

2015, ISSUE 4
EDITOR, KATHY COTTON

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IN THIS ISSUE

New Term Officers	1
President's Message	1
Feature Mary Jo Balistreri	2
NFSPS Convention	3
Manningham Student Awards	3
Chapter Facilitators	4
New Members / Members' News	4
Challenge: Erasure Poem	4
Editors and Submissions	4
Chapter Meetings	5
ISPS Expanded Contests	5
Online Poetry Submissions	5
Poetry Calendar	5
Board of Directors	6
Are You Still a Member?	6
Membership Application	6

WANTED: PHOTOS, NEWS

Your editor is looking for fresh ideas for feature stories, interviews and writing prompts, as well as news and photos of chapter meetings and poetry events.

Email photos (jpg or tiff) or an idea or news for consideration to kacotton7@frontier.com. Please send photo files as attachments.

Officers Continue into New ISPS Year



President, Susan Moss
Vice President, Jim Lambert
Secretary, Wilda Morris
Treasurer, Judith Tullis

May elections brought another two-year term for our four ISPS officers. With the July 1 new program year, our officers, along with board members David Alexander, Kathy Cotton, Barbara Eaton, Mardelle Fortier, and Caroline Johnson, have a meeting July 6 to fill additional board positions and discuss the future of an ISPS poetry celebration (gala), the addition of a new chapter, scheduling various readings, workshops, etc., and the future of another anthology. ✍

A Message from the President

Summer is moving steadily forward, and one of the mileposts is the annual National Federation of State Poetry Societies convention. This year's event was a very successful gathering held in St. Petersburg, Florida. ISPS had nine attending members who enjoyed the various presentations including cowboy poetry read by a horse-riding, cow-roping Florida wrangler to writing surrealistic poems at the Dali Museum. Peter Meinke, the new poet laureate of Florida, read as did nationally known Lola Haskins plus several other Florida poets. In addition, several couples presented a panel to discuss how they negotiate their respective artistic lives together.

One of the highlights of this year's convention was the number of Illinois poets who won awards from honorable mentions to first place. Our unofficial count at the convention was 29 awards in varying categories, including three Manningham winners. A special congratulations to Max Seifert for his winning chapbook, *The Hole of Everything, Nebraska*.

After hearing two different approaches to cowboy poems by the aforementioned Doyle James Rigdon, and another poet, Sean Sexton, the concept of regionalism (place) as a poetry genre opens many content opportunities. Within this type of writing, culture and ethnicity might also influence the material. If we look at our own local neighborhoods, there may be different influences that can offer dialects, jargon, landscape, customs, food and so forth that can add new ways to address the familiar and produce a sublimity in our writing.

Another avenue to creating new work might be trying three techniques of surrealist poetry: automatic writing (just write everyday about something), dreams (interpretation of personal dreams), and juxtaposing realities (taking apart what's "real" and reassembling it in creative ways). Another approach to making new work is erasure poetry. Pick basically any written work and start to remove words or parts of them until there is some kind of final piece that offers something different than the original material offered. This type of exercise is part of the "found poetry" genre.

Whether it's fantastical content, local character or many other approaches to creating poems, one of the gifts poetry can offer is the preservation of personal and community history and as Meinke stated, "emotional history of the world. Happy writing, Susan T. Moss ✍



Spotlight on ISPS Poet Mary Jo Balistreri

Mary Jo Balistreri, an ISPS at-large member and recent Brewed Awakening featured poet, resides in both Wisconsin and Florida. Balistreri came to poetry just a decade ago, but her gifted writing quickly made its way into numerous publications, two poetry books and a chapbook, and garnered six Pushcart nominations, two Best of the Net and an invitation to serve as assistant editor at Tiger's

Eye Press. Read more about Jo Balistreri, including her inspiring story, *Trigger Warning: Poetry Saved My Life*, at www.maryjobalistreripoet.com.

You have a unique story of how you began writing. Share a bit with our readers. I began writing in 2005 as a delayed response to my seven-year-old grandson's death. I had been a concert pianist and harpsichordist for much of my life; music was my means of expression. Unfortunately, it did not help me transcend my grief. I eventually came to poetry because I needed it. Someone gave me *The Life of Language* by Bill Moyers. Afraid of poetry my entire life, I never read nor wrote it, but these poets touched me. They were accessible. In retrospect, poetry provided the container that music, an interpretive art, did not. Poetry gave me a way to give witness to this child's life, and to be true to his spirit. I needed to celebrate the life he loved. So the initial spark came from a seven-year-old boy.

The poets in Moyers' collection were a beginning. What other poets inspire you? My favorite poets change, but ones with staying power are Jane Kenyon, Rilke, W.S. Merwin, Denise Levertov, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Cording, Olaf V. Hauge, Rolf Jacobsen, and Tomas Tranströmer. Recently, I have enjoyed Mary Szybist, Gregory Orr, and Sarah Kay.

Where can we read more of your poetry?

I have two full books, *Joy in the Morning*, 2008, and *gathering the harvest*, 2012, both published by Bellowing Ark Press. Tiger's Eye Press published *Best Brothers*, a chapbook in 2014. I continue to submit poems and prose to print journals, online publications, and anthologies. Recent or forthcoming work is in *The Healing Muse Parabola*, *Journal of Modern Poetry*, *Plain-songs*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Passager*, *Ruminate*, *Kentucky Review*, *The Homestead Review*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Acorn*, and *A Hundred Gourds*.

Do you have advice to share with fellow ISPS poets?

Read, read and read. Go to poetry events, and communicate with fellow poets. Join a critique group and if one is not available near you, find one at ISPS or other poetry organizations. Everyone needs objective readers. A small group often works best. And sometimes all you need is one good reader/writer to critique your work. Concentrate on process in your writing. Publication is important, but secondary in my opinion. Too much emphasis on publication can take you out of the reason you loved to write poetry in the first place.

What are you currently working on?

I'm working on a manuscript for a fourth book of poems, and a book of personal essays.

How do you keep track of your frequent submissions?

I have a list of submissions, the name of the journal, date sent, whether accepted or rejected, using yellow for "Yes," and red for "No." On a separate sheet I list the poems/prose published in that year. I start a new sheet each year. It's simple but it works. I keep them on my computer, but also in hard copy. ✍

Poems by Mary Jo Balistreri

What You Left Me

Sheer peach drapes sag in the sun's wide eye
vacuum silent and uncoiled on the beige carpet

grandfather clock from your childhood stopped at 8:02—
chimes useless as time

oatmeal-raisin cookies hard as stones in glass cashew jar
Coffee pot unplugged

black karaoke case on the counter
Willie Nelson's "Red Headed Stranger" hanging out
its sleeve

dress shoes waiting by the door
beveled mirror in the foyer

splotches of dried blood on the white marble floor
your eyes as mine

blue, startled

The Centrifugal Eye, 2014

Note: Poem is based on the poet's father who survived a sub-dural hematoma and brain surgery at 89 and lived in good health until the year before he died at 96.

Pilgrimage to Mont-Sainte-Victoire

I paint only what I see. —Cezanne

I walk the sun-strewn field, release
with the crunch of my shoes crushed essence
of lavender and sage that spark the air with scent.

Mont-Sainte-Victoire. I am here—
where Cezanne splashed canvas
with late August-ocher and violet-blue.

Lodestar of Provence, you defy time.
The railroad line carved into your foothills,
the scar he painted.

Unclasping the hinges of my canvas-backed chair,
easel ready, I paint only what I see:

Remoteness, face veiled in mist
distant and silent as God—
mountain both apparition and anchor.

After I sit in its presence for hours, the mountain
traverses the distance between us, transfers
the fire at the core of its granite bulk.
Illuminated by the setting sun, it breaks
through cloud cover, shifts stone to stained glass,
a transfiguration of angles and planes so bright it burns.

Parabola, 2014

Illinois Shines at 2015 NFSPS Convention in St. Petersburg, Florida



Nine ISPS members attended the 2015 National Federation convention: Pictured are:

Gary Ketchum, At Large
Susan Moss, Northbrook
Kathy Cotton, Carbondale
Candace Armstrong, Carbondale
David Bond, Carbondale
Judith Tullis, Darien

Other ISPS members attending the convention are:

Max Seifert of Wilmett
Carol Martino of Peoria
Amy Jo Zook of Ohio
All are ISPS at-large members..

Our Unofficial* Winners List

DAVID BOND, CARBONDALE

2nd, NFSPS Founders Award
2nd, Morton Prouty & Elsie Prouty Award

KATHY COTTON, CARBONDALE

1st, Jesse Stuart Memorial Award
HM, Appreciation Award
HM, Barbara Stevens Memorial Award
HM, American Indian Heritage Award
HM, Louisiana State Poetry Society Award
HM, Mildred Baass Remembrance Award

GAIL DENHAM, AT LARGE

HM, Jesse Stuart Memorial Award

MICHAEL ESCOUBAS, PONTIAC

HM, M&S Poetry Writing Contest

CAROLINE JOHNSON, DARIEN

1st, League of Minnesota Poets Award
3rd, Morton Prouty & Elsie Prouty Memorial Award

WILDA MORRIS, LISLE

3rd, Peace Award
HM, Poetry Society of Oklahoma Award
HM, Dorman John Grace Memorial Award
HM, Poetry Society of Michigan Award
HM, Ohio Award
HM, American Indian Heritage Award
HM, NFSPS Winners' Circle Award

DONNA PUCCIANI, LISLE

1st, Poets Roundtable of Arkansas Award
1st, New York Poetry Forum Award

DEBORAH ROHDE, NORTHBROOK

HM, Florida State Poets Association Award

MAX SEIFERT, AT LARGE

1st, Florence Kahn Memorial Award, College/University Manuscript Competition

BETH STAAS, DARIEN

HM, Poetry Society of Oklahoma Award
HM, Jesse Stuart Memorial Award

JUDITH TULLIS, DARIEN

1st, Mississippi Poetry Society Award

MANNINGHAM SENIOR DIVISION, GRADES 9-12

5th HM, Catherine Carroll, Lisle

MANNINGHAM JUNIOR DIVISION, GRADES 6-8

2nd, Anthony Poett, Pingree Grove
4th, Hannah Van Mevere, Arlington Heights

*Check upcoming NFSPS *Strophes* for official list.

Manningham State Awards

The annual Manningham Trust Student Poetry Contest begins at the state level with winners advancing to the NFSPS contests. Illinois 2015 state-level winners are:

SENIOR DIVISION

1st, Catherine Carroll, Lisle
2nd, Kenneth Dizon, Chicago
3rd, Rachel Watson, Lisle
Honorable Mention, Matt Swain, Patrick Mudge and Callie Sharp, all from Lisle.

JUNIOR DIVISION

1st, Anthony Poett, Pingree Grove
2nd, Jack Kingston
3rd, Elizabeth Gaare, Arlington Heights,
Honorable Mention, Hannah Foster and Hannah Von Meveren, Arlington Heights. ✍



ISPS President Susan Moss with a Florida pirate at the poets reception..



Kahn Award winner Max Seifert with Kathy Cotton, who edited/designed his winning chapbook.



Carol Martino with a pirate at the NFSPS poets reception.

Chapter Facilitators Begin New Two-Year Term



David Alexander, Pontiac; Kathy Cotton, Carbondale; Barbara Eaton, Lisle; Caroline Johnson, Darien; and Susan Moss, Northbrook, begin new two-year terms as facilitators for ISPS chapters throughout the state. Facilitators also serve as members of the board of directors.

Writing Challenge: The Erasure Poem

At the surrealism writing workshop, appropriately held at the Dali Museum during the 2015 NFSPS convention, we created erasure poems.

Most of us took the pages of existing prose text and "erased" (by scribbling over) all but our few chosen words. The facilitator set the bar higher by showing us her erasure poems with artwork drawn around her circled words. To view samples of erasure art, check sites such as the Poetry Foundation at www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/02/from-snow-city/ or www.postertext.com.

Whether your goal is to create a poetic art page, a unique new poem, or a few lines to break your writer's block, erasure is a good challenge. Select a page from any source—book, newspaper, magazine, online resource. To avoid getting caught up in the text, you may choose to fold the page vertically or in random shapes. Scan the portion of text and circle your chosen words or portions of words. "Erase" everything else on the page. You may wish to copy your selections in order, adding line breaks to format your poem on a separate sheet.

Typically, erasures are not considered derivative works. Before you publish an erasure, be sure the poem is sufficiently transformative, fair-use writing without copyright infringement.

Send your erasure poem or pdf scan of an art erasure to kacotton7@frontier.com to be considered for publication in our next newsletter. ✍

Think about the Editor When You Make a Poetry Submission

In *The Review Review*, Lynne Barrett gives us a glimpse into what editors really want. She reminds us that the editor "is committed to the magazine, to it reaching a readership, to its identity and survival. The editor wants nothing more than to read something so fresh and powerful and polished there is no question it must be in the journal." So, our job as poets is to consider that editor who is reading hundreds, perhaps thousands of poems

and has a deep wish that you "Send something perfect for us, please."

1. Read the journal to see if your work is a "perfect" fit for the editor.
2. Keep track of your submissions.
3. Carefully follow the editor's submission guidelines.
4. Pay attention to the reading period.
5. If you are making simultaneous submissions, notify editors if your

New Members / Members' News

LUCY M. LOGSDON of Norris City is a new member of the Carbondale chapter. Logsdon's recent and upcoming publications include *Heron Tree*, *Drafthorse Lit Journal*, *Poet Lore*, *Nimrod*, *The Southern Poetry Review*, *Iodine Poetry Review*, *Literary Orphans*, *Sixfold*, *Gingerbread House Literary Magazine*, *Rose Red Review*, *Indian Summer Quarterly*, *Conclave: A Journal of Character*, *The Miscreant Magazine*, *Cross Poetry Review*, *The Poetry Storehouse*, *VerseWrights*, *California Quarterly* and *Seventeen Magazine*.

She has received a MacDowell Writing Colony fellowship and taught at The Frost Place. She received her MFA from Columbia University and served as the program director at the National Book Awards. Currently, she teaches at Southeastern Illinois College, located in southern Illinois, near the Shawnee National Forest. In her spare time, she raises chickens and ducks with her husband and cares for various other aging critters.



JIM REISS of Wilmette has a review in *Huffington Post* for his sixth book of poetry, *The Novel*. Read the review at www.huffingtonpost.com/carol-muskedukes/poets-in-and-out-of-form_b_7482260.html. Reiss is a member of the Northbrook chapter.



DOYLE RAYMOND VINES of Cobden died June 24 at the age of 67. Vines was an active member of ISPS Southern Chapter and founder of Southpass Publications and the social media group, Poet's Post. He published two books of short stories, a poetic journal, and edited or was included in more than ten poetry anthologies. ✍

work is accepted elsewhere.

6. If your submission is accepted, write a brief thank-you note to the editor and supply any additional requested information.

Barrett also suggests that *you* try editing! "Seeing how much is sent when it is not ready and how a single work reads amid a mass of submissions will teach you a lot." It may even teach you to appreciate editors. ✍



Chapter Meetings

CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

1:00 p.m., Saturday, August 8
Pontiac Public Library, 815-844-7229
211 E. Madison St., Pontiac, IL

NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, July 12
Northbrook Public Library
847-272-6224

1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
Bring 8-10 copies of poems for critique. No food/beverages allowed in this room.

SOUTHERN CHAPTER, CARBONDALE

2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, July 12
Carbondale Public Library, 630-986-1976
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL
Bring 10 copies of poems for critique and a snack to share.

SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, August 7
Lisle Public Library, 630-971-1675
777 Front St., Lisle IL
Bring your beverage, 20 copies of poems for critique, and a snack to share.

WEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, DARIEN

1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Saturday, July 11
Indian Prairie Public Library
(630) 887-8760
401 Plainfield Road, Darien.
Bring your own beverage, 12 copies of poems for critique, and a snack to share. ✍

ISPS Online Submissions

The next bimonthly submission period for member poetry on the ISPS website is August 1 through 14. Members may submit one piece of original work, maximum two pages, to Alan Harris at oasis@alharris.com or by mail to Alan Harris, 543 E. Squirrel Tail Dr., Tucson, AZ 85704. Member poetry is viewable by poet, poem title, or submission period at www.illinoispoets.org. ✍

September 10 Deadline for Expanded ISPS Poetry Contest

The 22nd Annual ISPS Poetry Contest is now open with double the categories of past years:

1. Any subject, free verse
2. Formal verse, any set form
3. Haiku, traditional or modern
4. "A Happy Memory," free verse
5. "Enjoy Illinois," free verse
6. "Summertime," ethereal
7. "Hope," any form
8. "Cup o' Java," any form

No poet can win two awards in the same category. All poems must be the original work of the contestant, unpublished in print or electronically. Poems that have won monetary awards are not eligible. Simultaneous submissions are accepted.

Poems (except haiku) must be titled, written in English, no longer than 40 lines, and typed in 12- or 14-point with no fancy fonts or illustrations.

Submit two copies of each poem: one poem per 8 ½ x 11 page. Include on the first copy your name, address, e-mail, phone number and category in upper left hand corner. Second copy should include category only.

ISPS members pay a reduced rate of \$8 for up to 8 poems; \$1 each additional poem.

Make checks payable to Illinois State Poetry Society and mail submissions with your check to:

Illinois State Poetry Society Contest
% Judith Tullis
6455 Big Bear Drive
Indian Head Park IL 60525

All entries must be postmarked on or before the contest deadline, **September 10, 2015**. For a complete copy of the contest brochure, check www.illinoispoets.org. ✍

Mark your Poetry Calendar for July/August 2015

- **JULY 15**, deadline for Sister Cities Poetry & Prose Exchange, Highland Park.
- **JULY 26**, 12:30 p.m., readings by featured poet and open mic at Brewed Awakening in Westmont.
- **AUGUST 1-14**, online poetry submission period; submit to Alan Harris at oasis@alharris.com.
- **AUGUST 4, 11, 18 AND 25**, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Summer Poetry Writing Workshops; Coldwell Banker office conference room in Downtown Highland Park. Contact jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org for details.
- **AUGUST 22**, 1:00 p.m. Metered Poetry Workshop, led by Debra Bruce and Andrea Witzke Slot, at the Harold Washington Library, Chicago.
- **AUGUST 30**, 12:30 p.m., readings by a featured poet and open mic at Brewed Awakening in Westmont.
- **SEPTEMBER 1**, deadline for Helen Schaible sonnet contest. Check www.illinoispoets.org/pdf/sonnet-contest-2 for details.
- **SEPTEMBER 1**, deadline for submissions to Poets & Patrons 59th Annual Chicagoland Poetry Contest. Send entries, inquiries, and fees to: Barbara Eaton, Contest Chair, 416 Gierz Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515.
- **SEPTEMBER 1**, deadline for Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs annual poetry contests, www.isfpc.org/annual-contest.
- **SEPTEMBER 10**, deadline for submissions to ISPS Annual Poetry Contest with eight categories. Details at www.illinoispoets.org.
- **OCTOBER 17**, Reading of Poets & Patrons winning annual-contest poems at Downers Grove Public Library. ✍

ISPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President, Susan T. Moss
stm48@hotmail.com

Vice President, Jim Lambert
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Secretary, Wilda Morris
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Facilitator Kathy Cotton
kacotton7@frontier.com

Southwest Suburban Chapter, Lisle
Facilitator Barbara Eaton
eatonb1016@aol.com

West Suburban Chapter, Darien
Facilitator Caroline Johnson
twinkscat@aol.com

Past President Mardelle Fortier
fortier@cod.edu

At-Large Member (one or two)
TBA

It's a New Year. Are You Still a Member?

The 2014-15 ISPS membership year ended June 30. To continue all the benefits of the 2015-2016 ISPS year, renew NOW. For the small investment of \$20 (optional \$30.00 for Patron status or \$50.00, Benefactor status), you support poetry in Illinois and receive all these perks:

- ☆ Triple membership: the Illinois State Poetry Society PLUS the National Federation of State Poetry Societies PLUS any of the ISPS chapters.
- ☆ ISPS bimonthly newsletter plus email notices of poetry events throughout the state.
- ☆ NFSPS quarterly publication, *Strophes*.
- ☆ Special submission rates for annual ISPS and NFSPS contests.
- ☆ Free admission to ISPS seminars and lectures and all chapter meetings.
- ☆ Poetry critiques at chapter meetings across the state, plus availability of online critique groups.
- ☆ Bimonthly publication of a poem submitted to the ISPS website.

Stay with us! For your convenience a membership form follows and is also on the website, www.illinoispoets.org

If you are unable to print the form, send your check with your name, address, email address, phone number and voting chapter (Northbrook, Darien, Lisle, Pontiac, Carbondale or At Large).

If you have not submitted a brief bio for the newsletter and website, you are invited to send one with your membership form. ✍

GIVE A COPY TO A FRIEND!



ISPS Membership Form PLEASE PRINT

Complete the information below and send the form with a check for July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016 annual dues of \$20.00 (optional \$30 for Patron status or \$50 for Benefactor) to the address below. New members please send also a short bio for our newsletter and website.

MEMBERSHIP:

Renewal New Member \$20 Regular \$30 Patron \$50 Benefactor

VOTING CHAPTER (select one):

Central, Pontiac North Suburban, Northbrook Southern, Carbondale
SW Suburban, Lisle West Suburban, Darien At-Large

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (home or cell) _____

Email _____

Mail to: Judith Tullis, 6455 Big Bear Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525