.

We have ten active local chapters at this time, some meeting in-person, some online. Most meet monthly to workshop one another's poems. Additionally, some chapter presidents are collaborating with local libraries to provide some very innovative programs: ekphrastic poetry workshops, working with their library's art exhibits, and online readings, for local poets to promote and share their work. CPS continues to provide monthly open mics (MOMs) and monthly educational workshops called Poets on Poetry (POPs). Bi-monthly President's workshops provide an additional option to members for workshopping their poems. We have an in-person party planned for May 20th and an ekphrastic workshop in March at the New Britain Museum of American Art. We welcome all poets from any state to join CPS. Check out our website: [ctpoe.net](http://ctpoe.net) ~ *Pat Mottola, President*

**ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY** hosted a successful Zoom reading by poets presenting their winning state poetry contest entries, and the first student ISPS sponsored contest has attracted student submissions from all over the state. Another new event was the Best Book of the Year contest, and Neth Hass was the winner, chosen by Eleanor Berry. Kate Hutchinson was the runner up. The Addison Center for the Arts once again invited ISPS members to respond to the third collaboration with artists in their Expressions: Art & Verse 2023 on

February 18<sup>th</sup>. A reception to view art and ekphrastic poetry was held before a reading of all the thirty-eight poems.

After a long wait, our biennial anthology, *Distilled Lives, Volume 6*, was released in February and is available on Amazon.

On April 1, to kickoff National Poetry Month, there will be a Zoom workshop presented by Wesley Frazier-Keys, first-place winner of the 2022 NFSPS Blackberry Peach Spoken Word National Competition. Brewed Awakening in Westmont continues to host Zoom and live coverage of featured poets and open mics at the coffeehouse on the last Sunday of each month. Our seven chapters meet every other month. Some gather in person and others by Zoom. Please browse our website: [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org) for ongoing news, membership form, members' poems and books. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President*

**IOWA POETRY ASSOCIATION:** Anticipation is high ahead of a full schedule of events this spring for members of the Iowa Poetry Association. In addition to judging the Iowa Poetry Contest and assembling IPA's annual *Lyrical Iowa* anthology, April's spring workshop with critics Rustin Larson and Michaela Mullin, and IPA's monthly poetry Zoomcast, IPA LIVE, members are also collaborating on a three-day regional poetry celebration, Poetry Palooza, taking place from April 6-8 in Des Moines. Poetry Palooza will feature the IPA Championship Poetry Slam, workshops, readings and performances by current and former poet laureates from Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and Kansas, along with keynote Akwi Nji. Register to attend workshops and events at no charge at [poetryamp.org](http://poetryamp.org). ~ *Dawn Terpstra, President*

**THE SUNFLOWER POETRY SOCIETY OF KANSAS:** Greetings to all, we are The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas!

In November 2022, Russell Strauss (Board Liaison to State Societies) recommended at the board meeting for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) that the Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas be accepted as a new state poetry society. The board voted unanimously to accept us as the newest state poetry society. The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas (SPSK) is now the 33rd state poetry society in NFSPS.

The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas is a diverse and all-inclusive group dedicated to the promotion of poetry, sharing of poetry, mutual mentorship, encouragement, creative freedom and poetic expression in a supportive environment that embraces poets and poetry aficionados of all skill levels in both written and performance forms. The focus of this group is poetry and inclusivity. BIPOC, LGBTQQIP2SAA and other poets from underrepresented groups are welcomed and encouraged to participate.

Our path to this place proved to be quite arduous but we persevered. We are very excited to have the Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas as part of The National Federation of State Poetry Societies mission to share poetry and foster a poetic community. We are a small group but look forward to thriving and growing. With that goal in mind, we have made several efforts to foster community and increase awareness of our poetry group.

We have used social media platforms to promote and encourage membership. For example, M Palowski Moore utilizes his Silver Lion Poet Facebook page to share information and updates. We recently created a website <https://sunflowerpoetrysoc.wixsite.com/my-site-2> and a Facebook page (The Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas Facebook) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1195780731376210>. We held two informative and collaborative meetings in September and October of 2022 to discuss our mission, share ideas, receive input and ensure that all voices are being heard. Our emphasis is that the group belongs to everyone and active engagement is key. All ideas are welcomed and encouraged. The strength of our poetry group will come from creating a community where all voices are valued and all

participate in shaping a shared vision. This is a safe space to explore and express your poetry in a nurturing and supportive environment.

Additionally, we have held monthly workshops. Our members enjoy the camaraderie and feedback. Some of the members have decided to submit poems from the workshops to various poetry competitions sponsored by the NFSPS. We also will be represented during a Black History month event at a local high school as part of our youth outreach. Efforts to increase our community presence continue. During the Tangled Roots Art Exhibition (2022) and Art Heals Exhibition (2023) at InterUrban Arthouse, M Palowski Moore used his platform as a featured artist to promote and share information about the Sunflower Poetry Society. After being invited to share poetry for the annual William Stafford Memorial event, our group was provided space to discuss our mission and this led to an increase in membership.

We are a small group, just beginning our poetic journey. We look forward to receiving the guidance and input from advisors who represent the more seasoned societies in NFSPS. Proudly, our members reside in states across the country from Georgia to Washington State. We continue to strive and thrive in terms of expansion, contribution and membership. The heart of our group will always be ensuring that poets of all skill levels and poetic forms feel welcomed and encouraged to express art that honors their truth. ~ *M Palowski Moore, President*

**KENTUCKY STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S** popular Zoom reading series continues on the third Tuesday of each month. Open mics on May 16 and July 18 are free and open to the public, though you must be a KSPS member to read. Bernard Clay was the February featured reader (available at <https://tinyurl.com/KSPSYoutube>) and Joy Priest will read on April 18. June is Lexington Poetry Month, so a Lexington poet will be featured on June 20. Please join us each third Tuesday at 8:00 pm Eastern. Information and participation links can be found at <https://kystatepoetrysociety.org/>.

*Pegasus*, the literary journal of KSPS, has moved to its own site! The spring issue will go up this month at <https://pegasus-poetry.org>. Please consider submitting your work for future issues! ~ *Jennifer Barricklow, Secretary*

**MAINE POETS SOCIETY** is looking forward to our first-ever hybrid meeting, scheduled for Saturday, May 20, at the Durham Friends Meeting House, 532 Quaker Meeting House Road in Durham. The host organization has offered us the privilege of using their OWL equipment so we can see how well this may work for us. A Zoom link will be sent to all current MPS members by May 19<sup>th</sup>, to offer the opportunity of participation without traveling, but we hope a good number of those able to attend in person will do so.

There will be a brief business meeting beginning at 10:00, followed by the results of the members-only contest (image poems with a 30-line limit), chosen by our judge Cynthia Brackett-Vincent. She will then read some of her own work. The plan is for an hour-long break for lunch, after which Cynthia will lead a 90-minute workshop on writing haiku. She currently serves as treasurer for the Haiku Society of America.

For information about membership in the society, please visit our website: <http://mainepoetsociety.com/> ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

**MASSACHUSETTS POETRY SOCIETY:** We met to celebrate National Poetry Day, October 15th, proclaimed by Governor, Charles Baker. The printed proclamation was read by member Tim McCarthy from Framingham (also member of Louise Bogan Chapter in Lunenburg). Afterwards, the Waterfront CREW Poets Chapter (Chelsea, Revere, Everett, Winthrop) presented an excellent program using poetry from an anthology titled Premier Book of Major Poets, edited by Anita Dore. Participants Renee Pike (President of the

Chapter), Louis Picciuolo, and Sandra Joneck-Schiff customized the poems to fit their entertaining group reading. Following was a workshop taught by President Jeanette Maes relating to the subject of LISTS, "The Prime Director of Life" or "Primary Maps". Attendees then wrote their own poems on how lists are used in their own life. After a lunch break, poets took turns reading their original poetry for the remainder of the meeting. Our next meeting will be held April 1st, with a workshop, "You Gotta Have Words." Our 2023 National Poetry Day Contest Brochure with 25 contests is ready, deadline August 1st. Write for an email copy of brochure to [robette02@yahoo.com](mailto:robette02@yahoo.com) as well as for a list of our five annual contests. ~ *Beverley Barnes, Strophes Reporter*

**MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY:** MPS, Inc., has recently increased its efforts to promote poetry-related opportunities for young Mississippi poets and writers. Our Student Poetry Committee is managing these endeavors. Through emails, texts, phone calls, and our State Department of Education's teachers' blog, we are informing schools about contests, open mic events, and other opportunities for children and youth. Branch Highlights: •North Branch member, Bill Hill, invites students to read at Coffee Central Coffee Shop in Southaven with the long-range goal of having poetry readings near every high school in the state. •Central Branch member of our Student Poetry Committee, Brent Hearn, is working with Pacesetter Gallery in Flowood to have a Student Open Mic Night. •West Branch continues to grow with both poets and hybrid writers under the leadership of G. Mark LaFrancis. •South Branch continues to prepare for our Annual State Poetry Festival to be held in Ocean Springs at the Walter Anderson Museum of Art, April 22-23. Be sure to check out our website [www.misspoetry.net](http://www.misspoetry.net) ~ *Dorothy Wiman, Secretary*

**Nevada Poetry Society** proudly announces the publication of two fine new NPS Member books : HOMELESSNESS Through The Eyes Of A Nurse In The City, by Crystal E. Barker, available on Amazon.com, and WONDER Streams Of The Soul, by Craig Carpenter Downer, <https://www.ccdownerbooks.com> , also available on Amazon.

Despite a long and particularly cold, wet winter, we continue to meet in person on the third Saturday of each month – 1 pm at Artech. Our best e-mail contact is [nvpoetry@earthlink.net](mailto:nvpoetry@earthlink.net) ~ *Phyllis Peacock, President*

**POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA:** To paraphrase Mother Goose, The March winds do blow and we may have snow, but we are busy planning for our March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. The highlight will be the announcement of winners of the 2023 PSO Annual Poetry Contest and readings of the winning poems.

Several of our PSO Poets attend poetry gatherings around the state, not only to share their work but also to spread the word about PSO and invite poets and poetry lovers to sign up. We've added several new members and look forward to an influx of ideas and enthusiasm. One of those members, Shayna Mahan, is our new Secretary. We're grateful for her cheerfulness, zeal, and experience.

We hope to publish an anthology this year to highlight members' poetry, following the example of Zoe Tilghman, the amazing woman who founded PSO 89 years ago. In its first year, the new organization published *The 1934 Poetry Society of Oklahoma State Anthology*. That collection included two poems by a young man who had recently moved to Choctaw, Oklahoma: Louis L'Amour. Now recognized as one of the world's most popular writers, L'Amour stayed in touch with Tilghman even after he moved away, often consulting her about his writing.

An excerpt from L'Amour's poem, *A Handful Of Stars*, captures our wish for today and the future:

*Give me O Night, a blessing  
Of peace, and a handful of stars-  
Give me O Dawn, a beginning,  
New life, and a healing of scars.*

~*Judith Rycroft, President*

**Poetry Society of Tennessee** will hold a Poetry Festival April 15, 2023, via Zoom. The workshop presenter for the program will be Dr. Rick Hilles, Associate Professor, Department of English/MFA Program in Creative Writing at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Program details: <https://poetrytennessee.com>. Festival and contest details: <https://www.poetrytennessee.org>. Follow PST on Facebook: [@poetrysocietyoftennessee](https://www.facebook.com/poetrysocietyoftennessee).

During virtual monthly membership meetings, PST continued educational programs, announced members-only contest winners and read winning poems. Lacy Snapp is program chair and Russell Strauss is contest chair.

PST gained several new members following the Regional Connection Committee's (RCC) inaugural event, during which regional poets and authors read works and sold books at Oak Ridge Library (organized by member Pat Hope). RCC member Fred Tudiver will issue a contest for East Tennessee State University students soon, a pilot for possible future expansion.

Poet/educators Connie Green (PST member) and Heather Hoover are judging PST student contest entries: free verse for high school and middle school and any form for elementary. Seth Grindstaff is student contest chair.

PST editorial board members Maria Zoccola, Lacy Snapp, and Connie Green are reviewing submissions received for the upcoming edition of PST's anthology, *Tennessee Voices*. ~ *Lisa Kamolnick, Communications Chair*

**POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS** PST resumed our monthly meetings on Zoom in December with a program by Christine Irving, winner of the 2021 PST Catherine Case Lubbe Manuscript Prize. Focusing on one poem from her book, *Predator/Prey*, she presented "Up Close and Personal: Creating a Close Read." The January meeting consisted of a Memorial Program in which we remember poets we lost the previous year. Nine outstanding poets, including Loretta Diane Walker, were honored in the presentation by Vice President, Catherine L'Herisson. Program Chair, JDarrell Kirkly, then hosted our annual Poem-A-Thon, in which poets in attendance may read one of their poems or a favorite poem. Our February speakers were Susan Maxwell Campbell and Christine Irving, both members of our Denton Poets Assembly chapter, who recently compiled and edited *When Poets Meet: A Read and Respond Anthology*, which consists of poems written by chapter members after reading poems by many different poets and writing poems in response. The book is available at Amazon.com, as is *Smiles Behind the Lines: A Laugh Lines Anthology*, compiled by PST past president, Irene Robertson. Also in February, the Mockingbird Poetry Society chapter in McKinney hosted their second annual Art Meets Poetry exhibit and program in which artists and poets collaborated. Co-chaired by artist Beth Mortenson and poet Barry Rynk, it was a big success, and voluntary financial donations were given to local food charities. The winner of the 2023 William D. Barney Memorial Chapbook Contest, offered by the Fort Worth Poetry Society in cooperation with the Poetry Society of Texas will be announced in April at the PST monthly meeting.

Other PST chapters are active all across the state, and we hope to see many of our poets at the Spring Fling, being planned in historic Jefferson, Texas on April 29<sup>th</sup>. ~ Catherine L'Herisson, Vice President

**UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY** sends greetings from the mountains of the greatest snow on Earth. We are busy preparing for our upcoming yearly poetry festival, which will be held the last weekend of April. Hopefully, this will be our last virtual festival, as we are preparing the way to engage our members with a hybrid festival in 2024. The 37 categories in our annual poetry contest cover a wide range of subjects, and are now in the judges' hands, and we look forward to hearing the winning poems read at the festival. Our 2021 Book of the Year Award Winner, Michael Parker, has accepted the position of President-Elect. Michael offers not only wonderful skills as a poet, but possesses insightful leadership skills, along with tons of enthusiasm and optimism, as we search for meaningful ways to regrow our poetry society. Learning to Dance as Poets, ~ Michael Spears, President

### SUCCESS STORY: ROSE MINCEY BRINGING POETRY BACK INTO GEORGIA CLASSROOMS



As Youth Chair, I'm here for you all as a sounding board, idea-generator and -beautifier, experience-sharer and source of information and data to support your youth efforts. So it was a great joy when Rose Mincey (pictured), the new Member Outreach Chair

of the Georgia Poetry Society, reached out in early November to request my help in her efforts to get poetry going in Georgia school classrooms again. I'd like to share our collaboration and her success story as inspiration for what can work.

Rose and I had a series of three conversations in November, January and February, in which: (1) I shared data and teaching approach ideas from customized learning enrichment programs I have created in my own work and for New Mexico classrooms and "beyond-classrooms" communities in my New Mexico State Poetry Society Youth Chair role; (2) we honed in on what data might be most effective in demonstrating poetry's value; and (3) we affirmed that while data are important, personal stories of poetry and poets are what

### PLEASE BE WARY OF SCAMMERS

I have had many NFSPS members forward scam emails to me with "Paul Ford" as the purported sender. Often the message is a direct request to help "me" with buying a gift card or some other monetary assistance. There are more subtle scammers who initially ask if the recipient is available. Please, whenever you get an email with my name as the sender, check to see if the message is actually sent from pmford3@gmail.com. If it isn't, I suggest you report the email as scam/phishing to your email provider. For example, with Gmail I can click on the three horizontal dots to the top-right of the message and select either Report Scam or Report Phishing. Please be careful. And know I will not ask you for money in an email.

~ Paul Ford, 35th NFSPS President

### SUCCESS STORY: (Cont.)

really move decisionmakers, teachers and kids to engage with poetry successfully, in my experience.

With this information in hand, Rose landed an early-February meeting with the Literacy Committee at Freedom Middle School in Stone Mountain, Georgia, just outside the central Atlanta metro area. ~ JC Wayne, NFSPS Youth Chair (This article will be printed in full, in the August Issue.)

### MONTHLY POETRY CONTEST

Wilda Morris, former president of the Illinois State Poetry Society, posts a contest for other poets each month on her blog. New contests are posted the first of the month; deadline is the 15th of the month. No charge to enter. Previously published poems are okay, but not simultaneous submissions. Winning poems are published. See: wildamorris.blogspot.com.

### ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2022



The 2022 anthology of 159 prize-winning poems awarded at the "Renewal Through Poetry" NFSPS convention is available on amazon.com. All

royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS.

~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor

\*\*\*\*\*The Convention Fellowship Application is available at [nfsp.com](http://nfsp.com) and on the convention registration site at [nfsp.net](http://nfsp.net) Need assistance? Apply now! \*\*\*\*\*



NFSPS ANNUAL CONVENTION CATCH POETRY: STAGE & PAGE

June 21- June 26, 2023

Our convention headquarters will be the West Des Moines Marriott, 1250 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines, Iowa. **1-515-267-1500** Rooms are \$149 plus taxes. Let them know you are with NFSPS. **Last Day to Book a room at this rate: Wednesday, May 31, 2023**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_ \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Guests: #	__ @ \$40 per person	= \$__
Registration Fee	__ @ \$75 per person	= \$__
Non-Member Registration Fee	__ @ \$125 per person	= \$__
Single Day Member	__ @ \$40 per person	= \$__
Thursday Dinner	__ @ \$29 per person	= \$__
Friday Lunch	__ @ \$18 per person	= \$__
Friday Dinner	__ @ \$29 per person	= \$__
Saturday Lunch	__ @ \$18 per person	= \$__
Saturday Dinner	__ @ \$29 per person	= \$__
Sunday Lunch	__ @ \$18 per person	= \$__
Sunday Dinner	__ @ \$29 per person	= \$__
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>= \$__</b>

Special Dietary Needs: Vegetarian Gluten Free Other\* \_\*

Excursions and T-shirts/Hoodies will be available for payment and pick-up at Registration!

**Reserve your item by checking the correct box below. Prices may change.**

**Pay at Registration.**

- Wednesday @ \$40 per person = \$\_\_
- Monday excursion(Lunch on your own) @ \$30 per person = \$\_\_
- T-shirt @ \$20 per person s m l xl xxl = \$\_\_
- T-shirt (long sleeve) @ \$25 per person s m l xl xxl = \$\_\_
- Hoodie (long sleeve) @ \$35 per person s m l xl xxl = \$\_\_

**Register online at [nfps.net](http://nfps.net) or mail-in registration by May 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Don't forget to reserve your room!**

**1-515-267-1500**

Make checks payable to **NFSPS, Inc.**

NFSPS Convention  
 % Julie Cummings  
 9428 Fallen Rock Road  
 Conifer, CO. 80433

**APPLICATION FOR A 2023 NFSPS CONVENTION ATTENDANCE FELLOWSHIP**  
**Deadline for Submission: May 13, 2023**

Name:

State Poetry Society:

Email Address:

Phone Number(s):

Your work as a poet (please name two or three accomplishments--e.g., publications, prizes, readings--of which you are especially proud).

Your service to your state society and/or NFSPS (please list major offices and/or volunteer roles):

Any other major service to poetry and poets (please briefly describe):

What do you hope to get out of attending the 2023 NFSPS convention, both for yourself and for your state society?

Which of the following would a fellowship enable you to do? Check all that apply?

- to attend the convention at all
- to stay in the convention hotel
- to purchase group meals
- to travel to the convention by your preferred mode which is \_\_\_\_\_ and which will  
[car, bus, train, plane, etc.]
- cost \_\_\_\_\_ [including any necessary overnight stays en route]  
[your best estimate]

**Please email completed form to [eberry@wvi.com](mailto:eberry@wvi.com) with cc to [treasurer@nfsp.com](mailto:treasurer@nfsp.com) and [bfunke2@gmail.com](mailto:bfunke2@gmail.com)**