

News 'N' Notes

August 2022

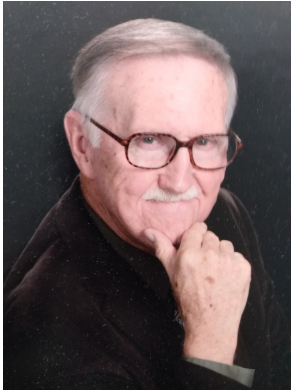
Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas

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,

One of my favorite authors is Malcolm Gladwell. In his recent book *Talking to Strangers*, I was shocked to read the following: "Poets die young. That's not just a cliché. The life expectancy of poets, as a group, trails playwrights, novelists, and non-fiction writers by a considerable margin.

They have higher rates of "emotional disorders" than actors, musicians, composers, and novelists." Later he continues, "Something about writing poetry appears to either attract the wounded or to open new wounds..." He cites as an example Sylvia Plath, who killed herself at the age of thirty. I know little of Sylvia Plath except that she was a well-known poet.

If I had to guess, I would say it is more likely that poetry attracts the already wounded, perhaps as a means of reaching out for help, rather than opening new wounds.

At any rate, my perception while associating with PRA poets and others is that the opposite is true: that writing and absorbing poetry opens not wounds, but new avenues of appreciation and wonders of nature and the human condition. Perhaps because we live in "flyover country" where old-fashioned values have not completely disappeared that we have more poets who, like Lily Peters, live a long, successful, satisfying life.

John McPherson

President, PRA

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

The Board met on June 25. Here are the minutes, starting with Old Business and Reports, from that meeting offered by secretary, **Frieda Patton**.

Last year, **Chris Henderson** was approved to fill a member at large position for the remainder of the fiscal year. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that **Chris Henderson** continue to fill this position for the upcoming fiscal year.

The date for Poetry Day has been set for October 15, 2022, at Parkview United Methodist Church in Benton, AR. **Chris Henderson** is Poetry Day Contest Chair and **Laura Bridges** volunteered to serve as Poetry Day Chair. Laura will check on getting a speaker.

Frieda Patton reported that she is still working on the Sybil Nash Abrams Trust tax issue. At this time, she is waiting for verification of the TIN for the Sybil Nash Abrams Trust.

Laura Trigg has requested that since she is unable to attend PRA meetings and functions that she be replaced as a Board member.

Due to the death of Harding Stedler, there is an Honorary Member vacancy. Nominations for a new Honorary Member were made and vote taken by secret ballot. **Elizabeth Faulkner** was selected as the new Honorary Member.

The student contests have not been supported by the Sybil Nash Abrams family for some time. Funds for the student contest have been collected in memory of Harding Stedler. Due to Harding Stedler's support and contributions to scholarships for students when he was teacher and principal and his contributions and support to PRA, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to change the name of the contest to the Harding Stedler Memorial Student Contest. The prizes for the Honorable Mentions for the student contest is a poetry book. The

cost of a book and postage to mail the book is greater than the value of the third place prizes. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the Honorable Mention winners receive \$5 each instead of a book.

Continued sponsorship of the collegiate contest was discussed. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the contest be postponed for one year. Continuation of the contest will be discussed next year.

Years ago, **Pat Laster** sponsored the Spring Celebration Mary Harper Sowell Award. Pat has requested to change the name of the contest to the Freeda Baker Nichols Memorial Award. A motion was made, seconded, and passed a motion approving the name change.

Pat Durmon is the Chair of this year's Sybil Nash Abrams Trust contest. Anyone with suggestions for judge for this contest should let Pat know the suggestion by July 15.

Concerning the Sybil Nash Abrams Trust, page 20 of the Yearbook reads, "Sybil Nash Abrams Trust: Income from the Trust will be paid annually to Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas to be awarded" Funds from the Trust are not paid to Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to correct the wordage to, "**Funds from the Trust will be awarded....**"

Concerning the Sybil Nash Abrams Trust contest committee, page 20 of the Yearbook reads, "The member who has served longest will be the Chairman. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that for clarification this be changed to read, "**The PRA member who has served the longest will be the Chairman.**"

July 1 is the date for renewal of the stipend of \$500 to the webmaster, Karalin Rogers. Due to health issues, Karalin has asked that she be approved as webmaster for 6 months at \$250 and then let her reconsider at that time if she continues as webmaster for PRA. A motion was made, seconded, and

approved that Karalin continue for 6 months at \$250 and reconsider at that time. A Nominating Committee is needed to make nominations to the PRA membership for officers for fiscal years 2023-2025. **Laura Bridges** volunteered to serve as Chair. Nominations were made for the 2022 Merit Award. Votes were by secret ballot. The Merit Award will be announced at Poetry Day.

Poetry Day

October 15--Save the Date

PRA's 2022 Poetry Day Conference is scheduled for October 15 at the Parkview United Methodist Church, 514 North Border Street, Benton, AR. Registration will begin at 9:00 am and the conference will begin at 9:30 am. There is no registration fee. A BBQ lunch will be available at \$8.50 a meal. Poetry Day is the main poetry event in Arkansas. Each year this conference honors Arkansas Poet Laureate Rosa Zagnoni Marinoni (1953-1970). As a result of her efforts to promote poetry in Arkansas, Governor Ben Laney proclaimed October 15, 1948, the first annual Poetry Day in Arkansas. For conference questions contact John McPherson at mcpherson8391@gmail.com or 501-305-9972.

Laura Bridges will serve as Poetry Day Chair and **Christine Henderson** will serve as Poetry Day Contest Chair.

The featured speaker is Dr. Tyrone Jaeger of Hendrix College. Dr. Jaeger teaches courses on creative nonfiction, fiction, hybrid literature, and digital storytelling. He is the author of *Radio Eldorado* (Braddock Avenue Books, 2020), the story



collection *So Many True Believers* and the cross-genre novella *The Runaway Note*. His writing has appeared in journals such as the *Oxford American*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *High Desert Journal*, and *The Literary Review*. Dr. Jaeger is the recipient of the Porter Fund Literary Prize, an Arkansas Arts Council Individual Artist Grant in Novel Writing, the Theodore Christian Hoephner Award, and the Frank O'Connor Award for Short Fiction. He frequently collaborates with the Hendrix-Murphy Foundation on reading series and symposia and programs events that bring award-winning authors from around the world to campus. Jaeger currently holds a Margaret Berry Hutton Odyssey Professorship with Maxine Payne called "Audiovisual Arkansas: Citizen Storytellers." Born and raised in the Catskill Mountains, Tyrone lives on Beaverfork Lake, Arkansas, with his wife and daughter.

Monthly Contests Information

2022-2023

September: Subject-Elders; Form-Free verse

November: Subject-Any; Form-Rhymed; 24 line limit

December: Subject-Special gift; Form-Free verse; 28 line limit

January: Subject-Any; Form-Ethereal

February: Subject-Any; Form-Hexadual; line limit 12

March: Subject-Any; Form-Free verse

May: Subject-Pets; Form-Any

June: Subject-Any; Form-Free verse; 36 line limit

July: Subject-The moon; Form-Pantoum; 24 line limit

August: Subject-Any; Form-Rhyming couplet; 24 line limit

Contest Rules:

1. Beginning September 2022, poems

must be postmarked by the first Saturday of the month.

2. Members may enter one poem per month with a limit of 36 lines unless directions are otherwise.
3. Entries must be mailed to: Renee Ramsey, 249 Garden Lane, Floral, AR 72534.
4. Poem must be original, unpublished.
5. Two copies; place name and address on one copy only in the upper right corner.
6. Winners receive a check for \$15, \$10, \$5 and are listed on the web site.
7. Three HMs may or may not be awarded. Contest results are to be announced by the end of the month.

Welcome New Members

Lucy Allen of Benton, AR; **Raven Goodwen** of Batesville, AR; **Dewayne Keirn** of West Fork, AR; **Naomi Sechrest** of Searcy, AR; **Hazel Wright** of Hot Springs, AR; **Lolita Kuester** of Hot Springs, AR; **Michael Hoerman** of Springdale, AR; **Ricky Wright** of Norman, OK; **Deborah Carmen** of Little Rock, AR.

Transition

Freedra Baker Nichols of Clinton, AR, passed away February 26, 2022. She was the author of the poetry chapbook, *Tigers and Morning Glories*.

<https://www.rollerfuneralhomes.com/memorialpage.asp?id=62211&locid=21>

Husband of member **Rita Goodgame** passed away May 10, 2022.

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/little-rock-ar/thomas-goodgame-10745394>

Von Bourland of Happy, TX, passed away June 8, 2022. A member of PRA, Hi-Plains Chapter Poetry Society of Texas and The Poetry Society of Texas, she loved writing

poetry and entering poetry contests.

<https://www.brooksfuneral.com/memorials/von-bourland/4640644/>

Delores Hinde of Hot Springs passed away on Thursday, June 23. Delores was a PRA member for over twenty-two years.
<https://www.smithfamilycares.com/obituaries/delores-hinde>

Wayne Rhodes, husband of PRA member and Arkansas Poet Laureate, **Suzanne Underwood Rhodes**, passed away on June 27. He was a gifted and professional landscape photographer who loved the shores and mountains where he and his wife hiked and where he found beautiful subjects for his pictures.

<https://www.nwaonline.com/obituaries/2022/jul/01/george-rhodes-2022-07-01/>

From the Pen of Our Poet Laureate



Photography by Don Monteaux

I want to thank Karen for inviting me as the new Arkansas poet laureate to write a quarterly column in News 'N Notes, and this I am honored and pleased to do, although my initial column comes under a cloud. As many of you know, my beloved husband Wayne died suddenly of heart failure on June 27. It is so recent! I was deeply touched to receive cards of condolence from many PRA members, and I thank you for your kind words and prayers. Only two days before he passed, he was with me for the PRA board meeting in Searcy. He always humorously described himself as my chauffeur and decoration. I miss him terribly and am trying to find my footing on this strange, unsteady ground. My Christian faith gives comfort and so does that good companion, poetry, which sounds the notes

of personal sorrow and pins it to the wall of universal human experience, giving perspective and solidarity. In the midst of profound sadness, I have some positive news to share. The poetry contest I launched as my first laureate project, “Yum’s the Word,” resulted in submissions from lower and upper divisions of home-educated students. The poems have all been sent to the judges. I chose that group because homeschoolers are often marginalized and stereotyped, a regrettable short-sightedness which I experienced myself when I taught my three children (now grown and successful in their fields) at home. The first-place winners in both divisions as well as second- and third-place winners will receive modest monetary prizes and, at his invitation, the top winners will have an opportunity to meet with Gov. Hutchinson for a talk and photoshoot. I’m also pleased to mention that I have a press secretary. (I got the idea for this classy title for an assistant from Jo McDougall.) She is Sophia Wright, a rising homeschool senior from Hot Springs and an accomplished debater, athlete, and chorale member who excels academically and takes many college classes online. Since youth is my focus for the first year of my term, she’s perfect for the position and was a great help with the business of the contests. We’re already looking at the second project, which will target public school students in cities and counties with the highest poverty rates and fewer resources in the arts. Congratulations to Fayetteville poets **Gloria Tran**, Gerry Sloan and **Missy Frye** whose poems will be included, as will mine, in *Mid/South Anthology* from Belle Point Press founded by Casie Dodd. The book will be out in September. Gloria, Gerry and Missy are all members of a poets’ group I started about three years ago. We plan to form a PRA branch as soon as we can.

Business aside (“biz” brings to mind what Robert Graves said, “There’s no money in poetry, but then there’s no poetry in money, either.”), I think the great gift of poetry is the way words can tunnel down into the deepest places, dark or sweet, and return with messages to the world not found anywhere else. I offer one of my own poems, from *Hungry Foxes*, and read at Wayne’s memorial service:

A Common Quiet
(for Wayne)

Easing our kayak into Back Bay
we sink into the hollows and paddle out
through the dream of a red moon shedding
light on the water past the raucous tolling of
a tree frog
to a cove where a screech owl whinnies in
the far-off woods

and you lean forward as we glide onward.
You follow the sweeps of my paddle
in the gray and grainy dark with the water
as still as the sky where Cassiopeia stares
from her cold kingdom and no one speaks.

I am learning the way of the tandem life, the
drift
of letting you let me lead or follow the
current
away from a long-ago ride with another
when my mind caved and the waters
thundered white
in the overwhelming face of that
swallowing.

Here, the water is one with our rhythm.
I love how your body brushes me with each
stroke.

With hopes for cooler days and happy times,
Suzanne

May Monthly Contest Winners

Judge: **Pat Durmon**; 16 entries

First Place: **Patricia Laster** “Revival”

Second Place: **Marilyn Joyner** “Night Plight”

Third Place: **Terrie Jacks** “Love, Bewitching Bouquet”

First Honorable Mention: **Dennis Patton** “The Words of Love”

Second Honorable Mention: **John McPherson** “Old Records and Me”

Third Honorable Mention: **Donna Henson** “I Wanted to Write a Love Song”

June Monthly Contest Winners

Judge: **Karen Moulton**; 5 entries

First Place: **Terrie Jacks** “Now Is the Time to Abandon All Reality”

Second Place: **John McPherson** “The Physics of Hate”

Third Place: **Dennis Patton** “Pastor Joe”

July Monthly Contest Winners

Judge: **Fay Guinn**, 13 entries

First Place: **Sara Gipson** “My Summer Spent Farming”

Second Place: **John McPherson** “The Summertime Genie”

Third Place: **Elizabeth Dail** “When Summer Begins”

Congratulations and Newsworthy

Senior Moments: Poems by **Betty Jo**

Middleton is available on Amazon.com as a paperback or eBook.

Kai Coggin has been the featured artist at The Mid America Arts Alliance in Kansas City for June and July, and just accepted a leadership position on the Board of Directors for the International Women’s Writing Guild.

Emory D. Jones had the following publications: “Morning Miracle” in *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices* for April 2022; “Jewel Bush” in #487, April 3, 2022 edition of *The Weekly Avocet*; “Art

Appreciation--A Golden Shovel Poem”

Third Place in the William H. Hildebrandt Memorial Award of the Pennsylvania Poetry Society’s 2022 Contest; “Soul Minstrels” in the Spring 2022 edition of *Jerry Jazz Musician*; “Personal Aesthetics” First Place in Category #5 (Scorn Not the Sonnet Award) of the Mississippi Poetry Society’s 2022 Contest; “The Resting Place” First Place in Category #12 (Villanelle Award) of the Mississippi Poetry Society’s 2022 Contest; “Forever Faun” Third Place in Category #23 (Helen Kressmann Taylor Memorial Award) of the Mississippi Poetry Society’s 2022 Contest; “Art Appreciation--A Golden Shovel Poem” First Place in the May 2022 Members-Only Contest of the Poetry Society of Tennessee; “The Thing About Quilts” First Place in the Arizona State Poetry Society’s May 2022 Monthly Contest; “Saturday” in *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*, June 2022; “Dancing Autumn: An Etheree” in *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices*, June 2022; “Divine Sculpture” in the volume 1, Issue 8, June 8, 2022, of the *Tunica Voice*; “Moon Streak” and “A Forest After the Rain” were each displayed with a painting at Peabody Art Association Show in Massachusetts in June 2022.

John W. Crawford won First Place in June Arizona monthly contest; Won First Place in May and July member contest of Arizona State Poetry Society; Won an Honorable Mention in Arkansas Writers Conference; Inducted into Arkansas Writers HALL of FAME in June; Read at Wednesday Night Poetry the poem “Miss Emma” which won in June ASPS contest; Had a haiku published in *The Southern Standard*, a weekly column edited by **Pat Laster**.

Marilyn Joyner shares this July 2022 South Arkansas Poets of the Pines News: **Jack Ryan, Janet Ryan, and Marilyn Joyner** attended lectures at the in-person South Arkansas Literary Festival held on July 17 at

SouthArk Community College. They also closed the festival by reading some of their works. **Marilyn Joyner** received one First Place, three Second Place prizes, one Third Place, and four Honorable Mentions at the recent Arkansas Writers Conference.

Paulette Bane who publishes under her maiden name, Paulette Guerin, had two poems in these journals: "Longing as an Antidote to Loneliness" in *Spindrift* and "Midsummer" in *Plainsongs*. In April, she reviewed a poetry collection *Tornado Drill* by Missouri-based poet Dave Malone: <https://blogs.wp.missouristate.edu/elder-mountain/2022/04/03/book-review-tornado-drill-by-dave-malone/>

Barbara Robinette shares that *Modern Haiku* published her haiku in their Summer 2022 issue; *Highland Park Poetry* published her poem "Feet" in their *Odes* book along with a painting #400 "In Praise of Lady Poverty and Her House" on the back cover. *Daily Haiga* also published online one of her poems in February and one in June 2022. *Quill and Parchment* published several of her watercolor paintings in March 2022 Volume 249. quillandparchment.com

Contest Opportunities...

The Arizona State Poetry Society's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the opening of their Annual Contest for 2022. They have added six new categories this year. Visit their website for submission guidelines and categories. <https://azpoetry.net>

Did You Know?

One year, the Baxter County Poets Association discussed the fact that our annual fair had many creative art exhibits including paintings, drawings and photography but not poetry. All loved the idea. I contacted a member of the fair committee. She wanted to meet with our group to share ideas. We formed a

committee from our club. We got together and came up with suggested rules. Later we met with the fair representative to discuss our recommendations. She was excited and encouraged. (Of course, we were too!) She told us that our poetry category was a great idea! We shared more thoughts. The list included that the poem would be one page with a font size of 12-14 or a legible handwritten poem. The poem(s) had to be matted or framed with or without glass. Two entries per person could be entered. Unacceptable language could not be included. The judge(s) would have three categories to place a winning poem under which included Humor, Serious, and Religious. The amateur work had to be done by the original exhibitor and never published before with an ISBN number. The name could not be visible. (Some place a post-it note over the signature.) A poem submitted must not have been entered before in the fair contest. Besides the three categories, the Best of Show would be given out as well with monies included. Now there are two categories: adult (19 years and older) and junior (9 years old-18). Since that fateful meeting a little over ten years ago, we are proud to say that the poetry category remains strong because of our collaboration of love and sharing what is dear to our hearts. We believe to this day that all counties that have an annual county fair in Arkansas could include poetry in their creative arts. What could be more creative than poetry? by **Debra Dail**

Poets Recommend...

From **Paulette Bane**: Missouri-based poet, Dave Malone's website is [\(https://www.davemalone.net/tornado-drill/\)](https://www.davemalone.net/tornado-drill/). Diana Moxon recently interviewed him for her "Speaking of the Arts" podcast: <https://www.kopn.org/programs/speaking-of-the-arts/> (The episode title is "Love: poetry; in the time of climate change;

and of art and archaeology." Dave's is the first interview after her intro.)
 From **Karen Moulton**: "Poetry Unbound," a podcast that examines one poem per podcast. This podcast has a Zen feel to it.



Joyner receives 2021 Merit Award from McPherson

Profile: Board Member at Large

Marlyn Joyner—
 The Road to Poetry
 My road to poetry was a long one. You might say it took a lot of preparation before poetry became a

part of my writing. I loved reading. As a child I did a lot of reading as we children were encouraged to do so by my family and my school. As I read, I wanted so much to be a writer of like compositions. In high school one English teacher gave us many writing assignments. She encouraged us and I enjoyed the writing. I began to write now and then. Then came college, work and family. My programming job required a lot of writing, but most of this was in code. However, this type of writing gave me a discipline in logic and organization. In addition, there were many reports and instruction manuals to write. When I took a creative writing class at the local college, I heard about the South Arkansas Writers. I joined and my writing activity became more frequent. One member of the group was my cheer leader. This was Jim Barton. Then in 2009, Jim decided to form a branch of PRA. I joined. And this is when I really found poetry. I don't write every day and maybe not even every week. I take it by spells. I enjoy the challenge of the various contests. My writing is done on a legal pad or my

computer, indoors and out, waiting at the doctor's office, or the car dealership. To polish my work, I read it aloud, then let it rest. After a proper resting period, I read aloud again. Then repeat until I quit. I say quit because I feel that few of my poems are ever finished.

Rhymed poems are my favorite and Robert Frost is one of my favorite poets. Here is a poem reflecting this.

Robert Frost, The Road Taken
 By **Marilyn Joyner**

Remember the snowy cotton topped head,
 his new poem on the podium spread;
 but sun cast a glare so he could not see
 and he recites a poem from memory.

At Kennedy's inauguration Frost spoke,
 a beloved poet of the common folk,
 using metaphors and similes when he wrote
 of everyday things and some of note.
 Writing about an ant on a tablecloth
 and a dimpled spider holding up a moth,
 about buzz saws, the wind and silken tents,
 waiting, walking, and other life events.

His poems have an air of simplicity,
 but he is a master of duplicity,
 requiring reading and reading again,
 that other hidden meaning to ascertain.

Frost, a traditionalist, uses much rhyme,
 manipulates words with results sublime.
 Word usage contributes to his poems flow,
 adding depth of sound to the audio.

Robert Lee Frost named for Robert E Lee,
 great American poet, most will agree,
 wrote many poems that I enjoy reading,
 if only my work was as succeeding.

From the Editor

It is hard to find the energy to write sometimes. I blame the weather and the pandemic. I tested positive for Covid on June 24. Because I was vaccinated and double-boosted, I experienced milder symptoms. The worst aspect of it was fatigue that lingered. Add 100 plus degree temperatures and poof—motivation disappeared! But now I am feeling better and rain gave much needed relief to the grass last night, so words and lines are once again stirring in my head. Watching butterflies nectar on bergamot is certainly inspirational. Last fall, I put in a butterfly garden which features native plants. I spent the winter covering them to protect them from freezing temperatures and frost since they weren't fully established. Most of them survived and are providing me and a plethora of pollinators sustenance. I glean so much joy from nature. I hope you have some place outside that you visit regularly.

I just finished reading *The Hurting Kind* by Ada Limon, our new US Poet Laureate. She weaves the natural world and the everyday into these poems. A review of the book can be found here:

<https://www.npr.org/2022/05/09/1096005629/ada-limon-hurting-kind-review-poetry>

Find out more about her at <https://www.adalimon.net/> and watch this interview with her on the PBS Newshour. (Thanks to Kai Coggin for sharing the link.)

<https://youtu.be/OWioTkS7apo>

Limon is also the host of *The Slowdown* podcast. If you aren't a podcast listener, you can get The Slowdown as a daily email.

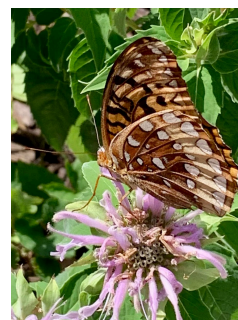


As you read about the Poetry Day plans, I hope you are thinking about attending. It is a long drive for me, but when I attended, I was able to put faces to names and picked up a few ideas from the speakers. A lot of work goes into the planning and setting up of this day. Thanks to all who make it possible.

In May's News 'N' Notes, there was an item requesting tips for self-publishing on Amazon. If you have experience with self-publishing that would benefit members, please pass that along and I will share it.

One of my poetry goals is to share my work more. I subscribe to Duotrope which gathers the places looking for submissions. I listen to Rattlecast but so far haven't signed on to read my work. PRA member, **Kai Coggin**, hosts an open mic every Wednesday. NFSPS and PRA offer contests. What keeps me from achieving this goal? I'm not sure. Is sharing a priority for you? If so, how do you manage submissions?

Remember that this is your newsletter. Your news and your ideas are what make it interesting for members to read. Send poetry book recommendations my way so I can share them with everyone. Have a great revision strategy? Send it. I'm always looking for member profile volunteers, so we can get to know each other better. What else would you like to see in your newsletter? I'm open to suggestions.



*Great Spangled
Fritillary on Bergamot*

*Photo by Karen
Moulton*

Stay safe.
Keep poetry alive.

Karen