

NEWS 'N' NOTES

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Founded February 5, 1931

Member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>

Like us on Facebook!

August 2017

President's Address:

Poets,

Our summer is a "stew." If you think about it, it really is. A stew has different items mixed in a pot and the heat makes a good-tasting dish. So far this summer, we have thrown a trip to Ft. Worth into the pot. We can now put faces to names we heard from other states. We were excited to have Jim Barton represent PRA as president of NFSPS. Like the vegetables that flavor the stew, announcement of PRA members as winners in the annual contest was sweet to our ears.

Another item in our stew was a Summer Writers' Conference with Siloam Springs Writers Guild. It was attended by about 35 people. There were attendees from as far as Jonesboro and some from other states. The speakers' topics were passion, technique, and creativity.

If you add smoke from the BBQ, fishing and swimming from the lake, and a big melon from Grandpa's watermelon patch, that's how great our summer stew has been. And, of course, there was a poem or two scattered in for spice.

New yearbooks are due out soon. Please look through them to acquaint yourself with changes. One change will be that Jodi Tooke will be the monthly contest chair starting in September. Some of the branch officers will be new names as well.

Hope you are making "summer stew."

Life is too short to be without poetry

Dennis

Poetry Day Conference, October 21st, Little Rock:

Poetry Day 2017 will be coordinated by PRA's River Market Branch on October 21st at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 401 President Clinton Avenue, Little Rock. The Butler Center is located on the Central Arkansas Library's main campus in the River Market next door to the Cox Building where we have held many PRA meetings. The first floor has a gift shop and the meeting room is located at the rear of the shop. There is no registration fee and lunch will be on your own across the street at the River Market.

Featured speaker will be Bryan Borland, poet, author, editor, Pushcart nominee, and winner of numerous honors. Poetry Day Contest guidelines are posted on PRA's website. Send entries by August 15th to Contest Chair Liz Faulkner, 3 Ridge Oak Cove, Little Rock, AR 72223.

Members also may submit two poems for critique by our speaker Bryan Borland. Send your poems by September 9th to Cathy Moran, 401 Auburn Dr., Little Rock AR 72205 or kirkwoodmo@sbcglobal.net. Make plans to attend this conference honoring past Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni who established the first Arkansas Poetry Day on October 15, 1948. For conference questions contact Poetry Day Chair Cathy Moran.

Agenda

9:00 Registration
9:30 Speaker Bryan Borland
10:30 Break
10:45 Critiques of poetry
12:00 Lunch in the River Market
1:15 Business meeting
Announcement of Poetry Day winners

Board Meeting Highlights of 6/10/17: The board is still looking for a branch who will sponsor the Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration in 2018. If your branch would be willing to host, contact PRA President Dennis Patton. Also, the board voted to discontinue the State Critic services effective 7/1/17, due to members' lack of usage. Funds saved from the Critic's contract will be applied to the web services, which were underfunded this past year. The board discussed but tabled the idea of discontinuing print versions of PRA's annual yearbook, in lieu of electronically delivered versions and web postings. Electronic delivery would be efficient, save funds and provide more timely information. Hard copies could still be provided as needed or requested. If you have questions or comments for board consideration please contact PRA President Dennis Patton or any board member.

PRA Board Member Changes: Our thanks to Cathy Moran for accepting the position of PRA's Vice President for the new 2-year term starting July 1, 2017. The board approved her appointment this summer to replace Mark Barton, who unfortunately had to resign. Many thanks to Mark for his service as VP and his work researching the future of PRA's anthology. Also, Cat Donnelly, who recently became a board member at large, has moved out of state. Our thanks to John McPherson for joining the board in her place.

PRA Monthly Contests: Starting in September, Jodi Tooke will be PRA's Monthly Contest Chair. Entries should be mailed to Jodi at 331 Beach Haven Road, Hot Springs, AR 71913. Our thanks to Liz Faulkner for filling this role during the past year. See monthly contest guidelines in your yearbook and on PRA's website, soon to be updated this month.

Did You Know? PRA members are NFSPS members too, with access to other state & national contests.

Notes from Jim, NFSPS President: Jim Barton presided over his first national convention in Fort Worth, Texas, June 29 - July 2, and it was a very successful one. Several PRA members were there to cheer him on. Our thanks to PRA President Dennis Patton for reporting results daily from the conference. PRA collected 37 wins by 17 members. Congratulations to PRA winners: Russell Strauss, Kate Lacy, Florence Bruce, Rita Goodgame, Dena Gorrell, Sara Gipson, D. Beecher Smith, Amanda Partridge, Laura Loughridge, Barbara Blanks, Cathy Moran, John McBride, Gail Denham, Don Crowson, Donna Smith, LaVern McCarthy, and Karen Kay Bailey. Congrats also to those who received citations. And thanks to PRA members who served as judges: Dennis Patton, Barbara Blanks, Russell Strauss, Gail Denham, and Ann Carolyn Cates. See the entire winners' list in the Strophes national newsletter or link to nfsp.com through PRA's website.

The conference offered a full agenda of great speakers and fun activities. Poets re-connected, made new friends, and acquired new ideas about poetry. Jim, who normally wins a bunch of contests, ran out of time to write this year. His advice: "If you wait around for inspiration, you will never get much done. You must take the time to write (regularly) . . . poetry manuscripts must convey a coherent and cohesive message . . . pose a question . . . or . . . lay out a dilemma . . . Poets today have more opportunities to be heard and read than ever before. We must use these opportunities."

Reminder! You can still pay your member dues to participate in free monthly contests and enter Poetry Day contests due August 15th, plus NFSPS contests. Send \$20 (or \$15 for seniors and students) to PRA Treasurer Jim Barton at Box 263, Huttig, AR 71747.

Yearbooks for July 2017 - June 2018: Watch for your new yearbook to arrive in the August mail. General information also will be posted on PRA's website, excluding member names/addresses. If you forgot to renew your PRA membership in June, please do so and a new yearbook will be mailed to you at a later date.

Online Group: PRA members, if you're not attending a branch consider joining the Online Group. Contact Kate Lacy at voicedancer2002@yahoo.com. New participants are always welcome.

Anthology Research: The board is studying materials provided in June by Kate Lacy and Mark Barton on continuing PRA's anthology. The anthology will not be published in 2017. If you would like to donate past anthologies to complete PRA's series at Arkansas State Archives, Arkansas State Library, and Butler Center, contact Dennis Patton, Marilyn Joyner or Donna Smith.

Want a PRA Handout for Events? Try the attached "2017 Year-in-Review" report. It includes general information about PRA and NFSPS, plus highlights of statewide activities during the year. See PRA's webpage "Resources" tab to print copies.

Poetic Wins, Activities & Publications:
Please send notice of activities & accomplishments to PRA News Editor Donna Smith, 58 Briarwood, Greenbrier, AR 72058 (tndsmith@live.com).

PRA Monthly Contest winners are: **May** - 1st Sara Gipson, 2nd LaVern McCarthy, 3rd John McPherson, 1HM Barbara Blanks, 2HM Cathy Moran, 3HM D. Beecher Smith; **June** - 1st D. Beecher Smith, 2nd Barbara Blanks, 3rd Dennis Patton, 1HM Pat Laster, 2HM Vivian Barcroft, 3HM Shannon Mullins; **July** - 1st D. Beecher Smith, 2nd Ann Carolyn Cates, 3rd Barbara Blanks, 1HM Dennis Patton, 2HM John McPherson, 3HM Vivian Barcroft.

Kathy Vernich (Saline County) won 1st place with a rondelet and a 1st HM in another poetry contest, plus in prose contests she won a 3rd, 1HM, two 2HMs and a 3HM at the Arkansas Writers' Conference.

Winners in the Terza Rima Sonnet contest sponsored by Russell Strauss are: 1st Barbara Blanks (Member-at-large, Texas) with "A Feral Encounter"; HM Cathy Moran (River Market) with "Reflections on a Formal Night"; and HM Pat Laster (Saline County) with "Too Soon".

Kate Lacy (Northwest Poets) received notice in July from "Whispering Prairie Press" <info@wppress.org> that her work will be published in the upcoming Volume 14 issue of *Kansas City Voices* in October this year. She is also invited to the official Volume 14 launch party on Saturday, October 28th at The Writer's Place (3607 Pennsylvania Ave.) in Kansas City. The publication is an 8.5 x 11, 80 page, advertisement free, glossy magazine combining art, poetry, and prose. Orders available at <http://www.wppress.org/purchase>.

Barbara Blanks (Member-at-large, Texas) won in the NFSPS contests: two 1sts, two 3rds, and a 4HM. and those four poems are in the new *Encore*--which is already for sale on Amazon. Barbara also won the "Best of the Fest" award at the Mississippi Poetry Society's Spring Festival in Southaven, April 29-30.

Dennis Patton (Saline County) won an award in the Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest.

John Crawford's (Hot Springs) new book, "Female Voices from the Bible" has arrived. He will be sharing its poems at various venues from July through October. Christian Faith Publishing, PA. will be promoting it. He also had poems accepted for the Missouri State Poetry Society Newsletter "Spare Mule" and one for the MSPS annual anthology "Grist."

Karen Kay Knauss Bailey's (Member-at-large, Oklahoma) latest publication *Where Once A Willow* won the Oklahoma Writers' Federation Award for **Best Book of Poetry for 2017**. She also won 2nd place for poems, "While Ridin' Slow" and "Once on a Snowy Morning". Her poem "Cemetery on Blackberry Road" won 2nd place in NFSPS' Jessica C. Saunders Memorial Award Contest.

Cathy Moran (River Market) won: from Alabama - three 1sts, two 3rds; from Utah - 2nd, 3rd, three HMs; from Pennsylvania - 2nd and 3rd; from Writers/Editors - 3rd; and from AR Writers Conference - 2nd.

Jim Barton (South Ark Poets of Pines) was one of the winners of the opening night contest at the NFSPS conference in Fort Worth, TX in late June.

Barbara Robinette's (Member-at-large, Viola) poem "Sitting by the Campfire, 30 A.D." was republished by *Time of Singing* this summer. And another poem, "My Cavalier Cruises" was published this summer by *California Quarterly*.

Vivian Barcroft (Northwest Poets) won PRA's Monthly Contest in June - 2HM and July - 3HM.

Pat Laster (Saline County) won an Honorable Mention in Russell Strauss' Terza Rima Sonnet contest that he announced at Spring Celebration. She also submitted 11 haiku/tanka poems to Season's Greeting Letter of Maryland, and 5 poems to the White County Creative Writer's Conference for this fall. Her poetry blog is www.pittypatter.blogspot.com.

Rita Goodgame (River Market) received an e-mail from Kathy Cotton, *Encore* Editor, stating that her 1st place win in NFSPS Poetry Contest #9-Not The Usual Poem, is in the top150 from 7,853 submissions and will be featured in *Encore Prize Poems 2017* anthology available on Amazon.com.

LaVern McCarthy (Member-at-large, Oklahoma) has a new book out called "Images of Life." She also won 5 honorable mentions at NFSPS this year.

Pat Durmon (Member-at-large, Norfolk) was the keynote speaker at the Mississippi Poetry Society's Spring Festival in Southaven, April 29-30. Check out her weekly blog at patdurmon.com or email her at patdurmon@gmail.com.

Sara Gipson (Online Group) won: a 3rd Citation (twice), 1HM, and 3rd Place from Pennsylvania; 3HM (twice), 1HM, 3rd Place (twice) from Mississippi; 3HM from Utah; 2nd Place from Alabama; 3HM from Missouri; 3rd Place from Arkansas Writers' Conference; 4HM, 3HM, 2HM, 2nd Place from NFSPS; and 3rd Place from Oklahoma.

D. Beecher Smith (Member-at-large, Memphis) won a 3rd place for his poem, "The Eskimo Alternative," and three HM's in this year's NFSPS Annual Contests. According to Cathy Cotton, *Encore* editor, these placed among the top 150 of over 7,000 entries.

Pat Oplinger (Member-at-large, Cherokee Village) won a 3rd HM rondelet, 1st HM blank verse, and 1st Place "Triple Impact" free verse on Alzheimer's from the Arkansas Writers' Conference; plus, a 1st HM for free verse on prison ministry from the 2017 *Lucidity* in Eureka Springs. Also, her poem, "Nourishing You" was Poem of the Week, June 21, 2017, the week of the League's Gala Birthday Celebration by the National League of American Pen Women, Washington, D.C. It now appears under the *BlogArchives* heading.

The Siloam Springs Writers branch sponsored a very successful first writers' conference on July 7-8. A total of 38 participants came from as far away as Wichita, Kansas to attend the event at Siloam's First Baptist Church. Speakers included; PRA President Dennis Patton; Dr. Paul Linzey, Humanities Chair at Florida's Southeastern University; and Traci Manos, Co-Curricular Coordinator at John Brown University in Siloam Springs. Dr. Linzey gave a keynote presentation Friday night on using passion in writing. On Saturday the speakers presented pointers on poetry and creative writing, followed by a Q&A session. Siloam President Gene Linzey says the group is planning a second conference in 2018.

Upcoming Deadlines/Events/Contests

2nd Saturday each Month: PRA's Monthly Contest entries are due by mail to Jodi Tooke, 331 Beach Haven Road, Hot Springs, AR 71913. See PRA's yearbook and website for rules, plus links to resources on poetry forms.

August: PRA's new 2017-2018 yearbooks mailed.

August 15: PRA's Poetry Day Contest entries are due together with entry fees in one envelope. See contest brochure posted on PRA's website. Send entries to Poetry Day Contest Chair Liz Faulkner, 3 Ridge Oak Cove, Little Rock AR 72223.

August 18: Deadline to register and enter 30 contests for Mid-South Poetry Festival in Memphis, sponsored by Poetry Society of Tennessee. See details at www.tnpoetry.org. Send fees and materials to JoAn Howerton, Festival Director, 2563 Twin Woods Cove, Memphis, TN 38134. Or contact her for questions at 901-361-0077 or joan0620@att.net.

September 9: Deadline for members to submit two poems for critique by speaker Bryan Borland on Poetry Day. Send poems to Cathy Moran, 401 Auburn Dr., Little Rock AR 72205 or kirkwoodmo@sbcglobal.net.

September 29: Mail-in deadline for the 2017 Arkansas State Fair Poetry Contest entries to arrive. See details and entry form posted on PRA's website. PRA will award Best-of-Show prizes in 4 age groups at the Fair in October. Entry is free for all Arkansas residents.

September 30: The University of Arkansas Press is accepting submissions for the *Miller Williams Poetry Prize*, judged by former national poet laureate Billy Collins. Winner receives \$5,000, plus publication. Applications accepted year round. Deadline for 2018 prize is 9/30/17. See details at www.uapress.com.

October 1: Wheelbarrow Books Poetry Prize, sponsored by RCAH Center for Poetry at Michigan State University, accepting 64-page manuscripts for

\$25 reading fee by October 1. Winner receives \$1,000 and book publication by MSU Press. See details at poetry.rcah.msu.edu.

October 6-7: Mid-South Poetry Festival in Memphis at Holiday Inn, 3700 Central Avenue, (phone 901-678-8200.) Registration and contest entries due 8/18/17 to JoAn Howerton, Festival Director, 2563 Twin Woods Cove, Memphis, TN 38134. For questions contact JoAn at 901-361-0077 or joan0620@att.net.

October 21: Poetry Day 2017 in Little Rock hosted by the River Market branch at the Butler Center. Featured speaker is Bryan Borland, poet, author, editor, Pushcart nominee, and winner of numerous honors. He also will critique members' poems submitted by September 9th. For questions contact Poetry Day Chair Cathy Moran at kirkwoodmo@sbcglobal.net.

November: Junior/Senior High and College Student contests will be distributed this month. PRA branches are asked to help promote these contests in their area.

December 15: Slab's 2018 Curry Poetry Prize Contest is accepting submissions by December 15. First place wins \$600 and publication. \$10 entry. See details at slablitmag.org.

December 31: Tampa Review Prize for poetry offers \$2,000 plus book publication, and portfolio in *Tampa Review* for previously unpublished manuscript by new or established poets. \$25 entry. Due December 31 to Tampa Review Prize, University of Tampa Press, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL 33606. See details at www.ut.edu/tampareview.

Watch For: Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Awards for poetry and prose sponsored by Poets & Writers, Inc. No deadline yet for 2018 competition. See pw.org.

May 31-June 3, 2018: NFSPS 2018 Convention in Denver, Colorado. Plan now to join the Columbine Poets of Colorado in the Mile High City. Jim would love to see you there.

PRA members receive the quarterly *News 'N Notes* via email and web posting. The NFSPS quarterly *Strophes* newsletter is available online via link from PRA's website. Members may request copies of both by postal mail. Branch Presidents are asked to assure that all members have access to these publications.

For More Information - Check PRA's website for updates on Arkansas activities and like us on Facebook. Also check the NFSPS web site (www.nfsp.com) for national news, contests, and links to other state poetry societies. Please alert PRA Membership Chair Kate Lacy with any changes in member contact information or branch meeting places/times/officers. PRA currently serves 118 members, 11 branches, and an online group.



Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>

Year in Review – 2016-2017

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 Arkansas poets.

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

Membership Benefits: PRA branches are located across the state for members to meet monthly. PRA also offers an online group, plus a quarterly newsletter, website, and periodic e-blasts to keep members informed. PRA's two annual conferences provide contests and networking opportunities, plus educational speakers and critiques. Members also may participate in the annual NFSPS conference with poets from other states. PRA members may publish winning poems in PRA's anthology and/or the NFSPS anthology, and promote their poetry books on PRA's website.

Contests: Members may enter 15 free PRA contests throughout the year. PRA's annual Poetry Day event sponsors another 30 contests, many open to all poets, for a small entry fee. Winners receive monetary prizes of up to \$1,000. Plus, members may enter 50 national contests at discounted rates with NFSPS. PRA also supports a number of student contests annually, including the Sybil Nash Abrams Contest for Arkansas High School and Junior High students, PRA's statewide Jeannie Dolan Carter Collegiate Contest, plus national student contests through NFSPS. Guidelines for all contests are posted on PRA's website, and distributed through branches and educational partners.

Activities 2016-2017: PRA poets hosted various activities, published books, spoke at events, and promoted poetry throughout the year. Many also received an impressive number of awards. (See details on PRA's website.) Highlights of the year include:

Jeannie Dolan Carter Memorial Collegiate Contest

was established in 2016 by Roger Carter of Hot Springs and PRA President Dennis Patton to honor Carter's late wife. Mr. Carter's sponsorship will continue the contest annually with no entry fees and prizes totaling \$1,000. JDC Chair Donna Smith coordinated the 2017 contest with statewide outreach from all branches. Pat Durmon and Diane Stefan judged. Winners were announced in April 2017 at the Spring Celebration where they read their poems. Winners were: 1st - Ellie Black of Hendrix College/Conway (from Clarksville); 2nd - Dennison Schultz of UofA Fayetteville (from Cabot); and 3rd - Anushah Jiwani of Hendrix College/Conway (from Little Rock).

PRA Partnered with the 2016 Arkansas State Fair

to sponsor *Best-of-Show* poetry winners in 4 age groups. Winners were announced in October at the Fair and on PRA's website. Prizes included cash for each BOS winner, plus a 1-year PRA membership for the adult winner. Entry is free to Arkansans. Chair Donna Smith judged the contests and submitted press releases to the 4 winners' home town newspapers. (See complete winners' list on PRA's website.) PRA's Board voted in June 2017 to continue the partnership.

Arkansas' 69th Poetry Day Conference

on October 22, 2016, was hosted by PRA's Roundtable Poets of Hot Springs, in honor of Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1969) who established the first Arkansas Poetry Day in October 1948. Poetry Day Chair John Crawford led a Friday night sing-along, read-around and impromptu contest. Featured speaker Kai Coggin shared readings Saturday from her poetry books and led group critiques. Kai is a creative writing teacher, poet, author, workshop leader, and performer. President Dennis Patton announced the 2016 Merit Award winner, Donna Smith of Greenbrier for her service on PRA's newsletter, numerous committees, and statewide promotion of poetry. A business meeting followed. Then Frieda Patton announced Poetry Day Contest winners. (See entire list on PRA's website.) John Crawford invited all to visit the *Hot Springs Wednesday Night Poetry* group, ongoing weekly for 27 years with featured speakers and open mic performances, at 6:30 PM at Kollektive Cafe.

PRA's South Arkansas Poets of the Pines Branch

(SAPOP) sponsored monthly "Open Mic" nights all year at PJ's Coffee on the Square in El Dorado. Marilyn Joyner, Jim Barton and Janet Ryan represented SAPOP in the 2016 "Between the Lines," publication of South Arkansas Community College. On October 28th SAPOP also hosted *SCARE ON THE SQUARE*, an evening of ghost stories, ghoulish poems, and music at PJ's. Marilyn Joyner won 1st for her ghost story, and a charming young gecko/dino won 1st for her costume.

Karen Hayes of PRA's River Market Branch

developed the *Laman Poetry Scribble* writers' circle in North Little Rock. They meet each 2nd Tuesday from 6-7:30PM at the William F. Laman Public Library, and welcome anyone who wants to write poetry. Karen also offers the *Dogtown Poetry on Demand at the Argenta Art Walk* each 3rd Friday from 5-8PM at the Laman Argenta Branch. She tells patrons, "You name it; I'll write about it." She sets up her table with a sign, tip jar and her 1971 jade green Olivetti typewriter. If patrons are stumped on a subject, she offers a little box of words they can draw. The poems are free. Tips are voluntary and donated to a charity. She says, "Twenty dollar bills make me very happy." She types the poem, reads it to the patron, and takes a picture of the poem to keep, plus a picture of the patron with the poem, if they're willing. Her best gig so far was the Little Rock Pride Fest at the Clinton Presidential Library. She wrote for 5 hours and had a line at her table! She also offered "poetry quickies," short, face-to-face, memorized poems as samples. Karen makes her free poetry service available at events for the sheer pleasure of seeing people value poetry.

Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration on April 22, 2017, was hosted by PRA's Saline County Branch in Benton. The annual event honors Arkansas Poet Laureate Dr. Lily Peter (1971-1991). Featured speaker Russell Strauss shared ideas on entering, sponsoring and judging poetry contests. Russell is a native of Memphis, President of the Poetry Society of Tennessee, past NFSPS President, current NFSPS Liaison with state societies, and PRA member. After his presentation he challenged members with a *Terza Rima Sonnet Contest*. Then a vote determined Light and Serious Verse Contest winners. Donna Smith introduced the 3 winners of the 2017 Jeannie Dolan Carter Collegiate Contest who read their poems. Frieda Patton introduced the 3 attending winners of the Sybil Nash Abrams junior and senior high contests who read their poems. (See list of all contest winners posted on PRA's website with pictures.) Donna Smith read and sang her winning 2016 Sybil Nash Abrams poem about Arkansas musician Glen Campbell. President Dennis Patton led a business meeting and discussed a new state law authorizing PRA to recommend future Arkansas Poet Laureates to the Governor. Finally, Spring Contest winners were announced.

Two Rivers Poetry Branch partnered with Dewey's Café in Ft. Smith for Open Mic Nights at 7PM every third Thursday. Branch meetings are the same day at 2:30 at Sweet Bay Coffee. Also, River Valley Writer's *Kindly Critics* group meets twice monthly at the main Ft. Smith Library on Mondays at 6PM to offer encouragement and critiques for poetry and prose.

Hot Springs Branch sponsored the second annual Dr. Paul Tucker Memorial Prize (funded by Doc Crawford) during the *Hot Springs Festival Arts and the Park*, April 28-May 6, 2017. Branch members judged the winners who received \$300 in prizes at a special noon ceremony on May 6th at Hill Wheatley Plaza.

John Crawford Received International Honor. In 2017 the International Biographical Institute of Great Britain awarded Dr. John Crawford the honorary Doctor of Letters. Crawford is a professor emeritus of Henderson State University, with 5 degrees. He has contributed poetry and essays to numerous literary journals since the 1960s, and published 4 academic books that are in the Library of Congress and university libraries across the nation. He also has 3 volumes of poetry, 1 chapbook (1990 Chapbook Prize of Erie, PA Poetry Forum), and a new volume titled "Female Voices from the Bible," by Christian Faith Publishing of PA. Dr. Crawford has won the Sybil Nash Abrams Prize twice, and received PRA's Merit Award in 1988 for his contributions to state, regional and national poetry. He is a charter member of the *Hot Springs Wednesday Poetry Group*, now in its 28th year, and President of the Hot Springs PRA branch. He continues to read at various venues and has twice performed a musical history of poetry at the NFSPS conference.

PRA Website Promoted Members' Poetry Books.

The Board voted in June 2016 to help members promote sale of their poetry books by adding a new tab to PRA's website. The website lists only PRA authors, only poetry books, and links for potential buyers to deal directly with authors. Members may post their books by contacting PRA President Dennis Patton.

PRA's Jim Barton, President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS)

presided over his first national convention in Fort Worth, Texas, June 29-July 2, 2017. The conference agenda offered many great speakers and fun activities in the area. Arkansas was well represented with PRA members attending and winning in the national contests. Congratulations to 17 PRA members who won 37 national awards. (See the entire winners' list in the Strophes national newsletter at nfsp.com.)

Siloam Springs Writers Branch Hosted First Writers' Conference

July 7-8, 2017. Speakers were PRA President Dennis Patton, Dr. Paul Linzey from Florida's Southeastern University, and Traci Manos from John Brown University. Participants came from as far as Wichita, Kansas. The Siloam Branch is planning a second summer conference in 2018.

PRA served 143 members, 11 branches and one online group statewide this year.