



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

## Strophes

Vol. LXII No. 4

www.nfspd.net

April 2026



Friends and Fellow Poets,

As we head into the last few months of my time as President of NFSPS I want to thank you for your membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS). As a member of NFSPS, you receive many high quality benefits including our Newsletter *Strophes*, this fine publication edited quarterly by Julie Cummings.

In this message I want to remind you of the many other benefits and opportunities to create and share your talents and poetry that you receive as a member of NFSPS. For your \$3 per year membership fee you receive many benefits. Here are a few:

**An Annual National Convention** hosted by a different affiliated state society each year that offers workshops, readings, and opportunities for fellowship among poets from all over the country, as well as meetings for conducting business and exchanging ideas. For 2026, our annual gathering to celebrate the art of poetry and foster community will be held in Overland Park Kansas on July 23-28. Those registered can attend either in person or via Zoom.

**Fifty NFSPS, Inc. Annual Poetry Contests** for an entry fee for members of \$1 per contest with a maximum \$10 for 10 or more contests. Together, these contests total nearly \$9,000 in cash prizes. Our student contests, catering to Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, include not only cash prizes but also publication opportunities, nurturing the next generation of poets.

**The Founders Award, one of the Annual Poetry Contests**, has a top prize of \$1,000 with an entry fee of \$5 per poem, with a submission limit of 4 poems.

**The Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam** during our annual convention comprises a series of poetry slam events, with prizes ranging from \$100 to \$2,000. This thrilling competition also serves as a prestigious qualifier for the World Poetry Slam, showcasing the best voices in American performance poetry.

**The Blackberry Peach Spoken Word Contest** and publication of its award recipients carries a top prize of \$1,000 and opportunities for publication, this contest showcases the rich tapestry of poetry as it is both spoken **and** written.

The annual **Barbara Stevens Manuscript Competition** carries an entry fee of \$20, and provides a travel stipend to our convention, a top prize of \$1,000 and wonderful opportunity for emerging poets to have their manuscript professionally published.

The **Manningham Student Poetry Award** is free for students and carries a cash prize and publication, encouraging young poetic talent to flourish.

**Our CUP Awards** offer two opportunities for college and university undergraduate students to publish chapbooks and compete for cash prizes.

Our annual **Member Anthology, *Encore***, beautifully showcases the winning poems from our annual contests, preserving the voices of our most talented contributors.

Our **Quarterly Newsletter *Strophes*** serves as a clearinghouse for state member information in both print and on-line edition. Besides national news, this dynamic hub for members contains state societies' reports on their activities, announcements of contests, publishing opportunities, articles on poetic craft, featured poets, inspiring writing prompts, insightful educational articles, and great opportunities for collaboration among all state societies.

**Special Projects/Publications** mount innovative initiatives like "Poets for Peace" dedicated to raising funds for orphans in Ukraine. Using the power of poetry to make a difference, we aim to demonstrate the amazing impact that poetry has on our world.

NFSPS Press proudly submits **Pushcart Prize** nominations for poems by their poets we have published that deserve significant recognition of their craft.

NFSPS, Inc. is honored to also serve as a Nominating Body for the annual **Nobel Prize in Literature** to join the international community of promoting and acknowledging literary excellence.

Please enjoy these benefits as part of your NFSPS membership during 2026.

If you are interested in participating in NFSPS as a committee member or if you have suggestions for new programs or ideas about how to improve our existing programs, please let me know. We thrive on the talents and valuable ideas of our member poets. You can contact me at [jcavanaugh1@gmail.com](mailto:jcavanaugh1@gmail.com).

Finally, I'd like to welcome the Poetry Society of Virginia into our community. Their organization brings a rich literary tradition, a strong commitment to the craft of poetry, and a vibrant network of poets whose voices strengthen the broader poetry landscape. We look forward to the creativity, collaboration, and inspiration that your members will contribute through participation in federation programs, contests, and gatherings. Together, we continue the shared mission of encouraging the writing and appreciation of poetry across our states and beyond.

Peace, love, and poetry,

~ Joe Cavanaugh, 36<sup>th</sup> NFSPS President

## MICHIGAN POET REBECCA BIBER WINS BARBARA STEVENS AWARD

This July the NFSPS will release *Escapement*, a book by Rebecca Biber of Ann Arbor, Michigan. Her manuscript was selected by Chris Abani as the winner of the 2025 Barbara Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition.



Rebecca G. Biber is a music educator, collaborative pianist, and poet. After earning her BM and MM from the University of Michigan School of Music, she completed her MFA in creative writing at Queens University of Charlotte. Her first book of poems, *Technical Solace*, was published by Fifth Avenue Press in 2017.

Abani also selected four finalists: *Cracked Paraffin* by Jen Ashburn of Pittsburgh, PA; *deep Is the skin of the world* by Mermer Blakeslee of Roscoe, NY; *Between Storms* by Brett Warren of Yarmouth Port, MA; and *Theme Park* by Liz Robbins of St. Augustine, FL.

In addition, Abani selected the following manuscripts as Honorable Mention:

- *Axis of the Vortex*, Richard Brostoff, Belmont, MA
- *In the Blue Zone*, Roger Camp, Seal Beach, CA
- *Spirits or Gnats*, Carol Munn, Houston, TX
- *I should want to survive*, Jude Marx, Scarborough, ME
- *Pianissimo Fortissimo*, Amy Marques, San Luis Obispo, CA
- *Flying into the Hurricane*, Sandy Solomon, Nashville, TN
- *Abstract Art and Other Concerns*, Ananya Kanai Shah, Watertown, MA
- *Breakwater*, Ellen Sazzman, Chevy Chase, MD

Chris Abani said this about Rebecca's manuscript:

"At times thoughtful, moving and even thrilling, *Escapement* is a joy to read. With persuasive and elegant lines these poems unfold, at once experimental and yet grounded in the familiar, flowing with a captivating and memorable lyricism, into an accomplished, revelatory, and magnificent collection. A beautiful book."

NFSPS First Vice-President Steven Concert is editing and designing *Escapement*, working closely with Rebecca to have the book released in time for this year's NFSPS Convention.

Rebecca entered the Barbara Stevens Competition as a non-member, but she has received a one-year complimentary membership in the Poetry Society of Michigan as part of her award. She will attend the 2026 NFSPS Convention in Overland Park, Kansas and read from her new book there. Copies will be for sale at a discounted convention price, and she will be available to sign them.

Please join us in congratulating Rebecca—and in commending the nearly 150 other entrants in the 2025 Barbara Stevens Poetry Book Manuscript Competition. ~ Julie Cummings

## BLACKBERRY PEACH NEWS

The BlackBerry Peach team is excited to share that we will again highlight the winners of the Spoken & Written Word Contest on the Sunday of the NFSPS annual convention in July. The contest is open until April 15, and our judge is former Arizona State Poetry Society President Katie Zale.

Also, the BlackBerry Peach National Poetry Slam returns, and it will again be held in conjunction with the NFSPS annual convention in July. There will be 60 of the top poets from across the country competing this year for the championship title. In addition to cash prizes for all finalists, this year's winner will serve as the U.S. representative at the 2027 World Poetry Slam in Tokyo.

The annual BlackBerry Peach Youth Mini-Festival will also be held during the convention. Youth are invited to participate in free poetry workshops hosted by acclaimed Kansas City-area poets: Melissa Ferrar (Kansas City Poet Laureate), Bob Sykora (Editor at Garden Party Collective), and Sheri Purpose Hall (BBP alum and award winning spoken word artist). Youth will engage in community building activities and lunch will be provided. As part of the festival, a youth poetry slam will be held with medals and cash prizes available.

Finally, we are eager to bring back the Form Slam during convention this year as well. This event brings the page and stage together in a fun and engaging way. State society presidents have received information from Noir Jente on registering a representative, and soon spots will open up to non-society members. Be sure to get those form poems ready!

Complete details are available at [nfsp.net/blackberry-peach](https://nfsp.net/blackberry-peach)

If you have any questions about the BlackBerry Peach programming, please contact the BlackBerry Peach Director, Kelsey Bigelow at [kelsey.bigelow@nfsp.net](mailto:kelsey.bigelow@nfsp.net) ~ Kelsey Bigelow, BlackBerry Peach Director & NFSPS Vice Chancellor.

### FELLOWSHIPS HELP WITH COSTS OF ATTENDING CONVENTION

NFSPS Conventions are a wonderful opportunity to connect with poets from all over the country, and attending in person provides a far richer experience than Zoom. However, the travel and hotel costs can be challenging or prohibitive. That barrier to attendance is what Convention Attendance Fellowships are intended to overcome.

Although they can't cover full costs for anyone, they can supplement travel budgets by a few hundred dollars. If such a supplement might enable you to attend the 2026 Convention in person, do consider applying for a fellowship. The more members that attend, the more valuable the Convention can be for everyone.

Applications for this year's Convention Attendance Fellowships are now available online at <https://nfsp.net/>. All members of affiliated state societies are eligible to apply EXCEPT those who received fellowships for the past two consecutive years. The deadline for applying is April 21. We're aiming to notify applicants by April 30.~ Susan Chambers

## CUPdate! College Undergraduate Poetry Competition Winners

This year's CUP Competition winners are *Where the Sky Touches the Ribcage* by Sarah Gill from Oklahoma State University and *A Jambstone Called My Jawbone* by Jonelle Penin from Purdue University.

This year's judge, Jessica Melilli-Hand, said both of these manuscripts use startling and fresh imagery and turns of phrase, and both young poets employ craft in interesting ways.

Please join us in congratulating these student-poets! *A Jambstone Called My Jawbone* and *Where the Sky Touches the Ribcage* will launch at convention in July and will be available for purchase in person or via Amazon. ~ *Jessica Temple, 2nd Vice President & Youth Chair*

## 2026 MANNINGHAM TRUST STUDENT POETRY CONTEST

I am pleased to announce the results of the 2026 Manningham Student Trust Poetry Contests. We had 242 total entries from 35 states. I would like to thank our judges for this year's contests – Susan Stevens Chambers from Minnesota – Senior Division, grades 9-12, and M. Palowski Moore from Kansas – Junior Division, grades 6-8. They gave their time and expertise to read these poems and make the difficult decisions of selecting the winners.

Congratulations to all the students who entered this year and to their teachers, who helped them learn how to express their feelings in such creative ways. Please keep writing and submit to the contest again this year for the 2027 contest. The submission period will be September 15, 2026, through November 15, 2026, for the 2027

contest. Guidelines can be found on our website: [www.nfsps.net](http://www.nfsps.net). Click on the Manningham Trust Student Poetry contest. Winners will be notified in 2027.

Here are the students who were selected by our judges for the 2026 Contests:

### Senior Division

1st Place: God is a Barber on 11 th Avenue  
Julian Jacinto, Pleasantville High School, Pleasantville, NY  
2nd Place: Portrait of Childhood as Threadbare Night  
Rohan Mahapatra, Harker Upper School, San Jose, CA  
3rd Place: Claymouth  
Jane Oh, Lexington High School, Lexington, MA  
4th Place: Farewell  
Xinqi Wang, Princeton International School, Princeton, NJ  
5th Place: Gateway to Lomonosov  
Ruiyan Zhu, Saratoga High School, Saratoga, CA  
1st HM: Pina Colada  
Ojasvi Ramani, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Alexandria, VA  
2nd HM: Six Ways to Say Home

Abdullah Muzammil, South Plainfield High School, Plainfield, NJ

3rd HM: Because the World Didn't End  
Hayden Park, Pacific Academy-Irvine, Irvine, CA

4th HM: Fairy-Dust Magic Spring  
Amelia Kozlowski, Stillwater High School, Oak Park Heights, MN

5th HM: Ghazal for a Disappearing Hutong  
Juliana Pan, Issaquah High School, Issaquah, WA

Citations: Find Me Between the Oceans  
Maylea Harris, The Rivers School, Weston, MA  
Everything I Learned about Death, I Learned from Three Ants  
Ashley Mo, The Harker School, San Jose, CA

### Junior Division

1st Place: Ain't No Preacher in My Bloodline  
Ashton Malone, Middle School of Poplarville, Poplarville, MS

2nd Place: Death of the Crows  
Trinity Hundley, Founders Classical Academy of Corinth, Corinth, TX

3rd Place: The Youngers' Ode to Karl  
Ryder Mackenzie, Boulder Country Day School, Boulder, CO

4th Place: Beauty's Deception  
Kaitlyn Hendrix, Pleasant Grove Middle School, Rescue, CA

5th Place: Petrichor  
Nayoon Lee, Tenafly Middle School, Tenafly, NJ

1st HM: Hope You're Dancing in the Sky  
Liv Schnathorst, Baxter Middle School, Baxter, IA

2nd HM: My Reflection Isn't Me (Yet)  
Nitya Modi, Central Middle School, San Carlos, CA

3rd HM: Veterans' Acrostic Poem  
Maggie Manookin, St. Luke Elementary School, Shoreline, WA

4th HM: Flowers  
Sutton James-Bennett, Lincoln Middle School, Ypsilanti, MI

5th HM: In the Wild  
Cooper Wollenhaupt, Homeschool, New Milford, CT

Citations: When We Were Small and Dreaming  
Jane Zhang, Buckingham Browne and Nichols School, Cambridge, MA

Being the Oldest  
Manjit Seckhon, Sacramento Valley Charter School, W. Sacramento, CA

Congratulations again to all the students who received recognition in the 2026 Manningham Trust Student Poetry Contests and to all those who entered! ~ *Polly Opsahl, Manningham Chair*

## 2026 CONVENTION SPEAKER BIOS



### KEYNOTE: ROSEMERRY WAHTOLA TROMMER,

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer has written and shared a poem a day since 2006. Her daily poems can be found on her blog, *A Hundred Falling Veils*. A curated version is available on her daily audio series, *The Poetic Path*, on the *Ritual* app.

She co-hosts Emerging Form (podcast on creative process), Secret Agents of Change (a surreptitious kindness cabal), and Soul Writer's Circle. Her poetry has appeared on A Prairie Home Companion, PBS News Hour, O Magazine, American Life in Poetry, on Carnegie Hall stage, and on river rocks she leaves around town. Her collection Hush won the Halcyon Prize. Naked for Tea was a finalist for the Able Muse Book Award. Her most recent books are All the Honey, The Unfolding, and Exploring Poetry of Presence II: Prompts to Deepen Your Writing Practice. Her spoken-word albums include Dark Praise and Risking Love.

As poet laureate for Evermore, she helps others explore grief, wonder, and love through poetry. She's been an organic fruit grower, a newspaper and magazine editor, and a parent educator for Parents as Teachers. She earned her MA in English Language Linguistics at UW- Madison.

Her three-word mantra: I'm still learning. If limited to one word: Adjust.



**SHERI PURPOSE HALL** is an award-winning spoken word artist, interdisciplinary creator, and mental health advocate. She ranked number two Woman Poet in the World at the 2022 Women of the World Poetry Slam (virtual) and was named 2020 Female Spoken Word Artist of the Year. A Charlotte Street Generative Performing

Artist Awardee and multi-year arts grant recipient, Sheri is widely published and the author of five books, including Black Girl Shattered. She serves as Executive Director of Arthropy and founder of East of Red ArtHouse.



**LINZI GARCIA** comes from a family of Rocky Mountain artists and has lived in Kansas for over a decade. She serves as the poetry editor and publicist for Meadowlark Press and the director of the Diverse Voices Literacy Program for House of Morrow, an arts and services nonprofit. She is the author of Thank You and Cravings. Linzi is also a recipient of a NextGen Under 30 Kansas Award and Kansas Governor's Arts Award.



**MAUREEN CARROLL**, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Anamcara Press, an independent publishing house dedicated to inclusive, socially engaged books. With over a decade of experience producing print, ebook, and audiobook titles for U.S. and international markets, she champions LGBTQ+ and underrepresented voices. Her background in linguistics, anthropology, conflict resolution, and human-rights training informs her ethical, collaborative editorial approach and commitment to mission-

driven publishing. Maureen, with help from other judges, selects the annual Amity Literary Prize winner.



**HUASCAR MEDINA** is a poet, editor, and essayist. He served as Kansas poet laureate from 2019 to 2022. He is the author of three books of poetry: Protest As Love Poem, Un Mango Grows in Kansas, and How to Hang the Moon His work has appeared in The Flint Hills Review, Gasconade Review, Green Mountains Review, Inscape, Kansas Magazine, Latino Book Review, The New York Times, and

other publications.



**M. PALOWSKI MOORE** is Silver Lion Poet. His photography has been featured in several exhibitions including Tangled Roots at IUAH. He is the current Chancellor and judges' Chair for NFSPS. He has received numerous awards including a Phi beta Kappa Award (Georgia State University) and a Sammy Davis, Jr./ Zora Neale Hurston Award for Arts and Humanities. He is a contributing poet to the Civil Rights Memorial Center (SPLC) community poem *A CIVIL COMMUNITY*.

### NFSPS, Inc and Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas

Co-Hosted Annual Convention  
Doubletree Hilton Overland Park, KS  
Wednesday, July through Sunday, July  
All times Central Time Zone

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

Happy Hour gathering for those who would like to participate

#### THURSDAY, JULY 23

9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Book Room Check in
9:00 am – 9:00 pm	Registration table opens
9:30 am – 11:00 pm	NFSPS Inc Contest Awards
11:00 -- 12:00 pm	Open Mic
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00- 2:00 pm	SLAM Orientation
2:00 – 3:30 pm	Poetry Trivia Game
3:30 – 5:30 pm	BBP SLAM Bouts A and B
4:00 – 8:00 pm	Cash Bar and Announcements
5:30 - 6:30 pm	Opening Dinner
6:45 pm – 8:45 pm	BBP SLAM Bouts C and D
9:00 – 11:00 pm	BBP SLAM Bouts E and F
11:00 pm-Midnight	Advocacy and Awareness open mic (protest poetry) *

#### FRIDAY, JULY 24

7:30 - 8:30 am	Open Mic Poetry Reading*
8:30 – 10:00 am	NFSPS Inc Contest Awards
9:00 - 5:30 pm	Book Room Open
10:00 - 11:45 am	Poetry Workshop
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Luncheon: Youth and Adults Invocation Poem

12:30 pm – 1:00 pm CUP Winners  
Sarah Gill and Jonelle Penin  
1:15 pm - 3:15 pm Writing Workshop  
3:30 pm - 5:30 pm BBP SLAM Bouts G and H  
5:00 pm – 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm Dinner  
6:45 pm – 8:45 pm BBP SLAM Bouts I and J  
9:00 – 11:00 pm BBP SLAM Bouts K and L  
11:00 pm – 12:00 am Open Mic Poetry Reading\* Identity poetry Open mic for LGBTQ+ and allies (poems about identity, however you identify, advocacy, and action in the life of the poet/community)

**SATURDAY, JULY 25**

7:30 - 8:30 am Open Mic Poetry Reading\*  
8:30 – 9:30 am NFSPS Inc Contest Awards  
9:00 - 5:30 pm Book Room Open  
9:45 – 11:00 am State President’s Meeting  
10:00 – 11:00 am Youth Workshop  
11:15 – 12:15 pm Youth Workshop  
12:15- 1:15 pm Youth lunch  
11:00 - 1:00 pm Plenary Session  
*(in memoriam, elections, reports)*  
1:00 – 2:00 pm Lunch  
1:45 – 2:00 pm Manningham Winners  
1:30 - 2:45 pm Youth Community Building Activity  
3:00 - 4:30 pm Youth Workshop  
4:30 - 6:00 pm Youth Slam and Open Mic for all  
2:00 - 5 pm Kansas Showcase (to be determined)  
5:00 - 8 pm cash bar  
6:30 - 7:30 pm Dinner  
7:00 – 7:30 pm Barbara Stevens Manuscript Winner  
Rebecca Biber  
7:45 – 11:00 pm Haiku Slam  
BlackBerry Peach SLAM Finals

**SUNDAY, JULY 26**

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. Open Mic Poetry Reading\*  
9:30 – 4:00 pm Book Room Open  
9:15 - 11:15 am Form SLAM competition  
11:30 - 1:00 pm Lunch  
12:30 – 1:00 pm Blackberry Peach Spoken and Written Poetry Winners  
1:15 – 2:30 pm Panel Discussion  
2:45 - 4:15 pm Workshop  
Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer  
4:00 to 5:00 pm Bookroom-pick up all books (no sales)  
5:00 – 8:00 pm Cash Bar  
6:00 – 7:00 pm Gala Dinner  
7:00 - 8:00 pm KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer  
8:00 - 8:30 pm Autograph signing for keynote  
8:30 pm to finish NFSPS Inc Contest Awards

Open Mic Poetry Reading to follow until 11:00 pm

\*\*\*Workshop Descriptions will be available at NFSPS.net

\*\*\*\*Are you attending convention and want to sell books in the bookroom? The guidelines and forms will be available Mid-April on the convention website at [nfsp.net](http://nfsp.net)

**NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS**

**The FLORIDA STATE POETS ASSOCIATION** welcomes everyone to our 2026 Spring Fling. Removing barriers of time, distance, and cost for those who love poetry, our celebration is free and entirely online, and because April is always busy with National Poetry Month events, we moved our celebration to the last six days of March. Fifteen sessions include generative workshops, social hours, insider info for FSPA contests, and open mics. Scheduled presenters include poets Shutta Crum, Sue Brennan Walker, Al Rocheleau, Susan Chambers, Marc Davidson, Denise Duhamel, Peter Gordon, Camara Gaither, Elaine Person, Katherine Nelson-Born, Lola Haskins, and the leadership team at FSPA. For more information and to register, see our website: [flopoets.org](http://flopoets.org). We hope to see old and new poetry friends March 26-31, 2026.~ *Diane Neff, Secretary*

**MAINE POETS SOCIETY** is thrilled to announce the forthcoming release of a new anthology featuring poetry by 56 member poets. The book’s publication commemorates the 90th anniversary of Maine Poets Society, which was founded in 1936 as the Poetry Fellowship of Maine. The title is *Timberline and Shoreline*, reflecting the Maine environment, and echoing the titles of past anthologies produced by MPS: *Juniper and White Pine* (1962), *Rock Ledge and Apple Blossoms* (1971), and *Salt Spray and Pine* (1978). It will be launched at the society’s general meeting on May 16 and available for purchase from Amazon after that date. ~ *Sally Joy, Reporter*

**NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY:** Poetry is thriving in western Nevada thanks to our very own Nevada poets and mentors. We’re collectively maintaining our Nevada chapter’s involvement with community service and community building. We meet ten times across the year (monthly with a summer hiatus) for the sake of workshopping poems according to a specific theme/prompt/challenge. There is no substitute for the personal investment in each other’s lives by gathering in person. In addition, our members do ongoing work with many local agencies, institutions and organizations related to, or directly involved with, poetry and the literary arts in general.

As communications liaison to the NFSPS I have now finished my tenure as the City of Reno Poet Laureate. In our last few gatherings we have agreed that I will assume all roles and responsibilities as president of our chapter along with Spoken Views Collective founder Iain Watson serving in chapter leadership as well. Our chapter would love to thank Phyllis Peacock as well as Carol Quinn, from the bottom of our hearts, for their ample years of service and dedication to poetry in Nevada. They will both remain members in wonderful standing and consistent attendees at events. We are excited for this official transition on April 1st (no joke) to help commemorate National Poetry Month. Iain and I along with

our amazing members are working on several larger projects that will represent Biggest Little City firsts. I have the honor as well of being the MC for our Poetry Out Loud Nevada State competition at UNR on March 7th in collaboration with Nevada Arts Council and the national Poetry Out Loud organization.

Our members support and work with the Sierra Arts Literary Community, Reno Arts and Culture Commission, City of Reno, City of Sparks, Reno Arts Consortium, Reno Arts News, University of Nevada English Department, UNR Low Res Tahoe MFA program, UNR MFA program Reno Campus, Reno News and Review, Reno Gazette Journal, Biggest Little Streets, Monday Night Poetry, Collective Breath Poetry Book Club, Our Center including the True Colors Poetry Group, Poetry Under No King monthly slam poetry competition, Radical Cat Bookstore, Thistle and Nightshade Bookstore, Mountain Music Parlor, Nevada Humanities, Nevada Arts Council and of course the Spoken Views Collective.

Our members are involved with the Tahoe Poetry Collective, Annual Truckee Literary Crawl, Annual Tahoe Literary Festival and Poetry in the Parks. The greater Reno/Tahoe region certainly values the literary arts in general with a particular affinity for and support for the art form of poetry.

Our collective involvement spreads the word about special events, both local and statewide engagement, and numerous volunteer opportunities. Our chapter's membership continues to grow organically by putting ourselves out in the community and making ourselves easily available to any poets and would be poets for their inquiries.

Our 50th anniversary NPS anthology will soon be available through the Washoe County library system and includes contributions from members across generations. Thank you again to Crystal Barker for her tireless efforts to help bring the beautiful volume to life. ~ *Jesse James Ziegler, Communications*

### **POETRY SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA**

April is an exciting month for the Poetry Society of Oklahoma! Since April is National Poetry Month PSO has several events planned. People all over the world will celebrate *National Poetry Month*. Each year PSO looks forward to the OKC City Council presenting a Proclamation proclaiming April as *National Poetry Month* in Oklahoma City (this year for the fifteenth year in a row!) by Mayor David Holt. And, our Oklahoma State Legislators will present a Resolution stating that April is *National Poetry Month* in the State of Oklahoma (again, for the fifteenth year in a row!) by State Representative Tammy West. And finally, for the very first time, Mayor Vickie Douglas will be presenting a Proclamation proclaiming April as *National Poetry Month* in the City of Warr Acres, OK.

During April we will also host our annual Contest Awards Ceremony and a luncheon. Contest winners that are present will read their winning poems. Winners that are not present, if their poems place first, will have their poems read by PSO members attending the Awards Luncheon. PSO will also announce the PSO Poet Laureate for 2026. Always an exciting time.

As I mentioned in a previous article, our PSO and NFSPS Webmaster, Billy Pennington, passed away last year and PSO has not had a Webpage. Well, be on the lookout because our PSO Vice-President, Sydney Aerin is in the process of starting one! She is also doing a podcast for PSO.

And finally (last but certainly not least) we are reviving our Youth Lore Contests. PSO feels this is very important for children to be involved in poetry for the following reasons: It helps with language development. It supports literacy skills and scaffolds emerging readers. It exposes kids to all sorts of language and vocabulary and grammar. It enhances memory. It encourages play. It offers an outlet for creative thinking and emotional expression. It's a comfort during hard times. It's fun. Motivates children to read. Teaches young readers about sound. Builds vocabulary. Encourages creativity. It improves language, understanding, imagination and reasoning as well as developing empathy, self-confidence and emotional intelligence. Reading, writing, and discussing poems allow students to learn how to express themselves, to be sensitive to different points of view, and to be moved by ideas and feelings. These are just a few reasons why we are reviving an interest in poetry for our youth. ~ *Patti Koch, President*

### **WYOPOETS Spring 2026 Poetry Workshop**

Join us in Casper, WY, in April 2026 for a fascinating presentation from two distinguished writers—Veronica Golos and David Pérez. During the weekend of Friday, April 24th through Saturday, April 25th. The two presenters will share their experience at writing, their techniques in interpreting poetry, and their skills in performing poetry.

As part of the workshop, participants will have the opportunity to submit a poem to the presenter, Veronica Golos, prior to the workshop and receive feedback on it. Only 30 poems will be critiqued, so submit early. Guidelines: 12-point, black font, no more than 36 lines, must fit on one page. Deadline March 21, 2026. For more details on the workshop, visit <https://www.wyopoets.org/workshop.html>.

### **The 2026 Spring Workshop**

To ensure the workshop remains accessible, WyoPoets' is offering two scholarship opportunities: A Student Scholarship (available to Wyoming K-12 and collegiate students) and a General Scholarship for those requiring modest financial support.

### **WyoPoets has increased its membership.**

We are thrilled to report significant organizational growth. A promotion committee was formed this term with the goal of increasing membership by 20%. Within just seven months, membership has surged by 29% thanks to the dedicated efforts of the committee and the board.

### **Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest**

WyoPoets received 279 poems from across the country for its annual Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest! ~ *Suzanne Stephan, Correspondent*

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

Organized October 17, 1959

Mary B. Wall, Founder

**Honorary Chancellor: Ihor Pavlyuk**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD ~ 2024-2026**

Elected, NFSPS Convention, June 2024

**PRESIDENT:** Joseph Cavanaugh

**Development Chair,** 3722 Longford Cir., Ormond Beach, FL 32174 president@nfspss.net

**1ST VICE PRESIDENT:** Steven Concert  
49 Kitchen Ave., Harveys Lake, PA 18618  
steven.concert@nfspss.net

**2ND VICE PRESIDENT:** Jessica Temple

**Youth Chair, College Undergraduate Poetry  
Competition Chair** 103 2nd Ave SW, Fort Walton  
Beach, FL 32548 jessica.temple@nfspss.net

**3RD VICE PRESIDENT:** JoAn Howerton

**Special Awards Chair** 2733 Wigginton Point,  
Lexington, KY 40511 ladyjoan1946@gmail.com

**4TH VICE PRESIDENT:** Peter Stein

**Learning Coordinator** 5612 23rd Ave S., Minneapolis,  
MN 55417 peter.stein@nfspss.net

**CHANCELLOR:** Melvin Palowski Moore, **Judges  
Chair** 11916 Lakeside Drive, Apt. 1622, Overland Park,  
KS 66213 judgeschair@nfspss.net

**1ST VICE CHANCELLOR:** Kelsey Bigelow

**BlackBerryPeach Prizes for Poetry Chair**  
Kelsey.Bigelow@nfspss.net

**2ND VICE CHANCELLOR:** Susann Moeller

**Membership Co-Chair** Columbus, OH  
smoeller@nfspss.net

**TREASURER:** Linda Harris

49512 SE Weber Rd., Sandy, OR 97055-7425  
treasurer@nfspss.net

**SECRETARY:** Polly Opsahl

**Manningham Trust Competition Chair**  
7316 Huntington Dr., Oscoda, MI 48750  
secretary@nfspss.net

**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:** Paul Ford

**Presidential Advisors Chair, Electronic Media** 2412  
E. 10265 S., Sandy, UT 84092 paul.ford@nfspss.net

**APPOINTIVE BOARD**

**Board Liaison to State Societies, Membership Chair:**

Russell H. Strauss 18 S. Rembert St.,  
Memphis, TN 38104 RSTRpoet@cs.com

**Strophes Editor,** stropheseditor@nfspss.net

**Webmaster and Electronic Media Assistant**

**Contest Chair:** C/O Julie Cummings, 5858 Pintail Way,  
Frederick, CO 80504-9668 ~ contestchair@nfspss.net  
admin@nfspss.net stropheseditor@nfspss.net

**Judges Chair:** Melvin Palowski Moore, 11916 Lakeside  
Drive, Apartment 1622, Overland Park, KS 66213  
judgeschair@nfspss.net

**Encore Editor:** McKenna Hall

**Historian:** Nancy Baass

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

**Legal Counselor and Parliamentarian,**

**Convention Coordinator:** Susan Stevens Chambers  
700 Agency Trail, Unit 202 Mankato, Minnesota 56001  
schambersmediator@yahoo.com

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

**Poetry Day/Poetry Month Liaison Co-Chair:**

Amy Jo Zook 3520 State Route 56,  
Mechanicsburg, OH 43044

**Publicity Chair:** Bernadette Perez  
19645 Hwy. 314, Belen, NM 87002  
bpburritos@aol.com

**Stevens Manuscript Competition Chair:**

Eleanor Berry 2230 SE Laura Lane, Dallas, OR 97338  
stevenschair@nfspss.net

**Strophes Associate Editor:** Julie K. Shavin

8435 Ermel Rd., Fountain, CO 80817

julianza@comcast.net

**NFSPS MEMBER STATE SOCIETIES  
AND PRESIDENTS**

**ALABAMA: Alabama State Poetry Society**

Dargan Ware, President ~ 2154 Highland Avenue South,  
Birmingham AL 35205 ~ authordarganware@gmail.com

**ARIZONA: Arizona State Poetry Society**

CChristy White ~ President, 1145 E. Kaler Dr.,  
Phoenix, AZ 85020 ~ c.christy.w.16@gmail.com

**ARKANSAS: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas**

Christine Henderson, President PO Box 9122, Searcy,  
AR 72145 ~ my1stdraft@yahoo.com

**COLORADO: Columbine Poets of Colorado**

Julie Cummings, President ~  
president@columbinepoetscolorado.com

**CONNECTICUT: Connecticut Poetry Society**

Patricia Mottola, President ~ 390 Maple Ave.,  
Cheshire, CT 06410 ~ patriciamottola@yahoo.com

**FLORIDA: Florida State Poets Association**

Mark Terry, President~300 East Miller Street  
Orlando, FL 32806 ~ markajterry@gmail.com

**GEORGIA: Georgia Poetry Society**

Barbara Barry-Nishanian, President  
President@georgiapoetrysociety.org

**ILLINOIS: Illinois State Poetry Society**

Mary Beth Bretzlauf, President ~ 2800 Theresa Avenue,  
Waukegon, IL 60085 ~ mbretzlauf@comcast.net

**INDIANA: Poetry Society of Indiana**

Tamara Saylor, President ~ 6818 Woodcrest Drive, Fort  
Wayne IN 46062 ~ tamarasaylor@gmail.com

**IOWA: Iowa Poetry Association**

Dawn Sly Terpstra, President ~ 14410 S 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave. E  
Lynnville, IA 50153 ~ dterp@me.com

**KANSAS: Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas**

Melvin Palowski Moore, President 11916 Lakeside  
Drive, Apartment 1622, Overland Park, KS 66213  
dragonpoet@charter.net

**KENTUCKY: Kentucky State Poetry Society**

Katerina Stoykova, President ~ 250 S. Martin Luther  
King Blvd. Apt. 116 Lexington, KY 40508 ~  
katerina.stoykova@uky.edu

**LOUISIANA: Poetry Society of Louisiana**

Ed Ruzicka, President, 744 Woodhaven St.  
Baton Rouge, LA 70815 ~ edzekezone@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 ~ mspss.jcmaes@comcast.net

**MICHIGAN: Poetry Society of Michigan**

David James, President ~ 1108 Fairway Dr.,  
Linden, MI 48451 ~ dljamespoet@gmail.com

**MINNESOTA: League of Minnesota Poets**

Amanda Bailey, President ~ P.O. Box 17344  
Minneapolis, MN 55417 ~ leagueofmnpoets@gmail.com

**MISSISSIPPI: Mississippi Poetry Society**

Mary Beth Magee, President ~ 752 DuPont-Harts Chapel  
Road, Poplarville, MS, 39470  
marybethmageewrites@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 ~ nvpoetry@earthlink.net

**NEW MEXICO: New Mexico State Poetry Society**

Bernadette Perez, President ~ 19645 Hwy. 314,  
Belen, NM 87002~ president@nmpoetry.com

**NORTH DAKOTA: North Dakota Poetry Society**

Jamie Parsley, President ~ frjamiaparsley@gmail.com

**OHIO: Ohio Poetry Association**

Holly Brians Ragusa, President ~ 1414 Elm St.,  
Cincinnati, OH 45202 ~ president@ohiopoetryassn.org

**OKLAHOMA: Poetry Society of Oklahoma**

Patti Koch, President ~ pattikoch0@gmail.com

**OREGON: Oregon Poetry Association**

David Goodrum, President ~ president@oregonpoets.org

**PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Poetry Society**

Pom Benson, President ~ 257 Ashton Hollow  
Catawissa, PA 17820 ~ pombenson@att.net

**SOUTH DAKOTA: South Dakota State Poetry**

**Society** Marcella Remund, President ~ 235 E Lewis,  
Vermillion SD 57069 ~ surfaceworld@yahoo.com

**TENNESSEE: Poetry Society of Tennessee**

Lisa Kamolnick, President ~ 259 Cain Drive  
Blountville TN 37617 poetrytennessee@gmail.com

**TEXAS: Poetry Society of Texas**

Holly Jahangari, President ~ 12310 Vintage Leaf Cir  
Houston, TX 77070~president@poetrysocietyoftexas.org

**UTAH: Utah State Poetry Society**

Michael Parker, President ~ 878 South 250 West,  
Orem, Utah, 84058~ note.to.mp@gmail.com

**VIRGINIA: Poetry Society of Virginia**

Kathleen P. Decker, President ~ 1499 Quarterpath Rd,  
#5A Williamsburg, Va 23185  
president@poetrysocietyofvirginia.org

**WYOMING: WyoPoets**

Mandie Hines, President ~ wyopoets@gmail.com

**For information on forming a state society, contact  
Susann Moeller at smoeller@nfspss.net**

**STROPHES**

*Strophes*, the newsletter of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc., is published four times a year: August (\*June 25th) ~ October (\*August 25th) ~ January (\*November 25th) ~ April (\*February 25th). News items and information on contests may be sent via regular mail or email, which is preferred, by authorized members of NFSPS member state societies to:

Julie Cummings, *Strophes* Editor

5858 Pintail Way, Frederick, CO 80504-9668

Stropheseditor@nfspss.net

\* 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 \$5.00 a year to cover handling costs. Special orders are mailed separately. To order a single issue: specify the issue ordered, include a **SASE with adequate postage for up to 12 pages and \$2.00 per copy.**

**NFSPS PAST PRESIDENTS**

**(Presidential Advisors)**

\*Cecilia Parsons Miller

\*Clinton Larson

\*Robert D. West

\*Edna Meudt

\*Marvin Davis Winsett

\*Max Golightly

\*Hans Juergensen

\*Russell Ferrall

\*Jean Jenkins

\*Catherine Case Lubbe

\*Glenn Sweetman

\*Carl Morton

\*Alice Briley

\*Waneta Hackleman

\*Jack Murphy

\*Barbara Stevens

\*Henrietta Kroah

\* Deceased

\*Jerry Robbins

Pat Stodghill

\*Wanda Blaisdell

\*Ralph Hammond

Amy Jo Zook

Susan Stevens Chambers

\*Clarence P. Socwell

\*Madelyn Eastlund

Budd Powell Mahan

\*Doris Stengel

Nancy Baass

Russell H. Strauss

Jeremy M. Downes

Eleanor Berry

\*Jim Barton

Julie Cummings

Paul Ford

**NFSPS DEADLINES****Strophes Reports or Articles:**August Issue Deadline: June 25<sup>th</sup>October Issue Deadline: August 25<sup>th</sup>January Issue Deadline: November 25<sup>th</sup>April Issue Deadline: February 25<sup>th</sup>**BlackBerry Peach SLAM Entry Period:**

January- May!

**Contest Sponsorship Forms and Payment:**May 15<sup>th</sup> for the following year**State Annual Reports:**July 15<sup>th</sup>**Board and Committee Annual Reports:**July 15<sup>th</sup> or when complete in special cases. (Treasurer, Contest Chair)**CUP Submission Period:**

December 1– January 31

**BlackBerry Peach (Spoken Word)****Submission Period:**January 1<sup>st</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>**Annual Contest Submission Period:**January 1<sup>st</sup> – March 15<sup>th</sup>**Reporting Leadership Changes to NFSPS**

When a new president, officer, or other leadership position changes in your society, please send the updated information to both the **Strophes Editor** [stropheseditor@nfsp.net](mailto:stropheseditor@nfsp.net) and the **NFSPS Webmaster** [admin@nfsp.net](mailto:admin@nfsp.net)

Providing this information promptly allows NFSPS to update the official website and include the changes in the next issue of the *Quarterly Strophes* newsletter.

Keeping leadership information current helps maintain clear communication between NFSPS and its member societies and ensures that the correct individuals receive important announcements and updates.

Thank you for helping keep our records accurate.

**State Reports Due July 15**

As we get closer to annual convention, a reminder to all state societies that annual reports must be submitted to the president, Joe Cavanaugh, by **July 15, 2026**. Send reports to [president@nfsp.net](mailto:president@nfsp.net)

Each year, state reports provide an important snapshot of the activity, creativity, and vitality within our poetry community. As the deadline for submitting state reports approaches, societies are encouraged to take a few moments to gather and share the highlights from the past year.

These reports serve several important purposes. First, they document the work being done across the country. From workshops and readings to contests, publications, and outreach programs, each activity helps demonstrate the strength and reach of our organization. When these accomplishments are compiled, they create a record of the vibrant literary work happening in every region.

Equally important, state reports help us share ideas. When one state describes a successful workshop series, youth outreach program, or innovative contest format, other states can learn from that experience. The reports become a source of inspiration and practical guidance, encouraging collaboration and new initiatives.

State reports also allow us to celebrate one another. Too often, excellent work happens quietly within local groups. By submitting your report, you ensure that your poets, volunteers,

If you are preparing your report, consider including:

- Major events such as readings, festivals, or conferences
- Contest results and notable awards
- Publications or anthologies produced by your state society
- Educational programs, workshops, or outreach efforts
- Membership growth or notable milestones
- Any unique projects or partnerships from the past year

Even brief reports are valuable. A few paragraphs highlighting your state's activities help paint a fuller picture of the creative work happening throughout our network.

Most importantly, your report ensures that your state's voice is part of the national story. Every reading, workshop, and poem contributes to the larger mission of supporting and promoting poetry.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to share your news. We look forward to celebrating the work happening in your state!