

NEWS 'N' NOTES

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

www.poetsroundtable.webs.com

(Coming soon <http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>)

August 2015

President's Message:

Poets,

Summer has suddenly taken flight. Take up the courage to write.

The new board met and discussed new ideas to promote PRA in some different ways in hopes of reaching out for new members. The board cannot do it without your support. However, the best way I've found to promote poetry is by word of mouth. You, as a poet, have the opportunity to share your passion with a friend or family member. Passion can be seen in your eyes as well as heard in your words. Your inspiration will resonate and leave them wanting more.

At this writing, we have lost some dear friends recently who supported poets and poetry for many years. We will miss them. Your thoughts and words to the families will bring comfort in the days ahead.

The new yearbooks will be coming out soon. If you haven't renewed your membership or there are errors in your information, contact Kate Lacy.

I want to encourage you to visit the web site. The News N Notes are found on-line as well as things about monthly contests and all the Poetry Day contests. I hope you are feverishly working on entries. I am incorporating the distractions of grandkids, flower gardens, lawn grooming, and sitting on my back deck in the late afternoon into these contests--just saying.

Life is too short to be without poetry.

Dennis Patton
State President

Poetry Day 2015 Event in Little Rock, October 3:

Make plans now to attend PRA's 68th annual Poetry Day on Saturday, October 3rd at the Cox Building (3rd floor) across from the Central Arkansas Library at 120 River Market Avenue in Little Rock. The event honors Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, Arkansas Poet Laureate (1953-1969) who established the first annual Arkansas Poetry Day on October 15, 1948. Featured speaker will be Hope Coulter, award-winning author and professor at Hendrix College in Conway. Part of her presentation will be critiquing members' poems. (If you'd like to participate, send one or two poems to Laura Loughridge by September 10th.) Hope also will have books for sale. Lunch will be on your own in the River Market district. Contest winners will be announced after lunch. Contest entries are due 8/15/15. See details on PRA's website. Only 6 of 26 contests are limited to Arkansas residents &/or PRA members. The topic selected for this year's Sybil Nash Abrams Award (\$1,000) is "Arkansas Law and Disorder." Also watch the website for agenda updates (see tentative agenda below) and site directions. Contact Poetry Day Chair Laura Loughridge with questions. Our thanks to the River Market Poets for hosting this annual event.

PRA's Poetry Day 2015 speaker is Hope Coulter, a fiction writer and poet whose poetry collection, *The Wheel of Light*, was released in spring 2015 as part of the New Poets Series of BrickHouse Press. Winner of the 2014 Laman Library Writers Fellowship, she has placed in Southwest Review's Morton Marr poetry contest and the North American Review's James Hearst Poetry Prize. Other honors include two Pushcart nominations, Arkansas's Porter Prize for Literary Excellence, and the Short Story Award of *Louisiana Life* magazine. Her novels

The *Errand of the Eye* and *Dry Bones* were published in 1988 and 1990 by August House Publishers, and her children's picture book, *Uncle Chuck's Truck*, came out in 1993 from Bradbury Press. She teaches at Hendrix College, where she currently directs the Hendrix-Murphy Foundation Programs in Literature & Language. Hope grew up in Alexandria, Louisiana, and earned her AB at Harvard University and her MFA at Queens University of Charlotte. She lives in Little Rock with her husband, Mel White, a nature and travel writer. She has three grown children and enjoys travel, birding, and swimming.

Poetry Day Tentative Agenda:

(Cox Building 3rd floor, 120 River Market Ave., Little Rock)

9:30 Registration
10:00 Welcome & Announcements – Laura Loughridge
Roll call of branches – Dennis Patton
10:15 Guest Speaker - Intro, Hope Coulter
11:00 Break
11:20 Critiques - Hope Coulter
11:50 Lunch on your own
1:15 Remembrances, Merit Award
1:30 Break
1:45 Business Meeting – Dennis Patton
Announce Contest Winners – Donna Smith
Adjourn

Yearbook Corrections:

Please make the following additions/corrections to your 2015-2016 yearbook upon receipt:

Polly Bakker, 4920 Canal Place, Conway, AR 72034 (Bakker14@aol.com)
Betty Rutledge, 206 Meadowlake Dr, Hot Springs, AR 71913 (better.rutledge@gmail.com)
Judy Davies, 1418 Louis Alexis Trail, Gautier, MS 39553

Baxter County Poets' Association Officers elected in July: President Stephen Johnson, Vice President George Dreger, Secretary (TBD), and Treasurer Leroy Buffon.

PRA's Board Meeting Results of July 11, 2015:

PRA's newly elected board had its first meeting July 11th at President Dennis Patton's home in Alexander. It was a very productive meeting. Among other things, the board decided to launch a new College Student Contest in January, set up a new website to support it (coming soon at <http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>), apply for potential grants to fund it, and conduct outreach to colleges statewide for participants. More details to follow. Conference sites were set for the 2016 Spring Celebration in El Dorado and the Poetry Day Event in Mountain Home. The spring contest deadline has been moved up to March 15 to accommodate the April celebration. PRA will sponsor State Fair Poetry Contests in 2016, with monetary prizes for the *Best of Show* winners in 4 age categories. A new *Year-In-Review* document, summarizing PRA's activities for the past year, was approved for outreach, grant applications, and recruiting. (See attached.) This 2-page document will be updated annually and posted on PRA's website homepage for members to access and print as needed. Jeff Rawlings (a former colleague of the late Miller Williams) was named PRA's new State Critic for 2015-2016. Send your poems for his critique to PO Box 76, Yellville, AR 72687 (jeffr50@yahoo.com). The board decided the newsletter will continue to be posted on the website and also be distributed by email to branch presidents who are asked to assure that all their members get a copy. More details will be announced as available on all these changes. Meanwhile, please contact President Patton with questions.

Poetic Wins, Activities and Publications:

PRA Monthly Contest winners are: June - 1st Lee Ann Russell, 2nd Jim Barton, 3rd Karen Hayes, 1HM D. Beecher Smith II, 2HM Cathy Moran, 3HM Karen Kay Bailey; July – 1st Betty Heidelberger 2nd Ann Carolyn Cates, 3rd Alana Mahaffey, 1HM Karen Kay Bailey, 2HM Don Crowson, 3HM Barbara Blanks. Check monthly winners on PRA's webpage.

Cathy Moran (River Market Poets) won a 1st & 3rd from Utah, a 1st from South Dakota, and the Grand Prize from Dancing Poetry/California.

Gail Denham (Member-at-large from Sunriver, OR) won a 2nd place and 3 HMs from the Galaxy Verse contest run by www.barbara-blanks.com of Garland, TX; a 2nd place in Massachusetts; a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in Mississippi; a 1st place in Pennsylvania; a 1st and 2nd place plus 2 HMs in Oklahoma. She also led a Writers' Workshop in Washington and had poems used by Lucidity, Columbia Writers' Guild, ekphrastic, Springfield Writers' Guild, Chicago Art, Pennessee, and the Illinois Library.

Marcia Camp (River Market Poets) was recently the featured poet in MauMag, and her poem will be the first poem in Arkansauce: The Journal of Arkansas Foodways published by the University of Arkansas Libraries, out this spring.

Harding Stedler (River Market Poets) recently published poems in the Lucidity Poetry Journal (online), Calliope, Clapboard House Literary Journal, Cantos: A Literary and Arts Journal, The Storyteller, The Avocet, and MauMag.

Jim Barton and Marilyn Joyner (South Arkansas Poets of the Pines) were winners at the Arkansas Writers Conference, Little Rock, June 2015. Jim won a 3rd in Poetry, a 2nd HM in Song, plus 6 wins in fiction and non-fiction. Marilyn Joyner won two 1^{sts} in Poetry, a 3rd HM in Song, and 5 wins in fiction and non-fiction. Jim, who serves as VP for Membership in NFSPS, attended the annual convention in St. Petersburg, Florida, in July, and spoke for Poets Roundtable of Arkansas in the State Association reports.

South Arkansas Poets of the Pines sponsored an "Open-Mic Night" on July 10th at PJ's Coffee Shop on the Square in El Dorado. An overflow attendance spilled out onto sidewalk tables. Poetry, song, rap, and readings were provided by SAPOP members and interested citizens. Will Bontrager, poet and writer, was special guest artist.

Congratulations to our excellent poets and branches for their activities toward PRA's mission, to promote the art of poetry and encourage contemporary poets. Please send notice of your wins and branch activities for PRA's quarterly newsletter to Donna Smith, 58 Briarwood, Greenbrier, AR 72058 (tndsmith@live.com).

Farewell to Marguerite Palmer (1918-2015)

We say farewell to longtime PRA member Gladys Marguerite Palmer of Little Rock, who died June 23, 2015 at age 96. She was a poet and published freelance writer with a penchant for social justice. Born in Pocahontas, Arkansas, she observed her father Drew Bowers, a federal attorney, run twice for Governor unsuccessfully. He opposed segregation. Vandals broke windows in the family home and threatened his family. The experience made Marguerite proud that her father was trying to do the right thing. Thereafter she incorporated social justice into her writing and taught her children to do right even when it's unpopular. Palmer graduated from Little Rock Junior College and Ouachita Baptist College, then worked for the state and the U.S. Selective Service System. She was selected Arkansas Poet of the Year in 1962, won the Sybil Nash Abrams Award in 1987, and served as PRA's state critic for more than 12 years. She won many poetry awards and published two poetry books.

Another Farewell to Henry Heidelberg (1934-2015)

Henry Heidelberg, husband of former PRA President Betty Heidelberg, died July 11th. Henry was a farmer, family man, and Sunday School teacher who was beloved by family and friends. Henry regularly accompanied Betty to most of the PRA events, though he was not a PRA member. We all knew him and loved him. Please keep Betty and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Hinegardner Books Available

The late Verna Lee Hinegardner, former Poet Laureate of Arkansas, left a number of her poetry books with her daughter, Cindy Corhn. If you are interested in purchasing any of Verna Lee's books, contact Cindy Corhn, P.O. Box 11044, Conway, AR 72034.

Upcoming Deadlines, Events & Contests

2nd Saturday each Month: PRA's Monthly Contest entries are due by mail to Chairman Dennis Patton, 2512 Springhill Circle, Alexander, AR 72002. See guidelines in PRA's Yearbook.

August: Watch for your new 2015-2016 PRA Yearbook in the mail.

August 15: PRA's Poetry Day contest entrees and fees are due in one envelope postmarked by August 15, 2015 to Poetry Day Contest Chair Donna Smith, 58 Briarwood, Greenbrier, AR 72058. See contest details on PRA's website. Entry fees are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Poems are accepted in Times New Roman font, 12 point type, printed front side only, and, if multiple pages, the longer poems may be stapled.

August 15: Deadline for Poetry Society of Texas's 2015 annual contest. See details at poetrysocietyoftexas.org.

September 10: Deadline for submitting poems for critique by PRA's Poetry Day speaker Hope Coulter. Send poems to Laura Loughridge, 102 Oakridge Cove, Maumelle, AR 72113.

September 15: Deadline for Arizona State Poetry Society's 2015 Annual Contest. More information available at azpoetry.webs.com.

October 3: PRA's 2015 Poetry Day will be celebrated in Little Rock at the Cox Building (3rd Floor) across from the Central Arkansas Library, 120 River Market Avenue. Featured speaker will be Hope Coulter, an award-winning author and professor at Hendrix College in Conway. Contest winners will be announced. Lunch will be on your own in the River Market. Watch PRA's website for agenda details & directions. Contact Poetry Day Chair Laura Loughridge with questions. Our thanks to the River Market Poets of Little Rock for hosting this event.

November: Student contest information will be distributed this month. Each PRA branch is encouraged to promote these contests in their area schools. Contact Youth Contest Chair Laura Loughridge with questions.

January 2016: A new poetry contest for college students in Arkansas schools will be launched by PRA this month. Details to follow.

March 15, 2016: Deadline for entering poems for the Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration to be held in El Dorado during early April. See contest details in the PRA Yearbook.

March 15, 2016: Deadline for entering NFSPS poetry contests. See details at www.nfsp.com.

April 2016: PRA's 2016 Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration will be in El Dorado this month. Date to be announced. Our thanks to the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines for hosting.

September/October 2016: PRA will sponsor poetry contests for all Arkansans in 4 age groups through the 2016 Arkansas State Fair. Details will be posted in May at Arkansasstatefair.com in the Creative Arts Competition Guidelines.

October 2016: PRA's Annual Poetry Day 2016 Event will be in Mountain Home hosted by the Free Verse Poetry Group of Mountain Home. Dates/details to be announced.

Check PRA's website for updates on Arkansas events, contests, etc. Also check the NFSPS web site (www.nfsp.com) for national news, contests and links to other state poetry societies. The NFSPS *Strophes* newsletter is mailed with PRA's newsletter for members who do not have Internet access. PRA Branch Presidents will receive an emailed copy of News 'N Notes each quarter and are asked to assure that all their members receive one. Remember to send your poems for critique – one per month at no cost - to PRA's new State Critic for 2015-2016, Jeff Rawlings, P.O. Box 76, Yellville, AR 72687 (jeffr50@yahoo.com.)

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Year in Review – 2014-2015



Purpose: Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (PRA) is a private, non-profit organization established in 1931 to share the love of poetry, encourage the writing of poetry, and support poets in Arkansas.

History: PRA is the oldest poetry organization in the state. Most of Arkansas's Poet Laureates have been members. Among them were Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni of Fayetteville (1953 - 1969), and Dr. Lily Peter of Helena (1971 - 1991), for whom the two annual PRA conferences are named. Current Arkansas Poet Laureate Peggy Vining of Little Rock also is a member. PRA participates in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS), a national non-profit also promoting poetry.

Contests: Contests for PRA members are offered free throughout the year. PRA's annual Poetry Day contest in October is open to all poets for a small entry fee. Winners receive monetary prizes of up to \$1,000. Guidelines are posted on PRA's website and in PRA's membership yearbook. PRA also supports a number of student contests annually, including the Sybil Nash Abrams Student Contest in Arkansas and national contests through NFSPS. Information is posted on PRA's web site, and distributed through branches and educational partners.

Membership Benefits: PRA branches are located all over the state for members to meet monthly. PRA's two annual conferences offer educational opportunities to learn more about poetry and meet other poets. Members also may participate in the annual NFSPS conference with poets from all over the nation. PRA's monthly contests and its spring contests are free for members. Winning poems may be published in PRA's annual anthology, and national winners may be published in the NFSPS national anthology. PRA also offers the free service of a state critic for members to help edit and improve their work.

Activities 2014-2015: During the fiscal year PRA hosted several events and promoted poetry in various ways. Many PRA poets also received an impressive number of awards too numerous to name here.

The South Arkansas Poets of the Pines held a very successful open mic night at PJs Coffee House on the Square in El Dorado in August. Nearly twenty poets aged 20 to 80+ read their work to a standing room only crowd, and folksinger Rickey E. Pittman opened the show with his music. The owners asked the group to return for regular open mics monthly or bi-monthly.

Mountain Home Free Verse Society hosted a wonderful 2-day event in October celebrating the 67th annual Poetry Day in Arkansas. Dwight Durmon spoke on his tumultuous military experiences as an advisor in Kuwait and a POW in Iraq. Then PRA's State Critic Todd Sukany offered valuable tips on writing effective poetry, reading more poetry and challenging our way of thinking. Annual awards were announced and a good time was had by all.

The Mountain Home Free Verse Group also recently produced their second CD featuring readings of original poetry by members active in poetry locally and nationally. All proceeds from CD sales go to a scholarship fund for a Mountain Home High School graduating senior.

Jim Barton (South Arkansas Poets of the Pines) was named 1st Vice President and Membership Chair of the NFSPS Board in June for the next 2 years. He said his goal is to have poetry organizations from every state join NFSPS. Jim is an award-winning poet, published author, Treasurer of South Arkansas Poets of the Pines and State Treasurer for PRA. He was featured speaker at several venues this year including: Mississippi Poetry Society's Annual Festival, PRA's Spring Celebration, a Senior English class at El Dorado High School, and the Annual South Arkansas Community College Celebration of the Arts in El Dorado. He also won Tennessee's "Best of the Fest Award" in October.

During the year several poets led by Pat Durmon (Mountain Home Free Verse) researched and created lists of "Old School" and "New School" Marketing Tips to help PRA members publish their poetry.

The Saline County Branch of PRA hosted this year's Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration in May. Opening remarks from Betty Heidelberger memorialized Dr. Peter who was Arkansas 3rd Poet Laureate (1971-1991). She was a successful farmer in Phillips County, a distinguished author, poet, teacher, musician, conservationist and philanthropist. Dr. Peter was a dreamer who made things happen, much like Betty who as past PRA President partnered with the Little Rock Zoo where today visitors see poetry displayed throughout the zoo. Then PRA's own Jim Barton spoke on tips to edit poetry and advised poets to "cut, cut, cut" unnecessary words. Contest winners were announced and newly elected PRA officers were installed to serve during the next 2 years. Outgoing PRA President Cathy Moran received a plaque and gavel for her 4 years of fine leadership.

PRA said farewell to renowned Arkansas poet Miller Williams in January. Williams was a long-time friend to PRA. He spoke at PRA conferences and most recently wrote the Foreword for PRA's Eightieth Anniversary Anthology. His closing remarks in the Forward were, "Welcome to some good hours with friends you may not have known you had."

Marilyn Joyner, David Hall, and Donna Henson (all from South Arkansas Poets of the Pines) presented a program "Poetry from the Garden" to Union County Master Gardeners. The branch also plans to start a "Poetry in the Parks" program during the fall as part of their mission to spread the word and words of poetry.

Marcia Camp and Justin Booth (both River Market Poets) recently published a book chronicling Justin's progress as he became an award-winning poet during a short prison term. He credits the River Market Poets branch with encouraging him toward much of his success. He has since given poetry readings in New York and California. He also enjoys considerable popularity in Ireland.

Dr. Ed Madden (PRA member at large and former Arkansan) was named the first City Poet Laureate for Columbia, South Carolina in January. Dr. Madden will serve a 4-year term to, "encourage appreciation and create opportunities for dissemination of poetry in Columbia." Originally from Newport, Arkansas, Madden serves on the faculty of the University of South Carolina, teaches English, directs the University's gender studies program, and leads poetry summer camps for students. He has published 3 poetry books and won fellowships from the South Carolina Academy of Authors and the South Carolina Arts Commission.

For more information on Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas see poetsroundtable.webs.com (and coming soon, <http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>).