

NEWS 'N' NOTES

Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Founded February 5, 1931

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

<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>

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November 2016

President's Address:

Visionaries,

We had a wonderful time this year at Poetry Day as we met at the Comfort Inn & Suites in the spa city. Roundtable Poets of Hot Springs hosted a *Poets as Visionaries* program that began with a Friday night of poetry and song. Kai Coggin, the featured speaker, shared poetry on Saturday from two of her books and offered insight on poems members had submitted for critique. Thank you, Hot Springs branch. A job well done!

The year, where did it go? As I sit to write, I am reminded of *Memory* by Ted Kooser in which he creates a thirty-six line poem with one period. The pace is maddening. He likened it to a tornado. He ended by saying it was a roaring, dusty funnel and there at its tip was the nib of a pen. That is how the year has been. It quietly budded into spring, wildly blossomed into summer, and has arrived at autumn with dust trailing a mile behind. I hope the nib of your pen has scratched and clawed its way over paper and kept a record.

"Over the river and through the woods" are words from the poem by Lydia Maria Child that I recited to our kids for the winter holidays. Those words still remain a familiar part of my fondest childhood memories as I share them with our granddaughters today. I am thankful that poetry has been a significant part of my life and is timeless in preserving my greatest memories with family through the years. Hopefully, you have memories. Don't hesitate to share them in the upcoming season as you spend time with family and friends.

Life is too short to be without poetry

Dennis

Poetry Day, October 22, Hot Springs:

Our thanks to the Roundtable Poets of Hot Springs for hosting PRA's 2016 Poetry Day conference. Each year this conference honors Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1969) who established the first Arkansas Poetry Day on October 15, 1948. Poetry Day Chair John Crawford led a Friday night event including a sing-along, read-around and impromptu contest. The contest winners were: 1st Jim Barton, 2nd Fay Guinn, and a tie for 3rd between Marilyn Joyner & Bethel Kymes. Our hosts provided food and great hospitality. On Saturday featured speaker Kai Coggin of Hot Springs shared wonderful readings from her poetry books and led group critiques. Kai is a creative writing teacher, poet, author, workshop leader, and performer. She also serves on the Arts in Education Roster for the Arkansas Arts Council. She blew us away with her passionate readings and observations on the critiques. We had a chance to visit with her and buy her books before lunch break.

PRA Business Meeting, October 22: President Dennis Patton read the Arkansas Poetry Day Proclamation and noted that the photo with Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson included Arkansas Poet Laureate Peggy Vining, NFSPS President Jim Barton, and PRA President Dennis Patton. After lunch President Patton conducted a business meeting and discussed several updates and issues.

1) 2017 Conferences: PRA's 2017 Spring Celebration will be April 22nd in Benton. Poetry Day will be in Little Rock on October 21st. More details to come.

2) 2nd VP Position: Members voted to amend the PRA constitution to eliminate the 2nd Vice President position. The Monthly Contest Chair duties will be appointed.

3) Anthology: Members discussed PRA's annual anthology and Kate Lacy volunteered to Chair its publication and contest. Kate and Mark Barton will

first study PRA's options and make recommendations on how/when to publish the anthology in the future. The anthology will not be published in 2017.

4) Student Chair: PRA is seeking a Student Contest Chair again for middle and high school contests. The new chair Timothy Tripp took a job out of state. Please contact Dennis Patton if you are interested in this role. Student contest materials will be posted on PRA's website and distributed to all branches/members.

5) Election of Officers: Nominations Chair Kate Lacy asked members to contact her if interested in serving on PRA's elected board beginning July 1, 2017. Ballots will be in PRA's February newsletter. Be sure to vote.

6) Collegiate Contest: Roger Carter has agreed to fund the contest in perpetuity as a memorial to his wife Jeannie Dolan Carter. The contest guidelines and due date will remain much the same, but with no entry fee. Donna Smith will chair the contest. Guidelines will be distributed to all members and posted on PRA's website. Please alert Donna if you can help contact any of the 50 colleges statewide in November.

7) State Fair Poetry Contests: PRA-sponsored Best-of-Show poetry winners in 4 age groups at the 2016 Arkansas State Fair are: Catherine Moran, \$25/Adult (Little Rock); Shane Cramer, \$25/Senior Youth (Alexander); Brooke Elliott, \$15/Junior Youth (Austin); and Joe Boone, \$10/Youth (Searcy). Other winners will receive ribbons/cash from the fair in November, and PRA will post a winners list on our website.

8) Merit Award: President Patton presented the 2016 Merit Award to Donna Smith for her work on the newsletter, various contests and PR efforts.

9) Contest Winners: Frieda Patton announced the winners in the absence of Poetry Day Contest Chair Pat Laster. (A list of winners was emailed to all members immediately following the conference, posted on the PRA website, and mailed with the November newsletter for members without email.) Before announcing the Sybil Nash Abrams contest winners, Jim Barton shared a short biography on Mrs. Abrams (1900-1968), a widely published poet/author who appeared in the International Who's Who in Poetry Anthology. Our continued thanks to Mrs. Abrams and her family.

Reminder!

PRA has a new tab on its website for members to promote the sale of their poetry books. The website will list only PRA member authors, only poetry books, and links for potential buyers to deal directly with the authors. PRA will not be involved with the buying or selling. To post your book information link, contact PRA President Dennis Patton: patton_dr@hotmail.com.

Did You Know?

PRA members also are members of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) with yearly access to 50 contests at the national level, plus access to contests in other states.

Notes from Jim, NFSPS President:

Hope you read your copy of the NFSPS *Strophes* newsletter posted in October. In it, see Jim Barton's first address as NFSPS President. "To be a poet," he said, "... you must think like a poet, release the inner muse, the fountain of joy and sorrow, laughter and tears, pleasure and pain that makes life's journey worth the trek." Throughout history poetry has been the people's language to express universal emotion. So, let's write! Set your sights on the NFSPS contests due March 15, 2017, and plan to attend the conference June 29-July 2 in Fort Worth, Texas. Jim will be happy to see a lot of Arkansas's friendly faces in the crowd and hear Arkansas names announced as contest winners. Jim says, "I choose the life poetic because I have only this one beautiful chance to drink in life's wonders and to celebrate."

Yearbook Corrections:

Please make the following corrections to your 2016-2017 yearbook. Yearbook information also is posted on PRA's website, excluding member names/addresses.

Welcome new PRA members: Carol Birth, Kathy Dulaney and Ruth Pride, all members of Delta Poets; and LaVern Spencer McCarthy of Blair, Oklahoma.

The following members renewed after the deadline and do not appear in the new yearbook: Kathy Vernich of Alexander, Jeff Dyer of Helena, Jo Lightfoot of Lowell. Also, missing is Debra Dail's (Baxter County) name and the Two Rivers Poets branch of Ft. Smith.

Poets Northwest President changed to Jo Lightfoot.

Geneva Emerson's phone number is 870-528-4946.

John Han's correct email address: hanjn7@gmail.com.

Patsy Pipkin's new email is: patsyjpipkin@gmail.com.

Farewell Pauline Brown (1920-2016):

Long time PRA member Pauline L. Brown, 95, of Hot Springs, passed away June 10, 2016. Born to Paul and Fannie Howell on November 9, 1920 in Hot Springs, she was a member of the Grand Avenue Baptist Church and Roundtable Poets of Hot Springs. She enjoyed playing the piano, singing and teaching music. Her survivors include a son, 4 stepchildren, and many nieces, nephews and friends. PRA extends our sympathy to her family, friends and branch colleagues.

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: **August** - 1st Cathy Moran, 2nd Sara Gipson, 3rd John McPherson, 1HM Dennis Patton, 2HM Donna Henson, and 3HM Patricia Laster; **September** – 1st Pat Durmon, 2nd Barbara Blanks, 3rd Gail Denham, 1HM Dennis Patton, 2HM John McPherson, 3HM Cathy Moran.

Winners in the Betty Heidelberger Memorial Contests are: **Free Verse** – 1st Jim Barton, 2nd Liz Faulkner, 3rd Marilyn Joyner, 1HM Laura Loughridge, 2HM Lee Ann Russell, 3HM Pat Durmon; **Rhyme** – 1st Lee Ann Russell, 2nd Liz Faulkner, 3rd Pauline Mounsey, 1HM D. Beecher Smith II, 2HM Jim Barton, 3HM Patricia Oplinger; **Any** – 1st Jim Barton, 2nd Pauline Mounsey, 3rd Lee Ann Russell, 1HM Liz Faulkner, 2HM Barbara Blanks, 3HM Patricia Oplinger.

Patricia A. Oplinger (Member at Large–Cherokee Village) – won a 2HM and 1HM from the *Poetry Society of Tennessee*; 1HM, 1st place, 2nd, and 3rd from the *Arkansas Writers' Conference*; 4HM from NFSPS; and a 2nd place from the *White County Creative Writers Conference*. She is also working on a full-length poetry book and memoir.

Betty Pittman (Online Poets) had a poem published in the September issue of *Do South Magazine*.

LaVern Spencer McCarthy (Member at Large – Oklahoma) won three 3rd places and one 1st in League of Minnesota Poets; a 2nd in Ohio Poetry Day; a 2nd in Kentucky State Poetry Society; a 1st in Austin Poetry Society Monthly Awards; two 3rds in Indiana Poetry Society; a 2nd and two HMs in Tennessee State Poetry Society; a 1st in Missouri State Poetry Society Summer Contest; a 2nd and HM in Florida State Poetry Society.

Elizabeth Dail (Baxter Co.) won a 1st place and Best of Show at the Baxter County Fair.

Laura Loughridge (River Market) won two 3rds and a 2nd in the Massachusetts Contest.

Cathy Moran (River Market) won two 1^{sts} and one 2nd from Massachusetts; a 1st and 2nd from Dancing Poetry; two 1^{sts}, a 2nd, two 3^{rds} and Best of Festival from Mid-South; and a 1st from Poets and Patrons.

Lee Ann Russell (Member at large–Springfield, Mo.) won a 2nd place, two 2nd HMs and one 3rd HM in the Missouri State Poetry Society Summer Contest; a 2nd and 3rd place from the Mid-South Poetry Festival sponsored by Poetry Society of Tennessee; a 1st and two 2^{nds} from the Ozark Creative Writers' Conference.

Lee Ann also judged the Betty Heidelberger Memorial Award Contest for PRA.

Pat Durmon (Member at Large–Norfolk) spoke on free verse at the mid-South Poetry Festival in Tennessee on October 1st.

Barbara Robinette (Member at Large–Viola) had two poems published in the Fall, 2016 issue of The Penwood Review.

Jim Barton (South Ark Poets of Pines) spoke at the banquet for the Poetry Society of Texas' Summer conference in July.

Fay Guinn (Member at Large–Jonesboro) won a 2nd, 3rd, 1HM and 3HM from the White County Creative Writers' Conference; a 1st, 3rd, 4th and 3 HMs from the Mid-South Poetry Festival; and a 3rd, 2HM and 3HM from the Ozark Creative Writers Conference.

Pat Laster (Saline County) spent a week in late October at the Writers Colony at Dairy Hollow participating in an 8-person, 3-session poetry critique group. Her third book, *Hiding Myself into Safety*: a collection of short stories & long poems with an occasional essay, is now available on Amazon or from the author. She also has 4 haiku published in Season's Greetings Letter: 2017, based in Baltimore, MD.

Dennis Patton (Saline Co.) won a 2nd, two 3^{rds}, and a commendation from Mid-South Poetry Festival; two 3^{rds} from Missouri; three 1^{sts}, a 3rd, and six HMs from Indiana.

Kate Lacy (NW Poets) is leading the Online Poets Group into the fall season with new challenges. This group serves members who may have dropped out of branch meetings or moved too far away to attend monthly. If you know of someone who might enjoy the online activities, please let Kate know at voicedancer2002@yahoo.com or 479-442-8028.

John Crawford (Hot Springs) spoke at Poetry Day about the Wednesday Night Poetry group meetings in Hot Springs. They have met weekly for 27 years without missing a week! They meet at Kollektive Cafe next to Fountain on North Central Street (same as Hwy 7) and across from the Majestic Hotel (which is being razed). Open mic starts at 6:30 PM, feature poet at 7 and more open mic at 7:45. Food and drink are available in a No Smoking setting. Feel free to join in.

The Siloam Springs Writers Guild *Poem-of-the-Year* winners were: 1st and 2nd place - Rachel Kulp; 3rd place - Sylvia Alderton; HM - Louis Houston.

Karen Hayes (River Market) is developing the Laman Poetry Scribble writers' circle. They meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday from 6-7:30PM at the William F.

Laman Public Library in North Little Rock. At the first meeting they used the Laman Gallery art exhibit as inspiration to write and read around. The group welcomes anyone who wants to write poetry, with or without experience. Karen also is offering poetry to “regular” people at the *Dogtown Poetry on Demand at the Argenta Art Walk* each 3rd Friday of the month from 5 to 8PM at the Laman Argenta Branch Library in North Little Rock. 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 for their poem, she offers a little box of words they can draw and discuss. The poems are free. Tips are voluntary and donated to a charity like “Friends of the Library.” She says, “Twenty dollar bills make me very happy.” She types the poem, reads it to the patron, then 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 recent Little Rock Pride Fest at the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock. 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. Questions? Contact Karen at dogtown.poetry@outlook.com or 501-749-6332.

PRA member Beecher Smith (Member at Large-Memphis, TN) won a 2nd place and three HMs in the Ohio Poetry Day contests.

South Arkansas Poets of the Pines will be represented in the 2016 edition of “Between the Lines,” the annual literary publication of South Arkansas Community College. Marilyn Joyner had 2 poems and a story accepted, Jim Barton 3 poems and Janet Ryan 2 poems. On 10/28/16 SAPOP hosted SCARE ON THE SQUARE, an evening of ghost stories, ghoulish poems, and music at PJ’s Coffee in El Dorado. Marilyn Joyner won first prize for her ghost story, and a charming young gecko/dino won first place for her costume.

Congratulations to our excellent poets and branches for promoting the art of poetry.

Need Contest and Publishing Tips?

For more contest and publishing opportunities, visit Poets & Writers Magazine online at www.pw.org for a list of almost 1,500 organizations where you can submit your work.

Upcoming Deadlines/Events/Contests

2nd Saturday each Month: PRA’s Monthly Contest entries are due by mail to Liz Faulkner, 3 Ridge Oak Cove, Little Rock AR 72223. See PRA’s yearbook and

website for rules, plus links to resources on poetry forms. **PRA members may send one poem per month for free critique to PRA’s State Critic Todd Sukany, 5443 South 188th Road, Pleasant Hope, MO 65725 (editor@upstarespress.com).**

November: 2017 contest materials for middle and high school students, plus college students, posted on PRA’s website and distributed to all members this month via email and snail mail. PRA members are asked to promote these contests with schools and students in their area. Entries are free and due Jan. 31, Feb. 1, March 1 and March 15, 2017.

November 30: Deadline for Oklahoma’s Spring Contest. See details at angelfire.com/poetry/ps/.

November 30: Deadline for Wyopoets National Contest. See details at wyopoets.org.

December 1: Deadline for Redrock Writers’ Chaparral Poetry Contest. See details at redrockwriters.org.

February 5, 2017: Happy 86th BD to PRA!

March 15, 2017: NFSPS annual contest entries due.

March 15, 2017: Deadline for JDC Collegiate entries.

April 22, 2017: Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration will be hosted by the Saline County Poets in Benton at Parkview Methodist Church.

June 29-July 2, 2017: NFSPS conference in Fort Worth, Texas.

October 21, 2017: Poetry Day 2017 will be in Little Rock at the Butler Center (beside the Cox Building) with featured speaker Brian Borland, a Pushcart nominee who just released his newest book “Dig” from Stillwater Press.

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.nfsps.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 139 members, 11 branches, and an online group.