



2016, ISSUE 1  
EDITOR, KATHY COTTON

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**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.

## What's on Your "Poetry Favorites" List?

The ISPS bylaws—those ten Articles with all their numbered Sections that most members have never read— set our challenge: "to encourage the crafting and enjoyment of poetry in the State of Illinois." So, what will *you* do to craft and enjoy and encourage this year? Some opportunities will unfold from ISPS board plans: an exhibit of members' poems in libraries in April, an upcoming third edition of *Distilled Lives* anthology, a gala with workshops and socializing. Other individual opportunities may flow from our New Year's resolutions like: *I will set aside time to read and write poetry*, or *I will submit more poems to contests and journals*.

And here's something you can do to encourage your fellow ISPS poets: For a future newsletter column, share the names of some of your favorite poetry books, whether on the craft of writing or by favorite poets. This week I am enjoying Mary Oliver's *New and Selected Poems* and *The Essential Haiku* edited by Robert Hass. What books are inspiring you? Please email titles/authors of some favorites to kacotton7@frontier.com. ~Kathy Cotton, Editor



## A Message from the ISPS President

Another year closes, and many ongoing and new members have made a commitment to ISPS. We mourn the passing of several members (see page 3) and look forward to the start of a haiku chapter on February 21 at the Northbrook Public Library. Some other exciting plans are also underway with more information forthcoming as they evolve.

We often take an accounting of the past year's personal accomplishments, and as poets, our writing is one of those markers of time and intention. It is also an opportunity to consider what might be fresh approaches to writing as well. Here are a couple of ideas that might be interesting if you have not tried them already.

One suggestion relates to a recent Wisconsin Public Radio broadcast of Jean Sibelius's music in celebration of his one hundred and fiftieth birthday. It made a pleasant drive through parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin back to Illinois. The program included sections of his choral symphony entitled *Kullervo* which was based on *The Kalevala*, Finland's national epic. He also created tone poems, musical structures usually in a single continuous movement that evokes a poem's content. These pieces were based on mythology and folklore and the music spoke for the original words. Both formats are interesting ways to reinvent our own poetry, perhaps in collaboration with a musician.

Another idea, which some of us have tried or are presently doing, is to write a series of poems that relate to one theme that runs through and informs a variety of these works. Both metaphorical and literal portrayals of the central idea can be applied as well as different forms. Examples of a central guiding idea could be journey, memory, loss, love, beginnings and endings among innumerable other possibilities. Perhaps a whole collection might result or a section of a collection. This challenge can allow for a variety of approaches, opinions and deeper research into self and observation that might not occur with only one poem on a given topic.

May the new year bring you inspiration and peace.

Happy writing, Susan T. Moss

## Spotlight on ISPS Poet Sheila Kirscher



ISPS members share their poetry in numerous ways. We enter contests, submit to journals, post online, compile books. Sheila Kirscher of Wilmette brings to the list a few additional venues. Hers is a life-long story of applying writing skills to make people happy wherever she happens to be.

To honor individuals and groups on special occasions Kirscher wrote parody poems. When working for a local textbook publisher, she regularly shared her light verse in the company's employee newsletter, even including names of all the staff members in four poems that spread out over the entire year.

Now retired, Kirscher is collecting personal history and writing her memoirs—each chapter opening with a poem about a family member or a remembered event from her "long and happy life." She has also been a Brewed Awakening featured poet and director of the annual ISPS Poetry Month project. Kirscher serves as an at-large member of the board.

*When did you first start writing poetry?*

Poetry has provided me with comfort and inspiration since my youngest years. My aunt, who was a high school English teacher, started me out with Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*. I began writing rhymed poems when I was in second grade.

*What inspires your current writing?*

In the past few years, travels with my family to France, Tanzania and the Galapagos Islands have been one source of inspiration for my poems. Meeting with other writers, like the ISPS North Suburban Chapter and my memoir class, is also inspiring.

*Tell us about your practice of writing poems to honor people and events.*

In high school I started reading *The New Yorker* regularly and collected a folder of poems from the magazine over many years. From my earliest days with the *New Yorker*, I was hooked on Frank Sullivan's "Greeting Friends" poetry and started using it as inspiration for writing my own poems to give people to honor occasions such as holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, travel—especially group walking trips in Switzerland—and individual participants in the various events. Often these poems were in the form of parodies of songs. One example is a song parody I wrote to celebrate the 40th anniversary of neighbors, both lawyers. Years later at the memorial service for one of them, I was asked to perform the poem. The part designed for the chorus was repeated by the audience at my signal, resulting in a fun and happy remembrance for all.

*You've been reading poetry since childhood. Whose work do you most enjoy now?*

Current favorites are Ted Koozer, Billy Collins and my contemporary, Marilyn Taylor, and my teacher, Robin Chapman.

*How has your poetry style changed over the years?*

After spending most of my life doing parody poems and the "Greeting Friends" style of poems—certainly rhyming is a key element of both—I went to poetry camp at The Clearing in Door County, Wisconsin. There I met a number of poets connected with ISPS and learned it is not necessary to have everything rhyme. As a rank beginner in writing free verse, I am now working to improve my lyrical, non-prosaic poetry. Being a member of ISPS has taught me new ways to make my poetry sing.

*How do you overcome writer's block?*

At one point I rented an office because I felt it was too difficult to keep at it at home—too many distractions household and family distractions ✍

## Poems by Sheila Kirscher

### Serengeti Sounds and Silences

On the vast, grassy savannah  
where acacias and baobabs  
shade the Great Migration routes  
and cape buffalo roam  
beside wildebeest and  
zebra, falling asleep in a small  
canvas room is *hakuna matata*.  
Staying asleep is another matter.

Some nights the noise  
is constant depending how  
close to the tent the wild ones are.  
Wildebeests moan. Both ostriches and  
lions hoot but only the duration  
of the sound tells us which one  
is calling. Hyenas whoop—  
shrill scary, insistent, ceaseless.

Other nights settle deathly still.  
Zipped into my tent, I wake.  
Not a sound is to be heard until I sneeze.  
Instantly, hoof beats fill the night.  
Twenty, forty, perhaps  
four hundred legs just beyond my bed  
jump, leap, bound, rustle then vanish  
into the silence.

### Our Secret

Some time ago  
when I was young  
but old enough  
to think about love,  
I confessed  
I loved you best.

You, though old,  
were young enough  
to embrace what  
I'd confessed  
and told me back  
you loved me best.

We could not  
let the others  
know, and so,  
we chose  
a sign to send  
each other anytime.

It was the letter "C"  
the coded message  
our hands flashed  
between us  
you and me.

(For my Grandmother, Poetry Invitational, Class of 1960)



## A Glance Back: Our 2015 Featured Poets



In 2015 ISPS featured six poets: Joseph Kuhn Carey of Glencoe, Thomas Chockley of Plainfield, Michael Escoubas of Bloomington, Mary Jo Balistrari of Genessee Depot WI, Gail Denham of Sun River OR, and Jacob Erin-Cilberto of Carbondale. ✍

## Farewells to our Poet Laureate and Three ISPS Members



Phillip Levine, the 18th U.S. Poet Laureate, died February 14. The ISPS also said goodbye in 2015 to members Glenna Holloway of Naperville and Doyle Raymond Vines of Cobden (pictured) and Marguerite McClelland of Winthrop Harbor. ✍

## NFSPS CONVENTION

Nine ISPS members attended the 2015 National Federation convention in Florida. Pictured are Gary Ketchum, Susan Moss, Kathy Cotton, Candace Armstrong, David Bond, and Judith Tullis.



## SEVENTH CHAPTER APPROVED

In 2015 the ISPS approved its seventh chapter and welcomed its facilitator, Susan Auld, to the board. The new group is our first ISPS focused chapter. Contemporary English Language Haiku Chapter will hold its inaugural meeting from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 21, at the Northbrook Library Civic Room. It is open to all ISPS members. ✍



Caroline Johnson with a 2015 Poetry Month display

## Mark your Poetry Calendar for the New Year

- **JANUARY 1**, NFSPS contest submissions open. Contest deadline is March 15. Information is available at [www.nfspd.com](http://www.nfspd.com).
- **JANUARY 5**, deadline for submissions to NFSPS 2016 convention contest. Prizes include hotel accommodations, meal package, and convention fees.
- **JANUARY 31**, deadline for chapbook submissions to NFSPS College Undergraduate Poetry Competition. Submissions at [nfspd.submittable.com](http://nfspd.submittable.com).
- **FEBRUARY 1–14**, submission period for member poems on the ISPS website.
- **FEBRUARY 15**, submission deadline for Poetry Month displays and bookmark project.
- **FEBRUARY 21**, 1:00 p.m., the new Contemporary English Language (CEL) Haiku Chapter will hold its first meeting at the Northbrook Library Civic Room.
- **FEBRUARY 27**. Feature poet reading and open mic at Madame ZuZu's, Highland Park.
- **FEBRUARY 27**, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., poetry workshop, "In Praise of Praise Poems," by Tom Roby and Jenene Ravesloot at the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St., Chicago.
- **MARCH 1**, submission deadline for Northbrook Arts Contest and Juried Reading. Cash prizes. Awards and reading of winning poems is April 17, 1:30 p.m., Northbrook Library (winners must be present).
- **MARCH 15**, deadline for NFSPS poetry contests.
- **MARCH 26**, featured poet and open mic at Madame ZuZu's, 582 Roger Williams, Highland Park.
- **JUNE 9–13**, NFSPS convention in Chaska, Minnesota.

## ISPS New Members / Members' News

**DAN FITZGERALD**, a new member of the Central Chapter, says he has written off and on for a number of years. When he found he could not write in complete sentences, he stuck with poetry. His poems have been published in *The Writer's Journal*, *PKA Advocate*, *Nomad's Choir* and many others. His work has also appeared in several anthologies. He has written three chapbooks, *Random Tales*, *Musing*, and *Your Star & Other Poems*. He lives quietly in Pontiac, Illinois, tending to home and garden.

**JANAY GARRICK** of Chicago is a new member of North Suburban Chapter.

**MELISSA HUFF** of Champaign is a new at-large member. She says she has returned to a love of writing that she first discovered in her college days, now exploring formal poetry as well as free verse. She is also pursuing mixed media collage and photography, having earlier enjoyed 15 successful years creat-

ing one-of-a-kind jewelry. She holds degrees in both mathematics and art.

**HILDEGARD "MARGUERITE" McCLELLAND** of Winthrop Harbor passed away May 29, 2015, at the age of 71. She was a member of the North Suburban Chapter. Following is a poem by Marguerite from the ISPS website.

**Now**

I'm only passing here.  
A thousand rippling rivulets  
converging in this place  
grace  
the flowing face of time.  
A knot unravels here  
before the choking of the chain.  
A breeze sings the leaves of silent trees  
into a fleeting form  
flitting into oblivion  
immediately.  
I am not  
but passing here.  
Tomorrow I'll be gone. -HMM

**JENNIFER THIERMANN** of Glenview, a new member of North Suburban Chapter, says she can't remember a time when poetry was not part of her life. "My parents had poems or parts of poems memorized that they would often recite as situations triggered them. For my tenth birthday, my mother gave me a thick book I treasure to this day, *Favorite Poems Old and New*. I began memorizing a poem a week.

"I was fortunate at that same age to have Lucille Nixon come into our Palo Alto school and introduce us to haiku. I took to it and thereafter always had a few haiku books on my bookshelf. In college I took courses in Chinese literature and modern poetry. Three years ago, I began a serious study of haiku literature and poetry and took writing haiku as a committed practice. I am grateful to be a member of a group of haiku artists that meets at Arlington Heights Library once a month to critique our haiku."

## Dunn and Huff, Hutchinson and Skelly, to Read at ISPS-Sponsored Brewed Awakenings

Featured poets will read at Brewed Awakening, 19 West Quincy, Westmont, on January 31 and February 28 at 12:30 p.m., followed by open mic. Cover charge of \$10.00 includes coffee and a snack.

**SUNDAY, JAN. 31**



**PATRICK DUNN** of Aurora is the author of the 2011 poetry collection, *Second Person*, and four books on esoteric spirituality. He is an associate professor of

English at Aurora University, where he teaches linguistics, creative writing, and stylistics. His current project is a poetic translation of the ancient Greek *Orphic Hymns*.

**MELISSA HUFF**, who won several awards in poetry contests this fall, enjoys exploring both formal poetry and free verse, experimenting with many



avenues of expression. She also pursues the making of mixed media collage using acrylic media and photography, [www.melissahuff.com](http://www.melissahuff.com).

She holds degrees in mathematics and art and splits her time between Champaign and Chicago.

**SUNDAY, FEB. 28**



**KATE HUTCHINSON** has taught English for 30 years at a large high school northwest of Chicago, and each summer she teaches poetry writing at a local university. She is the author of a new poetry collection, *Map Making: Poems of Land and Identity*. Her chapbook, *The Gray Limbo of Perhaps*, was published in 2012. Hutchinson's poems and cre-

ative essays have appeared in dozens of literary magazines and anthologies, including *Shenandoah*, *The Sow's Ear*, and *The Doss Passos Review*; she was a 2010 Pushcart prize nominee. Find more of her work at [PoetKateHutchinson.wordpress.com](http://PoetKateHutchinson.wordpress.com).



**MARJORIE SKELLY** has won first place in the Poets and Patrons and the Jo-Anne Hirshfield Poetry awards contests, along with reaching

finalist status for the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Slam in Chicago. Skelly is the author of the 2015 book, *The Unpublished Poet: On Not Giving Up on Your Dream*, available on Amazon. She has taught English at Loyola University of Chicago and Northeastern Illinois University and poetry and fiction writing at a variety of venues.

## Library Displays and Bookmarks for April Poetry Month

Current ISPS members are invited to submit poems for our two National Poetry Month projects. In addition to displaying poems at libraries, some brief submissions with fairly short lines will be printed on bookmarks along with information about ISPS. After all submissions are collected and mounted, we will provide a list of libraries where members' poems are displayed and a list of the poems selected for bookmarks. Submission guidelines follow.

- **THEME.** "Books, Books, Books."
- **COPYRIGHT.** If the poem you submit has been previously published, include the name of the first publisher. Note that a poem published on a widely distributed bookmark will be considered published.
- **FORMAT.** Submit your poem in 14 point Georgia. Center the poem on the page.
- **TITLE.** Center the title at the top and skip two spaces before beginning the poem. Do not use bold type, quotation marks or underlining in the title.
- **FILE.** Send as a document file. Do not send in PDF format.
- **IDENTIFICATION.** Put your name two spaces below poem and to the right of center.
- **DEADLINE.** February 15, 2016.
- **EMAIL SUBMISSION.** Send your entry as an attachment to [isps.submissions@gmail.com](mailto:isps.submissions@gmail.com)
- **MAIL SUBMISSION.** If unable to send via email, mail hard copy to:

Ms. Barbara Eaton  
416 Gierz Street  
Downers Grove, IL 60515-3838 ✍

## Short Poems for the Issue 6 Challenge

In the last ISPS newsletter our poetry challenge was short poems (seven or fewer lines). Here are a few responses provided by our members.

### INA G. PERLMUTER, NORTHBROOK

#### A Walk With Man's Best Friend

Tethered by leash to whiff and paw  
we move in unison from tree to tree  
walking leisurely when days are bright  
moving faster in dark of night  
my winter I lament won't any tree to do  
my feet are cold, yours must be too

#### Contrast in Hard and Soft

Beyond the chain link softly  
Creamy violet hydrangeas  
Rustle as tushy soft paws work  
Their way among their stems  
Searching for a prize

### DAVID GROSS, PINCKNEYVILLE

#### Impermanence

all morning  
a spider  
spins her web  
all afternoon  
a hummingbird  
unweaves it

Published in  
*Hummingbird*

### DORIS ANN FREY, MURPHYSBORO

#### Evening

Out of the sunset  
There comes a hazy rosy glow  
That wraps around me  
Like a cozy winter fire  
And then I think  
Again  
Of you

#### Bottomland

rows of corn  
suffer the heat

sparse tassels  
hiss like snakes  
in dry wind

Published in  
*Cotyledon*



## Chapter Meetings

### CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

1:00 p.m., Saturday, February 13  
Pontiac Public Library, 815-844-7229  
211 E. Madison St., Pontiac, IL

### HAIKU CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 p.m., Sunday, February 21  
Northbrook Public Library, Civic Room  
847-272-6224  
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL

### NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, January 10  
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, January 10  
Carbondale Public Library, 630-986-1976  
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL  
Bring 10 copies of poems for critique

### SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, February 14  
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, January 2  
Indian Prairie Public Library, (630) 887-8760  
401 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL  
Bring your beverage, dish to share and 20 copies of poems for critique. ✍

### JACOB ERIN-CILBERTO, CARBONDALE

#### no milk today

roast chocolate blues  
dark scent in Paris cafe  
overturned coffee

### PHILLIP EGELSTON, JONESBORO

the moon -- almost full  
cricket on a cedar stump  
no shadow, no sound

#### Couple

Our first date, first kiss...  
love, marriage, life together...  
short drive at sunset. ✍



## ISPS Online Submissions

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

### ISPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President, Susan T. Moss  
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Vice President, Jim Lambert  
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West Suburban Chapter, Darien  
Facilitator Caroline Johnson  
twinkscat@aol.com

Past President Mardelle Fortier  
fortier@cod.edu

At-Large Member, Sheila Kirscher  
jkirscher@comcast.net

At-Large Member, Tom Moran  
tgm1958@sbcglobal.net

## Bring a Friend to ISPS

Do you know a poet who would be inspired by belonging to ISPS? For the small investment of \$20—optional \$30 for Patron status or \$50, Benefactor status—your poet/friends can join you in supporting poetry in Illinois. Tell them about 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.

For your convenience a membership form follows and is also on the website, www.illinoispoets.org. Print out a few copies of the form and hand them to your friends, or tell them to send their checks with name, address, email address, phone number and voting chapter (Northbrook, Darien, Lisle, Pontiac, Carbondale, Haiku or At Large).

Your new-member-friends are encouraged to submit a brief bio for the newsletter and website, and if you haven't submitted a bio, please do! Email it to kacotton7@frontier.com. ✍

✂ **GIVE A COPY TO A FRIEND!** .....

## ISPS Membership Form PLEASE PRINT

Complete the information below and send the form with a check: membership through June 30, 2016 annual dues, \$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 Haiku, Northbrook At-Large

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home or cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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