



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

Strophes

Vol. LVIII No. 3

www.nfspd.com

January 2022



Julie Cummings
34th NFSPS
President

Dear Poetry Family,

In November, I traveled in my RV to Dallas, Texas, for their 100-year celebration of the Poetry Society of Texas. It was a great trip, and I was thankful to see friends—masked and unmasked at the microphone—and partake in the poetry that is born and bred in that great society. It was a grand time. Such a perfect way to begin this season of gratitude.

All that drive time gave me the opportunity to really reflect on our national society and the individuals that make it what it is to me. I love being an active member of my state society and I love the mission of continuing to educate and inform people about poetry. I am deeply grateful and feel honored to be able to be a

member of my state society and a member of NFSPS.

While stopped overnight in Amarillo, Texas, I took my dogs to a dog park and began talking to a man in the park who was walking his little scruffy K9. The conversation started politely enough but continued to become a discussion about reading and writing. I discussed the reason I was in the state, and he talked about how he always enjoyed poetry, but stopped writing it. I encouraged him to begin again and mentioned the state that he lived in had an active society. When I left the park, I was hopeful he would write again and possibly join NFSPS, simply because it is a huge part of who I am, and I want the good that I experience to be a part of everyone's life.

Poetry, living on beyond all of us, is not a given. Therefore, I talk about poetry and our society every chance I get! Will you tell people you are a poet? Do you encourage poets younger than you to continue writing and join us? How do you let people know you are a poet?

Now that I am settling into the routine of retired life, my days pass rather quickly as I continue to live in a kind of social limbo. I am just now beginning to participate in more online poetry events. (I was a teacher and due to Covid, I was so zoom-fatigued at the end of the day that it was difficult to be present online after work.) One good thing that I believe came out of this crazy pandemic era is the abundance of online, social interaction options. Online poetry readings are basically open to anyone and everyone who has access to the internet and a device, be it your smart phone or computer device. Hosting and/or joining an online open mic is so easy, safe, and fun! I want to thank those of you who host online events! With every online open mic I join the excitement inside me bubbles with enthusiasm. I so enjoy getting to see the faces of our members and non-member poets and listen to them read their great works of poetry. Once you get over the initial fear and self-consciousness of seeing yourself on your computer screen, it's great fun. I encourage you to join in when and how you can. To that end, there is a NFSPS committee working on listing all the poetry events on our NFSPS website. We hope to have that feature up and running early in the new year. Our expectations are that state societies can provide us with all their society-sponsored events and we will list them on our interactive calendar.

We want so much for our 2022 convention to have the option of having face-to-face meetings for those willing to travel, but it is still unknown. The ever-morphing virus is resulting in more unknowns for the health and safety of our members. Be that as it may, please know that our Convention Committee is working hard looking at viable options. That work is far from complete, so we do not have details that we can currently share. As soon as we know what options we have, and specifically what will take place, it will be announced. On another front, we do have a committee headed by Joe Cavanaugh planning a BlackBerry Peach (BBP) poetry slam in October 2022 in Florida. This is exciting and something I am looking forward to attending with many of you.

Until we meet again, keep writing and know in your heart how thankful and honored I am to have NFSPS and each of you in my life.

Your Sister in words, Julie Cummings, 34th NFSPS President

NFSPS 2022 VIRTUAL/HYBRID CONVENTION

The NFSPS Board is committed to hold this year's annual convention, traditionally held in June. As to whether this convention will again be fully virtual or hybrid with a state poetry society hosting the in-person aspects of the convention has not yet been determined. Stay tuned for the April *Strophes*, the upcoming convention plans will be announced.

POETRY FORM: RONDINO

By Phyllis Peacock, Nevada Poetry Society President

It has been brought to my attention that the form RONDINO by Almeda Norma Davis is not widely known. The complexity of form makes it a true word puzzle and NPS has enjoyed this challenge over the years. We hope many will be inspired to try something new with the Nevada Poetry Society Award in the 2022 NFSPS Annual Contest. The following instructions and example were taken from *Awakening the Poet Within* by Ann Gasser.

RONDINO

The title of the Rondino must be 4 words. First quatrain begins each line with a word from the title in order:

Line 2 becomes first line of stanza 2

Line 3 becomes first line of stanza 3

Line 4 becomes first line of stanza 4

Title is repeated as a refrain line at the end of the poem.

Rhyme Scheme: Stanza 1 - A1, B1, A2, B2

Stanza 2 - B1, a, b, a

Stanza 3 - A2, b, a, b

Stanza 4 - B2, a, b, a

Example of a RONDINO:

FIREWORKS: BRIGHT SKY FLOWERS

By Ann Gasser

Fireworks blaze, a flaming brand,

Bright in indigo of night:

Sky blooms over darkened land

Flowers sparkle laser-bright.

Bright in indigo of night,

Over sea or desert sand,

Thrilling to the sense of sight--

Flaming flowers on demand.

Sky blooms over darkened land

In an awe-inspiring sight;

Cheering voice and clapping hand

Veteran and neophyte.

Flowers sparkle laser-bright.

At a tympani command,

Bursting red and blue and white

When a flaming wick is fanned--

Fireworks: bright sky flowers.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

Organized October 17, 1959 ~ Mary B. Wall, Founder
Honorary Chancellor: David J. Rothman

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Elected, NFSPS Online Voting, July 2020

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Membership, Publicity Chair, Electronic Media
9428 Fallen Rock Rd., Conifer, CO 80433
jcummings3@gmail.com

1ST VICE PRESIDENT: Paul Ford

Strophes Editor, Electronic Media Assistant
10239 Hickory Point Dr., Sandy, UT 84092-3960
pmford3@gmail.com

2ND VICE PRESIDENT: Joseph Cavanaugh
Development Chair (Endowments/Sponsorships),
BlackBerryPeach Prizes for Poetry Chair
3722 Longford Cir., Ormond Beach, FL 32174
jcavanaugh1@gmail.com

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Special Awards Chair
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charmainedonovan@gmail.com

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49 Kitchen Ave., Harveys Lake, PA 18618
paperlesspoets@gmail.com

CHANCELLOR: Polly Opsahl
Convention Coordinator
7316 Huntington Dr., Oscoda, MI 48750
pollyopsahl@gmail.com

1ST VICE CHANCELLOR: JoAn Howerton
Judges Chair
1550 Trent Blvd., Apt. 1403, Lexington, KY 0515
ladyjoan1946@gmail.com

2ND VICE CHANCELLOR: Loretta Diane Walker
4519 E. University Blvd. Apt. C, Odessa, TX 79762
walkerld1@aol.com

TREASURER: Linda Harris
711 6th St. SE, Altoona, IA 50009-1926
harristaxes@aol.com

SECRETARY: Jessica Temple
College Undergraduate Poetry Competition Chair
Alabama A&M University, McCormick Building, Rm. 1
P.O. Box 4900, Normal, AL 35762-4900
NFSPSsecretary@gmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Eleanor Berry
Presidential Advisors Chair
2230 SE Laura Lane, Dallas, OR 97338
eberry@wvi.com

APPOINTIVE BOARD

Board Liaison to State Societies: Russell H. Strauss
18 S. Rembert St., Memphis, TN 38104
RSTRpoet@cs.com

Contest Chair: Carla Jordan
5858 Pintail Way, Frederick, CO 80504-9668
ContestChair.nfsp@gmail.com

Encore Editor: Kathy Cotton
1019 Applewood Lane, Anna, IL 62906
kalcotton@gmail.com

Historian: Nancy Baass
408 E. Warren Ave., Victoria, TX 77901-4847
nancy.baass@gmail.com

Legal Counselor and Parliamentarian & Manningham Trust Competition Chair:
Susan Stevens Chambers
PO Box 422, Mankato, MN 56002
schambersmediator@yahoo.com

Librarian: Catherine L'Herisson
518 Grinnell Dr., Garland, TX 75043
catherinepoet@juno.com

Publicity Chair, Traditional Media, and Poetry Day/
Poetry Month Liaison Co-Chair: Amy Jo Zook
3520 State Route 56, Mechanicsburg, OH 43044

Specil Events/State Outreach: Peter Stein
5612 23rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55417
pwilliamstein@yahoo.com

Stevens Manuscript Competition Chair:
To Be Appointed

Strophes Associate Editor: Julie Cummings
9428 Fallen Rock Rd., Conifer, CO 80433
jcummings3@gmail.com

Youth Chair: Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer
P. O. Box 86, Placerville, CO 81430
rosemerry@gmail.com

Webmaster: Billy Pennington, P.O. Box 7842,
Moore, OK 73153 ~ nfspswb.master@gmail.com

NFSPS MEMBER STATE SOCIETIES AND PRESIDENTS

ALABAMA: Alabama State Poetry Society
Jerri Hardesty, Co-President ~ 1830 Marvel Rd.,
Brierfield AL 35035 ~ wytrabbit1@aol.com
Jessica Temple, Co-President ~ P.O. Box 2308,
Huntsville, AL 35804 ~ alabamapoets@gmail.com

ARIZONA: Arizona State Poetry Society
C. Christy White ~ President, 1145 E. Kaler Dr.,
Phoenix, AZ 85020 ~ AZPoetryorg@gmail.com

ARKANSAS: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas
John McPherson, President ~ 111 Jawanda Ln.,
Searcy, AR 72143 ~ jmcpherson@cabllynx.com

CALIFORNIA: California State Poetry Society
Dr. Maja Trochimczyk, President ~ P.O. Box 4288,
Sunland, CA 91041 ~ Maja.Trochimczyk@gmail.com

COLORADO: Columbine Poets of Colorado
Anita Jepson-Gilbert, President ~ 8989 Yukon St.,
Westminster, CO 80021 ~ anitajg5@aol.com

CONNECTICUT: Connecticut Poetry Society
Patricia Mottola, President ~ 390 Maple Ave.,
Cheshire, CT 06410 ~ patriciamottola@yahoo.com

FLORIDA: Florida State Poets Association
Mary Marcelle, President ~ 107 Magnolia Dr, Altamonte
Springs, FL 32714 ~ marymarcelle@earthlink.net

GEORGIA: Georgia Poetry Society
Steven Owen Shields, President
President@georgiapoetrysociety.org

ILLINOIS: Illinois State Poetry Society
Susan T. Moss, President ~ 609 E Center Ave.,
Lake Bluff, IL 60044 ~ stm48@hotmail.com

INDIANA: Poetry Society of Indiana
Deborah Petersen, President ~ 718 S. Bennett St.,
Bluffton, IN 46714 ~ djpetersen57@yahoo.com

IOWA: Iowa Poetry Association
Jerrol J. Narland, President ~ 122 S. 7th Ave.,
Winterset, IA 50273 ~ chiefjer@aol.com

KENTUCKY: Kentucky State Poetry Society
Amelia Martens, President ~ 2929 Jefferson St.,
Paducah, KY 42001 ~ martensamelia@gmail.com

MAINE: Maine Poets Society
Jenny Doughty, President ~ 31 Rustic Ln.,
Portland, ME 04103 ~ jmdought@maine.rr.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
David James, President ~ 1108 Fairway Dr.,
Linden, MI 48451 ~ dljames@oaklandcc.edu

MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets
Peter Stein, President ~ 5612 23rd Ave S., Minneapolis,
MN 55417 ~ pwilliamstein@gmail.com

MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi Poetry Society
Patricia Butkovich, President ~ 8319 Pine Cone Dr.,
Gautier, MS 39553 ~ pattyb8319@gmail.com

MISSOURI: Missouri State Poetry Society
Nancy La Chance, President ~ 14940 Hwy 64, Lebanon,
MO 65536 ~ lachancenancy@outlook.com

NEBRASKA: Nebraska Poetry Society
Charlene Pierce, President ~ Omaha, NE
charlene_pierce@icloud.com

NEVADA: Nevada Poetry Society
Phyllis Peacock, President ~ 35 E. York Way,
Sparks, NV 89431-2424 ~ pbtwo@earthlink.net

NEW MEXICO: New Mexico State Poetry Society
Zachary Kluckman, President ~ PO Box 90461,
Albuquerque, NM 87199 ~ president@nmpoetry.com

NEW YORK: New York Poetry Forum
James DeMartini, President ~ 7941 78th Ave., Glendale,
NY 11385 ~ jvwdm123@gmail.com

NORTH DAKOTA: North Dakota State Poetry Society
Bonnie Larson Staiger, President ~ 419 East Brandon Dr,
Bismarck ND 58503 ~ dakota923@hotmail.com

OHIO: Ohio Poetry Association
Chuck Salmons, President ~ 12886 Coventry Ave.,
Pickerington, OH 43147 ~ president@ohiopoeetryassn.org

OKLAHOMA: Poetry Society of Oklahoma
Patti Koch, President ~ 5101 N.W. 20th St.,
Oklahoma City, OK 73127-2312 ~ pattikoch0@gmail.com

OREGON: Oregon Poetry Association
Sue Fagalde Lick, President ~ 281 SE 97th Ct.,
South Beach, OR 97366 ~ opasue@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Poetry Society
Emiliano Martín, President ~ 2955 Columbia Dr.,
Bensalem, PA 19020-2109 ~ poeta48@aol.com

SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota State Poetry Society
Bruce Roseland, President ~ 16894 SD Hwy. 47,
Seneca, SD 57473 ~ bbroseland@venturecomm.net

TENNESSEE: Poetry Society of Tennessee
William G. Hill, President ~ 581 White Ash Dr.,
Southaven, MS 38671 ~ hillw@bellsouth.net

TEXAS: Poetry Society of Texas
Irene Robertson, President ~ 1625 Gayla Creek Dr.,
Little Elm, TX 75068 ~ yranie@att.net

UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society
Steven Leitch, President ~ 9225 ToniLee Cr.,
West Jordan, UT 84088-8554 ~ sleitch@yahoo.com

WYOMING: WyoPoets
Tina Ann Forkner, President ~ wyopoets@gmail.com

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 email, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Paul Ford, *Strophes* Editor
10239 Hickory Pt. Dr., Sandy, UT 84092-3960
pmford3@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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NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

ARIZONA STATE POETRY SOCIETY had a very successful annual contest this year with participants from all over the US and one in Canada! Our annual journal, *Sandcutters 2021*, has been published and was mailed out to members, annual contest winners, and annual contest judges in early December. Our visual theme this year featured the many flowering cacti of the Southwest. December 5th, 2021, we hosted a poetry open mic via Zoom for our members as a holiday treat. We are planning our annual conference on Zoom for January 7-9 with workshops, presentations, and open mics featuring our annual contest winners. Watch for our schedule on our website, azpoetry.net. Email azpoetryorg@gmail.com for Zoom details. ~ *Christy White, President*

POETS ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS: Poetry Day in Arkansas was held on Saturday, November 6th, at the Darragh Center in the Main Library in downtown Little Rock. University of Arkansas' Public Radio Arts & Letters program producer, Mary Ellen Kubit, and program host, J. Bradley Minnock, shared their program, Audio Poetics, which covered the ins and outs of their KUAR broadcast and podcast. It is a program "celebrating contemporary arts, humanities, and social sciences, with an emphasis on authentic Southern voices." Visit ualrpublicradio.org/show/arts-letters to learn more. Marilyn Joyner, long-time member, won the annual Merit Award for her work leading the Poets of the Pines branch and her work on the PRA board. The Sybil Nash Abrams Poetry Contest winner was Dr. John Crawford with Dennis Patton winning second place. Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas is now focusing on student (junior and high school) poetry contests as well as our collegiate poetry contest. To find out more, visit poetsroundtableofarkansas.org. ~ *Laura Bridges, PRA Vice President*

CONNECTICUT POETRY SOCIETY has been prolific this past year, as always! Although we miss our in-person gatherings, Zoom events have been well-attended. CPS sponsors 12 "Chapters" throughout the State, where members meet to workshop their poems. Each Chapter has a President who leads the workshop. We offer monthly educational programs: POPs (Poets on Poetry) and MOMs (Monthly Open Mics). We sponsor four major contests annually. This year we debuted our "Experimental Poetry Contest", the first of its kind. The poems were phenomenal, and the winner received \$1,000. CPS publishes a national poetry journal, *Connecticut River Review*, yearly in beautiful hard copy. We also publish a quarterly newsletter, sent to members and on our website. Many of our CPS members serve as Poets Laureate for their respective towns. Our State Poet Laureate, Margaret Gibson, is keeping Connecticut thriving with poetry and poetry events. This year CPS appointed a local High School student as our first Student Ambassador as part of our Youth Outreach Program. We sponsor semiannual professional readings and workshops, and we are focusing on increasing our collaboration with other art venues in Connecticut. This past fall we collaborated with the New England Ballet Theatre to incorporate poetry into their recent performance, "The Myth and Madness of Edgar Allen Poe." We look forward to many in-person social and educational events in 2022! CPS welcomes new members from any state. Visit us at ctpoetry.net. ~ *Pat Mottola, President*

GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY: After a physical absence since spring 2020, GPS met again face-to-face in October 2021 in a park pavilion in Gainesville, Georgia, on a sunny (but cool) Saturday morning and afternoon. The meeting celebrated the winner of our inaugural Ron Self Chapbook Competition, Trish Percival, who's *Awake with Low-Slung Moon* was featured during the morning session. Copies of the Society's annual anthology, *The Reach of Song*

2021, were featured during the afternoon session of the meeting. Both sessions included a Zoomcast for members unable to attend. President Steven Shields and Vice-President Alyson Shields hosted the all-day event, which included sales of GPS and member volumes published during the pandemic period. Both their terms of office conclude in January 2022, when we inaugurate new leadership and feature Georgia Poet Laureate Chelsea Rathburn. ~ *Steven Shields, President*

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY: Zoom meetings continue to prove successful for both board meetings and chapter meetings. Some chapters are beginning to meet in person where facilities allow for safe distancing and pandemic protection. The monthly Brewed Awakenings coffeehouse readings also continue with both in-person and Zoom attendance. 2021 ISPS Poetry Contest poems have been sent to judges, and Jim Lambert, the contest chairperson, reports that he has already received a few results back from the judges. The 2021 Manningham Student Poetry Contest has begun. Middle schools and high schools, both public and private, are receiving the notices along with a colorful poster showing where 2020 student winners were located. This year Manningham notices are also being posted in local libraries. Jennifer Dotson of Highland Park Poetry stepped in to serve as interim ISPS Newsletter editor. The Northbrook, the Lyle, and the Southern chapters are collaborating to hold a Zoom poetry reading and open mic event in January 2022. It will be open to all ISPS members statewide. From 1-4 pm on Saturday, February 19, 2022, the Addison Center for the Arts will host the event, Expressions: Art & Verse Festival. The public is invited to enjoy the art exhibit in the gallery and then attend a poetry recital and poet videos by members of the ISPS in the studio theater. The Southern Chapter has reserved the Carbondale Library's art area for a 2022 Poetry Month art exhibit (in conjunction with their annual display case of poems). In all, two dozen, eye-catching poetry broadsides that the chapter members created will be on exhibit. ISPS will also take on an ekphrastic, poetry-and-collages collaboration with the Midwest Collage Society. The exhibit is scheduled for its opening in April 2022 at the Downers Grove Public Library. ISPS continues to plan for other events and opportunities for its members in 2022. For example, the next member anthology, *Distilled Lives 6*, is slated for creation and publication in 2022. ISPS has tabled discussions regarding a 2022 in-person Gala. It is still too early to tell whether Covid-19 may prevent large in-person meetings. Our website, illinoispoets.org, continues to showcase new member poems and haiga (haiku embedded in an image) as well as searchable archives going back some twenty years. ~ *Susan T. Moss, President, and Tom Chockley, Secretary*

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY's National Poetry Day meeting was held in Winthrop, MA, in October. The CREW Poets Chapter presented an entertaining program based on compiling one poem derived from several written by Vice President Renee Pike. President Jeanette Maes had a workshop on the five senses. We all made our own personal thesaurus list of words describing each sense. We also wrote a poem including one or more of the senses. Sponsorships are now being received for our upcoming National Poetry Day Contest, usually consisting of more than twenty contests. You pick the Contest Name (can be a memorial to a special person or event), Subject, Form, Length, Judging Preference, and Prize Amounts. The minimum cost is \$30 total for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Prizes. Anyone interested should send a request for a sponsorship form to Jeanette Maes, 64 Harrison Ave., Lynn, MA 01905. ~ *Beverley Barnes, Reporter*

MAINE POETS SOCIETY has met on Zoom since March 2020. This has enabled some members who have not been able to attend in-person meetings to participate. That being the case, we are exploring the possibility of offering hybrid meetings. As long as the State Library is able to host in-person meetings, we plan to try the process out for an open mic on Saturday, March 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Details will be included in our December newsletter. MPS President Jenny Doughty will host this event. If all goes well, we expect our May meeting to also be offered both in-person and online. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

POETRY SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN: This is my final report as President of the Poetry Society of Michigan. The capable and talented poet/playwright/educator, David James, will assume the helm in January. His sense of community is strong and that's what's needed in the job. Poet Robin Church is the new vice-president, and the rest of us carry on as before. Our five-year anthology, *Michigan Roots*, edited by former Vice President Jennifer Clark, came out this fall to kudos all around. Patricia Barnes, longtime member of PSM, is also a visual artist; one of her pieces served as the cover. At our most recent meeting in Lowell, we piggybacked on Phillip Sterling's (he's in charge of our newsletter) grant called "WordView" combining visual and written arts. I led an ekphrastic workshop for our membership, and we had a great time in our first in-person meeting in a year and a half. Some wore masks; some didn't. We all got along. Our state is in the process of creating a Poet Laureate position. I think that's good news as long as it compensates them for their time, because one cannot eat only honor.

~ *Elizabeth Kerlikowske, President*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY met in Natchez at Copiah-Lincoln Community College on October 23. In discussions about the problems with mail service and the complications caused by contest entries not being received by the deadline, the group voted to encourage electronic submissions for the upcoming spring contest. Rules for the 2022 MPS contest are now available on misspoetry.net. Brenda B. Finnegan finally received her Poet of the Year award, and she introduced her chapbook, *Horn Island Vista*. Results of the 2021 Fall Contest were announced. (Winning poems will be published in the 2022 *Mississippi Poetry Journal*.) Looking ahead, the MPS Spring Festival will be held at Lake Tiak O'Khata in Louisville, Mississippi, from Friday night, April 29 to Sunday morning, May 1. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Benjamin Morris from Hattiesburg, MS, is an award-winning poet, writer, and researcher whose work appears in the United States and Europe. In addition to his presentation on Mississippi poets, he will do a reading from his works. North Branch will host the festival and is very busy planning. Congratulations to Ann Carolyn Cates, who was recently named Mississippi Poetry Society's 2022 Poet of the Year. She will introduce her chapbook at the Spring Festival. ~ *Jeanne Kelly, Secretary*

NEBRASKA POETRY SOCIETY's Poetry Contest is open and taking submissions on Submittable.com. Top 3 winners receive cash and up to 23 winners will be published. You do not have to be a member, or from Nebraska, to submit. You can enter 5 poems with your \$20 fee. Search for the Nebraska Poetry Society on Submittable to see if submissions are still being accepted. To celebrate and promote Nebraska poets who have published book-length work, we have a monthly virtual reading and discussion series, free and open to the public. The Nebraska Poets Reading Series is such a hit that the whole year of 2022 has been booked. Our monthly virtual craft workshops continue to grow and attract accomplished workshop leaders from around the country. We are excited to have Kwame Dawes leading a workshop in February on "What Art Can Teach the Poet." All workshops are free to members (annual \$35 fee). NPS is now an

official IRS 501c3 organization; expect it will help us grow and add more events and programming. You are welcome to attend any of our events as they are all virtual. Information and links to sign up on NEpoetrysociety.org. ~ *Charlene Pierce, President*

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY had our first in-person meeting on October 16th at our new facility, Artech. It felt good to spend physical time together not only to read and critique our poetry but to review the past Covid-19 period, it's effects upon us, especially as it pertains to some of our more vulnerable members who continue to be housebound. We discussed ways in which we could support and include them with poetry and in our decision-making processes, absent but not forgotten. ~ *Phyllis Peacock, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA wants to wish one and all a very "HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR!" We are proud to be celebrating our eighty-eighth year this February! PSO celebrated National Poetry Day with our Poetry Day Contests. But again, due to all the viruses, it was decided to forgo meeting in person. This year and last have been very challenging for so many (PSO being among those challenged)! Our annual business meeting for this year was conducted through both email and snail mail. On the positive side we are fortunate with the technology we have today. However, nothing can take the place of meeting in person—the fellowship we share and the exchange of ideas (and food)! PSO is making plans for our annual meeting and banquet in March 2022. This is the time when contest results are announced, poems recognized and read, and prizes and awards are presented. PSO is looking forward to another year of growth as we continue to get the word out about poetry today and the Poetry Society of Oklahoma. Poetry in Oklahoma is alive and quite active! Please remember to check our PSO website angelfire.com/poetry/ps/ for information and our PSO Facebook page. Until next time, *Keep writing those poems!* And "Come and Grow at PSO!" ~ *Patti Koch, President*

OREGON POETRY ASSOCIATION's board has decided to hold its October 2022 conference online via Zoom, even if COVID is no longer an issue. We have had great success meeting and offering our events online over the past two years. It allows poets spread across Oregon and southern Washington a chance to meet free from for home. No driving, no hotels, no babysitters. We plan to continue Zooming, with readings and workshops throughout the year. The new board, elected in October, has also decided to bring back the youth poetry contest that was suspended during COVID, and we are considering offering online workshops for teachers to help them incorporate poetry into their lessons. In other news, we are busy updating our website, digitizing our group's history, now stored in boxes, and sending out copies of the latest issue of *Verseweavers*, our anthology of prizewinning poems from our adult contests. All in all, things are zooming in Oregon. ~ *Sue Fagalde Lick, President*

PENNSYLVANIA POETRY SOCIETY celebrated its 2021 Fall Conference and General Meeting on October 23rd. This event took place via online with the attendance of its members, Chapters and Board of directors. Membership registration is in full gear. Annual Poetry Contest entries for 2022 are still coming. Poetry Contest Judges have been selected. The quarterly bulletin, *The Sylvan*, was issued in October. Virtual Monthly Collegiate Poetry Open Mic for students was successfully initiated and it will continue next year. Plans for 2022 activities are under way. ~ *Emiliano Martín, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE: Greetings and Happy Holidays from the three chapters of the Poetry Society of Tennessee. We have had a wonderful year in spite of the pandemic, which is waning. We are looking forward to returning to in-person monthly meetings. The Society's 65th Annual Festival and contest was done remotely but was a great success. Our thanks go to Jeff Harden from Columbia, Tennessee, for honoring us as our keynote speaker. We had over 500 entries in our various contests and the winners are posted on our web site. Check it out at poetrytennessee.org. Some of us who are active in the Tennessee Society actually reside in other states, so, it is an honor to tell you that my neighbor from the southern suburbs of Memphis and PST Monthly Contest Director, Ann Carolyn Cates, was named Mississippi Poet of the Year. Our anthology, *Tennessee Voices*, will soon be available from PST or you can get it from Amazon. My first chapbook, *It's Not Even Past*, is also available. We in Tennessee and 'round about are looking forward to a bigger and better new year in 2022. ~ William Hill, President

POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS: The Poetry Society of Texas Celebrates 100 years! On November 5, 1921, seven poets from across the state of Texas met in Dallas to organize the Poetry Society of Texas. One hundred years later, on the evening of November 5, 2021, poets from all over the state traveled to the DoubleTree by Hilton in Dallas to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Poetry Society of Texas. The committee members planning the Centennial Celebration were President Irene Robertson, Beth Ayers, Beth Honeycutt, Sylvia Medel, and past president Catherine L'Herisson. Unfortunately, our President, Irene Robertson, was unable to attend due to a health issue, but other members of the planning committee carried on. Beth Ayers, in charge of the banquet and decorations, welcomed those in attendance and introduced our Master of Ceremonies, Steve Sanders. He started off our evening with opening remarks that included some historical highlights of the last one hundred years. After introductions and recognitions, Catherine L'Herisson read an article about PST and how it had promoted poetry in the state of Texas during the past 100 years. Betty Roberts, Corresponding Secretary, had sent this article to the Governor's office before our celebration, and that night Steve read a proclamation from Governor Greg Abbott naming that day as Poetry Society of Texas Day. Steve then read a congratulatory note, via Beth Ayers, in which poet Billy Collins congratulated PST on their hundredth anniversary. Members of the PST Executive Board, Chapter Presidents, Councilors and Centennial Committee were introduced and recognized. At this point, Beth Ayers, acting on behalf of our absent President, told us how Irene had wanted to recognize some special people who had helped PST reach this milestone. A Centennial Award, a standing rectangular crystal with dark blue base, engraved with the date and name of each past living PST President was presented to Pat Stodghill, Budd Powell Mahan, Linda Banks, Marilyn Stacy, Jeanette Strother, Catherine L'Herisson, Aman Khan, and to Richard Sale who was not present. Pat Stodghill, first female President of PST, spoke about some of the challenges over the years, but told how pleased she was that we had persevered and that she was there. Valerie Martin Bailey, editor of the PST bulletin for eight years, and Nancy Baass, Annual Contest Chairman for fourteen years, also received one of the Centennial Awards. After a silent invocation, those present enjoyed a delicious meal before our special speaker for the evening. We were honored to have Julie Cummings, President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, as our special guest speaker. Julie traveled from Colorado for our special event, and we were so pleased to have her there. With a touch of humor at the beginning, she went on to congratulate PST, and remind us that our words and work are important. She also inspired and encouraged us to reach out to others, especially our students. During a short break, many poets posed for photos in front of the huge gold "100" number that

Beth and Mark Ayers made along with the other black and gold decorations. Marty Ruiz, a popular area singer and comedian, entertained us and brought a fun end to our night of celebration. The next morning, Saturday, November 6th, was our Annual Awards Luncheon. After our meal, Julie Cummings, NFSPS President, brought greetings from the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Budd Powell Mahan, Chairman of the Hilton Ross Greer Outstanding Service Award, announced the winner of this prestigious award and presented the Texas shaped plaque to a stunned Beth Ayers, who had been welcoming student winners. Nancy De Honores, Chairman of Poetry in Schools, introduced each student winner before they read their poem and had their photo taken. After a break, the winners of adult contests 100 to 51 were announced by Vice President Richard Weatherly, and if present, the first-place poet read their poem. During the break at the halfway mark, the famous Hilton chocolate chip cookies were brought in. Usually contests 50 to 1 are announced by our President, but in her absence, our new Annual Contest Chairman, Lynn Roberts Grice, did the honors. A new member, Cade Huie, won contest number 1. All in all, 2,739 poems were entered by 97 entrants, and \$7,085 in prize money was awarded to first place winners. Richard Kushmaul, Chairman of the Catherine Case Lubbe Manuscript Prize, announced Christine Irving was this year's winner and that her manuscript would be published. To see photos of these two events, go to poetrysocietyoftexas.org and click on the Photos link. ~ Catherine L'Herisson, Past President of PST

WYOPOETS: Winter is just starting (in Wyoming as I write this). While we prepared to use these cold, short days to find inspiration and put pencil and pen to paper. The WyoPoets are also looking ahead to our spring workshop in April. It will be held in Douglas, Wyoming, on April 29th and April 30th. We will have an open reading on Friday while Saturday will be filled with a workshop. This year we are honored to host the 2019 Guggenheim Fellowship Recipient, poet Camille T. Dungy. Her debut collection of personal essays, *Guidebook to Relative Strangers*, is a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. She also was the winner of the Colorado Book Award. She is the author of four poetry collections and is currently a professor of English at Colorado State University. She lives in Fort Collins, Colorado. I had the honor to hear her read on a Zoom event; her poetry is deep, inspirational, and timely. I hope you get to enjoy her many works. Till spring, have a lovely winter. ~ Angel Mizner, Reporter

POETRY ARTICLES & NEWS

USING THE SUBMITTABLE SUBMISSION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

By Julie Cummings, NFSPS President

If you don't already have a free Submittable.com account, applying for any contest through the Submittable submission management system will automatically create a free account for you. Once you have an account, you will not only be able to upload and track your submissions to NFSPS contests, but also to other major journals and contests using Submittable. Our Submittable portal for each contest includes the rules or guidelines for submission, a series of text box questions (this serves as your cover sheet or letter), and the option to upload files. The accepted file types vary, so pay attention to the guidelines. Be sure that you are titling your submitted files per the contest guidelines; do not put your name in the file and to make it easier on the Contest Chair to find your winning poem, don't title the file "contest 30" - use the title of the poem. Please do not use your name anywhere unless the request is for "name", and do not submit the named copy. If you have trouble with your Submittable account, there is a fantastic knowledge base on the Submittable website, <https://www.submittable.com/help/submitter/>. Additionally, during most working hours there is a Submittable staff member on hand to

live chat via a gold box at the bottom right-hand corner of any Submittable page. In order to fix any errors, you'll need to withdraw your application and submit again. All entries do not need to be uploaded on the same day. You can complete the entries over the course of several days and when completed, upload your "cover sheet" which is the equivalent of the index card used in the mailed in submissions. I will answer any questions you might have. Email me at julie@juliecummingspoetry.com.

A PORTABLE AESTHETIC:

JOHN DONNE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

By Al Rocheleau, Past President of the Florida State Poets Association

John Donne, founder of the Metaphysical School, is among the finest poets who have ever written in English. What is less known to readers (except scholars and divinity students), yet much revered within his time, were Donne's sermons, an elevation of effective prose. Donne was not only a poet of brilliant insight and sensuality on the human level; he also became an Anglican priest and eventually, the Dean of St. Paul's, the national cathedral of England. In Donne's works, both secular and sacred, the artist's poetic sense, whether planned or instinctive, pervades the various forms of his literature, and erases the four centuries that might have divided the contemporary reader or listener from him. Therefore, Donne becomes, among others, an exemplar of his class, and of the power of poetic voice and device to transport deep emotion and intellect over barriers of time and form.

What is it that separates poetry and prose? The answer of *what*, or *how*, expands beyond writing. What, in fact, is the difference between being moved or excited by a gorgeous sunset or the feeling of cool grass beneath our feet, and being affected by a piece of music, a painting, a passage from a novel, or a poem? With natural things, whether broad panoramas or individual objects, the response is *natural*. Nature appears to contain a latent and innate power to *affect* and make *effective* aesthetic wavelengths assimilable to all. With works of art, these aesthetic waves, whether as copies of natural objects, or as newly minted (imagined) images, are communicated through the arrangement of musical notes, paint formations, or graphic symbols. As such, these "created" aesthetic waves of all kinds may be called, in any of their manifestations, *poetic waves*.

The effects are not wholly subjective. Physicist and mathematician George David Birkoff's studies in the 1930s measured aesthetic properties in music, painting, and written poetry by examining the artist's employment of replicable structures, forms, designs, patterns, and devices. The artist's objective is of course to create a palpable effect upon the receiver. Birkoff held that the artist accomplishes this by the arrangement of naturally-affective proportions, ratios, and dualities: simplicity / complexity, similarity / difference, and clarity / ambiguity. The artist employs the media of sound, color, and symbol within various compartments, large and small. In so doing, he / she replicates the natural effects of aesthetics found in the environment, while also altering, amplifying, or carrying such aspects from one mode or form to another. Birkoff developed his theories via mathematical formulas in which he could reduce such effects to specific, replicable patterns and applied devices. Such devices can be seen to traverse literary forms and styles, and at their face, defy time periods. Used in concert, such arrangements and devices aimed at our auditory and visual perspectives, whether directly or symbolically, lift tangible poetic waves, and in so doing, create their physical and mental effects.

Focusing specifically on literature, what do the masters of these created waves have in common? Following Birkoff, it can be posited that strands of pure poetry weave themselves through all of our arts, and so may also color and make memorable our classic prose, from Swift to the Brontës, to Hardy, Joyce, Fitzgerald, Wolfe, and Kerouac.

An example:

I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day, I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women—my own features—mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!

From *Wuthering Heights* by novelist and poet Emily Brönte

In classic novels and stories, sublime passages turn on their elevation of the language and a vibrant manner of expression (*vibrant* from the Latin *vibrare*: "to shake or move rapidly"—a decidedly physical, resonant mode of representation). It is for that use of language that we return to these books over and over, even as we already know well the characters and plot. The passages that most attract us are innervated by the kind of phrasing (by way of phonologic, metrical, syntactic, and semantic devices) that turns latent aesthetic potentials into active waves (yes, the same as those that thrill or move us as we spot distinctive objects, or witness scenes of surf or sunset). As acts of personal creation, these raised aesthetic vibrations may be subtly reclassified as **poetic waves**, and they may exist in both poetry *and* prose.

Active phonological structures of various size and effect include assonance, consonance, rhyme, and the specific sonic or "musical" properties of individual vowels, consonants, and blends. Rhythm, whether visual (on the page) or auditory, would include meter or cadence in the form of syllabic counts, foot-units, accents, or line breaks and sporadic cadences. Syntactic structures engage the properties of order, emphasis, and balance found in rhetorical schemes. Semantic structures (of which Donne was among those most daring in use of image and logic) would include the family of metaphors and other rhetorical tropes that proceed from poetic vision that seeks, often simultaneously, to raise, amplify, or condense thought and emotion. As Birkoff sought to quantify these properties mathematically, even while admitting he could only approximate poetic individuality and genius from one work to another, Donne, in his poetry and prose, and for that matter, Brönte and the others, realized the premise of these transfers.

Such poetic elevation, surpassing prose's simpler objective to alert or inform, is found in literary poetry not as an occasional or segmented illustration as one may find it in prose, but rather as a wholly unrepressed, primary strategy. This is the plan of all poets of any ability, and it is fully achieved in the work of our grandmaster poets—even as these geniuses may *also* take to prose. In my classes, I have often brought out for students a particular piece by John Donne, written as the dean of St. Paul's. It comes from a prose sermon in memory of Lady Danvers, prepared and recorded before July 1, 1627, the date the sermon was preached. I could have excised other segments of that speech (or taken from other sermons) for the objective I intended, but this excerpt certainly made its point, or several. In my experiments, I attempted to make clear that Donne raised tangible poetic waves as a constant, whether planned or as matter of course; his poems and prose are thus remarkably interchangeable in effect, regardless of the form.

I rearranged that prose segment via line breaks, transposing it **verbatim** into *free verse*, and called it "Confraternity of the Ghost of John Donne." Reading it aloud and allowing the class to follow off the pages I had prepared, every student thought the piece was a poem, was modern, and that, in fact, I had written it. The purpose of the exercise was two-fold; first, to underscore the brilliance of a poet whose utterance of language transcends form and genre, revealing the flexibility of attraction that pure poetic waves possess; and second, to

show how form can be adapted to frame or to change, whether subtly or profoundly, the setting in which such waves attract and activate themselves in the mind of a reader. Further, the time period of the writing and the prevailing form was shown to become secondary to actual poetic content, a kind of manna that is inherent, and so is, as is all our great art, timeless.

CONFRATERNITY OF THE GHOST OF JOHN DONNE

But as it is said
of old cosmographers, that when
they had said all that they knew of a country,
and yet much more was to be said,
they said
that the rest of those countries were possessed with giants,
or witches
or spirits or wild beasts, so that
they could pierce no farther
into that country, so when
we have traveled as far as we can, with safety,
that is, as far as ancient, or modern expositors lead us
in the discovery
of these new heavens, and new earth,
yet we must say at last,
that it is a country inhabited with angels,
or archangels,
with cherubim, and seraphim,
and that we can look no farther into it
with these eyes.

Where it is locally, we enquire not;
we rest in this
that it is the habitation
prepared by the blessed saints of God,
heavens,
where the moon is more glorious than our sun,
and the Sun as glorious
as He that made it;
for it is he himself, the son of God,
the sun of glory.

A new earth, where all
the waters are milk, and all
their milk, honey,
where all their grass is corn
and all their corn, manna;
where all their glebe,
all their clods of earth are gold, and all
their gold of innumerable carats;
where all their minutes are ages, and all their ages, eternity;
where every thing, is every minute
in the highest exaltation, as good as it can be
and yet super-exalted
and infinitely multiplied by every
minute's addition, every minute
infinitely better than ever it
was before.

Of these new heavens and this new earth
we must say at last, that we
can say nothing.

For the eye of man has not seen,
nor ear heard, nor heart conceived
the state of this place.

We limit and determine
our consideration with that horizon
with which the Holy Ghost has limited us,
that it is that new heavens
and new earth
wherein
dwells
righteousness.

In a later class, with the students already in the know regarding the source material, I again transposed the piece, this time leaving the propellant engine of line breaks for the discipline of iambic pentameter. (For metrical purposes this attempt, unlike the free verse, could not be done verbatim, but every effort was made to retain as much of Donne's writing as possible.) While this is the metrical form in which most of the students had read Donne's poems originally, they saw that it was also possible to take the grandmaster's prose and fashion it into the accentual-syllabic meter that dominated his age, and yet still exists in ours.

CONFRATERNITY OF THE GHOST OF JOHN DONNE

But as it is said of old cosmographers,
that when they'd said all that they knew
of a country (and yet much could be said),
they said the rest were possessed with giants,
or witches or spirits or wild beasts
so all would blink and dare a' pierce no farther
into that country; so when we've gone
as far as we are able, and with safety,
far as ancient, or our own expositors
can lead us to discovery of these
new heavens, and new earth, yet we
must say at last, that it is a country
inhabited with angels, or archangels,
of cherubim or seraphim, and that
we look not farther into with these eyes.
Where, we enquire not; we rest in this,
resolve it to the habitation made
by blessed saints of God, and heavens, where
the moon is more glorious than our sun,
and Sun, glorious as He that made it;
for it is he himself, the son of God,
the sun of glory.

A new earth, where all
waters are of milk, and all milk,
as honey, where their grass is corn
and all their corn, of Moses' manna come;
where all their glebe, and all their clods of earth
are gold, and all their gold of innumerable carats;
where all their minutes age eternal be;
where every several thing, is every minute
cast exalted high, to be as good
as it can be, and super-yet-exalted,
infinitely multiplied by every
minute's next addition, every minute
infinitely better than before.
Of these new heavens, this new earth,
we say at last, we can say nothing.
For eye of man has not seen, nor ear heard,

(continued from page 7)

nor heart conceived the symbols of this place.
We founder to determine and consider
toward the Holy Ghost's horizon veiled,
and that it is entire of that new heav'n
and new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

The point is made that poets, especially great ones, carry poetic sensibility with them always, and that we as artists can work in and out of forms to find what for us will be the final "right" or "best" setting for a creative intent, as represented in the molding and firing of that ultimate aesthetic "object" that will be our poem. Using our knowledge of pattern and device to a greater or lesser extent, we fill in the variables of Birkoff's equation, taking the poet's aim to lift the latent aesthetic potentials of perception and imagination into palpable aesthetic / poetic waves, thus realizing the aim. Such an ability (employing the same device-components) is seen as transferable *between* forms and has no time stamp. Only the *quality* of the artist and his / her intent, rather than any general form or period style, dictates the quantity and quality of poetic waves created. In the great poets and prose writers, these conditions affirm themselves. In the writings of Donne and other grandmasters of English poetry, the effects projected in this thesis, available to readers and listeners alike, cross forms and centuries, reaching their apotheosis.

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POETRY CONTESTS

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.

CONTINUING TO SHARE POETRY IN ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCES

By Paul Ford, NFSPS 1st VP, *Strophes* Editor

As you may have read in a previous news report from the Utah State Poetry Society by President Steven Leitch, we continue to share poetry among our society members by way of Zoom sessions. We now use Zoom for critique sessions. As well, our 2021 annual poetry festival was held via Zoom with a high of 65 participants over the 1.5 days of Zooming. Below is a set of suggestions sent out to our UTSPS festival attendees on how to better prepare for and participate in the upcoming Zoom sessions. Primarily these suggestions are for members who have little or no prior experience with Zoom (or other video apps such as Google Meet, Skype, and WebEx). I would like to hear from other NFSPS members on tips for using virtual technologies to share poetry, as well as hosting poetry events online such as an annual poetry festival or presenting winning poems in a poetry contest.

Here are the suggestions on how to prepare and participate in a scheduled Zoom meeting as sent with the invite to our poetry festival attendees:

To fully participate in our scheduled Zoom meeting, you will need:

- 1) A connection to the Internet (or a phone if you are only going to call in to our session)
- 2) A computer/tablet/smartphone with a working camera, mic, and speakers (or a headphone with a mic and earphones plugged into your desktop computer)
- 3) The Zoom app installed on your computer, tablet or smartphone (although Zoom can be used with just a web browser, often it difficult to get the Zoom browser app to access the device's camera, mic, and speakers)
- 4) Optionally, a Zoom account, which is free to set up (having an account enables you to schedule your own Zoom sessions, limited to 40 minutes with the free version)

5) Use the zoom.us link in this invite to connect to our session. With the installed Zoom app, you will see a pop-up message asking to use your Zoom app, which you want to do.

During the session, PLEASE keep your mic muted when you are not the open mic presenter. This will prevent all sorts of stray noises from distracting others while the presenter is reading a poem. When you are introduced as the next presenter, unmute your mic, introduce yourself, and read your poem. Once you are finished, please again mute your mic.

Tips to improve how your video of how your face looks to others:

- * Position the device so it is stationary (not held in your hand)
- * Position the camera so it displays your face (not too close up!)
- * Position the camera so there is no bright light directly behind you (such as sunlight through a window)
- * If you can, place a light on the other side of the camera so that it shines on your face.

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2021



The anthology of 160 prize-winning poems awarded at the NFSPS 2021 virtual convention is available on amazon.com. The 2021 cover gives a nod to the Federation's first "sky-borne" annual gathering of poets. All royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS. ~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor