

From the Desk of Prez Perez: November 2019

Hello Everyone,

I am grateful to be able to serve the next 2 years as your President. This is a time to be thankful, a time to remember and to embrace those who enrich our lives. I'm thankful for a lot of things, I'm thankful to all of you! We have some amazing and valuable poets! I am proud to be amongst the most enthusiastic and inspiring people. It is the passion of our poets who makes us who we are! We are hopeful that with fresh ideas and inspiration, this will be one of our best years ever! A glimpse from this last past year. The New Mexico State Poetry Society is proud and honored to have hosted the 2019 National Convention, NFSPS 60th Anniversary annual convention, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Workshops were attended at capacity, and meals enjoyed with poets from all over the country. A highlight was meeting in the NM State Legislatures Rotunda where the Blackberry Peach Poetry winners and over 50 poets read at open mike. We presented a certificate to our State Senator and poet Bill O'Neill for his efforts in securing funding for a New Mexico State Poet Laureate! Special thanks to Ginny Gaskill, our Convention Chair, and all of the volunteers statewide who made this Diamond Jubilee brilliant.

We are all looking forward to seeing you at Society events. One of my goals is to visit Chapters and help those Chapters in the making. To bring Poetry to all 4 corners of New Mexico. To leave a footprint for those to follow. The best way for NMSPS to be able to deliver Poetry is to show up in as many Poetic Events as possible, talking to everyone, reading and writing no one off. That's exactly what we're doing. And we are doing it with the power of the Poetry!

The new NMSPS Board got right to work after the election. We held our first meeting on September 21. There is so much more we can accomplish.

I want to thank each of you for the kindness, generosity of time and spirit, and patience you have given me over the past two years. It is because of your efforts that we will continue to be not only placemakers, but change makers. Working together, we can fully realize the vision of our Organization.

My goals: Make NMSPS a home for all poets in New Mexico. Partner with other poetry organizations (both stage and page) across the state for special events that expand poetry opportunities statewide; support struggling poetry groups in NM communities where they need a boost from some of our stronger chapters, perhaps with workshops, visits, or readings.

My beliefs: All poets have a voice to be heard and a story to be told. There's no time like the present to start writing our next adventure.

I am proud of what you've helped us accomplish to-date and thrilled for what's ahead. Together we will build a thriving community, united to inspire hopes and dreams in all the lives we touch as we bring beautiful, original Poetry into the lives of our community.

With gratitude,

Bernadette Perez
president@nmpoetry.com

From the Desk of Prez Perez: August 2017

Hello Everyone,

I am Bernadette Perez, the person you elected on April 29 to serve for the next two years as your president. I thank you for this opportunity and am honored to lead NMSPS during this exciting time of growth and opportunity. There are so many things we can accomplish, and I want to share with you some of my vision for our Society. I also want to introduce myself to those I have not yet met.

I have been in the restaurant business for over 37 years, the last 17 of them at Burritos Alinstantiate. I head a company team working on developing short- and long-term goals and business strategies. Last year, I received "my ears" after studying at the Disney School of Business Management in Florida.

Here's my poetry bio: I have been a member of the Rio Grande Valencia Poets chapter of NMSPS since 2005, and served as its chair during 2012-15. I coordinated the Society's 2013 State Convention, held in Belen. I served as Andi Penner's vice president from 2015 until 2017. As VP, I publicized poetry events and went on road trips promoting poetry in New Mexico. If you joined NMSPS recently, you may recognize my name as the person who sent you a welcome letter or contacted you directly, because I made new members my primary focus.

The new NMSPS Board I head got right to work after election. We held a first (and very productive) meeting on June 4, and I attended the Annual Convention of our parent organization, the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, in Ft. Worth, Texas, during June 29-July 2. It was an exciting time of outreach to other state societies and insight into the fundamentals of the NFSPS—all creating a feeling of unity and fellowship as we gathered as poets, friends, and community for a common purpose. It convinced me that we should always send a NM representative to the national level convention, and I hope that next year, both president and vice president can attend.

Here are my goals: Make NMSPS a home for all poets in New Mexico. Partner with other poetry organizations (both stage and page) across the state for special events that expand poetry opportunities statewide; support struggling poetry groups in NM communities where they need a boost from some of our stronger chapters, perhaps with workshops, visits, or readings; consider helping out some of our nearby sister State Poetry Societies in the NFSPS: both Nevada and Arizona need help. Renew efforts to get a NM Poet Laureate program operational.

Here are my beliefs: All poets have a voice to be heard and a story to be told. Our poetry community is strong. Together, we have the ability to create change, develop passion, and embrace the art. My motto is, Give Poets Voice! If you want to learn more about my views about poetry, you can [check out this interview](#).

We shall house intensity of emotion
Blended with beauty in rhythm
Create literature in work
Deserving to be remembered forever

—Bernadette Perez

president@nmpoetry.com

Update from the President: June 2015

Dear New Mexico Poets and Friends of Poetry:

On this first day of summer and longest day of the year, my thoughts turn both to the light and the warmth (and sometimes the heat!) that poetry brings into our lives. We are fortunate to have found the joyful camaraderie and the soulful comfort that the poetry community offers us. As you read the updates, below, I hope you will be pleased to learn more about your organization.

April 2015 Convention and Election The NMSPS held its State Convention and Annual General Meeting on April 26, 2015 at the Albuquerque Open Space Visitors Center on a wonderfully rainy Saturday. Approximately 25 members attended the general morning meeting to hear reports, honor members, and formally elect the new NMSPS board. Business was followed by a potluck lunch, open mic, workshop, all of which were open to the general poetry community and the public. The new officers, elected for a 2-year term, are as follows:

- Andrea (Andi) M. Penner, President, and member of the Albuquerque Chapter
- Bernadette Perez, Vice President, and member of the Rio Grande Valencia Chapter
- Vicki Holmsten, Secretary, and member of the 4 Corners/Farmington Chapter
- Earl Kious, Treasurer, and member of the Albuquerque Chapter
- Fil Peach, Chancellor, at-large member

Award Winners

At the annual meeting, John Candelaria reported on the Children's Poetry Project, and introduced Allison O'Leary, the Alvarado Elementary School Librarian who has been the project champion for her students. Fil Peach presented John with the 2015 NMSPS Mission Award for his commitment to the project which resulted in a beautiful, published hard-back book, *Alvarado Elementary Poems*, written and illustrated by the elementary school students. John will continue to be the project lead in the upcoming school year, and we hope to expand the project to other schools based on the successful model begun by Larry Castillo-Wilson in 2010.

Fil Peach also presented our past president Shirley Blackwell a 2015 NMSPS Mission Award for constant going above and beyond to promote poets and poetry in the state. With Fil's relocation to Texas, Shirley will continue offer her wealth of past-president experience and expertise in support of the newly elected board.

Finally, Billy Brown was named the 2015 Patron of Poetry Award winner for his tireless support of poetry, not only through his organizing and hosting of the monthly Fixed and Free readings at The Source, in Albuquerque, but also for his ever-growing distribution list (and his delicious cookies!). Thanks to Billy, many hundreds of people across the state are now aware of the plethora of poetry happenings and the opportunities to participate in the growing community of poets and writers, artists and musicians....

Membership and Chapters

As of June 19, 2015, the NMSPS has over 115 members. The NMSPS membership participates in the society through eight active regional chapters and one at-large chapter. New Mexico ranks as the fifth largest state, geographically, but 36th smallest in population; therefore, many of our chapters in rural areas wax and wane in attendance. We hope that you will find a chapter close to you, or consider starting a chapter in your area!

- Albuquerque
- At-Large Poets
- 4 Corners Poets (Farmington)
- High Prairie Poets (Roswell)
- Rio Abajo Poets (Socorro)
- Rio Grande Valencia Poets (Belen/Los Lunas are)
- River Poets (Silver City)
- Santa Fe Poetry Trails
- Walking Rain Chapter (Taos)

There's also some talk of a new Slam of Enchantment chapter starting in Albuquerque. stay tuned!

Poet Laureate

NMSPS has formed a coalition with other poetry groups across the state to initiate a conversation with the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs to advocate for legislative action to create a State Poet Laureate position. We are one of only six states without such a position. State Senator Bill O'Neill, who is himself a poet, had been advocating tirelessly for a poet laureate in New Mexico. Though we were not successful in the 2015 legislative session, we will continue our efforts in 2016.

Red or Green?

Like our home-grown red and green chile, poetry hot in our state. New Mexico poets are active organizers of slams, open mics, readings at a variety of venues (from brew pubs and wineries to orchards, art galleries, botanic gardens, and even the Rattlesnake Museum!), writing workshops, and children's poetry events. We are also a prolific bunch, publishing chap books, anthologies, individual collections with small presses; hosting book launches at independent bookstores; and forming small groups of performance poets who take poetry on the road (and on the train). We are constantly trying new things, and NMSPS is happy to co-sponsor and promote the activities of its members.

Next Board Meeting

The new board will hold its first official meeting in Santa Fe on July 25, 2015 to plan some great events and consider new projects for 2015-16. If you are interested in getting more involved in NMSPS, please go to our Contact Us page and send us an email with your ideas. We'd love to hear from you!

Here's to a summer of poetry reading and writing!

Best wishes,
Andi

Andrea (Andi) M. Penner
President, NMSPS

Update from the President - March 3, 2015

Dear NMSPS members,

The March 15we deadline is fast approaching to submit your poetry to the National Federation of State Poetry Societies' annual competition for 2015. Winners will be announced at the annual convention in St. Petersburg, FL in June. Contest rules may be found at nfsp.com.

We had a great 2nd trip to Tucumcari for poetry reading and open mic in the Art Space on Friday February 6. Katrina Guarascio was the feature, with Zack Kluckman, Jesus Lucero, Vineet Bansal - a semiconductor industry colleague of mine from India, and me rounding out a group of poets from Albuquerque. Levi Mericle headlined local Tucumcari poets, reading a new poem that he had finished four days before, with his sister providing a stirring, resonating interpretive dance routine that she had perfected with only two days rehearsal. WOW, I had never seen such perfect interpretation before!!

John Candelaria and Alison O'Leary coordinated a great day of "Poets In The Classroom" for Alvarado Elementary School on Friday, February 20. NMSPS provided 135 composition books for the children's use and will provide financial support for printing their first anthology of students' poetry! Stay tuned for next year's version to expand to two schools. we'll need your help. It was great fun to teach a basic poetry idea, like use of alliteration, to the students and see them respond with a poem, or two or three, within a 20 minute span of time.

We will need some listener-judges for events at " English Expo" at Oak Grove Classical Academy on March 25. Mari Anne Ban will have details about times and number of judges needed by the end of this week. If you are willing to help judge spoken-word poetry and prose readings, please let me know!!

Gregg Howard is putting together a poetry open mic sponsored by and held at Mesalands Community College in Tucumcari. The date has been tentatively set for the latter part of March or first part of April to accommodate the schedule of Albuquerque's Poet Laureate Helen Jessica Lopez who will be hosting the "Women of the World Poetry Slam" competition in Albuquerque.

"WOWPS 2015" will be held in Albuquerque March 18-21. The competition will feature about 72 poets slaming at venues around Albuquerque, starting at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and ending at the Kimo Theater on Saturday the 21st, with an after party at Tractor Wells Park. For details, check wowps2015.com.

Thanks to all who volunteered to judge the NFSPS poetry competitions. We will try to conserve those volunteers' names for future judging of NMSPS competitions, if you don't mind.

We'll be having our NMSPS State Convention in April. Details when the venue and plans are firmed up in a few more days.

Thanks for your energetic support of poetry around the state...and beyond.

Fil

Update from the President - July 7, 2014

Dear NMSPS Members:

On Thursday, June 26, NMSPS Chancellor Shirley Blackwell and I made the ten-hour drive to Salt Lake City, Utah to attend the three-day "Utah Rendezvous of Poets for All Seasons," the 2014 NFSPS National Convention at the Doubletree by Hilton.

This year's convention was chaired by Clarence Socwell, a well-published poet, and attracted about ninety attendees. There were "Sun Up" and "Around the Campfire".sans campfire. open readings to start and end each day, with very nice programs and workshops morning and afternoon.

My favorite workshops were "Here a Volta, There a Volta: Learning to Turn a Poem" and "Crafting the Miniature Palace: What Aphorisms Can Teach Us about Concision and Paradox" by Lance Larsen a teacher of literature and creative writing at Brigham Young University, where he currently serves as associate chair and is in the midst of a five-year term as Utah Poet Laureate. In early June, I wrote an aphorism, not knowing that we would be getting an in-depth study and prompted writing of them at the convention. You can find them on the internet by the score. They are fun but require a little work to pare them down.

"The beauty of a perfect double-rainbow is that someone else is getting soaked." was my prompted aphorism that drew a round of laughter at the workshop. It is drawn from awareness of where the sun, the rain - its intensity, and the viewer are located relative to each other; the humor comes from the surprise in the choice of words at the end.

Rob Carney, a Professor of English at Utah Valley University, was quite interesting to me because in his luncheon reading and his workshop "Never Stop Learning: Poetry as Continuing Education" he brought back the oral tradition of poetry by "reading" his work from memory.

Diane Glancy, a visiting professor at Azusa Pacific University near Los Angeles, engaged the audience by having several of them come up to the mic to read her source material for "Looking for the Elusive Line: A Journey to a Realized Poem."

Even though the electronics of his presentation were not cooperating, Joel Long's "Rhythm and Muse: Say Something New" focused on trying to present a poetic observation from an unusual point of view.

At the Second Plenary Session, I was able to update the Federation about our NMSPS progress in hosting open mics around the state and, with Andi Penner's help, get a new chapter in Farmington to compliment the new chapter being formed in Tucumcari. I was also able to give them a progress report on our legislature's efforts to establish a New Mexico Poet Laureate. The Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs held a meeting on Wednesday, June 18, at the Hispanic Cultural Center to gather input on the selection and support framework for our Poet Laureate. The operating structure must be finalized by the end of August to present to legislative planning by November so that the final bills can be included in the 60-day legislative session beginning in January, 2015.

Out-going NFSPS President Jeremy Downes passed the gavel to new president Eleanor Berry, who has a Ph,D. in English from the University of Toronto and has taught literature and writing at several colleges and universities in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, was also the President of the Oregon State Poetry Association from 2004-2006.

Look for another announcement in the near future about an exciting new association of the NMSPS with the NFSPS!!

Fil Peach
President

Update from the President - February 10, 2014

Dear New Mexico Poet,

Though the computer keyboard has not, thus far, been too active, it doesn't mean that the new officers who began their terms on November 2nd have been idle. There are a lot of positive poetic activities for me to report to you.

On that Saturday evening, out-going President and now Chancellor Shirley Blackwell and I joined a small number of you members, state legislators and other movers/shakers, at the Santa Fe home of Devon Ross and Susan Gardner, owners of Red Mountain Press, to welcome, meet and enjoy getting to know Poets Laureate Denise Low (Kansas), Walter Barga (Missouri), Michael Glaser (Maryland) and Luci Tapahonso (Navajo Nation) over a dinner in their honor. The next day, at I.A.I.A., there was a brunch, panel discussion and readings by the Laureates to help NM legislators and the public learn some of the cultural benefits of having a post of State Poet Laureate. New Mexico is one of only three states in the U.S. that do not have such a state sponsored position. After the day's activities, we gathered at a downtown Santa Fe restaurant to enjoy a dinner to close to the weekend.

I can tell you that during this current legislative session that will close February 21st, Senator Bill O'Neill and Representative Brian Egoff have bills in their respective legislative chambers that support the establishment of a New Mexico State Poet Laureate and that, with the governor's support, we should have an active Poet Laureate by 2016 in our fine state.

Other news: My first NMSPS board meeting was held February 1st at Manzano Del Sol, in Albuquerque. There was a lot of new business to discuss and there are a number of proposals about which you will be reading in Secretary Basia Miller's minutes and/or summary that will be hitting the email trail once we get requested Chapter Chair feedback.

The active out-reach engine is gaining momentum. In an attempt to engage poets from the less densely populated areas of the state that fall outside the Rio Grande Corridor, I contacted Luna Community College in Las Vegas, NM and worked primarily with Professor (Leslie) Jae Dennis, the Director of Creative Writing for the college, to co-host an open mic on their campus on February 6th. There were 33 people in attendance and a lot of enthusiasm among those who read, including a playwright who presented a scene from her play that is being produced at a couple of New Mexico venues, a comedian, and prose and poetry readers. They may have enough interest and new NMSPS members to form a chapter. Working with Rick and Toni Haymaker who own Tapestry of Sound in Tucumcari, we co-hosted an open mic at Artspace on the square, across the street from the Odeon Theater, on February 7. Rick arranged an on-air interview with Karen Alarcon on KQAY - FM radio at 9:00 that morning, in which he, Gregg Howard, the creative writing instructor at Mesalands Community College, and I participated. It was a great thirteen minute spot that highlighted the open mic that evening. There were 42 people who turned out from 6-8:30 to hear their excellent local poets and featured Albuquerque slam poet Zach Kluckman, with Jesus Lucero and me rounding out a wonderful evening of poetry. After the open mic, everyone hung around chatting and enjoying an "after-party" that lasted until Rick turned out the Artspace lights about 10:25 to be able to lock the door and go home. I am sure that an NMSPS chapter will be forming there within the next couple of weeks. Saturday, I hit the Albuquerque Chapter meeting for an ekphrastic poetry exercise and attended the Smokin' Slam at Caf Bella Coffee in Rio Rancho. Sunday, I burned down the

road to "T or C" to attend the Black Cat Sunday Poets at Rhonda Brittan's Black Cat Books & Coffee. Terry Blanchard directed the meeting of the 16 in attendance, including NMSPS member Stan Thompson; six non-members took hard-copy applications to NMSPS, so the chapter that once existed there may be revived. I'll be going to Clovis on February 27 to do a radio interview on KTQM 99.9 FM and to tape a 30-second spot that will air 22 times during the week prior to the open mic I'll be hosting at the Clovis-Carver Public Library on March 10th, 6-8pm. Sheryl Borden, ENMU's public television station director at KENW, is trying to arrange a videotaping session that day that will air prior to the open mic as well. Andi Penner will be spear-heading an effort to promote NMSPS in Farmington at a meeting and open mic. Please contact her directly if you can help. Gayle Lauradunn, of the Albuquerque Chapter expressed an interest in being included in activities pending for Silver City. There is a Cowboy Poetry event held there that we might be able to dovetail with NMSPS co-hosting an open mic for other area poets. Chancellor Shirley Blackwell may be able to prompt those efforts, once she begins to feel more up to the task, since that is part of her old stomping grounds.

Please help when and where you can. Other targets on my list for our open mic promotions of NMSPS include, Hobbs, Artesia, Carlsbad, Ruidoso, Las Cruces, Deming, Grants and Gallup (hopefully with the help of Navajo Poet Laureate Luci Tapahonso.)

The Board of Directors has allocated some \$\$ to help make the outreach possible. I've tried to look forward to a shorter, rather than longer, time frame for it to happen.

Vice-President Georgia Santa Maria will be stepping into my shoes for a time while I'm on a short overseas work assignment. Please let us know how you would like to help our efforts to build a stronger society and grow our membership!

Many Thanks,

Fil Peach

Update from the President - December 2012

Dear NMSPS Members,

This update is to let you know about decisions taken at the last Board meeting, including some that will need your vote next month.

By January, we will publish our NMSPS newsletter, Language of Enchantment, and items pertaining more to the "fellowship" aspects of our Society will be addressed there. I know you are anxious to know what is ahead for next year's NFSPS Convention, and more information will be forthcoming; however, I'd rather give you the complete picture than information still in flux. So, I beg your patience until after the holidays.

The Board met on October 27th for a phenomenal session. Thanks to Secretary Charles Trumbull, a full account of the reports submitted by members of the Board and the business conducted at the meeting was sent to all members with electronic access. The compilation of information contained in those minutes will be submitted for approval at the next Board meeting. Here are the highlights:

1. The Board considered the difficulties we would encounter if we adhere to our traditional schedule for an April or May annual meeting and election of new officers, since we will be hosting the NFSPS Convention in June. The Board decided to postpone the annual meeting and election to Saturday, 26 October 2013. All currently sitting officers have agreed to stay on until then.
2. The Board voted to propose an amendment to our NMSPS Constitution. The amendment would delete the 2nd paragraph of Article IX, Section 1, which provides a system for pro-rating dues. If the amendment passes, we will do away with "quarters" and go to a flat annual rate. We will address the matter next month, after the holidays. You will be given more information before the vote.
3. Charles Trumbull submitted a proposal to broaden our membership to include a wide range of members besides individuals. Bonnie Rucobo offered to help, and the Board unanimously endorsed my immediate appointment of Charlie and Bonnie as co-Project Leaders for Outreach. This proposal epitomizes our mission, and I strongly applaud Charlie's initiative in this sphere, as well as Bonnie's willingness to lend a hand.
4. The Board spent a good part of the meeting discussing the June 2013 Convention. Board members approved the projected budget (also in the minutes), helped assemble and approved a PR kit to present to prospective Convention donors, and offered valuable insights on other income sources. The PL for the Convention reported that we are ahead of schedule and prospects look very good for the event.

I send all of you my very warmest wishes for happiness, health, and prosperity throughout the holiday season and into the new year. I know 2013 will be a banner year for the NMSPS. I am so thankful for your support in this endeavor before us.

I know that the June 2013 La Conferencia del Encanto will set the highest standard for NFSPS conventions and that the NMSPS and New Mexico's poetry community will long be remembered for exceptional hospitality and enthusiasm.

Shirley Blackwell, NMSPS President

Update from the President - October 2012

In this note:

1. Info on Board meeting on 27 October
2. Membership Sweepstakes closes on 31 October - FAQs about the Prize
3. Members who are Finalists in NM - AZ Book Awards

1. Board plans for upcoming year and 2013 Convention.

The NMSPS Board will meet at the Lucky Bean Downtown Cafe in the old Borders in the Railyard section of Santa Fe. Address is 500 Montezuma Ave. We will hold the business meeting at 1:00 p.m., but will meet at nearby Swiss Bakery Pastries and Bistro, 401 Guadalupe Street, at 11:00 a.m. for brunch and conversation before the meeting. The meeting is open to any NMSPS member, but only the Board will be voting on the agenda items. 2013 Convention workers are especially encouraged to attend.

2. Do it Now--No Invoice Required

Keep those membership renewals (or new memberships) coming! So far, we have received over 50 checks, but **THE SWEEPSTAKES DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 31.**

Here is your chance to get free registration (\$75) to what is shaping up to be a DYNAMITE 2013 Convention. You don't have to mail in your invoice if you are just renewing, unless some of your contact info has changed. Just send a check for \$20 (\$30 if you can get the newsletter online but choose to have paper copies mailed to you as well) to:

NMSPS
c/o Shirley Blackwell
P.O. Box 1352
Los Lunas, NM 87031

A name will be drawn in November from those who signed up during October for the sweepstakes prize. **If you cannot use the prize yourself, you may give it to another member.**

3. Congrats to 14 NMSPS members who are FINALISTS in the New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards!

I am so proud to see 14 members of our Society in various categories on the finalists' list for the NM - AZ Book Awards. Over 1400 books were submitted. The winners in each category will be announced at an awards banquet in Albuquerque on November 16. I went through the several-page lists and spotted the following names. If I missed any of our NMSPS members, please let me know. Here is who I found:

Anthology - The editors of Fixed and Free Poetry Anthology, which was 1 of 7 finalists in this category: Billy Brown, Gregory Candela, Elaine Schwartz, and Stewart Warren.

Note: Stewart Warren was the book designer for the anthology and for three of the members' books listed below. Book design counts significantly in the NM - AZ Book Awards judging process, so I am taking the liberty of expressing collective thanks to him and to the three editors of Fixed and Free on behalf of the poetry community represented in the anthology and below.

Cookbook - Jules Nyquist, 1 of 5 finalists, for Appetites.

Historical Fiction - Maggie Petton, 1 of 8, for Heaven's Daughter.

Fiction - Mystery/Suspense - Annmarie Pearson, 1 of 10, for The Fetish Ruby
(also placed in poetry with another book)

Sci Fi/Fantasy Fiction - Bonnie Rucobo, 1 of 7, for King Pachuco and Princess Mirasol.

Religious - Elizabeth Ann Galligan, 1 of 4, for Secrets of the Plumed Saint.

Poetry (6 of the 11 finalists are NMSPS members)

Shirley Blackwell: Already There

Joanne Bodin: Piggybacked

Thelma Giomi: Weaving the Wind

Annemarie Pearson: Nature Rhymes with Natural Impressions

Barbara Rockman: Sting and Nest

Jeanne Shannon: In a Rose Wood Wandering

Update from the President - May 16, 2012

Dear NMSPS Members,

This update is to inform you of several items:

1. Announcement of new NMSPS Board Members
2. Information about Society email channels
3. Help wanted with Contests
4. NMSPS delegates going to Federation convention next month
5. Who's out of range until late May

Item 1. At our State Convention on 28 April, you learned that Sylvia Ramos had stepped down from her position as NMSPS Secretary after 3 years of dedicated service. Since then, I also received a letter of resignation from our NMSPS Vice President, Kitty Todorovich, who has pressing family health matters which demand her full attention at this time.

I am most grateful that two other NMSPS members were willing to step into those vacancies at this incredibly busy time. It is my pleasure to announce that ABQ Chapter member Joanne Bodin has assumed the office of VP and Charlie Trumbull is our new Secretary. Please see below about changes in information flow through the Secretary.

We have two new chapter chairs as well. Chandra Bales took over the reins of the Albuquerque Chapter from Elaine Schwartz on Saturday, May 12, and Chuck Russell will officially take office as the High Prairie Poets (Roswell) chairperson on May 26, but Ann Applegarth, the outgoing chair, said to put his name on the list now because she is going out of town.

So, welcome to the Board, Joanne, Charlie, Chuck, and Chandra (just listing their names sounds like a line of poetry). If you want to communicate with any of these officers by email, you can do so through the appropriate title on our website.

Item 2: Emails within the Society

Please note that the role of NMSPS Secretary has changed because of new capabilities in our website. In the past, Sylvia acted as the "router" of information in our Society, and many of our members submitted news or questions directly to her, which she relayed to the appropriate officer or contact point. Since she has left the post, folks have still sent her stuff, which she has graciously passed on, but I respectfully ask that you stop sending Sylvia these items and that you spare Charles that duty in the future, especially as we now have a more direct way to accomplish the same goals.

You can now send officers and project leaders messages through our website email personas. How does this work, you ask? Well, our Webmaster, Debbi, has constructed a system that channels emails to the private mailboxes of officers, project leaders, and even the general membership, without allowing outsiders, or the Society at large, access to those private email accounts. This practice protects the contact information of all members.

Example: if you go to our website and click on "Contact Us," you will see a list of officers. If you were to click on my name, for example, it would open up a screen addressed to

president@nmpoetry.com, and you could write me a message. That message would come to my personal mailbox, but the sender would not see my private email address. The same holds true for chapter chairpersons, our calendar of events, our newsletter, etc.

Item 3: PL for Contests. What does it take? What's NOT at stake?

I very much need someone to be our Project Leader for Contests. This job would involve keeping track of the contest entries in our 4 Quarterly contests, the second of which has a July 1 deadline. These contests are fundraisers for the 2013 Convention.

The Project Leader would spend most of his/her time on: recording and depositing entry fees, coordinating with the NMSPS Treasurer and VP, keeping track of contestant contact info, controlling paper flow, doing packaging and mailing tasks, verifying that submission rules have been followed, sending some poems out for workshopping, and notifying contestants of contest results.

This job needs someone who is not bored by detail and who can keep the contest entries organized and moving on schedule. It also needs someone who has access to daily mail delivery or who goes to their Post Office on a regular basis. At present, submissions are done in hardcopy via the USPS.

Here is what IT DOES NOT REQUIRE: The PL for Contests does NOT have to find judges or do any judging himself/herself. Nor does it require that you make policy decisions about the contests. Clear guidelines and best practices have already been written by our previous PL for Contests, Annmarie Pearson. The PL would be a member of the Board while the contests are going on, but the job does not require attendance at Board meetings, although the holder would always be welcome.

Item 4: NMSPS delegates to Annual Convention next month

On June 15-17, former NMSPS President Joe Shaffer (a lifetime member now living in Arizona), Georgia Santa-Maria, Gary Chorre, and I will represent the Society at the NFSPS Annual Convention in Merrillville, Indiana. We promise to take copious notes to prepare for our own hosting of the event in 2013.

Item 5: Unplugging for some R&R

I will not be online much during the next two weeks, nor will our webmaster, Debbi Gutierrez. We are getting in a little R&R and doing some of our own creative writing, so please don't fret if you don't get immediate replies to our emails. We will catch up sooner or later. That's it for now. Have a great summer, everyone.

Shirley

Update from the President - 18 September 2011

Dear Members,

The NMSPS Board met on 10 September and voted on some important issues. It will be awhile before our next newsletter is published, and I wanted you to know what's in the works before then. I believe, and our new Constitution mandates, that members have the right to know what actions the Board has taken. In the future, the Secretary or another Board member may provide these summaries, but our Secretary, Sylvia Ramos, is away at the present and this information is just too good to keep. Here goes.

1. The Board voted to bid for the 2013 National Convention of the NFSPS, to be held in Albuquerque 13-19 June 2013. I have sent our request to the National Federation Board, and it requires their vote, but there is no doubt it will be accepted. NFSPS President Russell Strauss said he is thrilled that NMSPS has offered to do it. Indeed, he was waiting for our go-ahead so that he could include the good news in his President's Message for the October Strophes.

We already have some volunteers for the Steering Committee and other convention jobs. I'll be asking for help later on in filling the remaining Steering Committee posts.

2. Until now, the NMSPS has relied on a contractor to host and maintain our website. However, the incredible recent growth of our Society and a host of new ideas about how to expand our Web presence means that we need faster, easier, and more economical access to the website. Consequently, the Board voted to assume ownership (domain names, etc.) and maintenance of the website.

Several members who have various skills in related technologies will comprise a team under Debbi Gutierrez, who was appointed Project Leader for Web Presence. I am very excited about the possibilities this move provides to benefit not only communication within our membership, but also ways to promote individual members' publications and other endeavors.

3. The Board voted to raise dues to \$20 per year, effective 1 November 2011. Youth dues will be \$5. Our fiscal year starts on 1 November because we have to submit full membership lists to the NFSPS by December to prepare for the spring national contests (members get substantial discounts on contest fees, but the Federation Contest Chair has to verify you are a member). So, to encourage everyone to sign up in October...wait, wait.....

4. The Board approved a Membership Sweepstakes that will take place during 1-31 October. Anyone who joins for the first time or renews membership during October will be eligible for a \$50 Amazon gift certificate, to be drawn in early November.

5. NMSPS has a prorated dues program for people who join part way through the fiscal year, and this sliding scale had created an awkward situation. For example, if a potential member wished to join the NMSPS at the Poets' Picnic on 24 September, s/he would have been asked to pay this quarter's dues and then a week later, remit \$20 for the 2012 annual dues. To remedy this situation, the Board established a protocol:

If a person joins the Society during the first half of any quarter, the member shall pay for that quarter. If the person joins in the second half of any quarter, the dues are waived

until the beginning of the next quarter. It isn't as difficult as it sounds, and the Treasurer will set up a chart that lays it out by month.

6. The Board approved the appointments of some returning and some new Project Leaders. Former newsletter editor Annmarie Pearson has taken on the daunting task of PL for Contests and Anthology. This new initiative is designed to generate money for a contingency fund (if not needed for the 2013 convention, it can be applied to other Society projects in the future) and at the same time provide opportunities for Society members to workshop and publish selected poems, even if those poems have not placed in competition.

I've seen Annmarie in action when it comes to contests, and I can't imagine anyone better qualified to keep track of the myriad details connected with this job. I wish we could clone her energy, dedication, and dependability. My heartfelt thanks to her for the fabulous work on our recent Annual Contest and willingness to shepherd future ones.

7. The Board approved several other appointments:

Jules Nyquist to be our new PL for the Language of Enchantment newsletter. Jules is new to our area and Society, but she is not new to this kind of project, and we welcome both her and her expertise.

Princess Ifeoma Achusim as PL for New Members, a returning position. We are glad to welcome her to a second term as the person who enrolls new members and helps stand up new chapters. She was the key person in the creation of our new Santa Fe chapter, which held its charter meeting yesterday (September 17). Way to go, Princess!

George Forrest as PL for Membership Development, that is, the care and nurturing of established chapters. It was George's idea years ago to have a membership chairperson, and there is probably no one better at explaining the fellowship aspect of our Society. I was so happy to have him by my side when we visited our nascent Taos chapter.

The reappointment of Larry Castillo-Wilson was tabled until I could talk to him about the scope of his project. We chatted today, and I am happy to say that he will be returning as PL for the NM Children's Poetry Project, which he has headed during the past two years. His confirmation will come at the next Board meeting.

8. We adopted as our NMSPS motto this quote from Cuban poet Jose Marti: "A grain of poetry suffices to season a century." Thanks to Kitty Todorovich for bringing it to our attention.

There are a few more items that are cause for rejoicing but were not Board actions.

Susan Paquet is the chairperson for the new Bosque chapter (Corrales) that was chartered on 13 September. Terrific!

James Raby was elected chairperson of our new Santa Fe chapter last night. The name of that chapter will be decided at a later date, when more members can weigh in on the choice of name. James has been hosting a monthly gathering of some 30 poets in Santa Fe, and at their October meeting, he hopes to enroll more NMSPS members.

So far, at least 12 people in the SF area have joined, and our forming Taos chapter has about that many. It seems to be a moving target, but we have topped the 100 members mark and aren't done yet. Anybody have connections in Las Cruces? Carlsbad? Farmington? Raton? Exciting things are ahead.

Best wishes to all, and keep the good ideas coming.

Shirley Blackwell, NMSPS President