



*The New Mexico State Poetry Society (NMSPS) founded in 1969.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Remembering the days I would wake up early, as the sun peeked over the mountains. I could see my breath in the chilly air and watch the sky as it slowly changed from a dark hue to a crystal, piercing blue. During those moments I did not have the concerns I do today. I was not thinking about what would happen tomorrow or what I should worry about. I was just enjoying life—living in the moment.

Something really hit me this morning. To look at the sky again and feel the life provided by the breeze on our skin and the sounds of birds in the trees. I encourage you to be in the moment and remember you are still you. The person is not defined by the state of the body but by the life lived through the soul.

As we move into the summer months, we owe a huge thank you to the Board for their dedication, service, and leadership over the past months, as well as to all of our members for giving your time and talents to make this year a success. The pages of this newsletter are an indication of the remarkable achievements we have attained amid many uncertainties and obstacles. For example, NMSPS presented a remarkable State Convention in April, continuing to “promote poetry throughout New Mexico and beyond.”

As I look toward the challenges we will face in the coming months, I’m reminded of one of my favorite adages: Many hands make light work. There is tremendous power in the size of our membership and the many talents our members bring to this organization. Through our collective action, I am confident we can fulfill our mission.

I hope you will take some time to read and learn more about the amazing people that comprise the 2022-23 Board. I am thrilled to be working with such an exceptional group of leaders in the months ahead.

**Bernadette Perez, President**



2022 POETRY VIDEO  
CONTEST WINNER

**The Art of Escape**  
**By Trier Ward**

[Click here to view the  
winning video.](#)



## A Word

A word is dead  
When it is said,  
Some say.

I say it just  
Begins to live  
That day.

*Emily Dickinson*

## OUR STATE CONVENTION WRAP-UP!

The 2022 Convention has come and gone – and what a spectacular celebration it was! An expansive field of nearly 30 poets, representing a vast array of poetic styles and experiences, shared their poetry with all of our attendees, making this year's event a smashing success! We had poets laureate from Santa Fe and South Euclid, Ohio reading alongside spoken word artists from the US and abroad. We had two incredibly powerful workshops facilitated by poets whose presentations started very necessary conversations. The underlying current of self-care and self-expression as we navigate transition, loss and a more hopeful future was palpable and so uplifting. Our featured readers brought such inspiration and such strength to the "stage" as well, and of course, Ana Castillo's keynote address on the meaning of poetry when nothing stays the same emboldened our hearts and perhaps helped some of us find new purpose.

All in all, this year's convention was a thing of beauty, and all of the feedback we have received so far seems to indicate that people left the event feeling uplifted and renewed – and what better result could a gathering of creative minds and empathetic hearts ask for?

If you were in attendance, thank you for sharing your light with us and for elevating the poets. If you were not there, fear not—we have several options for sharing some of the highlights with you through our online platforms. So keep an eye on the NMSPS website for that.

And remember—the past is behind you, with all its myriad experiences. The future however, lies ever forward with new experiences awaiting and new memories to be made, so let us move into that future with confidence and purpose!

**Zachary Kluckman, Director of Publications, Contests, & Fundraising**

## MEET OUR BOARD

Bernadette Perez, President  
Carol Borsello, Secretary  
Helen Knoll, Treasurer

## CHAPTER CHAIRS:

Janet Ruth  
*Albuquerque*  
Kuan Tikkun,  
*Rio Grande Valencia*  
Elise Stuart,  
*River Poets*  
Azina Lila Forest  
*Santa Fe Poetry Trails*  
Basia Miller

## DIRECTORS:

Shirley Blackwell,  
Chancellor  
Marissa Prada,  
Convention  
Jannetta Lamourt,  
Communications  
Membership  
*Volunteer needed!*  
Youth  
JC Wayne  
Fundraising/Contests/  
Publications  
Zachary Kluckman

## NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 21825,  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87154

### 2022 National Federation of State Poetry Societies Annual Convention

Bernadette Perez, Shirley Blackwell, and JC Wayne, all members of RGV Chapter, attended in person. Jannetta Lamourt, of the ABQ Chapter, attended virtually.

There is real news coming out of and about that convention that will affect all its societies. We'll get it to you ASAP, so watch for it in an e-blast or our next *Language of Enchantment*.

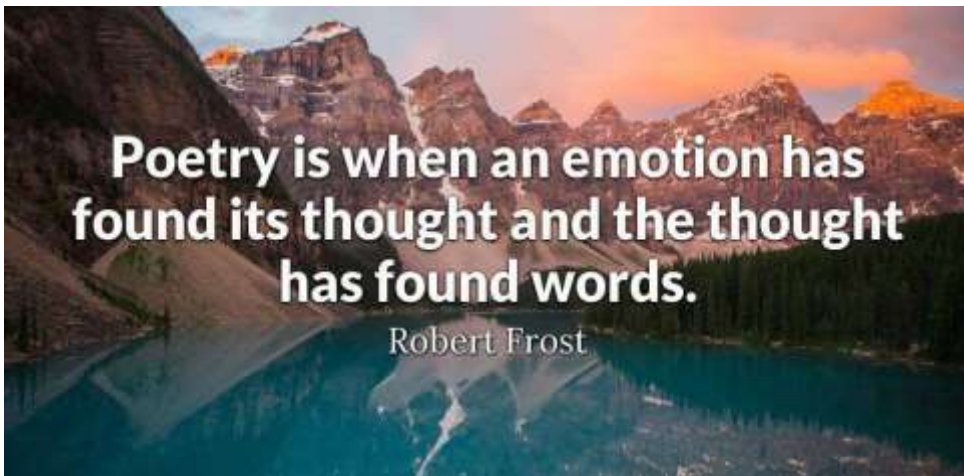
**Congratulations to Janet Ruth, ABQ Chapter Chair, for her First Prize win in the NFSPS Annual Contests/Category 4.** The required form was Golden Shovel. Janet, was your winning poem written during Scott Wiggerman's workshop on Golden Shovel poems, his last hurrah as departing ABQ Chair? You can see Janet's poem in *Encore Prize Poems 2022*, which is already available in paperback on Amazon.com. The full winners' list will be published in the August NFSPS newsletter *Strophes*.

NMSPS Chapters welcome new members and visitors-for zoom or in-person invitation [CLICK HERE](#)

**The NMSPS is all-volunteer. Here's how you can make a difference** If you would like to help steer the Society's future, please consider joining the Board or working informally on a project of your own choosing. We still need a Director for Membership. However—if you just want to sponsor, run, or judge a contest; help revive Poetry in the Classroom; set up a poetry festival; or have other ideas on outreach and growth, please contact our president or the relevant Board member listed at <https://www.nmpoetry.com/wp/contact-us> for more information.

## a Poet's Picnic—a Success!

For a full wrap-up, a photo slideshow, and videos, [click on this link](#).



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Zachary Kluckman

### FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK

It's been my honor & privilege to work with NMSPS & our outstanding board & members, Just wanted to introduce myself & say hello to all. I've been your Society's Secretary since about August of last year & have a few meetings & a Convention under my belt.

Please check our website for updates & ideas. We love when you participate in our contests & share our ideas & look forward to hearing from you. Many thanks - Carol Borsello

[secretary@NMPoetry.com](mailto:secretary@NMPoetry.com)

NMSPS members in good standing may request their own listing on our website's Members' Page (including bio, photo, and up to three weblinks) by [clicking here](#).

## From: Sylvia Ramos Cruz To: NMSPS members

"Reading is the building block of human knowledge" *Dana Goldstein*

I read NYT story and became quite alarmed at how much children have lost in reading and learning skills during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, I joined the tutoring program at Oasis and helped in my local elementary school. It was easy to do and a pleasure to work with two children during that year. I will go back to help again this next school year.

Oasis did the security clearance and provided a workshop to learn how to be a tutor. (And they have resources to use, if needed.) Then I asked to be assigned to the elementary school in my neighborhood. It's easier than you may think. After all, if you are reading this, you know how to read. Can you find one or two hours a week to help a child learn to read? If so, please give Vicki a call. (And can you tell a friend?)

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### Vicki DeVigne

ABQ Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring Program Director  
3301 Menaul Blvd NE, Suite #18 | Albuquerque, NM 87107  
Office Phone: 505-884-4529 [vdevigne@oasisnet.org](mailto:vdevigne@oasisnet.org) <http://www.oasisabq.org>

## A U.S. reading crisis

### The NY Times

*The pandemic has affected language and reading development in elementary students.*

By Christopher Capozziello

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Dana Goldstein, who covers education for The Times, has been hearing from parents concerned that their young children's language development might have been hindered by masks in the classroom.

*...And that's what was largely missing during the pandemic: explicit, hands-on instruction.*

After the Omicron variant wave, when some epidemiologists suggested that it was time to start unmasking in schools, concern from parents "reached a fever pitch," Dana said. "But when I got on the phone with speech pathologists and phonics experts, they cast a lot of doubts on the correlation," Dana said. "There's not rigorous data at this point that would suggest that masks are the cause of the issue."

"However, I continued down the road of talking to speech and reading experts and heard about a lot of other really big deficits," she said.

Perhaps most concerning: About a third of children in the youngest grades are missing reading benchmarks, up significantly from before the pandemic, according to a cluster of recent studies. In Virginia, one study found that early reading skills were at a 20-year low this fall, data that the researchers called "alarming."

To read the full article [click here](#).

## What's In a Federation by any Other Name—Like NFSPS?

Any member of the NMSPS is automatically a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Society (NFSPS), but what does that entail?. Once upon a time (say 2006, when I joined the NMSPS), I had no idea how being a member of the Federation could affect or benefit me. I was just glad to have contact with other poets. Several people had said that perks of membership included “contests” and the Federation’s quarterly newsletter *Strophes*. I knew about *Strophes*, but “contests” rang no familiar bells, and the NFSPS still seemed a faint, distant galaxy.

All that changed in 2008, when then NMSPS President George Forrest convinced me to enter the venerable NFSPS Annual Contests—and then attend the Annual Convention at which winners were announced. As George took me along to officers’ meetings and various events, and as I met Federation veterans, I discovered its goals for all NFSPS members, its efforts to support America’s youth poets, and how Federation practices embody NFSPS values and culture.

At the 2008 Convention, I saw how NFSPS membership benefits both State Societies and individuals. Those benefits have four iterations: contests, conventions, collaboration, and community. In this newsletter, I’ll talk about contests and leave the rest to future articles. I want to help all in NMSPS understand what impact the Federation can have on us and our poetry.

Not everyone is a closet poet. For many in the NFSPS, the words *poet* and *competitor* are synonymous. Every year, the NFSPS affords all its members—beginners to experts—a unique opportunity to submit poems for cash prizes and publication and to do it at a discounted, ridiculously low entry fee. Nonmembers pay double the fees and are ineligible to enter more than a dozen contests open to Members Only.

A Federation member can submit by snail mail or electronically, nonmembers can enter only through Submittable.com online services. Members pay \$1 per poem up to ten poems or a flat fee for anything more than ten poems: \$10 if sent via USPS, \$12 if submitted electronically. An exception is Contest 1, which has a First Prize of \$1,000, so it charges members \$5 (nonmembers pay \$10) each for up to three poems. There is no entry fee for Contests numbered 51, 52 or 53 because they are for students in grades 3 through 12. Students do, however, get cash awards and publication in *Encore*. Last year, NFSPS gave out more than \$8,000 to prize winners in all 53 categories.

Poems by the top three winners in each of the 53 contests, plus a list of all honorable mentions, is published in the annual *Encore Prize Poems* anthology, available since 2017 on Amazon.com. NFSPS sponsors four other annual competitions:

***National Federation of State Poetry Societies***  
**[www.nfsps.com](http://www.nfsps.com)**



## ABOUT NMSPS

We are a non-profit poetry organization affiliated with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc (NFSPS).

Our mission is to promote the creation and appreciation of poetry throughout New Mexico.

We are a diverse and inclusive community of poetry aficionados whose collective purpose is literary and educational, with a good dose of fun thrown in.

Come create and share your poetry with us. We thrive on mutual support and mentoring.

**SUPPORT**



**Donate**

**Stevens Poetry Manuscript Competition** awards \$1,000 plus publication and 50 copies for a single author's poetry collection.

**College Undergraduate Poetry (CUP) Competition** awards two students \$500 each and publication plus 75 copies of their winning chapbooks.

**BlackBerryPeach Prizes for Poetry: Spoken & Heard** awards poetry performers \$1,000, \$500, and \$250 prizes, plus chapbook publication and convention travel stipends.

**The Manningham Trust Student Poetry Contest** features cash prizes and publication in its own chapbook. The competition has two divisions: junior (grades 6-8) and senior (grades 9-12).

Federation contests not only motivate members to write more poetry, learn new poetic forms, hone their skills, and gain recognition, but also allow veteran poets drawn from a pool of past winners to earn their chops as contest judges. Except for the judge of the Contest 1: Founders' Award (grand prize), all judges are volunteers. This is also true for State Societies who run their own contests. NFSPS is an all-volunteer organization, and that fact dictates values, customs, and policies throughout the organization. One of those is to support all its members, not just those considered "celebrities."

Some State Societies benefit from using contests as fundraisers that do double duty by serving as training grounds for their own members to acquire skills and experience. Many affiliates have been doing this for decades.

In the past, NMSPS also ran contests and printed anthologies of members' poems, but those practices had lapsed. Now, however, our Contest Chair Zach Kluckman is gearing up for an anthology that will contain poems by attendees at the 2022 NMSPS State Convention and more innovations like our recent video contest.

Speaking of conventions, I will address that subject in my next article for *Language of Enchantment*, our newsletter recently revived by Communications Chair Jannetta Lamourt (thanks so much for your hard work). Look for it in email inboxes (or trapped in spam blockers) everywhere. Remember to enter Jannetta's email address, [communications@nmpoetry.com](mailto:communications@nmpoetry.com), in your address book to prevent your newsletter from being branded as spam and ending up in the abyss.

Shirley Blackwell, Chancellor

### Poets in the Classroom

**We have a new Youth Chair who will be assisting us with bringing this invaluable project back to classrooms in the near future! More information coming soon**