

A COMMON WEALTH OF POETRY

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia ♦ July 2021

A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

by Terry Cox-Joseph

"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer." —F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

As graduates toss their caps into the air, so we all toss our masks June 30. How apropos F. Scott's quote is. We're holding in-person readings and presentations! For starters, Eastern Region VP Kathleen Decker will host a reading at the Williamsburg Library Theater Saturday, July 24, 2-4 p.m. (Announcement later in this issue). We know there are more activities to come all over the state. Check out our website and Twitter and Facebook pages for more. Social Media Coordinator Catherine Fletcher is posting and tweeting up a storm.

I will host a board meeting on Zoom July 19, the last, I hope, of our Zoom meetings even though they are awfully convenient to avoid long-distance driving. Thank you, general membership, for your outpouring of support during our election. With the updated bylaws, the board and I will serve you for two years.

We are once again updating our website. Webmaster Steve Dorsey will be moving our platform in the coming months. The transition should be so smooth that you would probably not have known unless I'd told you. (See Steve's comments later in this issue.)

Welcome aboard, new treasurer, Pam Denyes! Pam will be working hard this summer to learn the ropes. She is a writer, retired from contract nonfiction work, and now writes poetry and nonfiction for fun. She has a B.A. from Virginia Wesleyan. She also has experience in accounting, bookkeeping, and HTML coding. Pam lives in Virginia Beach where summer runs *huge*.

Welcome, Stacy Clair, our new membership chair! Stacy hails from Fredericksburg, has been a head accountant, and has worked in accounting for twelve years. She brings with her a wealth of office and customer service skills. She is pursuing a Masters in Fine Arts in Non-Fiction, as well as devoting writing time to *Our Life Logs*. Stacy spends her days caring for her father and loves to spend time with her husband and two rescue dogs.

Congratulations, Old Dominion University alumna Natalie Diaz! She was awarded a Pulitzer Prize June 11 for *Postcolonial Love Poem* (Graywolf Press), her collection of "heart-wrenching and defiant poems that explore what it means to love and be loved in an America beset by conflict." *Postcolonial Love Poem* was also a finalist for the 2020 National Book Award, the 2020 Los Angeles Times Book Prize, and the 2020 Forward Prize for Best Collection. It was shortlisted for the 2020 T.S. Eliot Prize, as well. Natalie was born and raised in the Fort Mojave Indian Village in Needles, California, and is an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian Tribe.

Keep your eyes, ears, mind, and heart open for poems as the state opens up this summer. Beaches, walks in the woods, summer concerts, horses, birds, and even blue skinks offer a wealth of poetry prompts, as do family reunions, taxi rides, and philosophical and political discussions late at night on the back porch. Write on!



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NORTHERN REGION

CATHY HAILEY, VP

Greetings from the North (Via the Outer Banks)!

May and early June turned out to be wonderful months for poetry! We held our first Zoom Reading on May 15th, featuring **Zeina Azzam, Steve Bucher, Jacqueline Jules, Kathy Smaltz, and Sally Zakariya**. We held our second on June 13th, featuring **Katherine M. Gotthardt, Mike Maggio, Kim B. Miller, Farin Powell, and Katherine E. Young**. Both readings included powerful poetry and a variety of voices from recently published books followed by an open mic. Thank you to **Jacqueline Jules**, our Zoom Host for May and June, and to **Mike Maggio**, our MC for June. A similar reading is coming up later in the summer featuring **Laura Bobrow, Claudia Gary, Ruth Holzer, Daniel Nelson, and Elizabeth Spragins**. We haven't set the date yet, but I'll let you know when we do.

I attended my first in-person reading (post-pandemic) at the McCall Studio Gallery in Manassas on June's First Friday and heard wonderful poetry from **Kathy Smaltz** (*Pieces*) and **Katherine M. Gotthardt** (*D.C. Ekphrastic; Crisis of Faith*). They were wonderful, and we all enjoyed the art and music, too! How strange to be out in the world again!

The PSV State Festival was exceptional with readings by E. Ethelbert Miller and John Murrillo and a beautiful, emotional film about poet Larry Levis. Thank you to all who set it up. **LINK TO THE PLAYLIST: Poetry Society of Virginia 2021 North American Book Awards and Festival**. I plan to use the film in my JHU course through Kanopy: <https://www.kanopy.com/product/late-style-fire>. It can also be rented on Amazon.

If you are a fan of Anne Sexton or Maxine Kumin, you might enjoy listening to Grace Cavalieri's interview with National Book Award winner Maggie Doherty who wrote *The Equivalents: A Story of Art, Female Friendship, and Liberation in the 1960s*: <https://www.gracecavalieri.com/images/Maggie%20Doherty.mp3>. It made me want to read the book!

I attended the May Reston Readings on Zoom and listened to **Katherine E. Young's** beautiful poems. Two prose writers also read, and I enjoyed both. The link to the reading will be posted soon on the [Facebook page](#). The Reston Readings will take a break for the summer.

I also enjoyed the May Wordworks & Cafe Muse Poets vs. the Pandemic program, which is available to stream on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEiQbmUrO4Y>. You can sign up to receive links to future readings of this program, as well. All three poets were phenomenal!

How exciting that at least three of our Northern Region PSV poets were selected to read in the Joaquin Miller Poetry Summer Reading Series: **Zeina Azzam, Susan Notar, and Jacqueline Jules!** A post Zoom video was available for the first reading. You might find one for the others.

Another wonderful *Written in Arlington* virtual reading, hosted by Hannah Grieco, was held through Readings on the Pike, June 10, with Cristi Donoso Best, **Robert L. Giron**, Kori Johnson, Holly Karapetkova, Gregory Luce, Sushmita Mazumdar, Lori Rottenberg, Naomi Thiers, and **Katherine E. Young**, whose work appears in the anthology *Written in Arlington*. This event was hosted by Hannah Grieco.

John Dutton II has been busy creating poem posts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. For May, he posted 32 poems of 50 lines or longer under the title May is a Poem in Parts! Check them out on Spilled Ink VA (Instagram and Twitter) and on the Facebook author page of John Dutton II.

Selected poets in **Mike Maggio's** 30 for 30 Contest read their collage poems and talked about their poetry on Dennis Price's radio program in May. At this point, I have not found a recording to share. Congratulations to the poets who were interviewed and read, including Lucy Koons, Ed Morin, Mary Tavakoli, Susan Scheid (winner), Kathi Wolfe, **Susan Notar, Michelle "Micki" O'Hearn**, and Delores Hoffman, **Cathy Hailey**, Judge.

A poet friend of mine, Heather Grant, partnered with bass player, Chris Kosky, to perform Turn of Phrase: A Conversation Between a Poet and a Bassist. Thought you might enjoy listening on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/-9PMKDRzJ0g>. It includes a musical interlude at the beginning for about 9 minutes before the conversation begins.

Mark your calendars for the July 15-17 Third Annual 1455 Literary Festival. I saw Katherine E. Young's name on the speaker list! (details below)

Congratulations to Virginia and Richmond poets laureate **Luisa Igloria** and Roscoe Burnems for winning Academy of American Poets grants. Luisa has refocused her energy on the Young Poets in the Community Program, and the committee has been working to move that forward. Stay tuned for announcements to share with students of all ages.

I lucked out and found a cancellation for a house in Corolla. Just starting our beach week. Happy for some relaxation and inspiration!

MAY PLAUDITS

Congratulations to **Zeina Azzam**, whose poem, "Learning to Make a Bed," was published in *Passager*, Issue 70, Winter 2021. Her poems "Syrian Refugee at the Dental Clinic" and "Traveling with the Speed of Light" were published in *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, Issue 22.1, April 2021.

Northern Region *continued*

Congratulations to **Jacqueline Jules**, whose poem "Solo Dance Party" was published at *Your Daily Poem*: http://yourdaily-poem.com/listpoem.jsp?poem_id=3683.

Congratulations to **Mike Maggio**, whose new poetry collection will be out soon. *Let's Call It Paradise* is a poetic exploration of modern society through the lens of consumerism. Drawing from commercial and scientific texts, spam messages, Google searches, online personal ads as well as the author's own inspiration, Mike Maggio creates a 21st montage of dystopia and hope in a work that has been dubbed "a carnivalesque and manic world of mischief." The cover is unique, designed by Grazie Montalto, with a visual poem by Mike, so I've attached the image.

Congratulations to **Sally Zakariya**, whose chapbook *Something Like a Life* has been published by Gyroscope Press (<https://www.gyroscooperreview.com/sally-zakariya/>)

JUNE PLAUDITS

Congratulations to all those published in *Confetti: An Anthology of the Written Word* by Write by the Rails (Virginia Writers Club affiliate) members, some also PSV members: Susan M. Bardenhagen, Alyce Campbell, John Cowgill, Brian Donnell James, **John L. Dutton II**, **June Forte**, Leigh Giza, **Katherine Mercurio Gotthardt**, Lynne Smokler Grossman, **Cathy Hailey**, **Terry Cox-Joseph**, Amanda Valerie Judd, Sharon Krasny, Inger McPhail, Alan Meyrowitz, B, Kimberly Ray, Jan Rayl, Victor Rook, Zach Tamer, Dottie Ward-Wimmer, and Nancy (Ayanna) Wyatt. Thank you, **Katherine Gotthardt** for initiating this project.

Congratulations to **Katherine Gotthardt**, who was awarded a 2021 Seefeldt Award for Arts Excellence, as Outstanding Individual Artist, by the Prince William Arts Council! And thank you to **Alice Mergler** for her organizational wizardry in planning the program!

Congratulations to Ruth Holzer whose latest chapbook, *Home and Away*, is now available from Dancing Girl Press. This is a collection of short narrative prose poems in the Japanese form of haibun. See a sample on her publisher's website.

Congratulations to JoAnn Koff whose poem "The Poetess" will be published by Green Ink Poetry in Collection 6: Discovery, alongside her photograph.

Congratulations to **Daniel N. Nelson** who published *Minnesota and Other Poems* on Nov. 26, 2019, with Atmosphere Press: <https://atmospherepress.com/books/minnesota-and-other-poems-by-daniel-n-nelson/> Congratulations to **Susan Notar** whose poem, "7 p.m. Friday, Washington, D.C.," will appear in the Anacostia Swim Club's forthcoming nature issue.

Congratulations to **Sally Zakariya** who has 3 poems published in a new anthology *Through the Looking Glass: Reflecting on Madness and Chaos Within* (<https://indieblu.net/#jp-carousel-1990>). Sally's poem, "The Possibility of a Bobcat," will appear in the Anacostia Swim Club's forthcoming nature issue. Her poems, "Sky Song," "Star Light, Star Bright," "Toward Equinox," "Listening Note" are up on Bourgeon, thanks to Day Eight and Gregory Luce.

JULY POETRY EVENTS:

July 1, 12 pm. 1455 Literary Festival Teen Poetry Contest Deadline: <https://web.cvent.com/event/09e46134-4022-438e-9297-72ee3f323a1d/websitePage:f5f1940b-980e-4398-96f6-3b681ef5e4a3>

July 8, Readings on the Pike, readers to be announced. For more info: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/285878148678503>.)

July 9, 7 pm. Spilled Ink open mic hosted by **John Dutton**. For more information, contact John Dutton at spilledinkva@gmail.com.

July 10, 2 pm. Poets Anonymous. Open poetry reading, second Saturday of the month. Details: <https://www.meetup.com/POETS-ANONYMOUS-NOVA-s-longest-running-Open-Mic-since-1991/> or via email at poetsanonffx@gmail.com.

July 12, 7:30 pm. Cafe Muse Online, poems from *Written in Arlington*. Readers: Francisco Aragón, Sandra Beasley, Andy Fogle, Kori Johnson, Jose Padua, Richard Peabody, and Amy Young. Register at <https://sites.google.com/view/cafe-muse-events/home>.

July 15-17 Third Annual 1455 Literary Festival: <https://web.cvent.com/event/09e46134-4022-438e-9297-72ee3f323a1d/summary>

July 23, 7 pm. Spilled Ink open mic hosted by **John Dutton**. For more information, contact John Dutton at spilledinkva@gmail.com.

July 27, The Writer's Center Virtual Craft Chat. Caridad Moro-Gronlier discusses her debut poetry collection, *Tortillera*, with Richard Blanco. Register: <https://www.writer.org/event/caridad-moro-gronlier-with-richard-blanco/>.

July 30, The Writer's Center Virtual Craft Chat. Carlina Duan to discuss her latest poetry collection, *Alien Miss*. Carlina is in conversation with Emily Holland, poet and editor of *Poet Lore*, America's oldest poetry journal. Register: <https://www.writer.org/event/duan/>.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

DAVID ANTHONY SAM, VP

Combined NW and NC regions continue to meet via Zoom on the third Saturday of every month at 2 p.m.

* **Susann Gabbay's** book "Through the Archway" was just published

* **David Anthony Sam** had poems accepted for publication by *Mono*, *Inwood Indiana*, and the *Virginia Writers Club Journal*

NORTHWEST REGION

POSITION VACANT

Combined NW and NC regions continue to meet via Zoom on the third Saturday of every month at 2 p.m.

EASTERN REGION

KATHLEEN DECKER, VP

PSV Eastern Region will have an IN-PERSON live poetry reading for July 24th, 2-5pm at Williamsburg Regional Library. The address is 515 Scotland St. in Williamsburg, VA 23188. The reading will be in the Williamsburg Library Theater. Contact Eastern Region VP Kathleen Decker if you want to read at email: sam.jones459@yahoo.com. There will be featured speakers, TBA, and open mic. Two-poem limit for open mic readers; members from other regions will be accommodated as possible, but preference will be given to Eastern Region poets, depending on response. This will NOT be broadcast—it will be live only.

Mask policy: no masks needed if fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people will need to wear masks in the building.

WE ARE SO EXCITED TO FEATURE THIS EVENT, IN PERSON AND IN POETRY!!

The Poetry Society of Virginia's Annual North American Book Awards and Festival was held on May 29, 2021, via Zoom. Terry Cox-Joseph was this year's Festival coordinator. Three videos have been created as the Awards and Festival were recorded. They are available on YouTube at the following link: [2021 PSV Awards and Festival](#). In the first video, the featured speaker, E. Ethelbert Miller, reads some of his poetry and answers questions. The second video contains an introduction of the 2020 North American Book Award Winner, Maya Popa, and the 2021 North American Book Award Winner, John Murillo, by Poet Laureate Emerita Sofia Starnes. Sofia Starnes read a poem from Maya Popa's book, and John read one of the poems from his book. A poetry/music documentary created by Michele Poulos was shown during the festival on the life and poetry of American poet Larry Levis. Due to copyright restrictions, it is not included in the PSV recording on YouTube. However, you may rent the movie through Kanopy at: <https://www.kanopy.com/product/late-style-fire> or through Amazon by typing in "Late style of Fire." The third section of the PSV Festival was devoted to a question-and-answer session by Michele Poulos and PSV members. The PSV Channel also contains a recently added poetry hymn, "Flanders Hymn," created by Stephen Moore. He has set the poem to music and used archived historic images of WWI in the video. It is available at the following link: [Flanders Hymn Poem Video](#).

SOUTHEAST REGION

KINDRA MCDONALD, VP

Summer 2021

Greetings, poets! May this missive greet you with the all the joys of summer: long nights of fireflies, poolside ice cream, and fantastic beach reading. As we start to open up from our long hibernation, I hope you all are healthy and inspired as you continue to document this important time through your poems.

In May, several PSV members participated in the Christopher Newport University Writers conference, which had a great turnout in its virtual format.

The Hampton Roads Writers Conference will take place in person in September. Be sure to register now at www.hamptonroadswriters.org/2021-conference.

The Muse Writers Center summer class schedule is up, so please take a look at the more than 100 course offerings available at the-muse.org. They have also announced a gradual reopening and will now be open on Tuesdays from 10am-7pm.

The Venue on 35th welcomed poets back to the stage in June. Reservations and masks are required; be sure to follow them on social media [@thevenueon35th](https://www.instagram.com/thevenueon35th).

The project to compile an anthology of poems or essays in honor of Jeff Hewitt is in need of submissions. If you have a poem about or inspired by Jeff, please send it to wearevastanthology@gmail.com

May you be full of unabashed gratitude in the warm days ahead. If you find yourself working in the garden, read the poem "Ode to Drinking Water from my Hands" by Ross Gay: <https://poems.com/poem/ode-to-drinking-water-from-my-hands/>

Be well!

CENTRAL REGION

JOANNA LEE, VP

Greetings from the Central Region!

Things are looking more poetically lively these days with a return to some in-person events on a local level as well as continued virtual opportunities.

Charlottesville-based 4th Wednesday Zoom open mics are still drawing online crowds from all over the East Coast and, indeed, the world, with participants logging on from as far away as India. In Richmond, River City Poets is happy to announce regular 1st Thursday and 4th Friday night live outdoor open mic opportunities, as well as a summer reading/open mic series at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens on 4th Sundays.

Richmond also congratulates its first city Poet Laureate, Roscoe Burnems, on receiving a fellowship from the American Academy of Poets for his city-wide, mural-based project "If These Walls Could Talk."

Our Central Region annual meeting is still in the works for late summer/early fall. At this time, we are anticipating an in-person, open air gathering!

Meanwhile, all PSV members are always welcome to join in any of the community events—live or virtual—listed above; simply drop me a line, and I'll send you all the details.

Happy writing!

WESTERN REGION

ANGELA DRIBBEN, VP

I am the incoming VP for the West Region. Please check out our upcoming workshop.

Topic: *The State We're In: Writing Poetry and Place in Virginia*

Workshop Leader: Lesley Wheeler

Duration: 90 minutes

What: generative workshop

Where: Virtually / Zoom

Date and Time: July 13, 2021, at 6:00 PM

Cost: Free to Poetry Society of Virginia West Region members, open to others by donation.

Hosted by: Poetry Society of Virginia West Region

How to register: contact angeladribben@gmail.com Workshop capped at 15. Please don't hesitate to secure your spot.

About the speaker: Lesley Wheeler—author, poetry editor of the *Shenandoah Review*, and resident of our region—has gifted her time and expertise to lead a generative workshop for the West Region of PSV. In the West Region, we feel very fortunate to be the recipients of Lesley's generosity. We want to open up attendance to poets outside of the region and outside of PSV. We do ask that those outside of PSV's West Region membership make a donation to give back to Lesley.

Her new books are *The State She's In*, her 5th poetry collection, and *Unbecoming*, her first novel. Her essay collection *Poetry's Possible Worlds*, a hybrid of memoir and criticism, is forthcoming in Nov. 2021. Her poems and essays appear in *Kenyon Review*, *Ecotone*, *Massachusetts Review*, *American Poetry Review*, and elsewhere. Her work has received support from the Fulbright Foundation, Bread Loaf, Sewanee Writers Workshop, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Poetry Editor of *Shenandoah*, she lives in Lexington, Virginia, and posts at @LesleyMWheeler.

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS: Please send articles, announcements, and poetry to share with your fellow PSV members. Your work may be unpublished or previously published, but if necessary, don't forget to include an acknowledgement. Remember to include a brief bio for the Contributors' page, and keep work apolitical and family friendly. Please send to janhoffpoetry@gmail.com. The deadline for the September newsletter is August 15. Please note that it's a tremendous challenge when everyone waits until the deadline, so the sooner you can send me something, the better.

Thanks so much.

~Jan Hoffman

Congratulations to Virginia Poet Laureate **Luisa A. Igloria** and Richmond Poet Laureate **Roscoe Burnems** on their fellowships from The Academy of American Poets. Both poets will lead public poetry programs in their communities in the year ahead.

As a Poets Laureate Fellow, Igloria will expand available public information on Virginian poets in order to reflect the diversity of poets in the region more accurately, hold a series of virtual poetry workshops, and launch a Young Poets in the Community program. Her \$50,000 award announcement has appeared in numerous papers, including *The Daily Press*, *The Richmond Times Dispatch* and *The Virginian-Pilot*.

Congratulations

Dear Poet Friends in PSV,

Thank you so much for all the warm greetings and congratulations on my receipt of one of the 23 Academy of American Poets' 2021 Poet Laureate Fellowship Awards —

I'm looking forward to an exciting year of projects and to your continued support of me and my work.

All good things,

Luisa

Luisa Igloria

<https://www.luisaigloria.com>

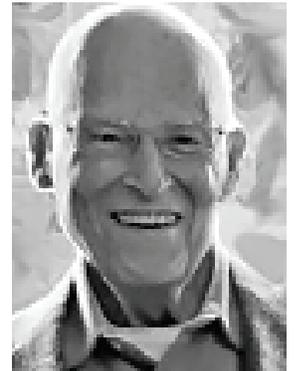
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/luisa-a-igloria>

<http://al.odu.edu/english/mfacw/>

Farewell to a Dear Friend

by Terry Cox-Joseph, President

What can one say about a man who filled every corner with light? Poetry Society of Virginia member Bob Kelly passed away June 10, 2021, at the sprightly age of 97. Those who knew him will understand that I seriously mean “sprightly.” He was probably the most active, energetic, happy guy we will ever meet. He greeted everyone by name, with a loud and happy, “HELLO!” and a hug. He wrote his own poetry and performed it with pizzazz—completely by heart. Never shy, he performed at spoken word and slam events for teens and twenties. With his Navy background in WWII, he was employed for many years at Newport News Shipbuilding where he pioneered the development of the Polaris Ballistic Missile Weapon System. Bob was highly active as a Newport News community volunteer, in his church (St. Andrew’s Episcopal), and with Christopher Newport University, where he helped found their first Theater Guild. He loved attending the symphony, local theater, fundraisers, and numerous other community events. Through classes at CNU’s Lifelong Learning Society, he learned to write poetry—and the rest, as they say, is history. Rest in Peace, Bob. Your legacy outlives you.



A WINNING STRATEGY FOR THE PSV CONTEST

by Claudia Gary

The Poetry Society of Virginia's contests have always been a vital part of the organization. Winning is good! Publishing is good! So why not continue to include publication automatically as part of the prizes? How could there be any drawbacks?

This question has come up repeatedly over past decades, including at least twice while I was on the Executive Board and again more recently. Heated discussions have ensued each time. Such discussions have highlighted the different expectations various poets hold for the same contest. They have also involved PSV's role in the poetry community.

There are a few major literary journals published in the USA that hold poetry contests and publish the winning poems. Two that come to mind are *Rattle* (with over 7,000 subscribers) and *The Missouri Review* (around 10,000). There are a dozen others that do *not* hold contests but have well-established reputations and large readerships — including *Poetry Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, *The Hudson Review*, *The New Yorker*, and so on. Unless a PSV journal or anthology gains a comparable reputation, circulation, and track record, it can't possibly compete with the above readership prospects—and it takes years for any journal to do that.



More to the point, the editors of most literary journals refuse to accept or even look at poems that have already been published—whether in print or on the Internet (including social media)! It's this factor that makes automatic publication of PSV prizewinning poems especially fraught.

More to the point, the editors of most literary journals refuse to accept or even look at poems that have already been published—whether in print or on the Internet (including social media)! It's this factor that makes automatic publication of PSV prizewinning poems especially fraught.

If poets must choose *either* the prospect of winning a PSV prize *or* the prospect of getting poems published in a major journal, PSV publication may look to some poets like a restriction rather than a reward. Those whose work is becoming better known may well choose not to enter the PSV contest at all! And since the contest is an important driver of PSV membership, this could easily restrict the organization's growth, both in numbers and in attracting accomplished members.

But we don't really have to choose—there is a simple way to do both! Why not offer contest entrants a series of opportunities: first, to win prizes; then, to get their prizewinning poems published elsewhere if they so choose; and finally, to get those poems reprinted in PSV's own journal or anthology? This can be both an incentive for poets to grow and a way to help PSV grow. All that's needed is to offer two options for the *timing* of inclusion in PSV's anthology or journal: allow prizewinners to choose either (1) immediate publication or (2) deferred publication (a year after winning the contest). Those who choose to defer could spend a few months submitting their prizewinning poems to journals and *then* have them published—or—if they're lucky, reprinted in the following year's PSV anthology or journal.

This could be a winning strategy for all contest entrants and for the PSV itself.

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR PSV TO CONSIDER

by Derek Kannemeyer

I've come to the end of my time as an elected official on the PSV board, after four years as Central Region Vice President, one as Parliamentarian, and four as President Pro Tempore. I don't recall when I became a member—I think the late 80s—but until 2012, I wasn't a particularly active one. I entered the contests for a few years, then, in the mid-90s, I stopped; I attended an occasional regional meeting. In my sixties, I reduced my teaching load and eased towards retirement. The time was finally right to serve. And to truly join the community.

PSV officers have term limits, for to flourish, the society needs fresh leaders. But there's an equal need for members who actively participate. To be a vital community, we need to mingle. Right now, Facebook and Zoom events might have to suffice, but soon, Asclepius willing, we'll be gathering live again, so I also urge you that if you're drafting new work, enter our contests. And whether you win anything or not, consider attending the awards ceremony.

I'll admit it: I have a thing about our annual contests. The regional meetings and the annual festival are equally crucial, but their business is "biz" guidance, craft workshops, poetry appreciation. Only the annual contests exist to showcase our own writing. And while it's nice to give the award winners big certificates and little checks, what matters more is to make it a community forum. One to celebrate our own best work. But it can't be if too few of us enter; if too few of us care enough to listen to the winning work, or to read it, even to buy the book.

I joined the society wishing to be challenged to write better. You can care as much as you like about broader publication. Send your work out to journals; acquire credits. But isn't that a bit like shouting into the void sometimes? It feels that way to me, at least, unless the journal is truly major, or I've joined its community. Or it's truly regional. Because I want to appear in the company of writers I know, especially personally—whose body of work I know, and I respect.

Here, for me, is the test: Do I read the rest of the work in the journals in which I appear? Do I read the work of poets whom I know?

This may seem a roundabout way to come at my central issue: **What, moving forward, should our annual contests look like? In a moment, I'll offer my own vision. But I would love it if our newsletter could publish some responses framed by our members. Write to us!**

Here's my view:

- 1) The annual contest categories are what they are because that's how they were funded. Still, maybe we could put some work into streamlining and/or broadening them, and eliminating what now seems tired. Could we share our ideas?
- 2) If there are too many contest categories and too many prizes, the awards ceremony becomes exhausting, and we dim the spotlight for the top poems. I would prefer a uniform four awards in every category, with the 4th place (HM) being at the judge's discretion.
- 3) We should publish an annual journal for 1st place poems and judges, with optional publication for 2nd and 3rd place poets. We should increase the first-place money and "buy" first publication rights with the increase. Here's the controversial part: Poets who don't agree to sell us first publication rights could still compete for second prize, but not first. If our best writers refuse to be published by us, how can our journal ever represent us? I ache for us to have a journal that might become a brand in which our members and our judges feel it is an honor to have work featured. That can work only if the journal is selective, if it's scrupulously edited, if it's gorgeously designed, and if it appears with reliable consistency. So far, we haven't met such a standard, and the skepticism about whether we can is absolutely warranted.

So maybe what I ache for is a pipedream. Maybe we're too piddling and pipsqueak to aspire to such a thing. But I'd like to see us show some ambition and to win over the skeptics.

- 4) There should be a category of membership (say \$12 more per year) which includes the price of this journal, including mailing; there might be an online only PDF subscription to it for \$3.
- 5) I seriously dislike the new rule about board members not being allowed to enter the contests. (There was some debate about conflict of interest and the appearance of fairness even though the judging is anonymous.) I want to encourage MORE people to enter, not fewer. I see the contests as a community initiative—it exists to say: this is who we are, ALL of us. I don't mind if in secondary fashion, as an outreach initiative, it heightens our profile. But historically, the number of people who enter from out of state has not rivalled the in state numbers, and those who do enter often become familiar to us: members who return to us every year.

If I had my druthers, every member would enter at least one category, even those who have served as our state laureate, even those who have joined because they read poetry rather than write it. Even if we have to invent special categories for them*. (Sigh. Since I am not Dictator, my druthers won't be mandated.) I don't mind us having levels of contests. I'm fine, if, for example, we have more categories that are closed to previous winners or multiple winners. But the whole darn thing? Are any of us really such big fish and the rest of us such minnows? And what is a contest worth once it's about distributing participation prizes? Is that really a way to challenge each other to write better—and to appeal (for example) to the university poets who wouldn't dream of joining us because we're just too amateurish for them?

- 6) *If we are to exclude board members in this fashion, we should have a few designated categories where they are permitted to submit. Or perhaps REQUIRED to. Please, let's have as broad a participation by our community as possible!

7) We should have a chapbook prize, members only, and publish one every other year under the auspices of the journal. Back in the day, one of the contest categories was for a GROUP of poems. I like that idea, too! This is a short paragraph, so I'm tempted to write it twice because I think both these ideas, but especially the chapbook idea, need emphasizing.

8) We should include a contest- winners reading at the annual festival. At present, the emphasis there is on guest speakers and guest readers. If not our chapbook prizewinner, or our "group of poems" winner, we could invite the year's top winners in the contests we have now to read.

8) On the off years, when there is no chapbook prize, maybe to help establish our new journal, we could put out a non-contest issue.

Shouldn't all this kind of stuff be the purview of the board members and the president and not some kind of permanent policy? Probably, as long as the members who care can feel heard. Is my vision, as a member who cares, too ambitious? Probably. But are we so small that we must renounce ambition? So indecisive about who we are that we flee longer term initiatives?

I really hope not.

POEMS

Independence Day

by Ed Lull

What is this day we celebrate
with picnics and parades?
The bands and fireworks demonstrate;
a festive mood pervades.

Today is Independence Day,
our nation's day of birth.
When we rejoice do we display
a grasp of its real worth?

Oppression by our Motherland
began our journey down
the road where just men took a stand
in Philadelphia town.

Tom Jefferson avowed us free;
brave men then signed away
their pre-war lives; they could foresee
the hazards of the fray.

With patriots from South and North
united in their cause,
the signers' lives would change henceforth,
for now they were outlaws.

But none of them would back away
from hardship or strife.
They took on debt they would repay
with destiny or life.

Protracted war went on for years
where valiant soldiers died.
Commitment ended bright careers
and fortunes cast aside.

Not one brave signer went untouched
by devastating war.
But each, in his own way, had clutched
his freedom to the core.

So when we raise our glasses high
and toast our Nation's day,
ensure our actions dignify
those men who showed the way.



POEMS

Speaking Freedom into Life

by Nancy C. Allen

A song of my ancestors rang out
 across the fields
 on that long-ago hot
 summer day in America.
 The sun stretched upon the horizon
 and drifted down,
 drifted. . .
 until their cinnamon-colored faces
 spilled of sweat.
 An unexpected sadness clung to them.
 Yet, the day was alive with their
 voices raised together in song.
 A song,
 A prayer,
 A source of free speech as beautiful
 as the flight of a butterfly reflecting against
 the breast of the sky.
 Gentle like a sigh of wind in the palms.
 A lyric of song lay heavy in the air.
 The scent of wild plum blossoms,
 pine boughs and the heat of the midday
 sun slid over them,
 a memory of a song out of Africa,
 yet America.
 A song of their shadows and dreams.
 A song as endearing as the lovely flowers
 blossoming amidst the stems of white cotton,
 glowing in the sun-laden fields.
 A song bountifully blessed on that long-ago
 hot summer day in America.

Mailbox 21

by Terry Cox-Joseph

Somewhere, a family lives a normal
 life, picks up the paper from
 the brick stoop every morning,
 shares coffee and corn flakes.
 Somewhere, right around the corner.
 I walk past. "Neat as a pin,"
 in real estate-speak. Take in the clean,
 painted siding. View the postage stamp
 lawn, boxwood hedge beneath living room
 window. Vine winds around white
 mailbox, red flowers pop. Sunhat on bedpost,
 Calm, order. Imagine routine. Friday
 Monday morning through
 follow familiar roads, office at eight,
 dinner at six. Laundry on Saturday,
 vacuum a little, stop by the mall. Sunday.
 Spend an hour at church on
 Roast beef for dinner, dishes then
 Nature Channel. It's what everyone wants,
 until they're bored, what everyone
 needs until they're full, what everyone
 craves until they don't. But not
 everyone knows what they want until
 reach their souls, temptation
 whispers
 calls their name. Not everyone
 knows
 what they want until they want it.
 Until they see more. Until they need it
 all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY ANTHOLOGY

This is a follow-on to the article published in the previous PSV Newsletter that announced the efforts that were underway to develop a Centennial Anthology. Contrary to previous editions, this will be divided into six chapters to facilitate an orderly and fair review and selection process. The first five chapters will be geographically oriented: North, South, East, West, and Central. The sixth chapter will contain selections from each of the previous six PSV anthologies.

The next newsletter will contain a one-page form to be submitted by all members who wish to have poems included in the anthology. No poems will be submitted at that time. The forms will provide information essential for an orderly book development process. It will determine to whom each poet will submit his/her poems for consideration. When the announcement is made for submission of poems, all communications and submissions will be done electronically. General guidance will be published in the newsletter.

If you have any questions, contact Ed Lull at ewlull@verizon.net.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

PSV welcomes the esteemed Poet Laureate of Alexandria and host of Busboys & Poets, **KaNikki Jakarta**, as a member.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW WEBMASTER FOR PSV!

My name is Steven Dorsey, and I'm honored to be the new webmaster for the Poetry Society of Virginia. I grew up in Williamsburg where I played in the Colonial Williamsburg Fifes and Drums Corps and graduated from Lafayette High School. I went on to graduate with a Bachelor's Degree from Christopher Newport and a Master's Degree from ODU. I worked 20 years as a Federal Background Investigator spending lots of time conducting interviews, writing reports, and working with numerous IT systems. At the end of 2019, I made the jump into copywriting, web design, and website management working alongside Jeanne Johansen and High Tide Publications and hand in hand with their authors and artists, including my mom, Sharon Dorsey.

I am currently living in the middle of horse country in central Kentucky with my wife and 3 kids and come back to visit family and friends in Virginia as often as possible. I love what I do and am always available if anyone has any questions or suggestions for the site. Just feel free to contact me at steven.dorsey@stevendorsey.com. I can also work with you personally if you're interested in creating a site of your own. Thank you again for this opportunity. I am looking forward to working closely with the Society moving forward.

When I signed on to be the webmaster for PSV, Terry and I knew there were ongoing issues with the website. Over the last few months, we have all worked together to try and address some of the issues and make the site easier for everyone to use. What I quickly realized is that while the site was built in WordPress, it uses several different editing systems for the same site. Used individually, these systems work well enough, but when combined together in the same site, they tend to create problems. These problems have reared their ugly heads repeatedly over the last few months. As a result, the site doesn't function the way we'd all like it to.

In talking to Terry and the board, I suggested using all of the information on the site to create a brand-new website. This website will keep all the best parts of the old one and add new functionality that has been hard to implement – for instance, a working forum and calendar/events page. The new site will be simpler to navigate and more attractive, and I'll be able to teach people how to use it, so there won't be a situation where it's inaccessible to those who need to post things or update information.

I'm really excited and am already working on getting the new site up and running. In the meantime, the old site will still function, and we'll update it as needed until the new one is completed. I'll continue to provide updates, and if anyone has questions or suggestions, feel free to email me at steven.dorsey@steven.dorsey.com or reach out to Terry.

Welcome to the other side of the Pandemic.

While we may have some time to go, perhaps the light at the end of the tunnel is that thing right up there: the foreseeable future.

In honor of our ever present, yet just out of reach friend: the future,

The theme for POET'S DOMAIN volume 35 shall be

***The future is a kaleidoscope of dimensions,
turning over colorful possibilities***

As before, we don't want to dictate how the poet interprets the idea, SO I will remind you just to ...

think literally,

think metaphorically,

think synonyms,

think philosophically,

think concrete,

think abstract,

think of what you *thought* would happen,

think of what you *still think* will happen,

think of how the future looked to your past, and to yourself now,

think of how wide the possibilities of the future can be,

think woulda-coulda-shoulda,

think "I WILL!",

think of all the things that *haven't* happened

– * the editors' meeting * yielded this topic after talk of the promise of jet packs and flying cars, and how many Sci-fi movies thought we'd be living on the Moon, heading to Mars and Jupiter, curing all diseases and transcending death ...

... by about 22 years ago.

If you wish to throw in a brief statement as to why you think your entry addresses the theme, sure, why not?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Poet's Domain accepts only original poetry submissions from residents of Virginia or any state bordering it, individuals having significant dealings within or formerly living in Virginia, PSV members, or anyone who previously contributed to the journal. The reading/entry fee is \$5 for 1 poem, \$3 each for additional poem for up to FIVE submissions. Secretly you can send in a sixth item for consideration for free, but don't tell no one. It's a bonus for reading all the stuff here. There is a maximum length per entered item of 4 pages typed (12pt., 8x11; any style, form, or voice of poem will be considered. English is the assumed language of the journal, but poems with mixed language will be considered. Submissions open on March 15, 2021 and close July 31, 2021, at midnight.

Each accepted contributor shall receive one complimentary copy of vol. 35 with a postcard upon which they may vote for their favorite piece from that issue. The winning poem will be acknowledged with a certificate and \$50 prize. Additional copies will be available to contributors at a discount. Please notify at time of submission if a poem has been submitted elsewhere (and where) or previously published. Simultaneous submission or re-publication can be done with coordination with other source.

Submissions should be .doc, .docx, .dot, .rtf, .odt, .xml or .pdf attached to an email titled Poets Domain 34 to HRACandWPP@outlook.com. The body of the email may contain text of the poetry, too, but it's unnecessary. Payment may be made in the form of check/M.O., CashApp transfer, paypal.com transfer to friend/family, or Credit Card through paypal.

VENUES

* **Busboys & Poets** on Instagram @busboysandpoets (ask about other formats, has been done on Zoom, too.) Every Mon. Weds and Fri., (usually \$5.) www.busboysandpoets.com. 8-10 PM

* **Venue on 35th Monday Night Open Mic** Virtual for now. Contact Jorge Mendez or James Cooper on Facebook for Zoom info. 7:30

* **CIPHERTuesdays** Tuesday nights at 8/8:30 Please contact Quinton Jennings-Sherman on Facebook. He also goes by Q5 at #Q5TV. May involve a \$5 donation. 8pm

* Richmond's **Poetry Social Hour**: Contact Joanna Lee to see if they are virtual and find out how to get your spot at joanna@rivercitypoets.com, typically Mon. afternoons.

* Richmond's **Jazz and Wine Tasting** may go virtual+IRL depending on the situation and the host restaurant (C'est la Vin, 17th St.). Contact the hostess with the mostess, joanna@rivercitypoets.com

* Richmond also has a **poetry writing/critique group** almost every Monday at 6:30 that is virtual until such time as their cafe homes open up... also write Joanna at joanna@rivercitypoets.com for that information.

* **All the Feels** open mic through Google Meet for all the lovers and the loners out there! Associated with Richmond's Blue Bee. If you want to get on the mic, contact the hostess joanna@rivercitypoets.com and plan on 4-5 minutes of material. Link to event:

<https://sable.madmimi.com/c/3946?id=38787.3937.1.974ddc9d27152feccd96c9b8f3e2fd28>

* **Charlottesville Open Mic (Over the Bridge?)** takes place on the 4th Weds. each month. Contact Patsy Asuncion for exact time and for the way in.

* See links for dates, 6:30 pm. **Spilled Ink East & West** Virtual reading hosted by John Dutton. Check Facebook at Spilled Ink (Virginia). Spilled Ink East takes place the 2nd Friday of each month, and Spilled Ink West takes place the 4th Friday of each month.

Data: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/SpilledInkVA>

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81108116410?pwd=M3Rac2JobGM5NTJwY2p0dFNGQW55Zz09> Meeting ID: 811 0811 6410, Passcode: 87613

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call to PSV Poets!

One way you can celebrate your poetry and your connections to the poetry community is to help out with causes and committees from within your poetry. Here are three things that spring to mind that allow for some opportunities to help from within the PSV:

Helping with the pilot program to recruit Poetry Student Ambassadors, several from within each region to help carry the call to write forward to coming generations of potential poets. This is just forming under the guidance of **VA Poet Laureate Luisa Igloria**, so initial contact may involve her taking down information and your expression of interest or ideas for nominees. Contact luisa.igloria61@gmail.com

Ed Lull is starting procedures to create a centennial anthology of poetry from PSV writers – a snapshot of poetry from contemporary society members to pass on to the next era of PSVers. Committees and contributions will be organized at the regional level, so please contact your regional VP to express interest in helping organize the effort or to contribute poetry. The contest committee helps to organize the society's annual contests which is a big fundraiser for the PSV AND an opportunity for Virginia poets to get seen, noticed, and recognized. Things the Contest committee members work towards are as follows:

- Help propose and select judges
- Help designate the categories
- Collect poems and separate them by categories
- Distribute poems to judges

Please contact **Terry Cox-Joseph** at tcoxjoseph@aol.com. Work begins in earnest around the July PSV meeting, but it's never too early to express interest.

Election committee: Next PSV elections are in Spring of 2022. We will need to find qualified & interested candidates for a number of positions, disseminate information about them to the appropriate regions and gather votes for tally. Contact HRACandWPP@outlook.com – **James Wilson**

MEMEBERSHIP

Have you paid your membership dues this year? See our PSV website for details:

<https://poetrysocietyofvirginia.org/membership/>



MEMBER NEWS

Bill Gloss was recently featured on Artemis Speaks podcast: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1262438/8732663> Bill is PSV's current president *pro tempore* and appears frequently as a featured speaker all around Virginia. See <http://billglose.com/>.

Janice Hoffman announces work forthcoming in the *Writers' Guild Journal* ("A Life Punctuated," "Harbinger," & "First Light"); the *Virginia Writers' Club Journal* via Chesapeake Bay Writers ("Guiltless," "Floating" & "Night Sky"); and *POEM*



Literary Journal ("On Viewing Botticelli's *Primavera*"). She will also be a featured speaker at the upcoming (July 26-Aug. 8) online national seminar, "Healing After Suicide Loss," where she will discuss the therapeutic qualities of writing poetry and share excerpts from *Azaleas in October*, her chapbook about losing her son to suicide. Jan's website is jan-hoffman.com. Contact her at janhoffpoetry@gmail.com.

Sarah Kohrs (senkohrs@gmail.com) had the poem "A Form Well-Loved" published in *Crosswinds Poetry Journal*. It just came out June 2021.

Joan Mazza has been quite prolific these days! Her poem "Asking the Eye Surgeon" is in the current issue of *The MacGuffin*, and "Ode to Variants" is published at North of Oxford <https://northofoxford.wordpress.com/2021/04/25/north-of-oxford-spring-2021-pandemic-issue-7/> She also has work forthcoming at *Slate*, "Folk Dancing with My Sister," and *Blue Heron Review*, "What Books Do You Like?" Her poem "Parachutes" is published at *Survivor Lit*, and "Taking My Own Advice" is published at *New Verse News*. <https://newversenews.blogspot.com/2021/04/taking-my-own-advice.html> See also <https://survivorlit.org/parachutes/> "What I Learned at the Bureau of What Never Happened" has been reprinted at *Verse-Virtual* <http://www.verse-virtual.org/2021/May/mazza-joan-2021-may.html>. In addition, "Folk Dancing with My Sister" has been accepted at *Slant: A Journal of Poetry* for the May/June 2021 issue. Joan says she's still writing a poem every day (since 2011) and thanks you for reading her work. Most recently, Joan has 3 poems forthcoming at *Sequestrum* (after years of submitting): "To Clarify," "Still Cautious," and "Autonomous Zone." Her poem "Quiet Oceans" is in the current issue of *Italian Americana*. Green Ink, in its Discovery issue, is publishing "Wherever the Open Meadow Takes Me." Joan says she's still writing a poem every day (since 2011) and thanks everyone for reading her work.

CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy C. Allen is a member of PSV and an elementary education school teacher retiree. The poem "Speaking Freedom Into Life" honors her ancestors' lyric of song, a poetic conversation among them which served as a source of hope and healing during a time of challenge.

Terry Cox-Joseph is the current President of PSV and a former newspaper reporter and editor. From 1994-2004 she was coordinator for the Christopher Newport University Writers' Conference and Contest. An award-winning poet and artist, she has been published in *Northern Virginia Review* and *Chiron Review*, among others. She has a BFA in illustration from Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Claudia Gary teaches workshops on villanelle, sonnet, meter, poetry vs. trauma, the science of poetry, and more through writer.org (currently via Zoom teleconference). Her poems appear in journals internationally and in anthologies, including *Villanelles*, *Love Affairs at the Villa Nelle*, *Extreme Sonnets*, *Forgetting Home*, and *The Great American Wise Ass Poetry Anthology*. Her publications include *Humor Me* (2006) and chapbooks, one of which is *Genetic Revisionism* (2019). She is also a health science writer, visual artist, and composer of art songs and chamber music. See pw.org/content/claudia_gary; follow @claudiagary.

Derick Kannemeyer is an active member of PSV who has served as an elected official on the PSV board: 4 years as Central Region Vice President, 1 as Parliamentarian, and 4 as President Pro Tempore. He continues to support poetry and poets throughout the commonwealth.

Ed Lull graduated from the Naval Academy in 1955 and began a navy career where he served primarily in submarines. He earned an M.S. from The George Washington University in 1969. Ed began writing poetry in retirement; he has published seven books: *Cabin Boy to Captain*; *Where Giants Walked*; *The Sailors*; *Bits and Pieces*; *Creating Form Poetry*; *My World*; and *My Game of Life*. He is a life member of the Poetry Society of Virginia having served four terms as its president.



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