

ISPS Board Members

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Caroline Johnson

Haiku chapter (meets in
Northbrook)
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Lisle – SW Suburban
Wilda Morris

Northbrook – N. Suburban
Mary Beth Bretzlauf

Pontiac - N. Central
Kathleen Murphy

President's Message



As I write this message, the view out my window offers a potential poem about blooming pear trees, bluebells, trout lilies, yellow and white daffodils, tulips flashing orange among flowering pink azaleas, petite red buds and other harbingers of a Midwest spring. Yes, poetry calls as is so often the case when springtime's beauty reminds me of beginnings, the hope that all will be okay as days speed by filled with challenges and changes.

This June marks the end of a two-year cycle of ISPS board members' services. Soon there will be a vote for new or renewing officers, historian and chapter facilitators. It is also the culmination of my fourteen-year tenure as ISPS president. I joined our society in 2006 and upon a suggestion, I started the Northern chapter that met at the Northbrook library. As time passes, it has been a wonderful journey filled with so many opportunities to share ideas, efforts and friendships with a growing society of seven chapters and members in and out-of-state.

Over the years, through the dedication and hard work of many ISPS members, we have published six volumes of our biennial anthology, *Distilled Lives*, and celebrated the achievement with book launches at "Galas." Both a student poetry contest and related anthology of winning poems plus Book of the Year contest are recent events. Also, there have been Zoom readings and programs, as well as monthly Brewed Awakening featured readers, all guided by various board and non-board members. Each new and repeated poetry-related opportunity is a tribute to those who have helped build ISPS. More creative endeavors will occur in the future such as special programs about famous poets, opportunities to work with artists to create ekphrastic poetry, and displays of members' poetry in public libraries.

Illinois State Poetry Society is greater than its parts and is enriched by a growing membership of dedicated poets. Sharing our talents and efforts contribute to making a better world, one filled with ideas and the art of capturing life around us. I am proud to be a member of such an organization and honored to have had the opportunity to collaborate and promote its *raison d'être*. As Yevgeny Yevtushenko stated, "Poetry is like a bird, it ignores all frontiers." Until we meet again—

Happy writing,
Susan T. Moss

Illinois Students Take Three Wins in Manningham National Finals

From 257 entries representing 25 states, three top winners are from Illinois. NFSPS Manningham Contest Chair Polly Opsahl writes, "The Illinois State Poetry Society and the students should be proud of the hard work and accomplishments in this year's contest." Winners receive prize money, certificates and copies of the Manningham anthology. The poems will be read at the NFSPS convention in West Des Moines, Iowa, June 21-26, 2023.

CONGRATULATIONS!

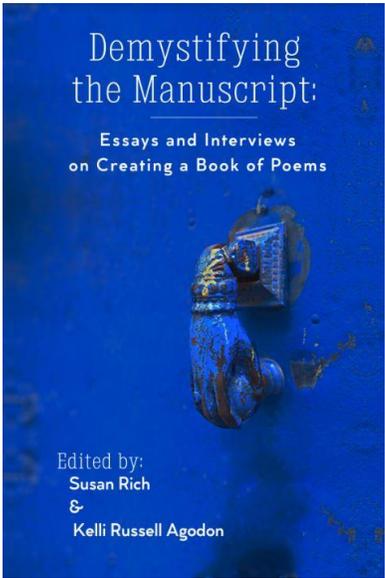
1st Place, Junior Division
Leah Rodriguez, Union School, Joliet

2nd Place, Senior Division
Daniella Torres, Plainfield East High School, Plainfield

3rd Place, Senior Division
Stella Abarca, Plainfield East High School, Plainfield

ISPS thanks our Student Contest Chair, Mary Beth Bretzlauf, for her work with the Manningham Contest.

Suggested Reading



So you've been writing poems for many years and have accumulated a large number of poems, some that have been published in literary journals and anthologies and some that have only been shared in an ISPS meeting. How do you transform your poems into a manuscript – either a chapbook or full-length collection? *Demystifying the Manuscript: Essays and Interviews on Creating a Book of Poems* edited by Susan Rich & Kelli Russell Agodon (Two Sylvias Press, 2023) may hold the answers for you.

It's easy to feel intimidated or overwhelmed at the prospect of organizing your poems into a manuscript. This book offers personal viewpoints from a broad range of poets with their insights into the process of getting one's poetic product ready for publication. The introduction also discusses different theoretical techniques for organizing work and provides actual examples of published books where these occur.

I find this volume a thoughtful guide to the process. There will still be work to do but after reading *Demystifying the Manuscript*, you will realize that you are not alone and will have some concrete suggestions about how to approach the task.

~ Jennifer Dotson, ISPS Newsletter Editor

ISPS Chapter News

ISPS West Suburban (Darien) Chapter - The next ISPS Darien chapter meeting will be **Saturday, May 6**, from **1 to 4 p.m.** at the **Indian Prairie Library**, 401 Plainfield Rd, Darien. Please bring 8 - 10 copies of up to 2 poems, a food item to share, plus a drink for yourself. Contact facilitator Caroline Johnson with questions: carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com. We will be meeting as usual on the 2nd floor, Board Room. Masks are not required, but feel free to wear one if you feel more comfortable.

ISPS-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter - The ISPS-HSA Haiku Chapter held its bimonthly Zoom chapter meeting on April 16, 2022. Those who attended were: Jo Balistreri, Barbara Eaton, Janice Doppler, Jeanie Cook, Lee Gurga, Margie Gustafson, Jeff Kressman, Jennifer Thiermann, Jill Spealman, David Green, and Wilda Morris (facilitating). We did have a good meeting - with eleven poets (and eleven poems to workshop). We also had some good discussions of various aspects of haiku.

Our next Haiku Chapter Zoom Meeting: Sunday, June 11, 2023, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CDT. The deadline for RSVPs to attend will be Tuesday, June 6. Contact Tom Chockley (tomzhaiku@outlook.com) to attend the Zoom meeting and to receive further information.

ISPS Northern Chapter and **ISPS Champaign – Central Chapter (Champaign)** will hold a joint meeting via Zoom and will meet on **Sunday, May 21st at 1 p.m.** on Zoom. Chapter meetings are open to all ISPS members. Anyone interested in participating, please send a poem for critique to Mary Beth Bretzlauf at mbbretzlauf@comcast.net.

ISPS North Central Chapter (Pontiac) will meet on **Saturday, June 10, 2023 at 10:00 am** via Zoom. Contact Kathleen Murphy, Facilitator, kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com for information on how to participate.

ISPS Southern Chapter meets at the Carbondale Library at **1:30 p.m., Sunday, May 21**. The Library is located at 405 West Main, Carbondale, IL 62901. [<https://www.carbondale.lib.il.us>]. Kathy Cotton, Facilitator, sipoets7@gmail.com. Please bring 10-12 copies of your poem for critiquing. Driving directions can be obtained on [MapQuest.com](https://www.mapquest.com), or by calling the library at **(618) 457-0354**. A Zoom workshop is set for **1:30 p.m., Sunday, June 11**.

ISPS Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle) will be meeting on **June 4** and **August 6**. We had a very successful hybrid meeting in April and hope for the same in the coming months. We are still waiting to see if the newly remodeled Lisle Library has the requisite equipment for a successful hybrid meeting. Watch for an email when we have been able to work out the details of where the in person meetings will be held, and to get the Zoom link if you want to participate online. Details will also be posted on the ISPS website when they become available. You don't have to be a member of this particular chapter to join us. For more information, you may also reach out to Chapter Facilitator Wilda Morris via email, wildamorris@ameritech.net.

ISPS Student Contest Results

Many thanks to our Judges, ISPS members: Ida Koytuk, Tom Moran, Beth Staas and Barbara Eaton! We received 226 poems from 202 students.

This year, we restructured the contest to resemble the adult contest offering our students more categories to enter. Also new are cash prizes and a published anthology of the winning poems. Our first edition of *Fresh Ink: 2023 Anthology of Prize Poems by Illinois Students* will be available on Amazon May 1st. [Fresh Ink 2023 Link](#)

Senior Division Winners:

Contest #1 – President’s Challenge Award Form: Any Subject: Peace

First Place: Sreehitha Nara, Barrington High School, Barrington – Robert M. Baker, teacher
Second Place: Espen Hammes, Newman Central Catholic HS, Sterling – Donna Spencer, teacher
Third Place: Ian Smiddy, Riverdale High School, Port Byron – Lacey Dean, teacher
HM #1: Delany Jokisch, A-C Central High School, Ashland – Liz Sinclair, teacher
HM #2: William Boston, A-C Central High School, Ashland – Liz Sinclair, teacher
HM #3: Carson Arthalony, A-C Central High School, Ashland – Liz Sinclair, teacher

Contest #2 – Lake Michigan Award Form: Any Subject: Water

First Place: Gianna Sagel, Newman Central Catholic HS, Sterling – Donna Spencer, teacher
Second Place: Jayce Privia, A-C Central High School, Ashland – Liz Sinclair, teacher
Third Place: Jack Van Gorkom, Wesclin High School, Trenton – Dr. Jessica Pilgreen, teacher
HM #1: Sarah Allgaier, Oswego East High School, Oswego – Tim Ochoa, teacher
HM #2: Max Keehma, Oswego East High School, Oswego – Tim Ochoa, teacher
HM #3: Sam R Neisewander, Newman Central Catholic HS – Donna Spencer

Contest #3 – Robert Frost Award Form: Rhyming Subject: Any

First Place: Sarah D. Murray, Newman Central Catholic HS, Sterling – Donna Spencer, teacher
Second Place: Stella Abarca, Plainfield east High School, Plainfield – Elizabeth Venezia, teacher
Third Place: Monica Healy, Newman Central Catholic HS, Sterling – Donna Spencer
HM#1: Abigail Peters-Eacho, Wesclin High School, Trenton – Dr. Jessica Pilgreen
HM #2: Alaina Marr, A-C Central High School, Ashland – Liz Sinclair, teacher
HM #3: Andrea Brandner, St. Bede’s Academy, Peru – Andrea Horst, teacher

Junior Division Winners:

Contest #4 – Vice President’s Challenge Award Form: Any Subject: Family

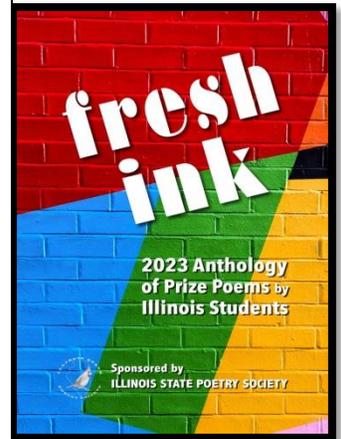
First Place: Vania Chavez, Fred Rogers Magnet Academy, Aurora – Laura Krueger, teacher
Second Place: Marissa Carsten, Pleasantdale Middle School, Burr Ridge – Nancy Deaton, teacher
Third Place: Ella Nielsen, Pleasantdale Middle School, Burr Ridge – Nancy Deaton, teacher
HM #1: Abigail Flinn, The Field School, Chicago – Jack Franicevich, teacher
HM #2: Adyson Choate, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin, teacher

Contest #5: Mississippi River Award Form: Any Subject: Water

First Place: Josephine Hillegass, Martino Junior High School, New Lenox – Amy Styx
Second Place: Abigail Flinn, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin
Third Place: Rehan Mathew Koshy, Edison Regional Gifted Center, Chicago – Angela Richardson
HM #1: Brody Maeser, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin
HM #2: Eliza Ford, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin

Contest #6: Land of Lincoln Award Form: Any Subject: Abraham Lincoln

First Place: Sereniti Mefford, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin
Second Place: Eliza Ford, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin
Third Place: Madalyn Shuster, Shawnee Junior High School, Wolf Lake – Rachel Griffin



Welcome New Members

Wolf Moon

She has been with us three nights--
under clear skies she emerges unblemished,
unrolls her luminous carpet across January snow,
her fingers tracing precise outlines—
tangled branches,
tree trunks in dark columns.

In these woods--
bones exposed,
mute,
our refuge from the bruises of loss--
we wait for the greening,
the hum of trees breathing.

The hour before dawn
the moon arrives at our window,
spreads strong hands across our bed.
Prodding us from old darkness
we awaken inside her canescent embrace,
trace the features on each other's face.

~ Jane Richards

Published in *After Hours: a Journal of Chicago Writing and Art*, Winter, 2022

Jane Richards' prose and poetry has appeared in journals such as *Gyroscope Review*, *after hours: a journal of Chicago writing and art*, *Willow Review*, *Snowy Egret* and *Bird Watchers Digest*. A former piano teacher and social worker, music, inner landscapes, and nature inform and inspire her writing. Now retired, she pursues her life-long passions for poetry, nature study and travel. She holds masters degrees in social work and creative writing.



Joris Soeding's most recent collections of poetry are *After Highland Park* (*Origami Poems Project*, 2021) and *Forty* (*Rinky Dink Press*, 2019). Soeding's writing has appeared in publications such as *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Poetry Pacific*, and *Tint Journal*. He is a 2021 and 2022 Pushcart Prize nominee and fifth grade Language Arts teacher in Chicago, where he resides with his

wife, son, daughter, and cats.

Nearing Galena

close to the town of Elizabeth
population 800
his hazard lights are on
pickup truck in the ditch
no clouds and next to another field of corn
he mows the grass in front of the crucifix
on Interstate 20
methodical
he is with another gentleman, younger
who are they doing this for?

~ Joris Soeding

ISPS Member News

A co-founder of the International Crane Foundation invited **Marilyn Peretti** to write a poem for their 50th Anniversary (2023). He loved the pantoum she wrote and it will be used for their Golden Jubilee events.

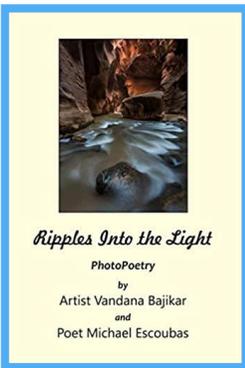
Charlotte Digregorio has run a poetry column, "Creatively Versed," in *Winnetka-Kenilworth Living magazine* for the past five years. Among many recent ISPS members who've been featured, are: **Susan Moss, Cassandra McGovern, Kate Hutchinson, Rita Yager, and Mary Beth Bretzlauf.** **Jennifer Dotson** is the poetry columnist for *Highland Park Neighbors*, its sister publication.

Caroline Johnson participated in a poetry reading for National Poetry Month on Tuesday, April 18, as part of AlzAuthors. The reading, titled "Poetry for the Dementia Journey," was broadcast live on zoom and included a Q&A. Caroline read poems from her poetry book, *The Caregiver* (2018, Holy! Cow Press), which chronicles illnesses that both of her parents experienced, including Alzheimer's and Dementia.

Barbara Robinette has some of her haiga published online at The Haiku Foundation:

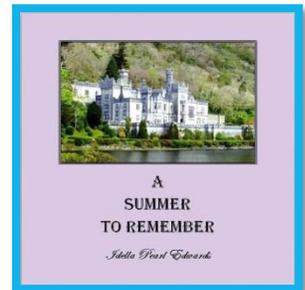
THF Galleries: Haiga of Barbara Robinette - The Haiku Foundation. Her paintings are also on display at a business in downtown West Plains, Missouri. Here is the link for the virtual online show of my art at Ozark Small Business Incubator (OzSBI):

[Art at OzSBI | West Plains Council on the Arts \(westplainsarts.org\)](http://westplainsarts.org) Scroll down to *Meet the Artist....The Virtual Slideshow Is Available Here.* Then click on that.



Michael Escoubas has teamed up with artist/photographer Vandana Bajikar on this collaborative publication, *Ripples Into the Light* (Cyberwit.net, March 2023). This lovely volume of captivating photography and ekphrastic poetry is available on Amazon. Be sure to read the review **www.HighlandParkPoetry.org**.

Idella Pearl Edward has published another children's book, *A Summer to Remember*. This story is about a young girl who has the opportunity to spend the summer at her wealthy aunt's castle in Ireland. The castle has multiple bedrooms but she wants the "storybook" room for her own bedroom. But her aunt insists that she must first write five stories before she can have that one for her own.



The program for the hybrid poetry readings at Brewed Awakening in Westmont for the last Sundays of May and June have not been finalized. More information via email and will be posted on the ISPS website (illinoispoets.com). One of the featured poets for June 25 will be **Stella Abarca**. She is a high school sophomore who began exploring and writing poetry during the pandemic. Her poem "What We Give To The World" placed first in state and fourth in nationals in the Manningham Contest in 2021 and her more recent poem, "Barbed Wire" placed third in nationals this year. When not writing poetry Stella enjoys reading, playing piano, acting, and singing. We will also have a cameo appearance from **Delphi Lonsdale**, one of the Iowa Manningham winners. Please show up at Brewed Awakening or via Zoom to support these young poets. If you have a poet to recommend, please email Wilda Morris at **wildamorris@ameritech.net**.

Jennifer Dotson facilitated a poetry writing workshop, "All the World's a Stage: Writing Poetry about the Theatre" and participated in a spoken word performance with other storytellers for Highland Park High School's biennial Focus on the Arts on April 20, 2023.

Congratulations to **Cheryl Weber** (Champaign Chapter) won 4th place in the Blackberry Peach Competition!

More ISPS Member News

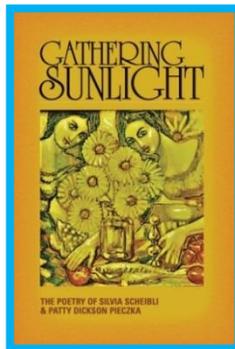


The ISPS Southern Chapter celebrated Poetry Month with a Carbondale Library exhibit of members' poems displayed with dozens of books by 14 member authors, plus chapter and ISPS anthologies.

A recording of ISPS member **Judy Cummings** reading her poem, "Enlightened," can be heard at

<https://www.northernpublicradio.org/wnij-news/2023-03-24/poetically-yours-banned-books>

Patty Pieczka of Carbondale co-authored a new poetry collection, *Gathering Sunlight*, with Sylvia Scheibli. The book is available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



Amelia Cotter's debut poetry collection *apparitions*, published by Highland Park Poetry Press in 2022, was Shortlisted in April for the The Haiku Foundation 2022 Touchstone Awards for Distinguished Books. Amelia's upcoming appearances include the Chicago Paranormal Convention in Countryside on June 17, Haunted America Conference in Alton from June 23-24, and the 2023 Midwest Paranormal Conference in Woodstock on July 8.

Highland Park Poetry hosts poetry readings and open-mics at Laughlin Gallery, 1894 Sheridan Road. All events are on Saturdays and doors open to poetry at 4PM. Poets may read up to 3 poems in the open-mic. Upcoming dates are **May 13 (Tom Moran and Dipika Mukherjee are featured)** and **June 10**. Visit the website www.HighlandParkPoetry.org for details.

Procedure for Posting ISPS Member Poems on Website

ISPS members may submit one poem and/or one haiga for posting on our website (illinoispoets.org). Poets whose last initial is E - H may submit from May 1 - 7, and poets whose last initial is I - M may submit from June 1 - 7. For submission guidelines, please go to "Submitting Poems" (illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm) in our site.

Chapter Contacts

While Covid-19 gathering restrictions are in flux statewide, please contact the chapter facilitator for more info on possible meetings online and how to access them.

All ISPS members are welcome at any monthly meeting (space permitting) after first contacting the facilitator.

Southern Chapter (Carbondale)

Contact Kathy Cotton, facilitator
kacotton7@frontier.com

Central Chapter (Champaign)

Jim O'Brien, facilitator
journaljim@gmail.com

West Suburban Chapter (Darien)

Contact Caroline Johnson, facilitator
twinkscat@aol.com

Haiku Chapter

Contact Tom Chockley, co-facilitator
tomzhaiku@outlook.com

Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)

For the Zoom link, contact

Wilda Morris
wem@americtech.net

North Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)

Contact
Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator
mbbretzlauf@comcast.net

North Central Chapter (Pontiac)

Contact
Kathleen Murphy, facilitator
kathleenzmurphy@mail.com

