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## Language of Enchantment

News from the New Mexico State Poetry Society (NMSPS) 2024 No. 2

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# From the President





## A Word from the President

Bernadette Perez, NMSPS President

Dear Members,

Energy and passion are contagious. I attended the 2024 NFSPS (Federation) Convention in Roswell, Georgia (a few miles outside Atlanta) with confidence and passion. Even when I was anxious, I turned that anxiety into enthusiasm, since it made me seem more confident. I read at Open Mics with emotional words that moved the audience. I was humbled by their applause, which felt like a warm embrace from my fellow Poets.

We attended workshops that evoked a night of writing and awakened a series of poetic works. Then, I stayed up until the next morning supporting other Poets. I made friendships that I will cherish for years to come.

It was a fantastic opportunity for me to represent the New Mexico State Poetry Society in front of other attendees and notable speakers. I gained new knowledge and skills from workshops that covered a variety of subjects. The State Presidents' Meeting gave me insights into communication and strategies used by other Societies that will serve us well in the years to come. My favorite interactions were engaging in social activities and bringing fresh ideas home to New Mexico.

We will heed those ideas—plus all that you will offer—as we prepare for the 2025 NFSPS Annual Convention and BlackBerry Peach National Slam Poetry Competition from July 23rd through July 28, 2025. Unlike the events in 2013 and 2019, when we had sole responsibility, the Annual Convention will be co-hosted by the NFSPS Board, which now handles the major logistical and financial aspects like registration, Book Room, and meals, although they will call on us for volunteers. NMSPS will concentrate on designing the program to highlight NM and its poets.

We have the rare opportunity to bring this event back to the city where the BlackBerry Peach began. You will be amazed by how far it has come. I'm looking forward to talking more about this event!

Your NMSPS President,

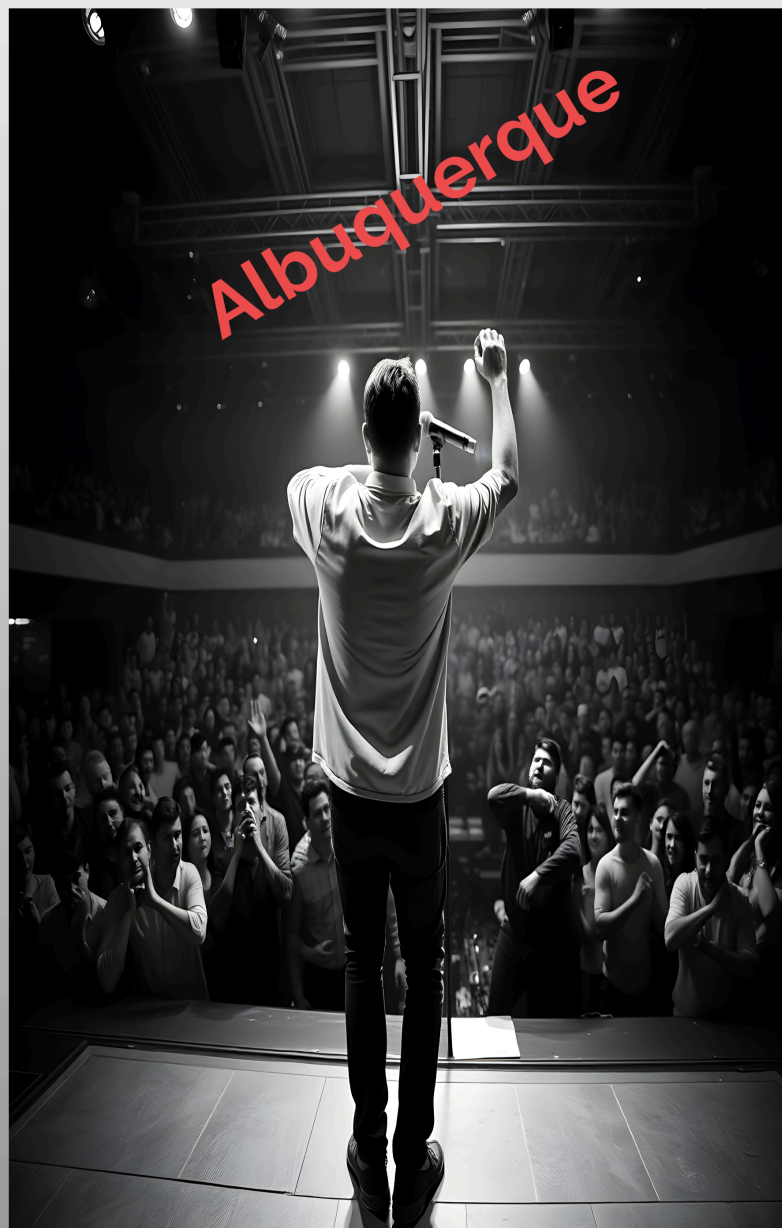
Bernadette Perez

# 2025 National Convention/Slam Coming to ABQ

National  
Federation  
of  
State  
Poetry  
Societies



Dates  
July  
23-28  
2025



## 2025 National Convention/Slam Coming to ABQ

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) has selected Albuquerque as the location for their next annual convention. Dates are July 23-



28, 2025.

At the Annual Convention in Atlanta in June 2024, the NFSPS Board took bold steps toward the future of the Federation and poetry across America. It agreed to serve as the final authority on who will represent the USA at the annual Individual Slam Poetry World Cup.

**A bit of history:** This move is the culmination of what began at the Albuquerque NFSPS Convention in 2013. Hakim Bellamy, then coach of the ABQ Youth Slam Team, brought the team in to perform for and inform attendees about slam poetry. Their show sparked the founding of the BlackBerry Peach (BBP) Prize, an NFSPS contest blending print and performance that debuted in 2017.

An offshoot of the BBP Prize was the live BBP National Slam Poetry Competition (BBP Slam), which had its first running in October 2022 at the Florida State Poetry Society's state convention in Daytona. One of the first live competitions after the pandemic, the BBP Slam had a phenomenal start, with 44 entrants nationwide, who began spreading the word in slam communities here and abroad.

When BBP ran in tandem with the 2023 and 2024 NFSPS Conventions, however, it had fewer entrants because two other big-money slams were also being held in mid-June. Consequently, the NFSPS Board provisionally changed the dates of its 2025 Convention to late July, giving top poets from Southern Fried and Big Foot Slams time to enter the BBP Slam.

Since the NFSPS started sponsoring the BBP Slam, it has gained a cadre of energetic and internet/social media savvy younger poets eager to help with communications, publicity, and performance. They are looking to learn from traditionalists but also to be recognized for their brand of poetry.

In New Mexico, we need to prepare (starting now) for what could be a watershed event. We also hope that this specific event/goal will revitalize local slam communities, especially youth slams. We will be working on that with established leaders both in and outside our NMSPS membership.

## **Guess Who's Coming to Keynote in 2025?**

GREAT NEWS! Naomi Shihab Nye has accepted the Federation's invitation to be our Keynote Speaker for the NFSPS Annual Convention, and our own State Poet Laureate Lauren Camp will headline the Convention's NM Showcase! Time to put 23-28 July 2025 on your calendar.



## **We Struck Gold: Welcome, Christine Murphy!**

With over 25 years of accounting experience, knowledge of both Excel and online bookkeeping systems, and a career history of working with nonprofits, Christine Murphy has everything NMSPS has been looking for to fill the post of Treasurer. We are delighted to welcome her to the NMSPS Executive Board.

She is currently president of the Bosque Gardens Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association in Peralta, NM, and has served as its de facto treasurer

since 2007. Her financial career has included doing accounts payable/receivable and payroll for a general contractor, working in an Albuquerque CPA firm serving nonprofit organizations, and directing a dental clinic, in which she was responsible for maintaining a million-dollar budget. She is currently a dental hygienist lining up interesting things to do when she retires. We got lucky that poetry is on her list.

Christine is a single mom with four grown children and five grandchildren. She loves sports (especially LA Dodgers' baseball) and working in her yard. She schedules a new yard project every year.



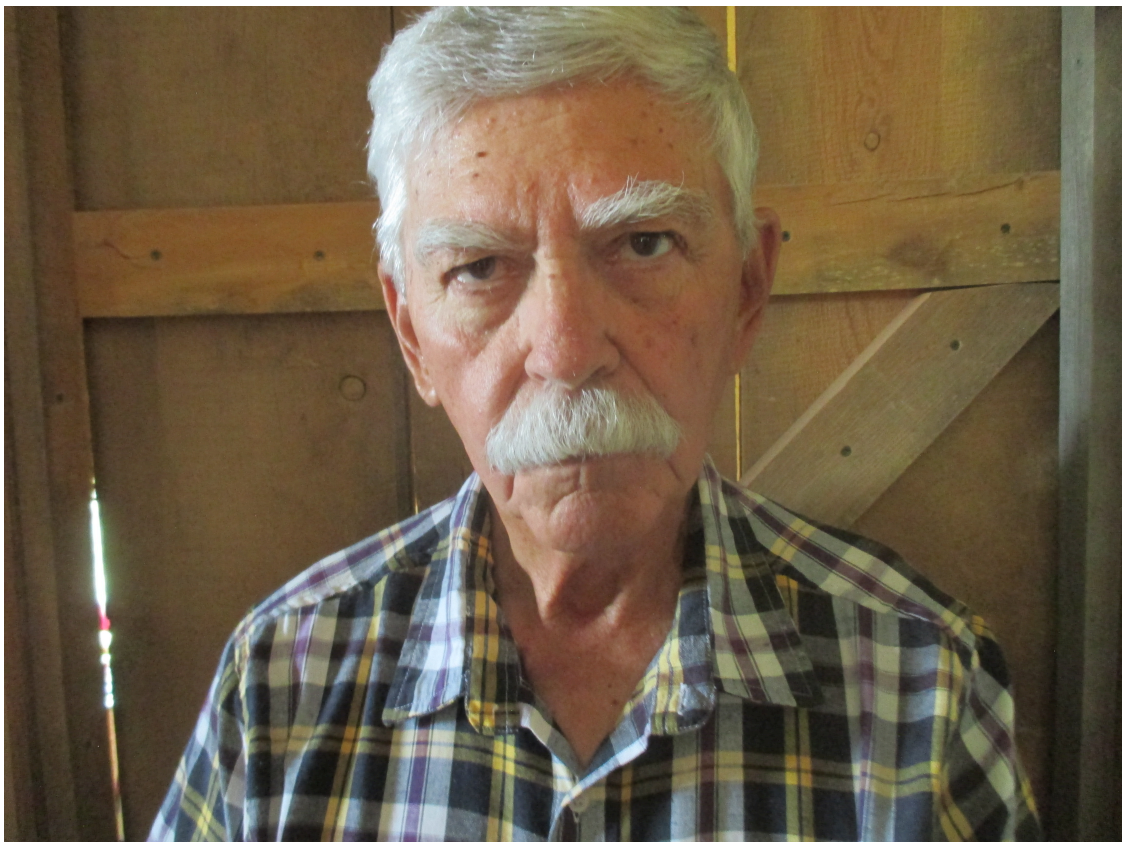
**Meet Our Membership Guru**



Jan Baca hit the ground running last November when she responded to our call for someone to take on the job of Membership Chair, and she hasn't stopped since. She has welcomed new members and kept the Board well-informed on membership issues. Meanwhile, she has been learning to navigate our website, which houses the software that supports online signups, dues, and directories of our 100+ members. Jan is excited to be doing this job and invites anyone with membership questions or issues to contact her for help.

Jan holds a BA in Creative Writing and an MA in Elementary education from the University of New Mexico. Her writing often explores themes of isolation, absurdity, and difference to uncover raw aspects of the human condition that are tender and vulnerable. She believes connection, community, and healing may occur in these soft spaces.

Since 1997, Jan, her husband, and her teenage son have lived in Albuquerque. Her award-winning poetry and short stories have appeared in various publications, including the *Santa Fe Reporter*, *Albuquerque Alibi*, *Earthships A New Mecca*, *Central Avenue Poetry*, and *Glissando*!



## **Greet Our New Editor**

Hello, my name is Larry Boggan. I write speculative fiction novels and poetry under the pseudonym Donald D'lo. I recently retired, which allows me time to work on my new website, <https://dlobookstore.com>, where I intend to sell my books and offer my services as a writing coach/instructor in the fields mentioned above.

I have Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Vocational Education from Mississippi State University, plus an Educational Specialist Degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. I also hold a Master's degree in English/Creative Writing from UNM.

I've been a resident of NM for over 25 years. My wife Dorothy and I, along with our adopted dog (named Cat), live at Pigeon Ranch in the Estancia Valley. When I'm not writing, I fly Birmingham Roller pigeons.

With this issue, I take on the editorship of *Language of Enchantment*. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the NMSPS team.

## **How to Co-host a Convention**

In June 2019, the NMSPS hosted the last traditional NFSPS Annual Convention in Santa Fe. Then Covid struck. When in-person (or hybrid) conventions became possible again, the Federation resumed its Annual Conventions with new twists. First, the events would no longer be the sole responsibility of the State Poetry Societies (SPSs). Second, they would become hybrid events, offering in-person and Zoom access. Third, in October 2022, the Blackberry Peach (BBP) National Poetry Slam—sponsored by NFSPS—debuted in Daytona Shores, Florida.

At the NFSPS Convention in Des Moines, IA (2023), the BBP Slam ran (in tandem) with the now-hybrid Annual Convention and achieved good reviews. At the 2024 Roswell (Atlanta), GA, event, the Federation agreed to an appeal from major venues in the US Slam community at large to designate the BBP Slam as the final arbiter for choosing a US Individual Slam Champion to represent America abroad.

The 2025 NFSPS Annual Convention and BBP Slam—under its official title, the BlackBerry Peach National Individual Slam Poetry Championship—will be held in Albuquerque from July 23 to 28 next year. This will be the first time the championship will operate with this new status and responsibility.

Holding the Convention and the BBP Slam simultaneously calls for changes in our role as a hosting State Poetry Society or SPS. Since 2020, the NFSPS (Federation) has taken proactive steps to ease the burden on hosting affiliates by taking on most of the financial and logistical duties, leaving the SPS to manage the more enjoyable parts of the event.

The NFSPS Board has designated people to oversee registration, bookstore, meals, technology (up to half the registrants may attend via Zoom), and choosing a keynote. Although NMSPS members will scout venues and hotels, final negotiations will be made at the Federation level. Co-hosting State Societies will have their own Showcase in the future, but SPS members will be asked to serve as workshop leaders, entertainers, guides, hospitality, volunteers, etc. See the article "There and Back Again" for additional details.



NFSPS  
&  
NMSPS  
Sponsored  
Convention  
2025

Contact Shirley Blackwell at: [chancellor@nmpoetry.org](mailto:chancellor@nmpoetry.org)

**Volunteers**  
NEEDED



## There and Back Again

*Very pretty!* said Gandalf, *But I have no time to blow smoke-rings this morning. I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it's very difficult to find anyone.*

-- JRR Tolkien in *The Hobbit*.

NMSPS threw great parties in 2013 (Albuquerque) and 2019 (Santa Fe) when we hosted the NFSPS Annual Conventions. We were fortunate to have a willing group of volunteers then, and once again, we call on our society members to step up for the grand adventure in 2025.

- 1. Since the Convention is now co-hosted by the NFSPS (Federation) Board and our State Society, the Feds will choose some of the speakers and we will pick some, but they will often work together. NMSPS will have our own Showcase to show off our local talent.
- 2. Next July, we will have three—maybe four—categories of attendees: regular Convention goers, a nationwide Zoom audience, BBP Slam competitors and coaches, and youth attending our National Youth. Slam Mini-Fest. It is a bit too early to sign up all the folks we will need, but please start thinking about where you might do best as a volunteer, including the BBP Slam.
- 3. We encourage crossover between stage and page poets. Although the BBP Slam goes at things a bit differently, we are confident NMSPS members can handle tasks such as bout manager, judge, scorekeeper, emcee, etc., and get a look at “the other side” in the process.
- 4. The rest of the Showcase will need workshop leaders, entertainers, panelists, open mic coordinators, plus folks to do mundane tasks like book-



room sales, ticket takers, etc.

- 5. Because Zoom attendees can't participate in many of the social aspects of the convention that occur during breaks, mealtimes, and informal read-around, we'd like to provide something for them during those lulls.

Can anyone out there make a short video on such things as: How to (1) Use Submittable, (2) Speak Into a Mic, (3) Fix a Screeching Amp, or (4) Deal with Copyrights, ISBNs, and Blurbs?

Zoom registrants could preview them at the Convention. Afterwards, the videos could be posted in the NFSPS website's online Learning Center to benefit the rest of NFSPS. We have almost a year to make such videos. Any ideas? Any takers? If so, contact Shirley Blackwell at [chancellor@nmpoetry.org](mailto:chancellor@nmpoetry.org).

Before we mount a drive for volunteers across the NMSPS, we are already working with the Fed's Convention Committee to plan and organize the event. We need to form a NM Subcommittee to oversee our part. ABQ Poet Laureate Emerita Anna Martinez has agreed to serve on the subcommittee, and we welcome folks who can

do the traditional convention tasks but also stage-savvy poets who could step in to help with BBP Slam activities. Here are some ways you can help:

AV equipment wranglers; Bookstore staff; Donors' campaign; Grant application; Film Crew and/or Photography; Hospitality, Roommate Coordinator; Signage; Merchandise (T-shirts and/or silent auction) and Vendors; Podcasters/YouTube geeks; Tours and Transportation; Volunteers Coordinator; Youth Slam coaches.

Did I mention that a local filmmaker plans to do a documentary of the 5-day event? Who knows, you could start as a volunteer and end up a star!



## **Glissando! Glides to Victory**

*Glissando! 2023 NMSPS Anthology* WON the Poetry Anthology category of this year's AZ-NM Book Awards. Congratulations to Zachary Kluckman\* of the ABQ Chapter, who conceptualized the project and served as its chief editor; Shirley Blackwell\* (RGV Poets), Stan Crawford\* (ABQ), and Edward Pittman\* (SFPT) for copyediting and proofreading under tight deadlines; Janet Ruth\* (ABQ), who submitted it to the contest; Janna Lopez\* (SFPT) for the eye-catching cover; and to all the members of NMSPS who responded so quickly and generously with their poems and support.

NMSPS poets also appear frequently in three other anthologies named finalists in that category. Many contributed poems to the *New Mexico Poetry Anthology 2023* (Levi Romero and Michelle Otero, eds.) and to *Central Avenue Then & Now* (Dale Harris and Merimee Moffit, eds.)

Of special note is the fourth finalist in the Poetry Anthology competition—*Upward Spiral: Poems of Opening and Renewal* by Shelly Barnett\*, Leanne Hildebrandt\*, Pamela Warren Williams\*, and Lynne Zotalis\*—all members of the Silver City Poets (formerly our River Poets Chapter). Congrats to all, and thank you for your hard work.



## Kudos to Our Members

In addition to being part of the group that contributed to the AZ-NM Book Award-winning Poetry Anthology *Glissando!*, edited by Zach Kluckman\* (ABQ), numerous individual members of NMSPS showed their stripes elsewhere in the 2024 Book Awards. Their names are printed below and marked with an asterisk.

### AZ-NM Book Awards

Tina Carlson\* (ABQ Chapter) took FIRST PRIZE in the Poetry-NM category for her book, *A Guide to Tongue Tie Surgery*. Two other ABQ Chapter finalists in that division were Sarah Kotchian\* for *Light of Wings* and Mary Oishi\* for *Sidewalk Cruiseship*.

Oishi may have been a runner-up in the Poetry-NM category, but she was the WINNER in Cover Design (6X9 or smaller) for *Sidewalk Cruiseship*. John Roche\* (ABQ) was also a finalist for that award with his entry, the light-hearted cover of *Tubbables*.

Although not NMSPS members (they would be welcome), we congratulate these other finalists in the category of NM-Poetry: Mary Morris for *Late Self-Portraits*, Sara Danielle Rivera for *The Blue Mimes*, and Shelley Armitage for *A Habit of Landscape*.

NMSPS finalists in categories besides NM-Poetry are:

Fiction—Other *Vespers: Poems and Stories* by Jeanne Shannon\* (ABQ).

Gay/Lesbian (LGBTQ) *Nopalito, Texas* by David Meischen\* (ABQ).

## More Kudos (Late-Breaking)

### SouthWest Writers (SWW) Annual Contests

This year marks a new step in collaboration between SWW and NMSPS. For the first time, New Mexico's largest writers' group, SWW, asked NMSPS poets to judge an expanded Poetry category in its multi-genre Annual Contests. Some years ago, John Candelaria (ABQ), a member of both groups, asked SWW members to join NMSPS for Poets in the Classroom; their participation enabled us to field 50 people to bring poetry to Albuquerque elementary and middle schools.

This year, SWW looked to our Society to provide qualified judges for the contests that feed their annual anthology, this year titled *Mosaic Voices*. In that book, SWW has given NMSPS a promo page and, on their website, placed links to ours. Plus, they gave folks who judged a promo page in the anthology and a year's free membership.

We were told that interest in poetry spiked this year among SWW members.

All entries were judged blind. Below is a list of honorees in each poetry category, ranked from First Place to Honorable Mentions. We also note some winners in the Prose categories. To see a list of winners in all categories, go to [www.southwestwriters.com/2024-writing-contest-results/](http://www.southwestwriters.com/2024-writing-contest-results/). Congrats to all our judges, poets, and writers. Your achievements reflect well on NMSPS as an organization of multi-talented authors.

Haiku Judge: Scott Wiggerman\*

- *over a red horizon* – Michelle Smith
- *pale water lilies* – Wanda Whittlesey-Jerome\*
- *deep with the earth*– William Stotts\*

Free Verse Poetry Judge: John Roche\*

- *Notes from Jerome, Arizona* – Kathleen Holmes
- *A Cure for Procrastination* – Sarah Kotchian\*
- *Desert Rain* – Kathleen Holmes
- *Driving North* – Jefferson Carter
- *Notes From the Gila River* – Kathleen Holmes
- *Notes from Hawaii* – Kathleen Holmes

Limerick Judge: Shirley Blackwell\*

- *The Belle from Aurora* – William Stotts\*
- *The Sage Named Olanthee* – William Stotts\*
- *The Hack from Ohio* – William Stotts\*
- *The Man from Racine* –William Stotts\*
- *Haiku?* – Rose Marie Kern
- *Love Hurts* – Rolf Jansen

By chance, we also saw the names of NMSPS members in various Prose categories listed below.

- 1st Place, Published Memoir: *Flying Fancy*—Wanda Whittlesey-Jerome\*
- 1st Place, Opening Pages of a Novel: *Bodies of Water and Dust*—Sarah Kotchian\*
- HM, Nonfiction Article/Essay: *Tale of a Working Man*—Mark Fleisher\*

If we missed any NMSPS members, please let our new Editor, Larry Boggan, know at [newsletter@nmpoetry.org](mailto:newsletter@nmpoetry.org) and remember to tell us when they occur of any other special honors, awards, or accomplishments.

### **Late- Late- Breaking News.**

We have just learned that Zachary Kluckman has won the prestigious 2024 Two Sylvias Press Chapbook Prize for his book. *When I Say Ghost, I Don't Mean Dead*, chosen by contest judge Oliver de la Paz.

Two Sylvias Press is an Indie company based in Seattle that runs the annual chapbook contest. Two Sylvia's Press typically receive 400-500 entries each

year. Way to go, Zach!



## Meet Our Board

### Executive Board

President: Bernadette Perez (RGV) [president@nmpoetry.com](mailto:president@nmpoetry.com)

Vice President: position vacant [vicepresident@nmpoetry.com](mailto:vicepresident@nmpoetry.com)

Secretary: Stan Crawford (ABQ) [secretary@nmpoetry.com](mailto:secretary@nmpoetry.com)

Treasurer: Christine Murphy [treasurer@nmpoetry.com](mailto:treasurer@nmpoetry.com)

### Chapter Chairs

Albuquerque: Janet Ruth (ABQ) [abq\\_chair@nmpoetry.com](mailto:abq_chair@nmpoetry.com)

Rio Grande Valencia: Kuan Tikkun (RGV) [rgv\\_chair@nmpoetry.com](mailto:rgv_chair@nmpoetry.com)

Silver City Poets: Lynne Zotalis (SCP) [scp\\_chair@nmpoetry.com](mailto:scp_chair@nmpoetry.com)

Santa Fe Poetry Trails: position vacant [sfpt\\_chair@nmpoetry.com](mailto:sfpt_chair@nmpoetry.com)

### Appointive Board (Directors)

Chancellor: Shirley Blackwell (RGV) [chancellor@nmpoetry.com](mailto:chancellor@nmpoetry.com)

Newsletter Editor: Larry Boggan (RGV) [newsletter@nmpoetry.com](mailto:newsletter@nmpoetry.com)

Membership: Jan Baca [membership@nmpoetry.com](mailto:membership@nmpoetry.com)

Youth: Kayleigh Stevens (ABQ) [youth@nmpoetry.com](mailto:youth@nmpoetry.com)



## **Glissando! is the Focus at Jules' Poetry Playhouse**

Muchas gracias to loyal members of NMSPS Jules Nyquist and John Roche, who invite us to celebrate with them the Society's award-winning anthology, *Glissando!* The event is part of a series offered by Jules' Poetry Playhouse, highlighting exceptional group publications.

We are extremely grateful to its Chief Editor, Zach Kluckman, who conceived and oversaw the publishing of this book of poems by NMSPS members. We also thank Janet Ruth, who ensured it was entered in the AZ-NM Book Awards, where it won FIRST PLACE in the Poetry Anthology category.

The online Zoom event will open on November 26 with discussion and readings by selected poets, followed by an open mic. To get details and register to read your *Glissando!* entry at the open mic, go to this link:

<https://www.poetryplayhouse.com/events/featured-readers-glissando-anthology-plus-open-mic>

See you there!





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