# News 'N' Notes

# August 2021

# Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

Founded February 5, 1931 Member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

http://poetsroundtableofarkansas.org

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# President's Address

PRA Members,

—It's good to be back to my normal activities. Some of you may have heard that I took a fall and hit the back of my head on the floor. That happened on May 16. Three weeks later, after a flight to and return from Houston, I

started having trouble with my balance. A trip to the ER in Searcy resulted in surgery for a brain bleed at SVI in Sherwood and a hospital/rehab stay of two weeks.

- —Enough of that. Summer is in full swing and the Covid cases keep rising. I do wish that scourge would run its course.
- —As of this writing, Crape Myrtles are beginning to bloom. Can fireflies be far behind?
- August has switched from being my most disliked month to one of my favorites simply because the kids go back to school, football practice starts, and fall, glorious fall is just around the corner.
- —Contest deadlines are near at hand.
- —Remember: Write the poem you cannot write.

John McPherson President, PRA

### Welcome New Members

Pat Taylor, Lorraine Jeffery, Sketer Michaels, Gary O. Perry, Avreigh Watson, Desiree Witherspoon

### Transition

Charles McDougall, husband of Arkansas Poet Laureate and PRA member Jo McDougall, passed away on June 9th. Read the obituary here: https://www.echovita.com/us/obituaries/ar/maumelle/charles-william-mcdougall-jr-12868056

## Important Dates to Remember

August—PRA yearbooks

Poetry Day Contest Chair.

August 15—PRA's 2021 Poetry Day contest entries due November 6—Poetry Day at the Darragh Center (CALS), Little Rock. Laura Bridges is Poetry Day Chair and Laura Trigg is

# Congratulations! Monthly Contest Winners

# May

Judge: Pat Durmon had 14 entries
First Place: "Turkey Talk" – Faye Adams
Second Place: "Hats Off to My Dad" – Gail
Denham
Third Place: "Memorial Day--Western
Oregon" – Lorraine Jeffery
First Honorable Mention: "In the Depth of
Winter" – Barbara Blanks
Second Honorable Mention: "Midnight
Muse" – Donna Nelson
Third Honorable Mention: "The Fight" –
Catherine Parker

### June

Judge: John Crawford had 12 entries

First Place: "Nature Has a Way" – Patricia Laster

Second Place: "A Strength in Living" – Dennis Patton

Third Place: "A Breath of Hope" - Cathy

Moran

The latest Strophes lists winners for the NFSPF contests. Many PRA members had success!

# 2021-2022 Roundtable Monthly Contests Topics

September: Subject – Why I think I'm special (this can't be the title); Form – Free verse, 32-line limit

October: Subject – Getting along with

nature; Form – Any

December: Subject – Any; Form – Free

verse, 32-line limit

January: Subject – Past, present, future;

Form – Any, 24-line limit

February: Subject – Any; Form – Golden

Shovel Poem

#### Golden Shovel Poem Directions are:

Take one line from a poem you admire. Use each word in the line as the end word for your poem.

Keep the end words in order.

Give credit to the poet who wrote the original line.

The new poem does not have to mirror the poem from which it was taken.

Example below:

Muddy Paths

"who finds his way by sunflowers through the dark."

...Wm. Stafford

In this confusing world where we live, who

still dreams that everyone eventually **finds** happiness in spite of turmoil in his or her life, by ignoring what they see? The

ahead is muddy, often clouded by fear; yet faith, friendships shine, and sunflowers

wave bright, breeze greetings through stormy doubt, so I rest in the fact God grasps my hand, especially in the dark.

...line from William Stafford's poem "Times Exile"

March: Subject – Any; Form – Free verse, 40-line limit

May: Subject – Any; Form – Villanelle June: Subject – Societies absurdities; Form – Any – words must come from a wordpool – The wordpool is to be submitted with the poem.

A wordpool poem is a poem where all of the words used come from lists (pools) of words collected by the poet from any number of sources. They can be words a poet likes, words from texts, poems, speeches, ads, and so on. Here are a few links that discuss creating and using word pools: http://ericahale.net/random-acts-of-poetry-word-pool/

https://www.bremertonschools.org/cms/lib/WA01001541/C entricity/Domain/221/PoetryNotesPoemcrazy.pdf

July: Subject – Summertime; Form – Any, 24-line limit

August: Subject – Thoughts based on any common idiom; Form – Any, 24-line limit

## More Opportunities

\*The online enter portal is up on Arkansasstatefair.com if any adults or youths would like to enter. Poetry and short stories can be mailed in. Go to arkansasstatefair.com.

Click on "Creative Arts" at the bottom of the page. Click on "Information and Documents." Click on "2021 Creative Arts Handbook."

\*Arizona State Poetry Society (ASPS) Annual Contest is Open!

Eligibility: Everyone is eligible, whether a member of ASPS or not.

Cash Prizes: Category 1—1st-\$100, 2nd-\$65, 3<sup>rd</sup>-\$35; Categories 2-13—1<sup>st</sup>-\$50, 2<sup>nd</sup>-\$30, 3<sup>rd</sup>-\$20

Categories: Whatever you write, we probably have a category for you...including a Youth Category! Deadline: AUGUST 31, 2021

See our website for entry fees, details, and how to submit:

https://azpoetry.net/contests/#AnnualContest

\* The Poetry Society of Tennessee announces its 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival Contest. We have 27 contests this year, including a variety of contests available for members, non-members, and Tennessee residents. Please see our contest brochure at https://www.poetrytennessee.org/annualfestival-and-contest.html. For those who have entered our contest before, please note revisions to our rules/eligibility requirements this year. Contest deadline is postmarked by August 6<sup>th</sup>. Keep checking our website for upcoming information about our 65<sup>th</sup> annual festival, which will be held virtually on Saturday, October 9<sup>th</sup>! \* Dr. Paulette Mehta from UAMS wants PRA members to know they can submit poetry for consideration of publication in

upcoming journals. Check out their journal at: https://medicineandmeaning.uams.edu

# Congratulations and Newsworthy

#### From Barbara Robinette

A review of my recently published book, Affirmation, is at this website for July, 2021:

Quill & Parchment: Affirmation (quillandparchment.com)

In June 2021, at Q&P, they published this advanced praise on *Affirmation*:

Quill & Parchment: Affirmation
(quillandparchment.com)

Also, Quill and Parchment published 2 of my haiku in July, 2021 at this website:
Quill & Parchment: Two Haiku

#### Pat Laster

(quillandparchment.com)

In the summer issue of *CALLIOPE: A Writers Workshop By Mail*, Pat Laster's piece, "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Judge Scythes Through An Early Robert Frost Poem," appears. This piece is also on the website, calliopeontheweb.org and includes the Frost poem, "A Tuft of Flowers." This was one of three requirements in the application for an MFA: Critical analysis: Maximum three pages exploring some aspect or element of craft in a literary work. To date, Pat's written 228 new works (prose & poetry) and had 263 works published, including her monthly haiku booklets she sends to friends who request them.

# News from South Arkansas Poets of the Pines (SAPOP) July 2021

South Arkansas Poets of the Pines began meeting again in June 2021 at a new location, South Ark college library. Date and time remain the second Tuesday at 3:30 pm. We welcome new PRA member William Lowery.

Upon his death, Jim Barton's family donated his large collection of books on poetry to SAPOP. This collection now resides on a special shelf at the South Ark college library. SAPOP is working with the library staff on a permanent display and plaque. **Marilyn Joyner** had four entries place at the Arkansas Writers Conference. A 1<sup>st</sup> HM for an essay, a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for a story, a 1<sup>st</sup> place for a poem, and a 1<sup>st</sup> place for an essay.

**Donna Henson's** comments about writing a sonnet for June, "I searched out various descriptions of the form, from old text books

and through the Web. Being prompted to research and learn or re-learn together with friends is one of the reasons I have enjoyed being a part of PRA."

### **Diane Attwell Palfrey**

"Miss Appropriation" and "Platitudes" both won Honorable Mentions in The Ontario Poetry Society "Love Lies Bleeding Anthology Contest." "Metamorphosis" won 2nd Place in the NFSPS - Virginia Corrie-Cozart Memorial Award.

Sandy Soli's poem appeared in the Spring issue of Oklahoma Humanities as a reprint, having been first published some years ago in Oklahoma Today magazine. A poem and short play will appear in Level Land, an anthology of writings set along the entire I-35 corridor, to be published by Lamar University Press.

**S. Eugene Linzey** recently published a nonfiction book titled *Charter of the Christian Faith* available on Amazon. **Cathy Moran** won three second place

Cathy Moran won three second place prizes and one honorable mention in the Alabama state contests; third place in the Utah state contest; and third place in Dancing Poetry.

LaVern Spencer McCarthy won two 3rd places, one 2nd place and one honorable mention in National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc.

Pat Taylor's poetry has won prizes at the Arkansas Poetry Conference and other venues. After being published in several literary magazines she has published an Opus book of poetry called, *My Bag Is An Omnibus*, which offers an alternative look at life's beauties and hardships.

Fay Guinn attended the Hemingway Pfeiffer Writers Retreat in June. She offered this story: "Canceled last year, it was great meeting in-person again this year. The ambiance was not the same since it was held at the community center instead of the HP education center at the museum. The last two days concentrated on poetry. Unusual

because all the others I've been too only centered on prose. The last day of the retreat I awoke from a bad dream, couldn't go back to sleep, got up and wrote a poem using two of the prompts our mentor gave us: a listing and anaphora (repetition of a word or phrase). I read it during the critique session. Not a single negative comment. I guess the bad dream had a good outcome. I'm entering it in 3 upcoming contests so I won't print it here. One of the judges might read it." Some of her summer wins: Arkansas Writers Conference — 1st Place in poetry, 2nd Place in essay, and 2 honorable mentions in short memoir; White County Creative Writers Summer Contest — 2nd Place for prose, 3rd Place for poetry.

**Emory Jones** shares these publications: In the January 2021 issue of The Scarlet Leaf Journal: "What Color Is the Wind?", "Good God", "Rain Regiment", "Haiku Sequence", and "Sacred Music"; "Wild Horses" in WyoPoets News of January 2001; "Winter Sequence" and "Sanctuary" will be in Pasques Petals 2021 Spring Issue; "Dew Dancing" in *Halcyon Days* 2020, issue 19; "Night Dance" in The Avocet: A Journal of Nature Poetry Winter 2021 issue; "Haiku--On a pale blue sky...." in *Haiku Universe* on February 6, 2021 and in #424, March 28, 2021, of *The Weekly Avocet*.; "Mississippi Memories" and "A View from Mississippi" will be in *Deep South Magazine* 2021; "Preservation Hall" in The Jerry Jazz Musician; "Tin Roof: An Etheree" in #429 (February 21, 2021) of *The Weekly Avocet*; Haiku "Butterflies resting....", Haiku "Daffodils spout sun...", and Haiku "The warm spring sunshine..." in #424, March 28, 2021, of The Weekly Avocet; "Sanctuary" in the Spring 2021 Issue #171 of Calliope; "Haiku Sequence" in the April 2021 Issue of *Halcyon Days*; Haiku "On a pale blue sky..." and Haiku "Yellow butterflies..." in Three Line Poetry May

2021; Haiku "Trees stretch twig fingers..." was published in *Haiku Journal* May 2021; Haiku "On a pale blue sky" in *A Peculiar* Sophistication June 2021; "Dancing Autumn: An Etheree" in *Poetry 2021* of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society; "Inscape" and "Water Lilies" in the May 2021 issue of *The* Light Ekphrastic; "Golden Summer", "Living Lantern", and "Summer Hummm" in Halcyon Days Summer 2021 Issue and in The Avocet Summer 2021 Issue. Emory Jones' contest accomplishments include: "Divine Sculpture" won the January 2021 Monthly Contest of the Arizona State Poetry Society and will be published in *Sandcutters* in early 2022; third place and two second honorable mentions in the Arizona State Poetry Society's 2020 Contest; second and third honorable mentions in the Poetry Society of Tennessee's February 2021 Members Only Contest: Seventh Honorable Mention in The William A. Hilldebrandt Memorial Award of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society's 2020 Contest; Second place in the 2021 Winter Contest of the Missouri State Poetry Society; First place in the January 2021 Monthly Contest of the California State Poetry Society; won in Member Contest May 2021 Traditional Form of the Arizona State Poetry Society; won in Member Contest May 2021 Family Ghosts of the Arizona State Poetry Society; won second prize in the Eleanor B. Lapham Memorial Award of the 2021 Pennsylvania Poetry Society Contest and was published in Prize Poems 2021; won third honorable mention in the 2021 Utah State Poetry Society's Annual Contest; won first place in the Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer Contest of the White County Creative Writers.

# Poet Profile: William Lowery

I am a retired chemical engineer. I was born and raised in North Little Rock and graduated from North Little Rock High School in 1969. After



graduation I attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and earned a degree in Chemical Engineering in 1973. While there I met Donna, my future wife. She was one year behind me in school. After graduation I went to work for Dow Chemical in Freeport Texas. One year later Donna graduated and we were married. In 1980 I went to work for a small specialty chemical company in El Dorado, AR called Great Lakes Chemical Corp. I retired from Great Lakes in 2016. Donna and I have two sons, a daughter-in-law, a granddaughter and a grandson. Donna is a retired preschool teacher.

I write when I hear music that speaks to me. Sometimes I just happen to hear a song and I start hearing what the words should be. Other times I listen over and over to a song that I think has potential. Sometimes new words come and sometimes they don't. The mechanism of writing is determined by my engineering training. Once I decide I need to write new words for a song, I will download a copy of the song. I will then determine syllables per line and I will follow the rhyme pattern of the song. My first draft will be hand written. Once the draft is close, I will put it on the computer for further editing. When I listen to the music, I can blot out the words that are being sung and almost hear the vocalist singing my words. As I edit, I will wait a day or two and go back and re-edit. Once I do a couple of

edits without changes, I call it good. The poems are stored in a computer file and the originals with hard copies are in three ring notebooks with dividers and an index.

My book, *God is Love*, is listed on the PRA website. It is also available at Jefferson Street Books in El Dorado, on Amazon, and from the publisher Wipf and Stock. If ordered through the website, there is a 40% off discount code. There will be a discount for the Kindle version next month.

#### **Prince of Peace**

#### **Dawning**

And the beginning of a brand new day Take me to Your bosom and hold me like a newborn babe

### Sunlight

My beacon on a stormy way
Won't You be my guiding light for this
another cold and dreary day
Trusting in the Prince of Peace
Knowing that his love's complete
What I'd really like to know
Is how he can love me so

Covered up in all my sins Knowing I could never win Nothing left to do But put all my trust in You

Master, I know that You love me I have no greater pleasure than Your spirit taking care of me Savior, throughout my history You have been my loving solace and kept my life from misery

Praying to the Prince of Peace Knowing that his love's unique What I'd really like to know Is how he can love me so Covered up in all my sins Knowing I could never win Nothing left to do But put all my trust in You

Failings, there's plenty that I have You reach right down and pull me up and wash me off white as snow And pleasures, You've given me my share I can live a life of joy secure that you are there to help me grow

Trusting in the Prince of Peace
Knowing that His love's complete
What I'd really like to know
Is how He can love me so
Praying to the Prince of Peace
Knowing that His love's unique
What I'd really like to know
Is how He can love me so
Covered up in all my sins
Knowing I could never win
Nothing left to do
But put all my trust in You

Trusting in the Prince of Peace Praying to the Prince of Peace Trusting in the Prince of Peace Praying to the Prince of Peace

Music/Praise Ministers: This can be sung to the Juice Newton song "Queen of Hearts"

Poet
Profile:
Pat
Taylor
To me,
poetry is



simply an adjunct to life! I have always perceived things this way because

everything beautiful in nature is either rhythmic, symmetrical, or musical; so, to me poetry is simply everywhere. As a poet, it is simply my job to transmit as much as possible of that totality to my reader using the elements of the art: meter, rhyme, imagery, word choice and form. As far as I am concerned, to be an effective poem, all of these must mesh into a perfect and interlocked whole...with a zing on the end! What do I mean by 'a zing?" If a poem does not "grab" you by the coat tails by the time you have finished reading it, if it does not make you want to cry or laugh, if it doesn't have that 'zing,' it is not a good poem! Regarding where I get my material, as I said, it comes from what I see in nature with an added element which stems from another side of my personality. I have always been interested in the deep questions: life, death, eternity, God...and all of that, so I try to incorporate what I see in nature and in life into my poems to create metaphors for the bigger questions. I 'created' my first poem on a trip (one of very many) with my parents when I was a precocious 9-year-old. It was about the rain on the windowpanes! (I still LOVE rain!) Later, during my teenage years I wrote to ease the normal angst of that age plus the loneliness of a 'nerd' and a latchkey kid, and the pain of living in a dysfunctional family. Later still, after I grew up and got married, my writing almost stopped until after 25 years of marriage, my husband died in a car wreck and I ended up going back to school, although I really didn't know for sure what to study (still being too vague about my calling) and God sat me down in a chair, pointed His finger in my face, and said, "Go to school to be a writer!" And that settled that! I was in such luck, too! I happened to live in Russellville, enrolled at Arkansas Tech, which has one of the best English departments in the state, with Mr. Lake teaching most of my poetry classes. Lake was absolutely excellent at teaching

poetry, focusing on each element until you had it. Plus, he is the penultimate formalist, and believe me, that's a discipline! Very hard to learn but very good training for any poet. After graduation I kept writing, but I was putting my life back together after the death of my husband and getting published was not the greatest of my concerns, so that was put on the back burner until I found a life-coach last year who has gently but firmly encouraged me to stay on track, doing everything from a free edit to suggesting a great company to print my book. Published by Tall Pine Press, it is called, My Bag Is An Omnibus, and you can find it on Amazon. My favorite poet is Emily Dickinson with Robert Frost a very close second, and my favorite poem is Emily Dickinson's poem simply called, "Poem 1651: A Word Made Flesh is Seldom." I highly recommend it!

### "Do You Hear" by Pat Taylor

All waters make the same sound
A liquid susurrance---All rocks are silent,
While waters prance.
Lichen grows on rocks, a slow advance;
The rocks have time, stillness is their plan,
Put in place since life began.

The wind now, it flows and blows, Across the rocks, wherever it goes. If joined with the sea it roars and raves, Blowing foam from the reeling waves. The wind enhances, while the ocean dances.

Its sound, not silence, that makes us quicken,
But rocks
Were made
So
We
Would
Listen

### Featured Poet:

# Laura Brídges

No doubt you've heard or seen the name, Laura Bridges. After all, she is PRA's youth chair, social media handler, Strophes reporter, and the president of the River Market branch. But how



well do you know her? Recently, she found some time in her busy work schedule for a chat. I asked her how she got involved with the PRA. She said around ten years ago, living in Maumelle, she saw a notice for a poetry group meeting in the newspaper. She attended it and while there, met Cathy Moran and Harding Stadler who asked her to attend a PRA meeting. It was at that meeting that her poetry was critiqued for the first time. Not long after, Kathy Helmer invited her to be a member of the PRA board. One of Laura's proudest poetry moments came when she won the Sybil Nash Abrams Award while attending only her second PRA state meeting. Laura's relationship with poetry goes back to age six or seven when her mother brought home a book of children's poetry. At age 10, she started writing poetry of her own. As a teen, she read the short stories and poems of Edgar Allan Poe. In high school, she entered a poem in a contest sponsored by the Hot Springs branch and won. Like many of us, Laura keeps notebooks, mainly small ones in her purse, to capture ideas and lines. She finds inspiration in the simplest of things, like earthworms coming out of the ground.

A lot of her poetry has to do with nature. She also likes to give things a life. For example, a ceiling, a carpet, or a log. She is a fan of alliteration, but not of meter. Laura says it is like a mental block for her which means she's not crazy about writing blank form or sonnets, but she enjoys trying other forms. She doesn't always write every day. When revising, Laura likes to rip out the notebook page to rewrite and edit her poem. She often revises as she types. She cautions poets to watch those tenses! Some of her favorite poets are Jane Kenyon, Sylvia Plath, and Naomi Shihab Nye. Lately, she is impressed with an 18 year-old named Madisen Kuhn who has a following on social media. Laura savs she finds Kuhn's poetry really interesting as it has brought her a new perspective of writing. Laura thinks poetry is changing, going from the written form to the spoken one. "It's something new that's catching on," she says even though she herself prefers the written form. She believes this trend of spoken word is connected to Black traditions of oral storytelling. Laura likes to discover new poets to read by sitting on the floor of a used bookstore and selecting collections by those names she doesn't know very well. She feels reading new poets "expands our minds by looking at other perspectives." When I asked Laura what question she wishes people would ask more, she said, she wishes people would ask each other what are you reading right now? For me, that is Kim Stafford's Singer Come From Afar. How about you? What are you reading?

"Something Like Poetry"

By Laura Bridges

The seas carry many languages across their waves.
The words of the people who crossed them left behind

traces of themselves. Ragged, fragile, stunning, violent words cling to the salt and form a life of their own.

They either settle to the bottom with the dead or reach the shore to be discovered like shells.

# Keeping Poetry Alive—

Here are the responses to the request for: What got you writing this summer?

#### From **Emory Jones**:

I have never stopped writing poetry. I sometimes react to what I observe in nature and in society. I write a lot of HAIKU, some Etherees, and Sonnets. I especially enjoy Ekphrastic Verse and Free Verse.

#### From Gail Denham:

We've stayed inside most days for a month or so - cuz it's so hot. That helps keep me at the computer. So being inside, I think of the pile of writing I have beside me. And soon here come the listings for more contests state contests. I began to "mine" my journals - pulling out poems I'd written by hand typing the good ones. Also I have files and files of already typed up rough drafts - many of these I polished up and sent them off. I hope everyone keeps journals - I have kept them for well over 40 years. So much richness in those journals - and I have many more to "mine". I find just the beginning of a story or a poem - that helps to get the mind juices flowing. Anyway - that keeps the pile of manuscripts growing - and gives me plenty of poems to choose from.

Photo by Karen Moulton taken at Holla Bend, AR



### From the Editor

I am getting ready to take a two-week long road trip out west. I'll be going to national parks I've never visited in Colorado and Utah. The trip includes stays in a ritzy Airbnb, a yurt, a swanky Vegas hotel, and a tent. I will carry a notebook with me everywhere I go to capture the awe and grandeur of the scenery and the thrill of those moments when I catch a trout in a mountain stream or stare gob smacked at a perfectly dark desert night sky. I feel fortunate to live in the Ozarks where I am inspired by the beauty of nature every day, but this trip will expose me to landscapes I've never seen before. Hopefully, many photos will be taken and many poems will be written along the way.

I hope you enjoyed reading about two of our new members as well as one of our longtime members. I like learning about what inspires members to write poetry, how they got started writing, and what their writing process is. If you wish to be profiled or interviewed for a feature in the next News 'N' Notes, send me an email.

If you have read a poet or poem that really got your attention, please send me a quick note about it so we can share your thoughts with others. There's a lot of poetry out there. It is good to have recommendations from members to guide us. And don't forget that PRA members' books are listed on the PRA webpage for your convenience.

I didn't issue a specific form challenge for the next News 'N' Notes, but if you look at the new topics for the monthly contests, I think you'll find some. The Word Pool contest is the one I am sponsoring in memory of my dear friend and poet, David Spicer, who died in the fall of 2020. He was prolific and loved the challenge of some of the stranger forms out there. His credits include many journal publications as well as several books. He and I exchanged poems for years after meeting online in a Kim Addonizio workshop. My partner and I traveled to Memphis in December 2019 where we had lunch with David and his wife. This was the first and only time we met in person. I hope you decide to enter the word pool contest and the other months' contests as well.

Please keep track of poetry news you wish to share with the members and send it my way for the next newsletter. jkmoultons@yahoo.com

Stay safe. Keep poetry alive.

Karen Moulton Editor