

# 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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August 2018

### President's Address:

Where to start? The year snorted and pawed a little to start us off on this rodeo. We held on for the required seconds only to become the clown of spring with green hair and buttercup eyes. Little were we prepared for the Dog Days of late May and early June, but vacations and kids were grand at the lake.

Hold on tight as we lope along with summer's breeze in our hair. Keep the top down and drive fast with your hand floating beside the car. Pack a picnic for one last fling with the grandkids. These are memories written on hearts of the softest materials and will grow ragged as storytellers drag them out for years to come. The air will get stale soon and the kids will be lining up at the bus stops where they will head back to school. And when the teacher asks what they did for the summer, they will say, "nothing." We know better!

Two things changed this year that hold important memories. Jim took his pen and paper to share his poetry in a different place and time. His friendship and talent will be missed. Jo McDougall is our new poet laureate. We welcome her voice and the magic of her poetry.

Write! Life is too short to be without poetry.

Dennis

### Poetry Day Conference, October 13th, Little Rock:

Poetry Day 2018 will be hosted by PRA on October 13<sup>th</sup> at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 401 President Clinton Avenue, Little Rock. The Center is located on the Central Arkansas Library's main campus in the River Market next door to the Cox Building where many PRA meetings have been. 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 Pat Durmon of Norfolk, Arkansas. Pat is an accomplished poet, speaker, and PRA/NFSPS member. She just released her 4<sup>th</sup> poetry book--*Women, Resilient Women*. (See her other books posted on PRA's website.) Poetry Day Contest guidelines are posted on PRA's website. Send entries by August 15<sup>th</sup> in one envelope to Contest Chair Marie Allison, 165 St. Andrews, Hot Springs, AR 71913.

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 Amanda Partridge at 501-993-6593 or [themandabird@gmail.com](mailto:themandabird@gmail.com).

### Tentative Agenda

9:15 Registration  
9:30 Welcome/Opening – Dennis Patton  
Reading of Poetry Day Proclamation  
and History of Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni  
Poetry Day – Amanda Partridge  
9:40 Introduction of Speaker – Amanda Partridge  
10:35 Break  
10:45 Critique of poems – Pat Durmon  
12:00 Lunch in the River Market  
1:15 Business meeting – Dennis Patton  
2:00 Poetry Day Contest Chair – Marie Allison  
2:45 Announcements and Dismissal

**New Sponsor:** Our thanks to Larry Witherspoon of Little Rock for sponsoring the Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni Poetry Day Contest starting in 2019. Poetry Day is the main poetry event in Arkansas each year, honoring Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1970) who established the first Arkansas Poetry Day on October 15, 1948. In 1969, Governor Winthrop Rockefeller proclaimed October 15, the date on which Poetry Day is observed in Arkansas, to be Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni Day. PRA has continued to honor Mrs. Marinoni on Poetry Day with a conference and a contest in her name. Our thanks to the Marinoni family who sponsored this contest for years. The contest has been sponsored by another PRA member for 2018.

**Reminder!** You can still pay your PRA 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 Membership Coordinator Cathy Moran, 401 Auburn Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205. Also please send address, phone and email updates.

**Yearbooks for July 2018 - June 2019:** 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.

**Welcome new PRA members!** PRA added 15 new members so far this year, including: Paulette Guerin Bane (Conway), Elissa Gordan (Mountain Home), Linda Henryk (Cotter), Alice Horton (Ft. Smith), Terrie Jacks (Ballwin, MO), Barbara & Marion Laird (Hackett), Dixie Marriott (Mountain Home), Alison Martinez (Hot Springs), Donna Nelson (Kensett), Charles Southerland (Viola), Timothy Tripp (Fayetteville), Donna White (Mountain Home), Linda Woodbury (Hot Springs), and Sally Zielinski (Cotter).

**Online Group:** If you're not attending a branch consider joining PRA's Online Group coordinated by Kate Lacy. New participants welcome! Contact her at [voicedancer2002@yahoo.com](mailto:voicedancer2002@yahoo.com).

**Notes from Arkansas Poet Laureate Jo McDougall:**

"I think we should celebrate ourselves as poets. We tell stories in poetry about the human condition, about what it means to be human. We remind ourselves and our readers of our culture, our rituals, our roots. We refresh the tribe with language. I think that's important."

**PRA Board Meeting Highlights of 6/23/18:**

- 1) PRA Treasurer duties have transferred to Cathy Moran since Jim Barton's death. Our thanks to Cathy for taking on this important role.
- 2) Revised guidelines for the anthology will be published in the new 2018-2019 yearbook. Anthologies will most likely be published for multiple years in the future. The current anthology entitled "Turning Home" will be published later this year and will include member poems from 2015-2018. Our thanks to Kate Lacy and Mark Barton for all their diligent work on this renewed project.
- 3) PRA's board renewed its agreement with Webmaster Karalin Rogers. She's doing a great job keeping PRA's website updated.
- 4) Frieda Patton will chair PRA's Nominating Committee and present a slate of new officers for the 2019-2021 term by February. The ballot will be posted in the February *News 'N Notes* for a full membership vote. Please contact Frieda ([patton\\_fd@sbcglobal.net](mailto:patton_fd@sbcglobal.net)) if you wish to serve on the board.

5) Poetry Day will be chaired by Amanda Partridge of Searcy. Poetry Day Contest Chair will be Marie Allison of Hot Springs. PRA as a whole will host the event on October 13<sup>th</sup> in Little Rock at the Butler Center. Members interested in volunteering to help in any capacity, please contact President Dennis Patton (501-847-5328 or [patton\\_dr@hotmail.com](mailto:patton_dr@hotmail.com)) or Poetry Day Chair Amanda Partridge (501-993-6593 or [themandabird@gmail.com](mailto:themandabird@gmail.com)).

**2018 Anthology Progress:** PRA's Mark Barton (SAPOP-El Dorado) and Kate Lacy (Poets NW-Springdale) are working to finalize an improved version of past anthologies, entitled "Turning Home." (Submissions were due 5/31/18.) Mark is soliciting sponsors to fund the book, so members no longer must pay to submit their work. If you have ideas for sponsorship, promotion or sales contact Mark. Kate as editor is organizing poems submitted from fiscal years 2016-2017 to fill 100 pages. We expect publication this fall. If you have questions or would like to help, contact Kate ([voicedancer0002@hotmail.com](mailto:voicedancer0002@hotmail.com)) or Mark ([drspook1302@suddenlink.net](mailto:drspook1302@suddenlink.net)) or PRA President Dennis Patton ([patton\\_dr@hotmail.com](mailto:patton_dr@hotmail.com)).

**Old Anthologies:** If you would like to donate past anthologies to help complete PRA's series at the Arkansas State Archives, Arkansas State Library, and the Butler Center, please contact PRA President Dennis Patton, PRA Historian Marilyn Joyner or PRA Board Member Donna Smith.

**PRA Monthly Contests:** PRA's new Monthly Contest Chair for 2018-2019 is Renee Ramsey of the Batesville River Poets. Effective 7/1/18 please send your monthly poetry entries to Renee Ramsey, 249 Garden Lane, Floral, AR 72534. Our thanks to Jodi Tooke of Hot Springs for filling this role during the past year. See monthly contest guidelines in your yearbook and on PRA's website, to be updated this month.

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

**Farewell to Jim Barton (1953-2018):**

Our own Jim Barton of Huttig, AR, died on July 5<sup>th</sup>, from an aggressive cancer. Jim was born in Warren, AR, on November 11, 1953, the middle son of Viola and John Barton of Vick, AR, (later of El Dorado, AR). He was preceded in death by his parents, an infant sister, a grandson, and a step-daughter. He is survived by his wife of 22 years, Cathy Thompson Barton, 4 children, 2 step-children, 5 grandchildren and 2 brothers. Jim adored his family and his little dog.

Jim graduated from El Dorado High School in 1972, and earned a Bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1975 from Lyon College (then Arkansas College). He worked 29 years as a laboratory technician for Great Lakes Chemical (now Lanxess). Jim also was a prolific writer, especially of poetry. He published 5 books of poetry and had another book in progress at the time of

his death. He published work in more than 125 journals and magazines in 25 states and one foreign country. He also performed his work on radio, college campuses and numerous speaking engagements. Jim was a member and treasurer of the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas, founder and treasurer of the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines, and 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Jim won over 400 awards in state, regional and national contests for his poetry, including PRA's prestigious Sybil Nash Abrams Award - twice. He was surprised by his poetic talents, when at age 47 he took a college class and won acceptance of almost all his submissions to a local college publication. He won the Morris Memorial Chapbook Award, a Jim Stone Grand Prize for Poetry, and in 2011 he received PRA's Merit Award. He was an active and inspiring poet who generously mentored many poets with his big smile, great listening skills, and can-do attitude. We will long remember Jim's words, "Let us be the poets we were meant to be. Live. Love. Laugh. Write (and read) poetry."

We send our best wishes to his family and friends. PRA will provide a memorial donation in Jim's honor. If members wish to donate through PRA, please send your checks to Cathy Moran, 401 Auburn, Little Rock, AR 72205. Memorials also may be made to the Harper Springs Cemetery Fund or to the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines, C/O Dr. Janet Ryan, 131 Womack Rd., El Dorado, AR 71730.

**Want a PRA Handout for Events, or a Sponsor?**

Try the attached "2018 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](mailto:tndsmith@live.com)).**

Congratulations to PRA Monthly Contest winners: **May** – 1<sup>st</sup> Cathy Moran, 2<sup>nd</sup> Laura Bridges, 3<sup>rd</sup> Kim Vernon, 1HM Dennis Patton, 2HM John Han, 3HM Wendy Visser; **June** – 1<sup>st</sup> Donna Nelson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cathy Moran, 3<sup>rd</sup> Dennis Patton, 1HM Ann Carolyn Cates, 2HM Sara Gipson, 3HM Gail Denham; **July** – 1<sup>st</sup> Donna Henson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cathy Moran, 3<sup>rd</sup> John McPherson, 1HM Jodi Tooke, 2HM Terri Jacks, 3HM Gail Denham.

South Arkansas Poets of the Pines, South Arkansas Writers, and friends of Jim Barton gathered at PJ's Coffee House in El Dorado on July 12<sup>th</sup> before his visitation to read some of his work, tell Jim stories and just be together. We have a huge hole in our group and in our hearts.

John Crawford (Hot Springs) has a busy schedule of volunteer activities. He just finished serving several years as President of PRA's Hot Springs Branch, and continues to teach a monthly poetry class at the Garland

County Library. He also plays the organ each Sunday at church, performs solos there, plays/sings for 4 retirement centers monthly, and serves the Hot Springs American Legion as Chaplain, Media Officer and weekly karaoke host. John says, "My papa always said, 'Better to wear out than rust out.'" We agree, John!

Siloam Springs Writing Guild hosted a summer Writing Conference on Saturday, June 16, 2018. Speakers included Dr. Patsy Watkins, Roy Lessin, Jennifer McMurray and Carolyn Steele. Topics included writing, inspiration, social media and publishing.

Congratulations to 21 PRA members who placed 55 times in the 2018 NFSPS contests: Russell Strauss, Kate Lacy, Cathy Moran, Renee Ramsey, Pat Durmon, LaVern Spencer McCarthy, Sara Gipson, Dennis Patton, Wendy Visser, Kim Vernon, Ann Carolyn Cates, Barbara Blanks, Gail Denham, Karen Kay Bailey, John Crawford, Laura Trigg, Dena Gorrell, D. Beecher Smith, Rita Goodgame, and Amanda Partridge. Thanks for representing PRA so well at nationals!

In May 2018, Ohio Poetry Association President Chuck Salmons posted a link to his interview with one of the 2018 NFSPS College Undergraduate Poetry prize winners, Iryna Klishch, for her collection *A Monster the Size of the Sun*. View it at: <https://ohiopoetryassn.blogspot.com/2018/05/denison-student-wins-2018-nfsp-s-edna.html>

Stacy Pendergrast (River Market Poets): has a poem forthcoming in *Spank the Carp*; 2 separate haibun to be published in the August & September issues of *Memoir Magazine*; and a poem to be featured in *A Walk with Nature: Poetic Encounters that Nourish the Soul*, an anthology published by University Professors Press. In August she will be teaching haiku to inmates in a state prison at Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Lastly, she is delighted to be serving as Jo McDougall's press secretary for her new Poet Laureate role. So please contact Stacy to engage Jo for events.

Pat Laster (Saline County) received 1HM at the Lucidity Retreat in Eureka Springs during April. She will have 2 pages of poems in *Cantos 2018*, edited by John Han and published by Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis; a poem in *GRIST*, Missouri State Poetry Society's anthology; and 2 poems in Missouri State Poetry Society's August newsletter, *Spare Mule*. And her review of five Ozark-themed poetry books was published in CALLIOPE's Summer issue.

Cathy Moran (River Market) won: from Utah a 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>; from Alabama a 2<sup>nd</sup>; from Arkansas Writers Conference a 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>; from Pennsylvania a 2<sup>nd</sup>; and from *Dancing Poetry* a 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Reminder:** PRA Members may post their Poetry Book titles on PRA's website for sale. Links to the author are included for potential buyers to deal directly with the authors. Members who wish to post their books please contact President Dennis Patton.

## Upcoming Deadlines/Events/Contests

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday each Month:** PRA's Monthly Contest entries are due by mail to new Chair Renee Ramsay, 249 Garden Lane, Floral, AR 72534. See PRA's yearbook and website for rules, plus links to resources on poetry forms.

**August:** PRA's new 2018-2019 yearbook will be mailed to members in August. General yearbook information also will be posted on PRA's website, excluding member contact data for security reasons.

**August 1:** Postmark deadline for entries in the Poetry Society of Tennessee's 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Contest, offering 21 contests. Check rules at: <http://www.tnpoetry.org/>. For questions contact JoAn Howerton, Festival Director, (901-361-0077; Email: [joan0620@att.net](mailto:joan0620@att.net)) or Lori Goetz, Festival Coordinator, (901-753-4385, [poetrytennessee@gmail.com](mailto:poetrytennessee@gmail.com).)

**August 15:** Deadline for PRA's Poetry Day contest entries. See details for 26 contests posted on PRA's website. Send entries and payment in one envelope postmarked by 8/15/18 to Poetry Day Contest Chair Marie Allison, 165 St. Andrews, Hot Springs, AR 71913. Winners will be announced on October 13<sup>th</sup> at the 2018 Poetry Day event in Little Rock.

**August 15:** Deadline for the 2018 Poetry Society of Texas annual contests. See details at [poetrysocietyoftexas.org](http://poetrysocietyoftexas.org) or request a written copy through contest chair Nancy Baass, 408 E. Warren Ave., Victoria, TX 77901-4847.

**September 1:** Poets & Patrons Poetry of Chicago has 2 contests due on this date: 1) Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest, and 2) Chicagoland Poetry Contest. See details at [poetsandpatrons.net](http://poetsandpatrons.net).

**September 15:** Stevens Manuscript submissions are due to NFSPS at: <https://nfspssubmittable.com/submit>. For details see [nfspss.com/stevent2.htm](http://nfspss.com/stevent2.htm). Also, watch for the new NFSPS webpage that will list contest deadlines for each state society and link to their brochures.

**September 29:** Deadline for Arkansas State Fair Poetry Contest entries to arrive. PRA sponsors *Best-of-Show* winners in 4 age categories each year. Entry is free and open only to Arkansas residents. All poems must be mailed together with a completed entry form in one envelope to arrive no later than September 29<sup>th</sup>. Mail entries to: Arkansas State Fair – Creative Arts, 2600 Howard Street, Little Rock, AR 72206, ATTN: Deb Crow – Competitive Events Administrator. Or entries may be hand delivered to the fair from September 29 - October 6, between 10AM-6PM. See attached guidelines and entry form, also posted on PRA's web site. Winners will be announced at the fair October 11-21, and posted on PRA's website. See State Fair general information for all craft contests:

<http://www.arkansasstatefair.com/events/2018/creative-arts-information>.

**October 12-14:** Eureka Springs Writers' Conference celebrates its 51<sup>st</sup> annual Ozark Creative Writer's Conference, October 12 – 14<sup>th</sup> at the Best Western Inn of the Ozarks, Eureka Springs. Check the conference website for information.

**October 13:** PRA's 2018 Poetry Day event in Little Rock at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 401 President Clinton Avenue. Watch for the agenda and more information to be posted on PRA's website.

**November:** Junior/Senior High and College Student contests will be distributed statewide this month. PRA branches are asked to help promote these contests in their area. For questions contact Youth Contest Chair Laura Loughridge ([llough3@gmail.com](mailto:llough3@gmail.com)) or JDC College Contest Chair Donna Smith ([tndsmith@live.com](mailto:tndsmith@live.com)).

**November 1-3:** The Poetry Community & Connection group of Fayetteville, Arkansas is hosting an "Open Mouth Poetry Festival," including workshops, readings and other features. Check: [openmouthreadings.com](http://openmouthreadings.com).

**November 15:** Illinois State Poetry Society's annual state poetry contest deadline. See: [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org),

**December 1:** Redrock Writers' Chaparral Poetry Forum Contest entries are due. See guidelines at [redrockwriters.org](http://redrockwriters.org). Or contact Contest Chair Marie Tollstrup at [mariect@infowest.com](mailto:mariect@infowest.com).

**December 15:** Wyopoets Annual Eugene V. Shea National Poetry Contest entries are due. Check details at [wyopoets.org/contests.html](http://wyopoets.org/contests.html).

**June 23-26, 2019:** New Mexico State poetry Society will host the 2019 NFSPS Annual Convention in Santa Fe. Plan to attend and represent Arkansas!

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.nfspss.com](http://www.nfspss.com)) for national news, contests, and links to other state poetry societies. Please alert PRA Membership Chair Cathy Moran with any changes in member contact information or branch meeting places/times/officers. PRA currently serves 114 members, 11 branches, and an online group.



# POETS' ROUNDTABLE OF ARKANSAS

Founded February 5, 1931

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

<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>

## 2018 Arkansas State Fair Poetry Contests

Sponsored by Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (PRA)

### Entry Instructions

(Printed with permission from the Arkansas State Fair)

PRA is partnering with the 2018 Arkansas State Fair to sponsor the "Best of Show" poetry winners in 4 age groups. Entry is free and open only to Arkansas residents.

**Prizes:** In addition to any winnings offered by the State Fair, PRA will award the following prizes to the overall "Best of Show" poetry winners: \$25/Adult (age 19+), \$25/Senior Youth (14-18), \$15/Junior Youth (9-13) and \$10/Youth (5-8). The adult winner also will receive a 1-year PRA membership.

**Entry Form:** Complete the attached entry form listing each poem title, division number and class code. Poetry Division numbers are: Adult-167, Senior Youth-267, Junior Youth-367, and Youth-461. Poetry class codes, subjects, line limits and poetry forms are the same across all age groups. See list below.

<u>CLASS – SUBJECT</u>	<u>– LINE LIMIT</u>	<u>– POETRY FORM</u>
Class 01 – Nature	– 24 lines	– Any form
Class 02 – My Life on the Farm	– 24 lines	– Any form
Class 03 – My Day at the Fair	– 24 lines	– Any form
Class 04 – Wild Card – Any subject	– 24 lines	– Any form

**Instructions:** Enter only one poem in each class. In the upper left corner of each poem, put the division number, class number and name of contest. To accommodate blind judging, DO NOT put your name or address on the poem. That information will be on the entry form that must accompany the poems. No entries will be returned.

**Deadlines:** All poems must be mailed together with a completed entry form in one envelope to arrive no later than September 29<sup>th</sup>. Or entries may be hand delivered to the fair from September 29 - October 6, between 10AM-6PM. Submit mailings or hand deliveries to:

Arkansas State Fair – Creative Arts  
2600 Howard Street  
Little Rock, AR 72206  
Attn: Deb Crow – Competitive Events Administrator

**NOTE:** The fair normally requires hand delivery of all entries in the creative arts. However, the fair will accept mailed entries for the poetry contests. If you have questions feel free to call the State Fair staff at 501-372-8341. Or see details at the State Fair's website: <http://www.arkansasstatefair.com/events/2018/creative-arts-information>, with links to the fair's *Creative Arts General Rules, Schedule, Entry Form*, and instruction *Handbooks* for each age group.

**Winnings:** Winners will be announced at the fair October 11-29, and posted on PRA's website. Prizes will be mailed after the fair closes. PRA also will submit press releases for each "Best of Show" winner to their home town newspaper, with pictures if provided. Please remember to include your email address on the entry form to receive prompt notice if you are the Best-of-Show winner.





# Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

<http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org>

## Year in Review – 2017-2018

**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 Jo McDougall 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 where members meet monthly. PRA also offers an online group, plus a quarterly newsletter, website, and periodic e-blasts to share information with members. 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 26-30 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 Middle School 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 2017-2018:** 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:

**Arkansas Has New Poet Laureate from PRA:** In mid-April 2018, Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed Jo Garot McDougall of Little Rock as the 7th Arkansas Poet Laureate. Jo is a native Arkansan who grew up near DeWitt on a rice farm. She graduated from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and earned an MFA in Creative Writing there while mentored by the renowned Miller Williams. She is an accomplished poet, author, professor, and recipient of numerous awards including: Arkansas Porter Prize for Literary Excellence, Academy of American Poets Prize, a Pushcart Prize nomination, Arkansas Writers Hall of Fame, and Honorary Chancellor for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. (See more about Jo on PRA's website in a press release written by PRA's Stacy Pendergrass.) Per Arkansas Act 292 of 2017, McDougall will serve a 4-year term. (PRA's Stacy Pendergrass is serving as McDougall's press secretary. To engage Jo for event appearances, please contact Stacy at [pendergrasts@me.com](mailto:pendergrasts@me.com).) Our thanks to Cathy Moran and Stacy Pendergrass for representing PRA on the nomination committee along with representatives from higher education. PRA submitted 2 well qualified nominees – Dr. John Crawford of Hot Springs and Jo McDougall.

**Karen Hayes (River Market):** hosted a *Poetry for Life* event on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock. The free event was sponsored by the Arkansas Arts Council as part of the *GetSmART Learning Series*. Karen is a writer, performance poet, speaker, and a certified Alzheimer's Poetry Project coordinator. At the event she led a fun, interactive workshop for individuals 55+. They played with poems aloud, using call and response, and created a group poem together. In November 2017 Karen was featured in the statewide *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* and lauded for her volunteer work using poetry with the Arkansas Alzheimer's Association, plus her many other poetic outreach activities in the North Little Rock area.

**NFSPS 2018 Winners from PRA:** Congratulations to 21 PRA members who placed 55 times in the 2018 NFSPS contests: Russell Strauss, Kate Lacy, Cathy Moran, Renee Ramsey, Pat Durmon, LaVern Spencer McCarthy, Sara Gipson, Dennis Patton, Wendy Visser, Kim Vernon, Ann Carolyn Cates, Barbara Blanks, Gail Denham, Karen Kay Bailey, John Crawford, Laura Trigg, Dena Gorrell, D. Beecher Smith, Rita Goodgame, and Amanda Partridge. Thanks for representing PRA so well at nationals!

**Two Rivers Poetry Branch** continued partnering with Dewey's Café for Open Mic Nights at 7PM every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at Fort Smith's main library. Also, River Valley Writers' critique group *Kindly Critics* welcomes writers there twice monthly on Mondays at 6PM.

**Arkansas' 70<sup>th</sup> Poetry Day Conference** on October 21, 2017, was hosted by the River Market branch of PRA in Little Rock at the Butler Center in honor of Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1969) who established the first Arkansas Poetry Day in October 1948. Our thanks to Poetry Day Chair Cathy Moran and PRA's River Market Branch for hosting this year's event. Featured speaker was Bryan Borland, poet, author, editor, Pushcart nominee, and winner of numerous honors. For critiquing poems he adapted *Revision Tricks* by Carmen Gimenez Smith. (For example, try reading from the bottom up to see your poem differently.) President Dennis Patton presented PRA's 2017 Merit Award to Kate Lacy of Fayetteville. Our congratulations to Kate who served as PRA's Membership Chair, leader of PRA's online group, participant in numerous committees, and President of the Poets Northwest branch. A business meeting followed lunch. Then Poetry Day Contest Chair Liz Faulkner announced the winners. (See list posted on PRA's website.) Our thanks to Liz for coordinating this year's competition of 945 entries from all over the United States and Canada.

**PRA Poets published books in 2017-2018:**

John Crawford (Hot Springs) published a new book, "Female Voices from the Bible" and he shared its poems at various venues from July through October. 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.

LaVern McCarthy (Member-at-large, Oklahoma) has published a new book called "Images of Life."

Pat Durmon (Member-at-large, Norfolk) published her 4<sup>th</sup> book of poetry entitled, *Women, Resilient Women*. Check it out on PRA's web listing. Also, check her weekly blog at [patdurmon.com](http://patdurmon.com) or email her at [patdurmon@gmail.com](mailto:patdurmon@gmail.com).

Kimberly Vernon (Gin Creek Poets) has a new poetry book posted on PRA's website: *A Rhyme For Every Season*. It's for sale through Amazon.

**Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration April 14<sup>th</sup>:**

PRA hosted the 2018 Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration on April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Cox Building in Little Rock. President Dennis Patton welcomed everyone and announced the newest Poet Laureate for the state of Arkansas, our own Jo Garot McDougall. Jo received a call the day before from the Governor's office informing her that she had been appointed. She said, "It's an honor I never dreamed I'd receive." Our thanks to Jo for leading informative sessions that morning on the importance of story and using "small bursts of surprise" in poetry. She also advised poets to write about the reality of being human. Good poetry has the power to touch the human heart. After Jo's presentation, the Light and Serious Verse Contest winners were determined by a vote. JDC Contest Chair Donna Smith introduced winners of the 2018

Jeannie Dolan Carter Memorial Collegiate Poetry Contest - Jake Sawyer of Mena and Alexandra Borchardt of Monticello - who read their poems. (Our thanks to Mr. Roger Carter for his continuing generous sponsorship of this contest.) Then Student Contest Co-Chair Laura Loughridge introduced winners of the 2018 Sybil Nash Abrams Student Contests for grades 6-12 - Evie Kinsey of Benton, McKenzie Young of Sherwood, and Millie Allgood of Little Rock - who read their poems. (Our thanks to the Sybil Nash Abrams family for their continuing generous support.) A brief photo session followed with the students for press releases. Our thanks to PRA members who helped with statewide outreach and judging of these annual contests. President Patton then led a business meeting. Last year's Sybil Nash Abrams winner of \$1,000 Laura Trigg read her historical poem, "*Separate: The Taborian Hall and Its Dreamland Ballroom*." And finally PRA Contest winners were announced. (See PRA's website for a complete list of winners announced this date.)

**PRA Lost 2 of its Best in 2017-2018:** In November 2017 Arkansas Poet Laureate Peggy Vining passed away. She left a wonderful legacy of family, poetry and educational accomplishments. Peggy was a member of PRA for 50+ years and served 3 terms as PRA President. Governor Asa Hutchinson said, "Arkansas is richer for the life of Poet Laureate Peggy Vining and for the verse she left behind."

In July 2018, Jim Barton lost his battle with cancer. Jim was one of PRA's most active and inspiring poets, PRA's Treasurer, founder and treasurer of the South Arkansas Poets of the Pines Branch, and 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. He left a warm legacy of family, poetic achievements and many mentored friends. We will long remember Jim's words, "Let us be the poets we were meant to be. Live. Love. Laugh. Write (and read) poetry."

**Jeanie Dolan Carter Memorial Collegiate Contest Continues for 3<sup>rd</sup> Year:** 2018 winners were announced at PRA's Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration in April. JDC sponsor Roger Carter was pleased to see an increased number of entrees from all over the state representing 11 colleges/universities. Prizes total \$1,000 and entry is free. PRA members Pat Durmon and Diane Stefan selected the 2018 winners, plus 3 honorable mentions, representing 5 schools. (See complete winners' list on PRA's website.)

**PRA Partnered with the 2017 Arkansas State Fair for 4<sup>th</sup> Year:** 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. (See complete winners' list on PRA's website.)

**PRA served 129 members, 11 branches and one online group statewide this year.**