



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES, INC.

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

Strophes

Vol. LX No. 3

www.nfspd.com

January 2024

Dear NFSPS Poets,



Paul Ford
35th NFSPS
President

I again need to share with you my concern for NFSPS and our state poetry societies: our organizations need more poets to step up and take on operational roles and fill leadership positions. In my October 2023 *Strophes* message, I tried to make the case that each of us (remember that you are one of 3,600 NFSPS members) has both the opportunity and responsibility to support our poetry organizations. Yes, being a paying member is the basic level of support. Perhaps you enjoy contesting? What if there were no poetry contests because no one was willing to take on the task of getting sponsors and no one was willing to manage the contest submissions? Perhaps you enjoy attending poetry workshops? What if your organization has no one to coordinate workshops, such as finding a venue, a presenter, and your organization has no funds to pay an honorarium? What if no one in your poetry society is willing to be on the board in a role such as President, Secretary, or Treasurer? How would your society be able to continue as a dynamic and valuable addition to your life? For poetry activities, such as festivals, conventions, even open mics, there is a similar need for volunteers to make these events happen. I always enjoy time with poets, both in critique sessions and at larger events (e.g., my society's annual poetry festival). I suspect that many of you enjoy these activities as well. But without organization leaders and volunteers, our societies will wither, eventually dissolve with a *whimper* (as T. S. Eliot ended in his "Hollow Men" poem). If you can't take on a leadership or volunteer role in your society or NFSPS, you can always be an ambassador for poetry and your society. Please share the joy you find in poetry with others you come into contact with. If they have never heard of your poetry society, they might be interested in hearing more about it. They could be closet poets, working on poems by themselves, and would find it helpful to learn with other poets how to improve their craft. I would wager that you are like most NFSPS poets who have found poetry to be an extremely positive influence in our lives. I know I have.

Again, in my October 2023 *Strophes* message, I mentioned that NFSPS had four open Board roles:

- Judges Chair
- Contest Chair
- Contest Sponsors/Brochure Chair
- Youth Chair

I am pleased that M. Palowski Moore, President of the Sunflower Poetry Society of Kansas (newest poetry society in NFSPS), has taken on the Judges Chair role. He will be gathering competent judges for the NFSPS annual contest with 53 individual contests (three of these are for students). If you are interested to see these 53 contests, go to nfspd.com/poetry_contests.htm.

Since no one stepped forward to take on the Contest Chair role, I have opted to play this role for the annual NFSPS 2024 contest. I will try to manage the significant workload of this role along with my challenging President role. Please recognize that there will be some tasks as President I will not be able to fit in come this spring when the peak work for the Contest Chair occurs.

As to the Contest Sponsors/Brochure Chair role, no one has stepped up to take this on. With gratitude, our indefatigable Julie Cummings (with too many hats to mention) has started work on rounding up sponsors for the NFSPS 2025 annual contest. Yes, each year we need 53 sponsors to commit to funding the prize money for each contest along with the details of how they want the contests to be described (e.g., contest title, subject, and poetry form). If you are interested in helping Julie with sponsors and preparing the brochure for the 2025 contest, please reach out to me at president@nfspd.net.

Not surprisingly, the Youth Chair is still open with no one coordinating youth programs for NFSPS and across our 33 state societies. I did receive one email from an NFSPS member in response to my request for interest in the four open Board roles. This member was interested in helping the Youth Chair, such as being part of a Youth committee, but not in taking on this Board role. So, the NFSPS Youth program is still without leadership. Again, if you are interested in finding out more about this role, contact me at the above email address.

On a much more positive note, the planning is going well for our June 5-9 convention to be held in Roswell, Georgia (a suburb of Atlanta), which will include the third annual NFSPS national poetry slam competition. As you read this issue of *Strophes*, I expect that the convention details, including registration and a link to the convention hotel for booking, will be available on nfspd.net (note *.net*, not *.com*).

I want to express my thanks to Susan Stevens Chambers, NFSPS Convention Coordinator, and to the many members of the convention committee who have been working for months now with Lucinda Clark, Past President of the Georgia Poetry Society, and other key GPS members to make this upcoming convention spectacular. I can't wait for June 5th to be in Roswell for the start! Hope to see many of you there too, whether in person or online via Zoom.

Your servant in poetry,
Paul Ford, 35th NFSPS President
president@nfspd.net (note *.net*, not *.com*)

CONVENTION NEWS: VOICES SET FREE

Mark your calendar for June 5th through the 10th, 2024. Our convention will be a joint effort by NFSPS, Inc and the Georgia Poetry Society. Our theme is "Voices Set Free." Plan on adding your voice by attending. (continued page 3)



ANNUAL CONTESTS

Check the October 2023 issue of *Strophes* for the Annual Contest Brochure. Submission period January 1-March 15.

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

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

Honorary Chancellor: Lance Larsen

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Elected, NFSPS Convention, June 2022

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STROPHERS

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
9428 Fallen Rock Road, Conifer, CO. 80433
jcummings3@gmail.com

* Submission Deadlines

Strophes is available without cost to all paid-up members of NFSPS member state societies when mailed/shipped in bulk to the president or other designated person, who is responsible for ordering the number needed by the submission deadline for each issue. Individual subscriptions are \$4.00 a year to cover handling costs. Special orders are mailed separately. To order a single issue: specify the issue ordered, include a #10 SASE and \$1.00 per copy.

**NFSPS PAST PRESIDENTS
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* Deceased

(continued from Page 1)

We are well underway with exciting plans for the long weekend. For the second year we will be incorporating the NFSPS Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam as a part of the convention. Last year's attendees will tell you how invigorating it was to have this as a part of our annual convention.

We have booked the newly renovated Doubletree by Hilton in Atlanta-Roswell. This is about a 20 minute drive from the Atlanta airport, and there are a number of choices for transportation to Roswell. Our keynote speaker is spoken word performer Tamika Harper. She uses the name "Georgia Me" in her performances. She is a poet from Atlanta, Ga., who has been featured on "Def Poetry Jam" on HBO and on Broadway. Georgia will also showcase other well-known Georgia poets during the convention. The lineup of speakers is impressive, and you won't want to miss this convention.

CONVENTION MADNESS CONTEST OPEN NOW!

Win Your Way to the NFSPS Convention June 5-10, 2023, in Roswell, Georgia. You must attend to receive prize. 1st Place— 5 nights stay at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 2nd Place—All meals, 3rd Place—Registration Fee. Enter: Any form, any subject, limit one page, 12 point type. May be previously published. Simultaneous submissions acceptable. Fee: NFSPS, Inc. Members 3 poems for \$10.00. Non-members 3 poems for \$18.00. Make payment on Submittable to the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. No limit on number of submissions, so long as a new entry fee is included for each set of 3 poems. DEADLINE: February 28, 2024. Winners will be notified by March 31, 2024. To submit: Go to nfspssubmittable.com

NFSPS CONVENTION HOST CONTEST 2024 INVOCATIONAL POEMS

The NFSPS Board and the Georgia Poetry Society are pleased to announce the Invocational Poems Contest for Convention 2024. Subject: Invocational poems to be read by winners at the beginning of convention meals. Criteria: The paramount consideration is poetic value, not religious orthodoxy: "It must be first of all a poem." Poems should be suitable for a religiously diverse membership, should use gender-inclusive, contemporary language, and should have equal value for the religious and the non-religious. Form: Any form, not to exceed 30 lines. Name the form on your entry. Eligibility: Open to all poets. No fee to enter. Limits: 4 Poems per poet. Must be the original work of the poet, unpublished, not submitted elsewhere for publication, and not a previous host-contest winning poem. Typed or printed from the computer. One poem per page. Opening: Send entries after January 1, 2024. Deadline: February 28, 2024, postmark. Winners: Notified individually by mail in April of the year 2024. We place a high value on your reading of your own poem, but we will provide a substitute reader if you cannot be present at the convention in June. Copies: Two. Your name and postal address and name of your chosen form at upper right corner of one; name of contest and chosen form only in upper right corner of the other. Poems will not be returned. Ownership: NFSPS receives the right to have the poem read at this convention. You retain all other rights. If you have any questions email schambersmediator@yahoo.com. Mail your entries to: Susan Chambers 700 Agency Trail, Unit 202 Mankato, MN 56001

COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE POETRY COMPETITION

Two winners will be chosen for the College Undergraduate Poetry (CUP) Competition, one receiving the Edna Meudt Memorial Award (\$500), the other receiving the Florence Kahn Memorial Award (\$500). Undergraduates working toward a degree in an accredited U.S. college or university during the contest submission period are eligible to enter. The manuscript submission consists of 10 poems in a single Word or .pdf file. Submission via submittable.com is from December 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024. There is a \$10 fee. Manuscripts must be submitted through nfspssubmittable.com or, with permission of the CUP Chair, entries may be submitted through the U. S. Postal Service (USPS). See contest rules for details. Complete guidelines for the 2024 College Undergraduate Poetry competition are available online at nfspss.com/CUP.html.



BLACKBERRY PEACH NATIONAL SLAM POETRY COMPETITION

BLACKBERRY PEACH NEWS

This year for the second time the Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam Competition will be held in conjunction with the NFSPS annual convention.

The NFSPS Convention theme this year is VOICES SET FREE, blending the usual emphasis on the literary aspect of poetry with the excitement of Performance Poetry at the National Blackberry Peach Poetry Slam Championship. The Third Annual Blackberry Peach Youth Festival will also be held during convention, with poetry workshops by previous winners of the Blackberry Peach Written and Spoken Word contest. As part of the Festival, a National Youth Poetry Slam competition with medals and cash prizes will be held.

Complete details are available on the NFSPS website at [NFSPS.com](https://nfspss.com).

If you have any questions, or need any additional information about this year's Blackberry Peach Written and Spoken Word Contest, which will be open for submissions from January 1-March 15, 2024 or the Blackberry Peach National Poetry Slam Competition, or the Youth Festival, both to be held as part of this year's convention scheduled for June, 2024 in Georgia or if you have ideas or input for next year's NFSPS convention, please contact me at jcavanaugh1@gmail.com. ~Joe Cavanaugh, NFSPS First Vice President and Blackberry Peach Program Chair

NFSPS MEMBER SOCIETY NEWS

POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS: Poetry Day in Arkansas, sponsored by Poets Roundtable of Arkansas, was eclipsed only by the partial eclipse which many members witnessed during the Make-A-Sandwich lunch break. But first, Poetry Day speaker Michael Blanchard, adjunct faculty member in the English Department at the University of Central Arkansas and editor of *SLANT*, journal of contemporary American poetry, shared a brief history of poetry, submission tips, and a refresher on poetic elements: language, subject, continuity, theme, depth, form, dimension, metaphor, sound and rhythm. His engaging presentation was followed by a critique of poems submitted by PRA members. During the afternoon business meeting, Lisa Lindsey was recognized as the new Student Contests Chair. Poetry Day Contest Winners and the PRA Merit Award winner were announced. A full list of Poetry Day Contest Winners can be found on the PRA website, poetsroundtableofarkansas.org. Congratulations to all winners. ~ *Laura Bridges, Vice President*

CALIFORNIA STATE POETRY SOCIETY is pleased to announce the winners of its 36th Annual Poetry Contest, selected in September 2023 by Contest Judge Anna Maria Mickiewicz of London, England. Poets honored with the top three prizes receive small monetary awards, in addition to publication in *California Quarterly* 49:4, Winter 2023. **FIRST PRIZE:** "180° Transitions," by Sharon Chmielarz; **TWO SECOND PRIZES,** in no particular order: "Old People are Such a Drag," by Claire Scott, and "Badassery," by Susan Wolbarst; **THIRD PRIZE:** "Call me Shahed," by Mark G. Hammerschick. **HONORARY MENTIONS** are as follows: 1. "God is Depressed Again," by Claire Scott; 2. "Wandering Brume to Sparks," by Gurupreet K. Khalsa; 3. "Quantum Entanglement," by Mark G. Hammerschick; 4. "About Spring," by Christine Horner; 5. "Black," by rg cantalupo; 6. "Einstein" by rg cantalupo.

The *California Quarterly* Vol. 49, No. 1 was edited by Konrad Tademar Wilk, Nos. 2 and 4 by Maja Trochimczyk, and No. 3 by Nicholas Skaldetvind as Guest Editor., later joining the CQ Editorial Board. William Scott Galasso and Maura Harvey resigned from their roles as CQ Editors, while Maura remained on the CQSPS Board.

Edited by Maja Trochimczyk, the *Poetry Letter* No. 2 of 2023 presented winners of the 2022 Monthly Contests and book reviews by Michael Escoubas (three books: by Adrián Caldera and Charlotte Hart, J.J. Ferrer and Maja Trochimczyk), and by Nina Miller (a book by Joel Savishinsky). The issue was illustrated with abstract paintings by Janusz Maszkiewicz. The *Poetry Letter* No. 3 of 2023 presented poets Alice Pero, Chair of Monthly Poetry Contests; Nicholas Skaldetvind, and Frank Iosue, who served as the Judge for 2022 Annual Contest. Three reviews presented books by Deborah P. Kolodji and Mariko Kitakubo (reviewed by William Scott Galasso), Paulette Demers Turco, as well as Silvia Scheibli & Patty Dickson Piczka (reviewed by Michael Escoubas). Los Angeles photographers Beverly M. Collins and Iga Supernak were also featured. ~ *Maja Trochimczyk, PhD, President*

COLUMBINE POETS OF COLORADO: celebrated their 45th anniversary on Sep 23, 2023 at their annual Poets Fest. The event was well attended and included the release of the anthology *Columbine at 45: Keeping Poetry Alive!*, celebrating the 45th anniversary and included a workshop and reading by Brice Maiurro,

Editor in Chief of South Broadway Press and co-founder of the Nationwide Howling Movement, announcement of our annual contest winners, an open mic, and long-awaited fellowship. The Fest was planned by a committee consisting of Amy Irish, Val Szarek, Karen Betstadt, and Julie Cummings. Judges for the three member contests were Brice Maiurro, Free Verse; Barbara Blanks, Forms; Rachel Kellum, Prose. ~ *Julie Cummings, President*

POETRY SOCIETY OF INDIANA: Indiana has been busy hosting opens mic at numerous coffee shops, bookstores, pizza places, and Christmas tree farms over the last month. We are out in the streets encouraging diverse voices to share their poetry. We have also conducted poetry workshops at several libraries in central Indiana. We've added several new members from our activities. ~ *John Hinton, President*

KENTUCKY STATE POETRY SOCIETY: In October, KSPS held its 2023 conference virtually, with online workshops, readings, and panels. Kristen Renee Miller, poet and current editor of Sarabande Books, delivered the keynote address on poetry and AI to a live local audience in Lexington and a virtual audience via livestream.

The fall issue of *Pegasus* was published during the conference, featuring winning poems from the 2023 KSPS student contests: <https://pegasus-poetry.org>. Our student contests open soon, so please tell teachers and students about the information available at: <https://kystatepoetrysociety.org/contests/student-contest/>. And don't forget to submit your own work for future issues of *Pegasus!*

The Zoom reading series will continue in 2024. Open mics on January 16 and March 19 are free and open to the public, though you must be a KSPS member to read. Mackenzie Berry will be the featured reader on February 20. Please join us each third Tuesday at 8:00 p.m. Eastern. Information and participation links can be found at <https://kystatepoetrysociety.org/>.

Recordings of past featured readings, as well as KSPS conference keynote speeches are available on our YouTube channel: <https://tinyurl.com/KSPSYoutube>. ~ *Jennifer Barricklow, KSPS Secretary*

MASSACHUSETTS STATE POETRY SOCIETY'S October meeting was held on the 14th, National Poetry Day, in Winthrop, Massachusetts, hosted by the CREW Chapter. It was reported that fifteen MSPS members won 37 prizes in our 2023 National Poetry Day contest. Renee Pike, director of CREW, presented a moving tribute to Patricia Tacelli, founder and director for over 20 years. President Maes Workshop on "Change" discussed change in all areas of life and through difficult time spans. All attendees participated in a writing session. The North Shore Poets Forum Chapter continues to meet, with a new topic for each meeting. This month the topic was the poetry of Louise Gluck and her book *The Wild Iris*. Preparation continues for the 2024 National Poetry Day Contest; more info to follow. Next meeting: April 20th, 2024. ~ *Beverley Barnes, Strophes Reporter*

POETRY SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN: Twenty members and guests attended the October fall meeting held in the beautiful new library in Interlochen, Michigan. Nancy Nott's poem, "Grandpa Never Got a Horse," was awarded the Traveling Trophy during the reading of original poems. A panel consisting of Kathy Barrett, Associate Editor of *Making Waves*, Nicole Birkett, Editor in Chief

of *Making Waves*, and Glen Young, Associate Editor of *Walloon Writers Review*, answered questions regarding "Making Selections for Publication." Before lunch, special glasses were given to all so the noon hour eclipse could safely be observed. Teresa Scollon from *Dune's Review* conducted a writing workshop, followed by a business meeting. Everyone enjoyed the group fellowship as well as workshops, and appreciated meeting in such an inspiring setting.
~ Inge Logenburg Kyler, *Historian*

LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA POETS: Established in 1934, the League of Minnesota Poets is celebrating its 90th Anniversary this year. We will add 10 more pages to our annual members' anthology, *Agates*, which will make it a 90-page, perfect-bound, 6" X 9" book, sold in independent bookstores around the state. January 1st opens the *Agates* 90-day reading period. Members can go to our website (mnpoe.com) to review the new guidelines and get the link to submit on Submittable.

We will also be kicking off winter workshops on Zoom January 13th. We will have a series of Saturday workshops that take participants through the process of book publishing from the "Organizing Your Manuscript" stage all the way through to the "Selling Your Book" stage. These workshops are offered on a pay-what-you-can basis and are open to poets everywhere.

Also, we have a growing chapter that meets weekly on Zoom every Wednesday night from 7 pm – 8 pm Central Time. This chapter alternates programming, to include discussion about poems, critique sessions, writing workshops, and performance practice. Anyone interested in attending can send an email to pennedpoets@gmail.com. We're looking forward to an exciting 90th Anniversary year! For more information please email us at leagueofmnpoe.com. ~ Amanda Bailey, *President*

MISSISSIPPI POETRY SOCIETY: has been busy promoting "Poetry Out Loud." Katherine Brown, Coordinator of Poetry Out Loud in Mississippi, recently commended MPS and the Student Poetry Committee for our efforts to promote POL. Registration numbers are much higher this year than in the past. North Branch has hosted twice monthly Poetry Readings at The Coffee Central Coffee Shops in Hernando and Southaven. MPS is reaching new poets through these efforts. Central Branch continues the popular monthly Open Mic Night at Pacesetter Art Gallery. Western Branch continues to grow and is hosting author signings and workshops. South Branch is encouraging members to submit entries for "Chicken Soup for the Soul." Go to ChickenSoup.com for current topics under consideration. South Branch is also studying short forms such as couplets, triplets, quatrains, limericks, diamantes, nonets, Fibonacci, and rondeaus.

Our Spring Festival is coming up April 26-28, 2024, with keynote speaker Mississippi Poet Laureate, Catherine Pierce. Be on the lookout for festival information on our website. Also, our Spring Contest and the Student Contest are now on our website. We have quite a variety of topics and generous monetary prizes. Please see our website www.misspoetry.net for more information. ~ Dorothy Wiman, *Secretary*

NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY: NMSPS Fall Festival was held on October 21st in celebration of National Poetry day held in October. We had a Haiku & Limerick reading, and focused on fun and fundraising.

The Russellers Cowboy poet and singer-songwriter Dennis Russell teamed up with vocalist and multi-instrumentalist (renowned for her musical saw) Beverly Gray Russell. The couple performed original music and cowboy poetry.

Nathan Brown was our Featured performer, he is a famous author, songwriter, and award-winning poet, who is based in Wimberley, Texas. ~ Bernadette Perez, *President*

NEVADA POETRY SOCIETY made big strides in 2023 connecting with local literary and other creative groups, with the goal of increasing awareness of our presence and boosting membership numbers.

NPS has been represented at all the monthly meetings of Sierra Arts Literary Community (SALC) since its founding in last January. We officially joined them in October. SALC recently opened a bookstore for Nevada writers, where we have full access to buy and sell our published works. They maintain this facility at their Sparks Sierra Arts Depot Gallery on Victorian Avenue.

NPS Secretary/Treasurer Carol Quinn and I were invited to attend a meeting of Reno Arts Consortium in October to give a presentation of the roles NPS and NFSPS play, sharing annual convention and national contest opportunities, etc. The information was well received and we have been invited back. Happy New Year to poets everywhere! ~ Phyllis Peacock, *President*

The **POETRY SOCIETY of OKLAHOMA** wishes everyone a "HAPPY NEW YEAR!" 2024 will mark ninety years of the existence of PSO. Our first PSO meeting was held in February 1934.

We celebrated National Poetry Day at our October meeting. The theme for 2023 was *refuge* and we discussed and shared our poems about *refuge*, once again celebrating poetry's power to bring people together.

This was also the month of our annual PSO business meeting which included the election of officers for 2024 and 2025. We celebrated, presented awards and read winning poems for our National Poetry Day contests and gave out door prizes. Our PSO National Poetry Day meeting members enjoyed a delicious box lunch as we shared memories of our past days.

PSO will hold its annual spring meeting in March of 2024. Winners from the Spring Contest will be announced, prizes awarded and poems read. I encourage you to visit our PSO website for information on all our contests. There is quite a variety to choose from!

As always ~ check our PSO website for additional information <http://www.angelfire.com/poetry/ps/> and also our PSO Facebook page.

Until next time ~ Keep writing those poems! And, we invite you to... **"Come and Grow at PSO!"** ~ Patti Koch, *President*

The **SOUTH DAKOTA STATE POETRY SOCIETY** has a really exciting project underway. Last September at the South Dakota Festival of Books in Deadwood, SD, we launched *Poetry on the Road*. The project, with support from the South Dakota Humanities Council and many local sponsors, is bringing poetry to sixteen South Dakota communities around the state. Each event features readings by South Dakota's Poet Laureate, Bruce Roseland, along with other member poets, followed by an open mic open to all. We've held six of these events so far, and the response has been overwhelming! We have a table set up at each event, where we have SDSPS membership forms and information, as well as society books, other publications, and *Poetry on the Road* t-shirts for sale. Through these events, we're spreading the word about our society, being treated to an incredible variety of poetic voices from across our state—poets heard for the first time, established poets, and student poets alike.

We've been updating our website, too, in an effort to promote the society and better serve our members. We hope you'll check us out at <https://sdpoetry.org/poetry-on-the-road/>. ~ *Marcella Remund, President*

PENNSYLVANIA POETRY SOCIETY: In October 2024, **Pennsylvania Poetry Society, Inc.** will mark 75 years as an organization, and we are looking forward to celebrating the occasion. While planning is in the early stage, we are looking into a weekend gathering.

Also, in recognition of the milestone, PPS will be sponsoring a contest with two tracks: open to all, and members-only. There will be three cash prizes of \$400 / \$225 / \$125 for each track. The top three poems for each track will be published in our *Prize Poems 2025* anthology. To receive a pdf of the contest flier when it becomes available, send a request to pps75contest@outlook.com. We also hope to publish a perfect-bound anthology in October 2024. To receive a pdf of the Call to Submit flier when it becomes available, send a request to pps75book@outlook.com. If a print version of either flier is desired, send a #10 SASE with your request to Pennsylvania Poetry Society, c/o Steven Concert, Treasurer, 49 Kitchen Avenue, Harveys Lake, PA 18618. ~ *Steven Concert, Treasurer*

POETRY SOCIETY OF TENNESSEE (PST): has set April 13, 2024, as the date for its virtual 67th Annual Poetry Festival, to include 17 annual poetry festival contests, with more than \$1,000 in prizes. Howard Carman is Festival Chair and Deborah-Zenha Adams is Festival Contest Chair.

Our virtual monthly membership meetings featured educational programs, members-only contest announcements, icebreakers, poetic games, collaborative writing, readings, and poetry shares. Lacy Snapp is Program Chair and Russell Strauss is Contest Chair. Critique groups met monthly.

PST's Regional Connection Committee members organized an author reading and book sale at the Oak Ridge Library December 16, 2023, and are planning a regional collegiate poetry contest for spring 2024. PST elementary student contests remain open through Feb 16, 2024. High school and middle school submissions closed December 22, 2023. Seth Grindstaff is Student Contest Chair.

PST updated its website, created fliers for events, ran social media campaigns for its activities, and continued the monthly newsletter. It also added a Tech Tips section to the Resources web page. Matthew Gilbert chairs Communications. J. Michael Ramey is Webmaster. Society information is available here: www.poetrytennessee.org and in the blog, <https://poetrytennessee.com>. PST is on Facebook and Instagram: @poetrysocietyoftennessee. ~*Lisa Kamolnick, President*

The **POETRY SOCIETY OF TEXAS** Annual Awards Banquet was held on Saturday, November 11, 2023 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Banquet arrangements and reservations were handled by Chairperson Beth Ayers, and the theme was Lighting the Way to Poetry. The silver program cover featured a black square with a stylized wave on one side of a black and silver striped lighthouse, and three stalks of sea oats on the opposite side. There was an identical large mural on the wall inside our meeting room for photo ops, of which attendees took full advantage. Catherine L'Herisson and Barbara Blanks served at the sign-in table, and Beth welcomed guests and led the silent invocation before the meal. After the meal, PST President Richard Weatherly was in charge of introductions before Catherine L'Herisson, NFSPS Librarian, brought greetings from NFSPS, Inc. Budd Powell Mahan, Chairman of the Hilton Ross Greer Outstanding Service Award, announced that this year's recipient was Lynn Lewis, our faithful Membership Chairman, who was taken totally by surprise. She was presented with the beautiful engraved Texas-shaped plaque. After a short break, Budd Mahan, our new Annual Contests Chairman, announced the top three places in contests 100 to 51. First place winners who were present read their poems. After another short break and a treat provided by Beth Ayers, Budd announced the top three places in contests 50 to 1. David Bond was the winner of contest #1. Richard Kushmaul, Chairman of the Catherine Case Lubbe Manuscript Prize, announced that there were 13 entries this year, and that Robert Schinzel was the winner. Robert read a poem from his winning manuscript. Cade Huie placed second, and Christine Boldt was third. After short closing remarks, attendees posed for more photos in front of the mural provided by Beth and Mark Ayers. ~ *Catherine L'Herrison, Reporter*

UTAH STATE POETRY SOCIETY will soon share the contest details regarding its poetry contest via email, so sharpen your writing tools and find a covert corner where you will have the peace and quietude to invite your muse in and begin writing, or dig out older poems that need dusting off and editing again with a fresh eye and voice.

We have had a lot of support from members who want to sponsor a category or two, and our annual contest is shaping up to be another in the long line of challenging and rewarding USPS contests. To cap off the contest this spring, we are making plans for an in-person festival in the Provo area in late April, 2024. We are in the midst of a resurgence of member enthusiasm for the society, and for poetry in general. We are fortunate to have a number of new members who are making an impact with their desire to improve their poetic skills, which they share in our chapter meetings.

For anyone not a UTSPS member but who would like to enter our 2024 contest, it can be accessed here: utahpoets.com; in the Feb 1 section, click on "here" at the end of the first paragraph.

Our past Book of the Year books are available to our members at no charge. What a gift it is to be able to read these wonderful winning manuscripts, which offer not only insight into the authors' works, but also an expanding of our imaginations and increased ability to write better poetry! ~ *Michael Spears, UTSPS President*

WYOPOETS annual workshop will be April 26 and 27, 2024, in Casper, Wyoming. Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer will be our presenter. The workshop is supported in part by a grant from the Wyoming Arts Council, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Wyoming Legislature. See wyopoets.org/workshop.html for workshop details. At the event, our new chapbook of members' poems, *Upon the Wind*, will be

unveiled. In honor of Poetry Month, our previous chapbooks were available at Bookmarked, a literary event in Lander, Wyoming, on September 29th, 30th and October 1st 2023. ~ *Myra Peak, Reporter*

To include your state quarterly news in this section, the due dates are below. Email your news to Julie Cummings

stropheseditor@nfsp.net

August Issue Deadline: June 25th

October Issue Deadline: August 25th

January Issue Deadline: November 25th

April Issue Deadline: February 25th

NFSPS STATE SOCIETY WEBSITES

Alabama www.alpoets.org	Minnesota mnpoets.com
Arizona azpoetry.net	Mississippi www.misspoetry.net
Arkansas poetsroundtableofarkansas.org	Missouri mostatepoetry.com
California californiastatepoetrysociety.org	Nebraska nepoetrysociety.org
Colorado columbinepoetsofcolorado.com	New Mexico nmpoetry.org
Connecticut ctpoetry.net/index.html	Ohio ohiopoetryassn.com
Florida floridastatepoetsassociation.org	Oklahoma www.angelfire.com/poetry/pso
Georgia georgiapoetrysociety.org	Oregon oregonpoets.org
Illinois illinoispoets.org	Pennsylvania www.nfsp.com/pa
Iowa iowapoetry.com	South Dakota sdpoetry.org
Kansas sunflowerpoetrysoc.wixsite.com/my-site-2	Tennessee poetrytennessee.org
Kentucky kystatepoetrysociety.org	Texas poetrysocietyoftexas.org
Maine mainepoetsociety.com	Utah utahpoets.com
Massachusetts mastatepoetrysociety.tripod.com	Wyoming https://www.wyopoets.org/
Michigan poetrysocietyofmichigan.com	

Note: many NFSPS state societies also host facebook.com sites to enable members and poet-friends to share thoughts, photos, successes, and encouragement in the practice of poetry. ~ *Paul Ford, President*

A "HEADS UP" ABOUT 2024 REPORTS

This article is for officers in our state societies to know ahead of time what reports will be requested, and will have time to assign them to the appropriate person for preparing, we offer this checklist. You may receive reminders closer to the deadline, but this will give you advance notice. E-mail and/or postal addresses for sending them are on page 2 of each issue of Strophes.

- Membership list with dues payment @ \$3.00 per EACH member (includes honorary and at large). Send to Linda Harris, NFSPS Treasurer by January 15. Additional names and payment may be sent until March 15.

- Youth Awards Survey (form to come from Youth Chair). Complete by April 30.

- Report of how you celebrated Poetry Day (in October) and National Poetry Month (in April) to JoAnn Howerton by May 31.

- Update of state society's History. Send to Nancy Baass at least 10 days before Convention.

- Report of state society, prepared by President or other authorized person, presented during plenary session of the Convention, or send 10 days before Convention to Polly Opsahl and Billy Pennington, if no one from your state is attending. Your response with information at the suggested time makes it possible for certificates to be prepared or data compiled in the interests of our entire membership. (This item prepared on behalf of the NFSPS Executive Board.)

Over time, societies may change their website address. When this happens, please contact the nfsp.com web master, Billy Pennington (nfsp.webmaster@gmail.com) so he may update his list at: www.nfsp.com/states.htm

- Letter to the NFSPS Board listing names of 5 voting members attending convention due during first Plenary session.
- List of names of deceased members to honor them at first Plenary session.

ADDITIONAL NFSPS DEADLINES AND DATES

Manningham Submission Period:

September 15, 2023 - November 15, 2023

Stevens Manuscript Submission Period:

September 1, 2023- November 15, 2023

CUP Submission Period:

December 1, 2023 – January 31, 2024

BlackBerry Peach (Spoken and Written Word) Submission Period:

January 1, 2024 – March 15, 2024

Annual Contest Submission Period:

January 1, 2024 – March 15, 2024

State Membership Lists and Annual Dues Deadline:

January 15, 2024

Updates due by March 15, 2024

Strophes Reports or Articles:

August Issue Deadline: June 25th

October Issue Deadline: August 25th

January Issue Deadline: November 25th

April Issue Deadline: February 25th

BlackBerry Peach SLAM Entry Period:

Information at nfsp.net!

Contest Sponsorship Forms and Payment:

March 15th for the following year

State Annual Reports:

One week prior to convention

Board and Committee Annual Reports:

One week prior to convention or when complete in special cases. (Treasurer, Contest Chair)

State President Meetings:

Held Quarterly- Watch for emails!

Learning Central Meetings:

Held Quarterly- Watch for emails!

NFSPS CONVENTION FELLOWSHIPS

If you are in financial need to assist you to attend the annual NFSPS Convention to be held in Roswell, Georgia June 5-9, 2024, watch the websites for information about how to apply. Information about the fellowships and the application is usually posted in April with a due date in May. This information is also sent to state presidents.

2024 BLACKBERRY PEACH SLAM

Start planning now to host state slams to determine your state society sponsored Slam competitor! Kevin Campbell, the NFSPS Performance Poetry Advocate, can give your society ideas for hosting state sponsored slams. Contact Kevin at noirjente@nfsp.com

PLEASE BE WARY OF SCAMMERS

Whenever you get an email with my name as the sender, check to see if the message is actually sent from president@nfsp.net. If it isn't, I suggest you report the email as scam/phishing to your email provider. I will never ask you for money or gift cards in an email or text message.

~ Paul Ford, 35th NFSPS President

STATE SOCIETY CONTESTS AND RETREATS

Check individual state society websites for information on entering their contests or about attending retreats sponsored by them! Our states have a lot going on!

MONTHLY POETRY CONTEST

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

ENCORE PRIZE POEMS 2023



The 2023 anthology of prize-winning poems awarded at the “Catch Poetry: Stage and Page” NFSPS convention is available on

amazon.com. All royalties from *Encore* sales support NFSPS. ~ Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor

NFSPS CONTEST BROCHURE

The NFSPS 2024 Contest Brochure was included in the October 2023 print edition of *Strophes*. It is also available online at nfsp.com and nfsp.net. You may also request a copy by mailing a SASE with adequate postage for 4 pages to Julie Cummings, 9428 Fallen Rock Road, Conifer, CO 80433.