

# **NEWS 'N' NOTES**

## **Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas**

[www.poetsroundtable.webs.com](http://www.poetsroundtable.webs.com)

**February 2015**

### **President's Message:**

Dear Poets,

Enclosed is a slate of new officers for the next two years for PRA. I encourage you to vote for them and welcome them into a leadership role. I know they will keep the spirit of poetry alive and well in our state.

One of the great Arkansas poets, Miller Williams, died this year. Besides his marvelous poetry, I believe he was a great individual who loved to interpret humanity. Here is a quote from him:

“Have compassion for everyone you meet, even if they don't want it. What seems conceit, bad manners, or cynicism is always a sign of things no ears have heard, no eyes have seen. You do not know what wars are going on down there where the spirit meets the bone.”

Thanks to all those who have made my terms as president one to remember with fond memories. I believe we are moving into a modern wave of poetry, and I am happy to have been a part of that. As always I encourage you to keep on writing – poetry is alive and well.

Cathy Moran  
State President

### **Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration May 2<sup>nd</sup> at Benton:**

The Saline County Branch of PRA will host this year's Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at Parkview Methodist Church, 514 N Border Street, Benton, AR from 9AM to 4PM. Our thanks to this group for their hospitality. PRA's own Jim Barton will be the featured speaker. Jim is an award-winning poet, published author, State Treasurer for PRA and National 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Membership Chair for NFSPS. Members are invited to send one or two poems to Dennis Patton by April 1<sup>st</sup> for Jim's critique. His comments on these poems will be presented as part of the program on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Also, on May 2<sup>nd</sup> attendees may submit either a serious poem or a light poem at registration before the program begins. (See page 10 of your yearbook for the serious/light verse guidelines.) Winning poems will be determined by attendee vote. Remember to mail your 3 annual poetry contest entries by April 1<sup>st</sup> to the sponsors listed on page 9 of the yearbook. These contests are for PRA members only. Winners will be announced on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. Registration for the Spring Celebration opens at 9AM. The program begins at 9:30AM. Lunch plans will be announced later. Contact Dennis Patton for questions. And watch PRA's website for updates on the agenda.

Directions from I-30 East Bound from Hot Springs and points west to 514 N Border St, Benton, AR:

Take exit #117/AR-5/Benton/AR-35-----0.1 mi.  
Turn right onto AR-35, AR-5----- 0.6 mi.  
Proceed through stoplight -----0.1 mi.  
Turn left onto E North St-----0.6 mi.  
Turn right onto N Border St-----515 ft.  
Parkview Methodist Church is on right

Directions from Little Rock I-430/I-30 interchange to 514 N. Border St, Benton, AR:

Proceed west on I-30 approximately -----9 mile  
Take exit #117/AR-5/Benton/AR-35 onto I-30 frontage road W----0.5 mi  
Turn right onto Hot Springs Hwy (AR-5) to light-----0.2 mi  
Turn left onto AR-35. AR-5 -----0.7 mi  
Proceed through stoplight-----0.1 mi  
Turn left onto E North St -----0.6 mi  
Turn right onto N Border St-----515 ft.

Parkview Methodist Church is on right

## **Poetry Day Contest Sponsorship Forms Due 2-28-2015:**

Please consider sponsoring &/or judging a contest for Poetry Day. The Contest Sponsorship form is attached. Send completed forms with appropriate payment to PRA Treasurer Jim Barton (P.O. Box 263, Huttig, AR 71747) by February 28, 2015. See also page 21 in your yearbook for more information on sponsorships. The Poetry Day contest brochure will be produced in March and posted promptly on the PRA website. Brochure copies will be mailed with the May newsletter to members who do not have access to the website.

## **Poetic Wins & Activities:**

PRA Monthly Contest winners are: November - 1<sup>st</sup> Cathy Moran, 2<sup>nd</sup> Karen Hayes, 3<sup>rd</sup> Diane Stefan, 1HM Sara Gipson, 2HM Gail Denham, 3HM Karen Bailey; December – 1<sup>st</sup> Karen Hayes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Alana Merritt Mahaffey, 3<sup>rd</sup> Gail Denham, 1HM Pat Laster, 2HM Marilyn Joyner, 3HM Sara Gipson; January – 1<sup>st</sup> Cathy Moran, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jim Barton, 3<sup>rd</sup> Pat Laster, 1HM Karen Hayes, 2HM Kathy Helmer, 3HM Diane Stefan. Check monthly winners on PRA's webpage.

Lee Ann Russell (Springfield) won an HM from the Poetry Society of Texas, an HM from Ohio Poetry Day, a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place from Springfield Poets & Friends, and 2 HMs from Lebanon Poets' Society.

Cathy Moran (River Market Poets) won two 1<sup>st</sup> places from Louisiana; two 1<sup>st</sup> places and one 3<sup>rd</sup> place from Writers Unlimited in Mississippi; a 1<sup>st</sup> place and two 3<sup>rd</sup> places from Minnesota; and two 1<sup>st</sup> places from Georgia.

Jim Barton (South Arkansas Poets of the Pines) won Tennessee's "Best of the Fest Award" in October, and he will be featured speaker at the Mississippi Poetry Society's Annual Festival in 2015. He also will be featured speaker at PRA's Spring Celebration on May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Benton.

Our congratulations to these excellent 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](mailto:tndsmith@live.com)) by the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, October, January and April.

## **Yearbook Corrections:**

Please make the following additions/corrections to your 2014-2015 yearbook:

Edgin, Devin, 520 Pittman Road, Hot Springs, AR 71913, [devin.edgin@lhwolves.net](mailto:devin.edgin@lhwolves.net)

Johnson, Stephen, (new email) [watermarkstudio@hotmail.com](mailto:watermarkstudio@hotmail.com)

McBride, John, 2329 Avalon Dr., Bettendorf, IA 52722

Patton, Frieda, 2512 Springhill Circle, Alexander, AR 72002

Rutherford, Catherine, P.O. Box 112, Malvern, AR 72104

Smith, Kitty, 2725 Boles St., Batesville AR 72501, [pokienokie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pokienokie@sbcglobal.net)

## **Did You Know?**

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas is a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS). Part of your PRA membership fee each year goes to NFSPS. This assures that you may participate in more local, state and national contests at member prices. About half of NFSPS contests are open to members only.

## **Thank You!**

PRA extends our sincere thanks to a recent donor, who wishes to remain anonymous. A thoughtful memorial was made in honor of past PRA member Nina Tillery who died in 2014. Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas has been a non-profit entity since 1978. Donations to PRA are tax-deductible under the IRS code 501(c)(3). A copy of the 501(c)(3) letter is available upon request. Patrons and members are encouraged to consider tax-deductible memorials or gifts to PRA for the continuation of its various programs.

## **Farewell to Miller Williams (1931-2015):**

Renowned Arkansas Poet Miller Williams died at age 84 in Fayetteville on the first day of 2015. Williams was best remembered nationally for delivering his poem, "Of History and Hope," at President Bill Clinton's 1997 inauguration. He was only the third inaugural poet in the country's history. Williams was a prolific writer and long-time professor at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. He published more than 40 books, poetry collections, translations of foreign poets' work, and textbooks. He co-founded the University of Arkansas Press in 1980 and served as its director for 17 years. Williams also was a friend of PRA and served as guest speaker over the years. Our own Marcia Camp remembers first hearing him speak at Poetry Day in 1985 at Hot Springs. He inspired her to join PRA that day. Most recently, at Marcia's urging, Williams wrote the Foreword for the Eightieth Anniversary Anthology of Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas published in 2013. His closing remarks in the Forward were, "Welcome to some good hours with friends you may not have known you had."

Williams was born in Hoxie, Arkansas. He was one of six children. His father was a Methodist preacher who was an activist and moved his family around the state often. Williams grew up loving to write, especially poetry. When he entered Hendrix College in Conway his counselor advised him to pursue science in lieu of writing because a test indicated he "had no verbal aptitude." So he majored in science and taught biology at high schools and colleges. He married young, had 3 children and worked hard. But he continued to write poetry. In 1950 he hosted a poetry show on television in Jackson, Mississippi while teaching biology at a college there. In 1961 he met poet John Ciardi who mentored him. Then he met poet Robert Frost at a writers' conference. The community of poets and writers moved Williams to make a change. The next year he transferred to Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge as an English professor.

Williams lived all over the world, spoke at least 6 languages, and won numerous national and international honors for his writing. Some of his honors include: the Prix de Rome for Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Harvard's Amy Lowell Traveling Scholarship for poetry, the New York Arts Fund Award for Significant Contribution to American Letters, the Charity Randall Citation for Contribution to Poetry as a Spoken Art, and the John William Corrington Award for Literary Excellence. He was named Socio Benemerito dell'Associazione of the Centro Romanesco Trilussa in Rome, and in 1990 he won the prestigious Poet's Prize. He served as visiting professor of U.S. literature at the University of Chile and as Fulbright professor of American studies at the University of Mexico. He was on the poetry faculty at the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference for 7 years. He also represented the U.S. State Department on lecture tours throughout Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and the Far East.

Yet Williams spent most of his life in Arkansas. He once said, "I would rather live in Arkansas than win any prize on earth." Williams used plain words in his poems. He wanted his poetry to be understandable to all, yet serious enough for academic purposes. When journalist Ernie Dumas interviewed him on Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) a few years ago, Williams said he'd most like to be remembered for his poetry. Williams told Dumas, "It would make me very happy on my deathbed to believe that in a thousand years someone would actually open a book and read one of my poems."

## **Upcoming Events & Contests:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday each Month:** PRA's Monthly Contest entries are due by mail to Chairman Dennis Patton, 2512 Springhill Circle, Alexander, AR 72002. See guidelines for each contest on page 7 of the PRA yearbook.

**February 15:** Missouri contest deadline. Link to their state website through [www.nfmps.com](http://www.nfmps.com) for details.

**February 28:** Last day to vote for new PRA Officers (2015-2017). Send votes by mail or email to Nominating Chair Pat Durmon. See ballot below. Also, Poetry Day Contest Sponsorships are due. Send completed forms and payment to PRA Treasurer Jim Barton. See attached sponsorship form.

**March 15:** NFSPS Annual Poetry Contest Deadline for the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention. See details at [www.nfsps.com](http://www.nfsps.com). Send entrees to NFSPS Contest Chair Mikki Pennington, P.O. Box 7842, Moore, OK 73153.

**March 16:** Mississippi contest deadline. Check details at their website link through [www.nfsps.com](http://www.nfsps.com).

**March 31:** Watch for PRA's Poetry Day Contest Brochure to be posted on the PRA website. Brochures will be mailed with the May newsletter to members who do not have access to the website. This year's topic for the Sybil Nash Abrams poetry contest is: *Arkansas Law and Disorder*. See SNA guidelines on page 8 of your yearbook. Contest entrees are due August 15<sup>th</sup>.

**April 1:** PRA Spring Celebration poetry contest entries are due. See guidelines on page 9 of PRA's yearbook. Critique poems also are due today to Dennis Patton for the Spring Celebration program on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**May 2:** PRA's Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration is today in Benton starting at 9AM. Attendees may submit a light or serious verse at registration before 9:30. Winners will be determined by attendee vote.

**June 24-28:** NFSPS Annual Convention in St. Petersburg, Florida. See agenda at [www.nfsps.com](http://www.nfsps.com).

**June 30:** PRA membership fees are due for the new fiscal year 7-1-15 through 6-30-16. Only paid members will be listed in the new yearbook that is re-printed each July. Make checks payable to PRA and send them to Cathy Moran, 401 Auburn, Little Rock, AR 72205. Dues are \$20 for regular memberships and \$15 for seniors (65) and students (under 18).

**July/August:** Watch for your new 2015-2016 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.

**October 3:** PRA's 2015 Poetry Day will be celebrated on October 3<sup>rd</sup> in Little Rock at the Cox Building (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor). Featured speaker will be Hope Coulter, an award-winning author and professor at Hendrix College in Conway. Contest winners will be announced at this event. Lunch will be on your own in the River Market area. Our thanks to the River Market Poets of Little Rock for hosting this annual event. Watch the PRA website for more details. Contact Poetry Day Chair Laura Loughridge for questions.

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

Check the PRA website for updates on Arkansas events, contests, etc. Also check the NFSPS web site ([www.nfsps.com](http://www.nfsps.com)) for national news, contests and links to other state poetry societies. The NFSPS *Strophes* newsletter is mailed with the PRA newsletter for members who do not have Internet access. And remember to send your poems – at no cost, one per month - to PRA's State Critic Todd Sukany, 5443 S. 188<sup>th</sup> Road, Pleasant Hope, MO 65725 ([tsukany@sbuniv.edu](mailto:tsukany@sbuniv.edu).)

### **Another Farewell:**

Singer, songwriter and best-selling poet Rod McKuen died January 29<sup>th</sup> in California at 81. He was best known in the 1960s and '70s for his prolific music, verse and spoken-word recordings. He produced over 200 albums (many gold & platinum) and more than 30 poetry collections, selling over 160 million copies worldwide. He wrote songs for artists like Frank Sinatra, Madonna, Dolly Parton and Chet Baker. He also sang his own songs in a throaty style developed after his early rock-singing cracked his voice. He was called "every man's poet." One of his most memorable songs was the Oscar-nominated, "A Boy Named Charlie Brown," the title track for the Peanuts movie. He was a great talent who demonstrated the value and versatility of good poetry.

**Vote for New PRA Officers by 2-28-15:**

The following members have been nominated to serve as PRA Officers for the next two fiscal years from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017. Please put a check mark beside each nominee for whom you wish to vote. Clip and mail (or email) your completed ballot to Nominating Committee Chair Pat Durmon (2663 Shipps Dr., Norfolk, AR 72658 or [jdurmon@centurytel.net](mailto:jdurmon@centurytel.net)) by February 28, 2015. Election results will be posted in the May newsletter. New Officers will be announced and installed at PRA's Spring Celebration on May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Benton, AR. Our thanks to Pat and her team for conducting the nomination process.

\_\_\_\_\_ **President – Dennis Patton**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Historian – Betty Heidelberger**

\_\_\_\_\_ **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Stephen Johnson**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Membership Chair – Kate Lacy**

\_\_\_\_\_ **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Charlie Southerland**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Parliamentarian – Cathy Parker**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Secretary – Laura Loughridge**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Counselor – Cathy Moran**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Treasurer – Jim Barton**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Newsletter Editor – Donna Smith**

**Members At Large: \_\_\_\_\_ Robin Burrows, \_\_\_\_\_ Donna Henson, \_\_\_\_\_ Frieda Patton, \_\_\_\_\_ Sara Gipson**

**Write-in Nominations/Votes:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS

## Contest Sponsorship Form for October Poetry Day 2015

**Sponsoring a contest:** You must contribute a minimum of \$30.00 to sponsor a contest and the first place winnings must be no less than \$25.00.

**Form:** Complete this form and return it with your payment to assure that your contest is listed.

**Deadline:** The sponsorship form and payment are due February 28, 2015.

**Address:** Send this form with your check (payable to PRA) to:

Jim Barton, Treasurer

P.O. Box 263

Huttig, AR 71747

**Name of award:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Form:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Line limit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other requirements may be noted here or on reverse:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Awards:** First place \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Second place \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Third place \$ \_\_\_\_\_

First HM \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Second HM \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Third HM \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Eligibility:** Open to all poets ( ) Open to PRA Members only ( )

**Judging:** I will be responsible for judging this contest ( ) Please get a judge for me ( )

**Donor's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_