

2016, ISSUE 5  
EDITOR, KATHY COTTON

Also available  
on our website  
[illinoispoets.org/news-links.htm](http://illinoispoets.org/news-links.htm)

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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](mailto:kacotton7@frontier.com).

## Why the Best Poem Didn't Win

The big stack of NFSPS prize-winning poems I received as *Encore* anthology editor came with the 50 national judges' original comments: a treasury of accolades and stern, practical tips. One judge wrote, "The best poem could not win because the contestant did not obey the rules of submission. . . following the rules is crucial."

Let's start there. As October 15, the ISPS annual contest deadline, closes in, take a look at our rules on page 2 or download the contest form from our website, [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org). A few years ago I helped sort the ISPS contest submissions and found a 40-line limit poem that was several pages long. It joined the pile that didn't even make it to a judge's scrutiny.

To improve your chances of winning a contest, or having a poem accepted for publication, see more tips from national contest judges, page 2. -Kathy Cotton, Editor



## A Message from the ISPS President

As we finish the summer season and begin all the possibilities autumn offers in the world of poetry, much has been underway with preparing our next members' anthology, sponsoring the annual poetry contest and planning for a November Gala. It's a good time to be a participant in ISPS and meeting with long-time members and many new ones.

Our annual poetry contest deadline is October 15, and details can be found on page 2 of this newsletter. The categories offer potential for interesting and challenging poetry from both member and nonmember poets. New judges from several states will participate in reading blind entries. Jim Lambert is presently receiving submissions.

The creation of *Distilled Lives* volume 3 includes the efforts of a committee to choose poems from the 68 poets who submitted work. Blurb writers for the back cover have been chosen as well as a photo for the front cover. Editors have worked carefully on content and format details. The first launch of the books will be at the November Gala.

Speaking of the Gala, this event will be the second time we have joined together for a congenial and informative day-long event at the Park Ridge Country Club. It also marks the 25th anniversary of our charter membership with NFSPS. The location offers easy access off of Oakton and Touhy plus abundant free parking. There is an elevator to the second floor where we shall have two spacious rooms. The day will start with a continental breakfast and registration followed by our first presenter, Lee Gurga, who plans to discuss contemporary haiku. After lunch Mark Dvorak will offer songs and poetry of Illinois poet Carl Sandburg. The third presentation of the day involves a panel discussion by three people with various publishing experiences. Audience participation is invited as well. Reading our poems from the new anthology and an open mic complete the day. Also, start sorting through your books, both poetry and other appropriate volumes, to share in a book swap. The cost for the Gala will be \$35, and further details are forthcoming.

A line from *The Great Gatsby* suggests that fall is when we start over again, and so too, new ideas expressed through our poetry await each of us.

Happy writing, Susan T. Moss

## Deadline October 15 for ISPS Contests

The 23rd annual ISPS Poetry Contest includes four regular and three new categories. Prizes totaling \$580 will go to first-, second-, and third-place winners in each category. Three honorable mentions will also be selected.

Categories are Free Verse, Formal Verse, Haiku, The Arts, Celestial, Music, and Compassion. The contest is open to anyone and has an eight-poem entry fee of \$8 for members and \$10 for non-ISPS members. Additional entries are \$1 each.

### The Rules: Each poem must be . . .

1. the original work of the contestant, unpublished in print or electronically
2. submitted in English
3. no longer than 40 lines
4. typed in 12- or 14-point, no fancy fonts or illustrations
5. formatted one poem per 8.5x11 page
6. titled (except haiku)
7. submitted with two copies: FIRST COPY with ID (name, address, email, phone number) and category in upper left-hand corner; SECOND COPY with category only, no ID
8. postmarked by **October 15**

For full contest guidelines, see [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org). Send submissions to chairman Jim Lambert at Illinois State Poetry Society Contest % Jim Lambert, 11617 Sherry Lynn Drive, Carbondale, IL 62901. ✉

## Judges' Tips for Poetry Contestants

Based on comments by judges of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies' 2016 contests, here are tips to help you be a better contestant.

1. Your title is your first chance to hook the reader, so give it the same attention as text. Titles work best as clues to your theme rather than topic announcements.
2. Show, don't explain. If your images don't do the job, improve them. Beware abstractions.
3. STOP when you reach the end. Create a "provocative or enticing" ending.
4. Avoid predictability. Offer a fresh, creative view.
5. When choosing between long and short words/phrases, choose the short ones.
6. Take care with spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Proofread! In a quality competition a typo or misspelled word can be the factor that eliminates your poem.
7. Give attention to first and final lines/stanzas. Do they need to be renovated, eliminated?
8. Before submitting to a contest requiring form, research the form! Scan all metered lines for required rhythms.
9. "No extra words, but no word lacking." Eliminate all unnecessary articles, conjunctions and adverbs and use adjectives sparingly.
10. Be consistent in your style and approach. Be consistent in your format and punctuation.

## ISPS New Members / Members' News

**CAROL M. ANDERSON** of Worth, Illinois, is a new ISPS member.

**PHILLIP EGELSTON** of Jonesboro died July 23, 2016.



Egelston is the author of four poetry collections, *Reste Placide*, *Light Stalking the Dark*, *Simply Intact* and *A*

*Liberal Education and Other Poems*. He had recently released his fifth book, *Stories*. Egelston was an active member of ISPS Southern Chapter.

**JACOB ERIN-CILBERTO** of Carbondale



announces publication of his 15th book, *Rewrites and Second Chances*.

The new poetry collection is available from Water Forest Press Books and on Amazon.com. Erin-Cilberto teaches

at two southern Illinois colleges and is a member of ISPS Southern Chapter.

**DAVID GECIC** of Chicago is a new member of Southwest Suburban Chapter.

**LEE GURGA** of White Heath will present Part 2: Japanese Aesthetic at the Haiku Chapter Meeting, October 16,

1-4 p.m., at the Northbrook Library. Gurga will also lead a session on contemporary haiku at the ISPS Gala November 5.

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE POETRY SOCIETIES** appointed to their board three ISPS members: Kathy Cotton of Anna, Jim Lambert of Carbondale and Wilda Morris of Bolingbrook. They will serve NFSPS for the 2016-2018 term, Cotton as editor of the *Encore Prize Poems* anthology, Lambert in a new position as associate editor of the *Strophes* newsletter, and Morris continuing in her second year as chairman of the Stevens Manuscript Competition. Cotton also serves as editor for the College Undergraduate Competitions.



## Spotlight on ISPS Poet Lee Gurga

Lee Gurga, a dentist in the Illinois farming community of Lincoln, is internationally known for his haiku. Past president of the Haiku Society of America and former editor of *Modern Haiku*, he is the current editor of *Modern Haiku Press*. His ku have been included in every major anthology of English-language haiku in the past 20 years, including the third edition of *The Haiku Anthology* (1999) and *Haiku in English* (2013).

Among his prestigious awards are three first prizes in international haiku contests, an Illinois Arts Council Poetry Fellowship, the Japan-America Society of Chicago's Cultural Achievement Award, and, in his professional work as a dentist, an American Red Cross Healthcare Heroes Award.

*In & Out of Fog* and *Fresh Scent*, his books of haiku, took first prize in the Haiku Society of America Book Awards, and his *Haiku: A Poet's Guide* was recognized by the HSA as the 2004 "Best Book of Criticism." The anthology *Haiku 21*, co-edited with Scott Metz, was honored as "Best Anthology" by the Haiku Society of America and given the Haiku Foundation's "Touchstone Distinguished Book Award." He also has published several haiku chapbooks.

In an email interview about his experience with haiku, Gurga shared these thoughts:

*When did you first begin writing haiku?*

I began as a teenager in Chicago. I was wandering the poetry section in the old Kroch's & Brentano's on Wabash where I ran into R.H. Blyth's four-volume series on haiku. When I felt the raw silk cover with the two kanji for "haiku" blind-stamped in black, I was hooked and have been hooked ever since. I guess what brings me back to it again and again is its connection to nature and to mind. If you think haiku is a witticism in 17 syllables, you might want to take a look at some of the work of Brent Goodman or Michelle Tennison in *The Living Haiku Anthology*, [livinghaikuanthology.com](http://livinghaikuanthology.com).

*Can you offer advice about getting published?*

Write a lot and submit a few. Seriously, though, one of the best ways to improve your haiku is to get feedback from editors, which they are usually happy to give if you don't

abuse them. A list of haiku-friendly journals, both print and online, can be found on the Haiku Foundation website: [thehaikufoundation.org/event\\_calendars/](http://thehaikufoundation.org/event_calendars/). It contains a list of print and online journals (with deadlines) as well as a contest calendar.

*About writer's block and writing practice. . .*

I think "writer's block" is mostly related to "living-in-the-present block," something I have found impossible to overcome. Hence my need for haiku, which is a 100% guaranteed measure of whether you are kidding yourself or not.

I have never had much luck setting aside a time to write, as successful haiku are frequently dependent on being "caught unawares." So I guess my advice to aspiring writers (one of the questions here) is to be caught unawares as much as possible!

*What books do you recommend to our readers?*

Foundational books related directly to haiku, in chronological order, would be Bill Higginson's *The Haiku Handbook* (1985), Haruo Shirane's *Traces of Dreams* (1999), and Richard Gilbert's *Poems of Consciousness* (2004) and *The Disjunctive Dragonfly* (2013). Important anthologies include *The Haiku Anthology* (2nd edition, 1986, and 3rd edition, 1999), *Haiku 21* (2011) and *Haiku in English* (2013). Other essential reading includes Wendell Berry's *What are People For?*, Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural," Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (1855), and "Sheep" by Robert Francis.

*Tell us about your current projects.*

As editor of *Modern Haiku Press*, I find that most of what I am working on now is other people's things. This is not as bad as it might sound since it often gives me new areas of poetics to explore. We have just released *Haiku 2016* which contains 100 interesting ku by 100 different poets, all published in 2015. I am also working on two book projects. The first will contain critical prose and haiku of Hasegawa Kai, probably the most widely read contemporary haiku poet/critic in Japan. The second is a book on the poetics of sanctuary by Richard Gilbert, one of this century's most important poets/critics of contemporary English-language haiku. ✍

### Haiku by Lee Gurga

summer sunset—  
the baby finds his shadow  
on the kitchen wall

scenic overlook:  
the whole Mississippi valley  
hidden in mist

dancing to my tune  
cricket  
in the urinal

rooster crowing  
two old soldiers  
at the bar

prairie farmhouse--  
two empty lawn chairs  
facing the blacktop

winding a bobbin  
cotton the color  
of her husband's winter

armsful of bangles  
but lonely  
snowflakes

dotting an i  
dotting an i  
death verse

from house  
to barn:  
the milky way





### GALA SCHEDULE, SATURDAY, NOV. 5

- 9:00–10:00 Check-in at Park Ridge Country Club  
Continental breakfast  
Book Swap set-up
- 10:00–10:15 Welcome by ISPS President Susan Moss
- 10:15–11:15 Contemporary Haiku, presented by Lee Gurga
- 11:30–12:30 Buffet luncheon
- 12:45–1:45 Carl Sandburg, presented by musician and storyteller Mark Dvorak
- 2:00–3:00 Panel discussion on the topic of publishing by Lee Gurga, Joan Colby and Gail Goepfert
- 3:15–4:00 *Distilled Lives* anthology readings, and open mic as time permits

### PREREGISTER FOR THE GALA

Preregistration is required for the Gala, so plan now to attend and watch for your copy of the registration form. The \$35 fee, payable to ISPS, includes the continental breakfast and buffet luncheon. Forms and instructions will be available soon by email (an update from William Shakespeare) and on our website, [illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org).

### DISTILLED LIVES, VOLUME 3, BOOK LAUNCH

The ISPS Gala marks the official book launch of our third volume of *Distilled Lives*, which features 138 poems by 68 ISPS members. Attendees who have pre-ordered books will receive them at check-in, and extra copies of the anthology will also be available for purchase. Open mic readings from *Distilled Lives* are scheduled for the closing session of the Gala.

### BOOK SWAP

Bring poetry and other books to add to the Book Swap table at check-in. Books will be free for the taking and/or swapping; leftovers will be donated to a library. The swap table will be available the entire day. ✍️

## Save the Date: ISPS Gala, November 5



Lee Gurga



Mark Dvorak



Joan Colby



Gail Goepfert

The ISPS Gala will feature Lee Gurga speaking on contemporary haiku, musician/story-teller Mark Dvorak's presentation on Illinois poet Carl Sandburg, and a panel discussion on publishing led by Joan Colby, Gail Goepfert and Lee Gurga.

### LEE GURGA

Check the feature on Lee Gurga, page 3.

### MARK DVORAK

Mark Dvorak, called "Chicago's official troubadour," is a Woodstock Folk Festival's Lifetime Achievement Award recipient for his work as a performer, song writer, teacher and folk historian. He also received the Lantern Bearer Award from the Midwest Region of Folk Alliance International for his contribution of more than 25 years to folk performance arts and the folk music and dance community. Dvorak is a successful recording artist; the author of a collection of essays and poems, "Bowling for Christmas and Other Tales from the Road"; and the artist-in-residence on the Old Town School faculty. He continues to perform more than 200 dates each year.

### JOAN COLBY

Joan Colby of Elgin is the author of 17 books, including *Selected Poems*, *Ribcage*, *Carnival* and a forthcoming book entitled *The Seven Heavenly Virtues*. Among the awards Colby has received for her poetry are two Illinois Arts Council Literary Awards and an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship in Literature. Colby is a senior editor of *Future-Cycle Press* and an associate editor of *Kentucky Review*. Her work has been published widely in journals such as *Poetry*, *Atlanta Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Pinyon*, *Little Patuxent Review*, *Spillway*, and others.

### GAIL GOEPFERT

Gail Goepfert has three passions: poetry, photography and teaching. Currently, she is an associate editor of *Rhino Poetry*. Her first chapbook, *A Mind on Pain*, was released by Finishing Line Press early in 2015. A two-time Pushcart nominee, Goepfert's recent publications include *Crab Orchard* and *Jet Fuel* reviews, *Found Poetry Review*, *Minerva Rising*, *concis*, *Room Magazine* and *Rattle*. She lives, writes, and snaps photos in the Chicagoland area. ✍️



## Chapter Meetings

### CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

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

### HAIKU CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 16  
Northbrook Public Library, Civic Room  
847-272-6224  
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL  
Bring 10 copies of 6 haiku for critique.  
Guest speaker Lee Gurga.

### NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, September 11  
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, September 11  
Carbondale Public Library, 630-986-1976  
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL  
Bring 12 copies of poems for critique.

### SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, October 2  
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, Sept. 3  
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.

### ONLINE CRITIQUE GROUPS

To request a copy of the guidelines or to join an ISPS Email Critique Group, contact coordinator Wilda Morris at wildamorris@ameritech.net. Put "ISPS Email Critique Group" in the subject line of the email and be sure to include your name with your request. ✍

## Mark Your Calendar: Upcoming Poetry Events

**SEPT. 1**, deadline, Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest. Details at poetsandpatrons.net.

**SEPT. 1**, deadline, Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs Poetry Contest.

**SEPT. 1**, deadline, 60th annual Chicagoland Poetry Contest. Details at poetsandpatrons.net.

**SEPT. 1**, Deadline, Missouri State Poetry Society Contest

**SEPT. 2**, submission deadline for cleri-hews. See highlandparkpoetry.org.

**OCT. 1**, deadline, Arizona State Poetry Society Contest.

**SEPT. 17**, 1:00–3:00 p.m., juried reading, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art in Chicago. Watch for e-mail invitation to submit to the event or plan to attend.

**SEPT. 24**, 8:00 p.m., Lennart Lundh reading & open mic, Madame ZuZu's, Highland Park.

**SEPT. 25**, 12:30 p.m., Brewed Awakening poetry readings and open mic, 9 West Quincy, Westmont.

**OCT. 1–14**, submission period for ISPS members' poetry on our website, illinoispoets.org.

**OCT. 15**, deadline for ISPS annual poetry contest.

**OCT. 22**, 8:00 p.m., Jenene Ravesloot and Tom Roby IV, reading and open mic, Madame ZuZu's, Highland Park.

**OCT. 30**, 12:30 p.m., Brewed Awakening poetry readings and open mic, 9 West Quincy, Westmont.

**NOV. 5**, 9:00 a.m., ISPS Gala at Park Ridge Country Club.

**NOV. 15**, deadline, Georgia Poetry Society Contest.

**NOV. 19**, 8:00 p.m., Al DeGenova reading and open mic, Madame ZuZu's, Highland Park.

## Did Your Membership Fade Away June 30th? Renew Now!



Renew your membership for the triple benefit of belonging to the Illinois State Poetry Society PLUS the National Federation of State Poetry Societies PLUS any of the ISPS chapters.

For the small investment of \$20 (optional \$30.00 for Patron status or \$50.00, Benefactor status), your renewal dues support poetry in Illinois and beyond, through June of 2017.



### MEMBERSHIP THROUGH JUNE 30, 2017

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