

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 2019

President's Address:

Members,

We had our first Board meeting and I am excited about the start of this new term. The Board has had goals for quite some time of attempting to get more people involved in poetry and to get those people involved in PRA. To reach our goals, there will be times when we need help from other PRA members. Please keep this in mind when the opportunities arise and you can assist.

Summer is in full swing. For years, we started the granddaughters' summer with two weeks at Lake Ouachita—camping and fishing. They have a wonderful time. I am sure a number of you are also going on vacations this summer. It's great, but it does make the summer fly by quickly—so quickly, that it is hard to have time for other things you may enjoy, such as poetry. Whether your interest in poetry is reading it, sharing it, or writing it, make time for yourself and make time for poetry!

Frieda Patton
President, PRA

2019 Poetry Day Celebration in Arkansas is October 19, 2019 in Little Rock at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, room 124, 401 President Clinton Avenue. Registration begins at 9:15 AM. John McPherson will serve as Poetry Day Chair, and Pat Laster will be guest speaker. Pat is a poet, author, editor, publisher, and workshop leader.

Registration is free and lunch is on your own in the River Market. Members who would like to volunteer snacks for the meeting, please contact Laura Bridges at: lough3@gmail.com. Members who wish to submit a poem for critique by Pat Laster, please send 2 copies (without identification) by September 6th to Donna Smith, 58 Briarwood St., Greenbrier, AR 72058. To submit Poetry Day Contest entries, see guidelines posted on PRA's website. PD entries are due August 15th together in one envelope to Poetry Day Contest Chair Marie Allison, 165 St. Andrews, Hot Springs, AR 71913.

Tentative Agenda

9:15 Registration
9:30 Welcome/Opening – Frieda Patton
Reading of Poetry Day Proclamation
and History of Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni
Poetry Day – John McPherson
9:40 Introduction of Speaker – John McPherson
10:35 Break
10:45 Critique of poems – Pat Laster

12:00 Lunch in the River Market
1:15 Business meeting – Frieda Patton
2:00 Poetry Day Contest Winners – Marie Allison
2:45 Announcements and Dismissal

Board Meeting Highlights of 6/22/19:

News N Notes Editor/Collegiate Contest Chair: We still need volunteers to become PRA's *News N Notes* newsletter editor, and PRA's JDC Collegiate Contest chair. Meanwhile, Laura Bridges and Amanda Partridge will help Donna with the News N Notes. If you are interested in volunteering for either role, contact President Frieda Patton or Chair Donna Smith.

2019 Anthology Update: 100 books were ordered at the beginning of distribution, and 25 more were ordered later for Kate to sell at NFSPS. She has about 20 left.

Old Anthologies: The number of remaining vintage anthologies and suggestions for distribution were discussed. A motion was passed to give 5 sets of the vintage anthologies to the State Library so that copies may be checked out. A list of the vintage anthologies will be posted on the website for sale at a flat rate of \$1 plus postage if mailed. Distribution of these books is a way of promoting PRA. A motion was made to donate some of the vintage anthologies to the White County Creative Writers Conference donation table

Manningham Student Contest Report – Laura Bridges reported that there was confusion this past year because some student winners placed multiple times. Students are allowed to enter only one poem and this is expected to be clarified in next year’s contest rules.

Webmaster: The board approved Karalin Rogers to continue as webmaster for the new fiscal year at the same rate of \$500/year.

Board Member-at-Large Vacancy: Kate Lacy submitted her resignation as member-at-large due to a planned move out of state. Nominations were considered. Christine Henderson of Gin Creek Branch was elected to fill the position.

Merit Award vote: Nominees for the 2019 Merit Award were discussed and a secret ballot taken. The Merit Award winner will be announced at Poetry Day.

Reminder! The 2019-2020 PRA member fees were due June 30th. Fees include NFSPS memberships too. Send \$20 (or \$15 for seniors and students) to Membership Chair Cathy Moran, 401 Auburn Dr., Little Rock, AR 72205. Include address, phone and email changes. Yearbooks will be mailed in August.

Notes from Arkansas Poet Laureate Jo McDougall:

I am still smiling as I think of the sparkling gala held on June 20th to honor me as recipient of the 2019 Porter Prize Lifetime Achievement Award in Literature. The dinner was held in the Great Hall of the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, a light-filled space that held 250 guests. Friends came from Little Rock and other parts of the state, but also from Kansas City; Milledgeville, Georgia; Pittsburg, Kansas; Dallas; and Ireland. A grandson traveled from Park City, Utah, to be with me. Almost all of my family were there, plus friends from PRA’s River Market branch--Cathy Moran, Stacy Pendergrast, and Dr. Laura Trigg.

Former Governor Mike Beebe and Ginger attended, and Governor Beebe presented the award with a beautiful tribute. Porter Prize Secretary Phillip McMath and Event Chairman Catherine Johnson worked tirelessly to make the event the success it was--a sold-out evening! I wish all of you could have been there, for the gala was a tribute not only to me but to all poets, writers and their readers. McMath, emcee for the evening, reminded the audience how important the written and communicated word is in this digital age.

A reminder: I'll be a featured speaker at the White County Creative Writers 24th Annual Conference, August 31st, at Harding University’s American Heritage Conference Center in Searcy. I look forward to seeing some of you there. And remember-- Poetry ASAP: Poetry should be aspiring, surprising, accessible, and part of our everyday lives.

Yours,
Jo McDougall, Poet Laureate of Arkansas
www.jomcdougall.net

Want a PRA Handout for Events or a Sponsor? See the “2019 Year-in-Review” report posted on PRA’s website. It includes general information about PRA and NFSPS, plus highlights of statewide activities during the fiscal year.

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

Congratulations to PRA Monthly Contest winners:
May – 1st Dennis Patton, 2nd Freeda Baker Nichols, 3rd Cathy Moran, 1HM Barbara Blanks, 2HM Frieda Patton, 3HM Terri Jacks; **June** – 1st Sara Gipson, 2nd Gail Denham, 3rd Barbara Blanks, HM Frieda Patton; **July** – 1st Barbara Blanks, 2nd Gary Breezeel, 3rd Ann Carolyn Cates, HM Donna Nelson.

Congratulations to the following PRA members who placed in almost every contest at the annual Arkansas Writers’ Conference: Gary Breezeel, John Crawford, Sara Gipson, Fay Guinn, Jerri Hardesty, Marilyn Joyner, John McPherson, Cathy Moran, Dennis Patton, Kathy Vernich, and Kimberly Vernon. For more information see the AWC website:
<http://www.arkansaswritersconference.org/7.html>.

Congratulations to 16 PRA members who placed in the 2019 NFSPS Contests: Barbara Blanks, LaVern McCarthy, Kate Lacy, Sara Gipson, Cathy Moran, Wendy Visser, Russell Strauss, Pat Durmon, Gail Denham, Ann Carolyn Cates, Dr. Emory Jones, Fay Guinn, Diane Palfrey, Dena Gorrell, Von Bourland, and Dr. John Crawford.

The Siloam Springs Writers Guild held their 3rd Annual Writers Conference on Saturday, July 27 at the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Siloam Springs. The theme was “Cultivating Your Imagination.” Keynote speaker Linda C. Apple opened with “Inspire! Write from Your Soul!” and also presented “Living History.” Dennis Patton’s talks were “Three Secrets to Winning Poems,” and “What’s in Your Tool Box?” Elece Hollis spoke on “Creative Poetic Techniques,” and “Shouts of Joy.” Erin Marshall’s talk was “Dreams Worth Chasing.” A total of 32 attended the conference, moderated by past guild president, Gene Linzey. Guild member Linda Johnstone prepared a pulled pork lunch.

Fay Guinn (Member-at-large, Jonesboro) recently won: at Arkansas Writers Conference: 3rd for essay, 1HM for humorous short story, 1HM for rhymed poem, 1HM for hometown memorial poem, 3HM for comic short story. NFSPS Annual Poetry Contest — 2nd place.

Cathy Moran (River Market) recently won the following contests: 1st and 3rd from Louisiana; two 1^{sts}, two 2^{nds} and a 3rd from Pennsylvania; two 1^{sts} from Arkansas Writers Conference; a 1st, 2nd and 3rd from NFSPS; and she won the Grand Prize from the Maria Faust Sonnet Contest of Minnesota.

Welcome 19 New PRA Members! Bruce Borgerson (Little Rock), Priscilla Cox (Alexander), Kenyetta Crutchfield (El Dorado), Sue Frissell (Ft. Smith), Jean Grimm (Hot Springs), Jennifer Harrison (Bigelow), Bruce Hoffsommer (Ft. Smith), Laverna Johnson (St. George, Utah), Lolita Kuester (Hot Springs), Deborah Livesay (Rogers), Sketer Michaels (Alexander), Lisa Osborn (Judsonia), Mike Pafundi (Sherwood), Kinzey Rogers (Ft. Smith), Jim & Margie Ruble (Viola), Carrie Smith (Bigelow), Barbara Weatherby (Cotter), and Rebekah Wilkins (Morrilton).

New PRA Board Members were inducted at the Spring Celebration in April for the 2019-2021 term. See brief biographies of each below. These board members bring valuable experience to the organization leadership, and we thank them all for serving.

Frieda Patton (PRA President) was raised a farmer's daughter at Des Arc, Arkansas. She grew up helping with the 2000-3000 chicken farm and spent summers cutting sprouts, picking up chunks, or driving the tractor in the fields. After graduation, she moved to Little Rock, immediately began work for the State of Arkansas at age 17 and retired after 38 years. She worked as a secretary for 11 years for Rehabilitation Services and 27 years for the Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). She was assistant to the Director's Office of ADEQ for 20 years and was also manager of the Asbestos and Lead programs for 6 of those years. She later managed the budget, grants, and personnel issues for the Air Division. She met Dennis in Little Rock and married in 1971. They have a son, daughter and son-in-law, and 2 granddaughters, who live nearby. Her time is split among church activities, the granddaughters' activities, and PRA. Frieda was introduced to poetry by Dennis and serves as his critic and encourager. She served on PRA's Board as a member-at-large for the last 4 years.

Dr. Laura Trigg (PRA Vice President) is pleased to be a new board member of PRA. She has written poems since elementary school but rarely shared them until she met Karen Hayes at a poetry reading at Vino's in 2014. A few months later she braved her first meeting and found a poetry home. Her writing has improved through their monthly critique sessions, and she was encouraged by fellow members to enter contests. She feels lucky to have placed in several. She is primarily a weekend poet and a weekday physician, trying to carve out more time for writing. She lives with her husband, Dave, a retired teacher, and their dog, Steven. They have two fabulous adult children, Anna and Peter.

Amanda Partridge (PRA Secretary): AJ Partridge is a tea enthusiast and a cat lady. Currently pursuing her JD/MPA, AJ snatches moments between classes to write a few lines. Her poetry can be found in *Eye to the Telescope* and *Riddled with Arrows*. She can be found elsewhere on the internet as @themandabird.

Dennis Patton (PRA Treasurer, Counselor and Past President) has enjoyed poetry from early childhood

because his mother read to her children as they grew up in rural Arkansas, near Clarksville. He became a member of Saline County branch of Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (PRA) in 2005 after moving from Little Rock to Alexander. He saw a weekly poetry column in the *Saline Courier* which included an invitation to all who enjoyed or wrote poetry. He currently serves as editor of the *Saline Courier's* "Poets Forum" and president of the branch. He retired from ABF in 2003. He is an avid fisherman and hunter, which has been a boon to his writing. Along with gun, coffee, and sandwich, he carries pen, pad, and newspaper puzzle to the deer stand. The solitude in nature serves as a rare enticement to his pursuit. Often, he struggles with the difficult choice of hunting or finishing a poem. His love for poetry has led him to recognize life is too short to be without poetry and he shares in hope to inspire others.

Renee Ramsey (PRA Historian): Renee Ramsey has been reading and writing poetry since elementary school. She also enjoys painting and jewelry making. She resides in the Ozark foothills with her husband, Danny and her 16 pound cat, Hissyfit.

John McPherson (PRA Parliamentarian): John is a retired Manager for the United States Postal Service. Since retirement he has served as a tax aide for both Jackson Hewitt Tax Services and AARP. He has written poetry as a hobby most of his life and began entering contests in 2015. John is a good example of wonderful poets who come from all walks of life.

Laura Bridges (Board Member-at-Large): A book of children's poetry given by her mother when she was seven, sparked Laura's love of poetry. She wrote her first poem when she was 11. She has been a member of PRA for over 10 years and won the Sybil Nash Abrams in 2009 on her first try. She won the PRA annual Merit Award in 2014 for her work chairing youth contests. She now co-chairs that committee. She is President of the River Market group and has been the Strophes Reporter for the last 10 years. When she is not working or writing, she enjoys spending time with her family, especially her 19 year-old daughter. Laura has a BA in Commercial Art with a minor in Communications from Ouachita Baptist University. She and her daughter live in North Little Rock.

Fay Smalling Guinn (Board Member-at-Large) grew up in North Little Rock. After graduating with a degree in English education she taught in Memphis while putting her husband through medical school and living down the street from Elvis. In a trailer beside a salvage yard. When both her parents passed away 7 years ago she rediscovered her love of creative writing. She saw a photo and caption about a writers group in the local paper and attended the next meeting. The rest, as they say, is history. Through the group she learned of conferences, retreats and contests. Attending workshops in Wyoming, Missouri, Nashville, Memphis, Oregon, and all over Arkansas (especially Hemingway-Pfeiffer Writers Retreat in Piggott) has honed her skills, provided publishing, performing, speaking, and contest

opportunities. She has won over 100 writing awards in poetry and prose. For the last 42 years she has called Jonesboro, Arkansas home with her retired husband. Recently she celebrated the birth of the third son of her third son. She is currently seeking a publisher for a poetry collection, *Don't Wear Red While Sitting Outside With Birds*, and a memoir, *Mrs. Guinn Is an H.O.E.*

Christine Henderson (Member-at-Large): Christine Gayle Glass Henderson writes as Gayle Glass. After a divorce in 1994, she joined White County Creative Writers (WCCW) in Searcy, AR to re-invent herself. Her writing has garnered awards nationwide, and she has been published in anthologies such as *Writing on Walls*, *White County Creative Writers' Park Tales* and *Who We Are*. Chris was an online poetry editor for Writers' Village University for 2 years in 1997-1998, has held all offices and managed writers' workshops for WCCW, facilitated a workshop for Arkansas Tourism travel writers, and published a chapbook titled *Having Fun*, plus a beginners' writing guide called *Between the Lines*. In addition, she produced a blog titled *The Looking Glass*, wrote newsletters for various corporations, plus newspaper and magazine articles. She has given lectures on poetry to various writing groups in the state. She was one of the founders and the first President of PRA's Gin Creek Poets branch. In her day job her left brain focuses on keeping up with DOT regulations, taxes, permits, and payroll for the trucking department of a manufacturer in Searcy.

Donna Smith (Board Member-at-Large): Donna has loved poetry and the written word since she was a child. Late in life she began writing poetry as gifts for special occasions. She joined PRA in 2005 to improve her work, and continues to be surprised whenever she wins a contest, especially when she won the Sybil Nash Abrams competition. She has served PRA in various roles, including: Poetry Day Chair, Poetry Day Contest Chair, Spring Celebration Chair, Newsletter Editor, Collegiate Contest Chair, and State Fair Contest Chair. She also won PRA's Merit Award in 2016 for her various efforts to promote poetry and PRA. Donna was raised in Mtn. Home, AR, except for a few elementary school years in Kansas City, MO. She earned a Business Education degree from Missouri State University, and moved back to Arkansas where she served several financial roles in Arkansas State Government and private industry in Little Rock. Her last and longest tenure was 27 years as Director of Finance & Administration for the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN). She retired from AETN 6 years ago, and enjoys gardening, crafts, and spending time with her husband Tom, 2 daughters, 3 grandkids, and her 91-year-old Mom who still lives in Mtn. Home.

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 Frieda Patton.

Upcoming Deadlines/Events/Contests

2nd Saturday each Month: PRA's Monthly Contest entries are due by mail to Chair Renee Ramsay, 249 Garden Lane, Floral, AR 72534. See details in PRA's yearbook, plus website links to poetry resources.

August: Watch the mail for your 2020 PRA Yearbook.

August 15: PRA's Poetry Day Contest entries due together in one package to Poetry Day Contest Chair Marie Allison, 165 St. Andrews, Hot Springs, AR 71913. See guidelines posted on PRA's website.

August 15: Poetry Society of Texas Annual Contest deadline. See brochure at: poetrysocietyoftexas.org.

August 15: Poetry Society of Indiana's Annual Contest deadline. See: poetrysocietyofindiana.org.

August 20: Poetry Society of Tennessee's 63rd Annual Contest deadline. See more at: poetrytennessee.org.

September 1: Oregon Poetry Association's Fall Contest deadline. See: oregonpoets.org.

September 30: Arizona State Poetry Society's annual contest deadline. See: AZPoetryOrg@gmail.com.

October 10-12: 53rd Ozark Creative Writers' Conference, Eureka Springs, AR. See more at: ozarkcreativewriters@ozarkcreativewriters.com.

October 19: PRA's 2019 Poetry Day Celebration in Little Rock at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 401 President Clinton Avenue. Watch PRA's website.

November: Middle/High School 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 Bridges (lough3@gmail.com) or JDC College Contest Chair Donna Smith (tndsmith@live.com).

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 Cathy Moran with any changes in member contact information or branch meeting places/times/officers. PRA currently serves 105 members and 10 branches statewide, plus an online group.