

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 2019

President's Address:

Members,

Fall has moved in on us and it's great! The kids and grandkids are back in school, school activities are going strong, deer season has started (although, you know the world stops for deer season), and holidays are RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER. Then, it's a new year. Scary, isn't it? I can remember as a child that it seemed forever from the time school started in the fall until it was out in the spring. I guess being retired makes time go faster. It sure seems to do so at my house and I have to make a concerted effort to spend time on poetry. However, as poets and people who enjoy poetry, it's worth our efforts. Yes, take time to enjoy your family and your other activities and hobbies, but don't forget to STOP long enough to: **S**pend – **T**ime – **O**n – **P**oetry.

Frieda Patton
President PRA

2019 Poetry Day Celebration in Arkansas was hosted by PRA on October 19, 2019 in Little Rock at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. We enjoyed a full room of 35+ attendees. PRA President Frieda Patton welcomed all to the meeting, and introduced John McPherson as Poetry Day Chair. John read the Poetry Day Proclamation from Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, plus a history of former Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni, who started the annual Poetry Day Celebration in 1948. Then John introduced PRA's own Pat Laster as guest speaker. Pat is a poet, author, editor, publisher, and workshop leader. She shared an instructive talk on the value of writing groups and critiquing each other to improve our work. After a break, Pat also shared her critiques on poems submitted earlier by members. Following lunch in the River Market, PRA President Frieda Patton led a business meeting and announced the 2019 Merit Award for Karen Hayes posthumously for her many efforts to promote poetry in Arkansas. It was accepted by Karen's friend Mark Hotchkiss. Poetry Day Contest Chair Marie Allison then announced the winners. Finally, Dennis Patton announced the winners of the prestigious Sybil Nash Abrams contest. Cathy Moran won 1st prize for her poem on Arkansas Military Hero "Footsie" Britt. (See list of all PD winners posted on PRA's website, plus pics on Facebook:

<https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contest-winners/>.

See also the 2020 information on PRA's website for middle & high school contests, plus the annual Jeannie Dolan Carter Collegiate Contest and the NFSPS College Undergraduate Poetry contests for students at:

<https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/>.

Board Meeting Highlights of 10/19/2019:

Remembrance of Members Lost in the Past Year: Don Crowson (Saline County), Karen Hayes (River Market), George Dreger (Baxter County), Mike Pafundi (Saline County) and Mildred McKinney (South Arkansas Poets of the Pines).

PRA's 2020 Spring Celebration: will be on April 18, 2020 in Little Rock at the Butler Center. Dr. Laura Trigg will Chair the annual event. Prizes for Honorable Mentions may be decided by the contest sponsor/donor, in addition to those posted on PRA's website. Contests are open to members only and entries are due by March 15, 2020. Watch PRA's website for more details.

2020 State and National Student Contests: were announced for middle, high school and college students. Members are asked to help promote these annual contests statewide. Materials are on PRA's website. Entries are due at various dates this spring.

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. If you are interested in either role, contact President Frieda Patton or Chair Donna Smith.

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

Welcome New PRA Members! Rita Moritz (Pell City, Alabama), and John Han (Ballwin, MO).

PRA Member Highlight – Cathy Moran:

Past PRA President Cathy Moran grew up in North Little Rock and after traveling around and living in various parts of the world, has settled in Little Rock. She taught high school English for twenty years, then went to work at the Arkansas Municipal League and worked codifying laws for twenty years. Poetry has always been a part of her life. She dabbles in all forms from sonnet to free verse to haiku, and enjoys winning contests. PRA has been a great source of encouragement and fellowship, and she has been pleased to serve in various capacities throughout the years.

(The Member highlight is a new feature that will tell a little something about a PRA member in each quarter's newsletter. If you would like to be highlighted, please send a brief bio on yourself to: Donna Smith, PRA Newsletter Editor, 58 Briarwood St., Greenbrier, AR 72058, or to tndsmith@live.com.)

Reminder! The 2019-2020 PRA member fees were due June 30th and include NFSPS memberships. You can still join in time to enter the upcoming NFSPS contests and PRA Spring Contests. 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.

Notes from Arkansas Poet Laureate Jo McDougall:

October has been an eventful month, including a photo shoot with Governor Hutchinson on October 14th to proclaim October 19th as Arkansas's celebration of National Poetry Day, and the recognition of that day on October 19th at the Butler Center in Little Rock.

Stacy Pendergrast writes of the photo shoot with the governor on October 14th:

"Last summer at AETN's *Say My Piece Slam Camp*, leaders taught young poets that poetry had the power to take them places they'd never been. Arkansas Poet Laureate Jo McDougall, a guest speaker at the slam performance, told the campers stories about the many opportunities offered by the literary world. Indeed, McDougall was so impressed by the campers' performances that she invited them to Governor Asa Hutchinson's reading of the proclamation of Arkansas' 2019 celebration of National Poetry Day.

On October 14th, the campers went to the State Capitol to join McDougall, PRA President Frieda Patton and former President Dennis Patton. Also guiding the poets were AETN camp educators Karen Walker, Stacy Pendergrast, and Jasmine Harris, and 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year Stacey McAdoo. *Writeous* poets and "slambassadors" Victory Jackson and Chauncey Williams helped the campers feel at ease as they visited privately with Governor Hutchinson in his Capitol office. The governor chatted with the group about poetry and the presidents he'd met throughout his years

of public service. What a special occasion! Indeed, poetry has already opened doors for the budding *Say My Piece* poets."

Governor Hutchinson greeted the group by reciting a short poem he said his mother held as her favorite. I am pleased that Little Rock Central High principal Nancy Rousseau was present for the event. My thanks to Stacy for this account and to Governor Hutchinson for his warm and gracious welcome of the young poets.

The October 19th celebration of National Poetry Day in Arkansas was greatly enhanced with guest speaker Pat Laster's thought-provoking talk on the efficacy of writers groups and her succinct, helpful critique of members' poems. John McPherson's account of the history of Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni brought back good memories of my meeting Ms. Marinoni when I was an aspiring poet in my twenties.

Sadly, the poetry community recently has lost a friend, Bud Kenny of Hot Springs. John Crawford remembers him as a fine writer and contributor to the Hot Springs community. Our condolences go to Bud's family and friends.

Many joys to you in this fall season. Don't forget Poetry A S A P and the importance of encouraging young poets and writers. We can take as our example the late Karen Hayes, posthumous winner of the 2019 Merit Award, who encouraged poets at every opportunity. Just a word from you can mean a lot. They are our future generation of writers and, we hope, PRA members!

Yours,

Jo McDougall
Poet Laureate of Arkansas
www.jomcdougall.net

Farewell to PRA's Mike Pafundi (1944-2019):

Michael George Pafundi of Sherwood, Arkansas passed away on August 22, 2019. "Mike" was born February 6, 1944, in Ventura, California to Michael Pafundi and Jeannie Cunningham. He was preceded in death by his parents. He is survived by his sister Carrie (husband Larry) Smith, niece Jennifer Harrison, great-nephew Blake Harrison, aunt Jonelle McDaniel, numerous cousins, relatives, dear friends, and a very special friend that he considered his adopted daughter Lisa Frazier. Mike loved poetry and journalism. He was an active member of the Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas (Saline Branch) and had many poems and editorials published in newspapers around the state. He wrote about what he believed. He was very devoted to his family. After his stepfather passed away, he gave up his college scholarship to return home and take care of his mother and sister. He always put other's needs before his own. He worked at various automobile dealerships for 54 years, retiring from Mark McLarty Ford in 2018. After retirement, he worked for Kroger until he passed away. PRA sends our condolences to his family and friends.

Farewell to PRA's Mildred McKinney (1919-2019):

Mildred Weaver McKinney of Camden, AR, died on September 10. Mildred was one of PRA's longtime, Honorary Members. Her desire was to reach 100 years old, and she would have met that goal in December. She died at Ouachita Nursing & Rehab. Center in Camden, AR. She was born to Virgle Weaver and Arene Berry Weaver on December 24, 1919 in McNeil, AR. She was a teacher to all and a friend to many. She is survived by three sisters, Francis Russ of Milwaukee, WI; Dorthory Moore of Magnolia, AR; Pearlena Turner of Little Rock, AR; a brother Henry (Rosetta) Weaver of Magnolia, AR; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, relatives and friends. PRA shares our sympathies with Mildred's family and friends.

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: **August** – 1st Christine Henderson, 2nd Cathy Moran, 3rd John McPherson, 1HM Barbara Blanks, 2HM Dennis Patton, 3HM Patricia Laster; **September** – 1st Cathy Parker, 2nd Sara Gipson, 3rd Barbara Blanks, 1HM Patricia Laster, 2HM Ann Carolyn Cates, 3HM Dennis Patton. (See PRA's website for monthly guidelines: <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/monthlycontests2016/>. Please note, the February Monthly Contest information listed on page 7 in the current Yearbook, has been corrected to read: Subject - Any; Form - Heroic blank verse. Heroic blank verse is defined as combining the requirements of heroic couplets - minus the requirement of rhyming - with the requirements for blank verse.)

Pat Laster (Saline County Branch) has written a 4th book, *A Compendium of Journal Jottings: A Sourcebook for Writers*, now available on Amazon in softback, and e-book. She is also working on an online MFA with UA Monticello. This term, it's Intro to Graduate Studies under Jessica Hylton. Her seminar paper is on Robert Frost's poetry. In the spring, the course will be a poetry workshop with Sarah Bloom. Also, due to the death of Bob Palmer, Southern Standard editor Joe May has asked Pat to take back the poetry column she began 23 years ago. She accepted and vows to use poetry of present or past poets from the southwest part of the state. And a writer friend, Lydia Cheatham, and Pat will spend a week in Piggott, November 13 –18 to do two things: attend the weekend writers retreat at Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum Educational Center, with C. D. Albin as mentor, and spend the rest of the time writing.

Pat Durmon (Member-at-large, Norfolk) made a presentation on 9/14/19 to the Missouri State Poetry Society's 2019 Convention, hosted by Springfield Poets & Friends in Springfield, Missouri. Pat's presentation, "Let's Get Into the Arena," was about "taking that extra step, the show-and-tell of your work. It's about what to do with the feedback on your poem, once it's received

from a group or a person who cares. It can be a nurturing experience." Pat Durmon is a poet and writer with four books of poetry to her credit. Her writing is known for its clarity, humanness and accessibility. She lives overlooking the White River near Norfolk, Arkansas. She was educated at Ouachita Baptist University, Indiana University, and Arkansas State University. Though she is now retired, Durmon clings to her love for family and friends, and her writing. Her awards include the 2007 Sybil Nash Abrams Award from Poets Roundtable of Arkansas, and the 2013 Merit Award given by Poets Roundtable of Arkansas for her promotion of poetry.

Sara Gibson (Member-at-large, Scott) hosted the High Cotton on the Bayou Festival on Saturday, October 5, 2019 at Scott Plantation Settlement in Scott, AR. The festival is an annual event featuring turn of the century farm exhibits, music, art, vendors and family fun.

Barbara Weatherby (Baxter County Branch) won 2 blue ribbons for 1st place at the Baxter County Fair Poetry Contest recently for her two poems: An Old Woman's Musing and On the Banks of the River.

John Crawford (Hot Springs Poets) won a 1st and 3rd in the Massachusetts Poetry Society's annual celebration. He made a poetry presentation at Wednesday Night Poetry in Hot Springs on October 9th in honor of Bud Kenny who passed on October 2nd. Bud started the WNP in February of 1989. It is still going strong after 30 years, with Kai Coggin now leading it. John was privileged to attend the 1st WNP and many following. Not one Wednesday in Hot Springs has it failed to meet. It offers Open Mic and featured poets on each Wednesday, 6 30 to 9PM. John's 5th and last poetry book titled "Just Off Highway 71," Memories in Lyric, was scheduled to be published by Covenant Books of South Carolina. But after numerous communication problems, he cancelled his publication agreement and will now submit to other firms.

Gail Denham (Member-at-large, Oregon) won 2 Arizona monthly prizes; a 2nd and HM in Poets and Patrons contest; published some poems and a short story "The Concert" in the *Quill and Parchment*; won a couple of prizes at NSFPS; won a 1st in Massachusetts; placed poems in Pennessence (Pennsylvania); won a monthly contest at ISPS (Illinois); plus prizes at Pegasus; a 1st in MSPS contest; a prize at LOMP contest; and won prizes for a few poems and stories with *Fanstory*.

Barbara Robinette (Baxter County Branch) had a haiku published in *A Moment's Longing* by the Haiku Society of America, Members' Anthology 2019.

Cathy Moran (River Market-LR) won recently from White County Writers a 2nd, 3rd, HM; from Chattahoochee Valley Writers a 3rd; from Alabama two 2^{nds}, two 3^{rds}, two HMs; and from Louisiana a 1st.

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 at: <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/resources/links/>.

November: Middle/High School and College Student contests for 2020 will be distributed statewide this month. PRA members are asked to help promote these contests in their area. See guidelines for each at: <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/>. For questions contact Youth Contest Co-Chair Laura Bridges (lough3@gmail.com) or JDC College Contest Chair Donna Smith (tndsmith@live.com).

November 1: Illinois State Poetry Society's annual poetry contest deadline. See: www.illinoispoets.org.

November 8: Camille T. Dungy will give a Public Reading & Book Signing, 6PM, at UCA's McCastlain Hall Ballroom, 201 Donaghey Ave., Conway. Her debut collection of personal essays is *Guidebook to Relative Strangers* (W. W. Norton, 2017), a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. She is also the author of four collections of poetry, most recently *Trophic Cascade* (Wesleyan UP, 2017), winner of the Colorado Book Award. She was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2019. For more information contact Sandy Longhorn at 501-450-5108 or slonghorn@uca.edu.

November 8-9: C.D. Wright Women Writers Conference at UCA's McCastlain Hall, 201 Donaghey Ave., Conway, features readings and presentations by women writers from many genres and experience levels. The Conference will include an optional, limited-seating pre-conference writing workshop, an optional opportunity for a 20-minute editorial consultation, a Friday night keynote (**Camille T. Dungy**) presentation with reception, a book fair, a continental breakfast, choices from 16 individual breakout sessions of either panels or creative readings, a keynote lunch (**Jami Attenberg**), and a closing reception. See more: <http://www.cdwrightconference.org/conference>. Or contact Sandy Longhorn at: 501-450-5108 or cdwrightconference@gmail.com, slonghorn@uca.edu.

November 9: Self-Published & Small Press Book Fair at CALS Main Library, 100 Rock St., Little Rock is a biennial event for the public to meet and hear directly from a wide variety of authors and a few select small press representatives. Books are available for purchase. This is an excellent opportunity for networking and gathering tips from authors who self-publish. For more information contact Tameka Lee at TLee@cals.org or 501-918-3048.

December: Happy Birthday this month to Arkansas Poet Laureate Jo McDougall! www.jomcdougall.net

December 15: Oklahoma Annual Spring Contests due. See: <http://www.angelfire.com/poetry/ps0/Spring.html>.

January 15: Massachusetts annual contests due. See: www.mastatepoetrysociety.tripod.com/id14.html.

January 15: Postmark deadline for Pennsylvania Poetry Society's 68th Annual contest. Download contest brochure from: www.nfsps.com/pa.

January 31: Deadline for NFSPS 2020 College Undergraduate Poetry Competition (CUP). See details on PRA's website or www.nfsps.com/CUP.html.

February 5: Happy 89th Birthday to PRA!

February 28: PRA's 2020 Poetry Day Contest Sponsorships due to PRA Treasurer Dennis Patton. Forms will be posted on PRA's website in January.

March 15: PRA's Spring Celebration contest entries due. See details at: <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/>,

March 15: NFSPS annual contest entries due. See details on PRA's website: <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/>.

March 15: PRA's Jeannie Dolan Carter Collegiate Contest entries due. See details on PRA's website: <https://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org/contests/>.

April: April is National Poetry Month. Celebrate!

April 18: PRA's Dr. Lily Peter Spring Celebration at Little Rock's Butler Center. Watch PRA's website for details.

June 30: PRA membership fees and information updates due to Membership Chair Cathy Moran.

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 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.