

# A COMMON WEALTH OF POETRY

Newsletter of the Poetry Society of Virginia  
March 2019

## A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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Even though Andrew Jarvis relocated to Florida several years ago, he has graciously served our shared cause of spreading poetry throughout the state with due diligence and skill. I'm sorry to say that he will no longer be with us as Newsletter editor to clean up my errors and ferret out PSV news and print worthy poems. Not being able to attend meetings from such a distance is a major part of his decision to resign his position, but it's nice to know he'll remain a member of PSV.

So welcome now Janice Hoffman, our new Newsletter editor.

Jan has taught creative writing in Indiana, Kentucky, and Virginia, and is currently an Adjunct Lecturer of English at Thomas Nelson Community College where she co-sponsors a monthly poetry reading. She has lived in Virginia since 2004 and says she greatly admires PSV and our mission.

Jan is a published poet with a remarkable publication history. In addition to her admirable literary magazine publications, her forthcoming book, *Soul Cookies*, will be released this summer by High Tide Publications. She was also runner-up for Poet Laureate of Hampton Roads in 2017. She has as served as the Editor of *Musepaper*, a publication of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, and Associate Editor of *IUS Review* of Indiana University Southeast.

She has also been a judge, presenter, reader, volunteer, and/or participant at a plethora of literary events. So, let's do right by her by sending articles about our events and other matters. In the past, Andrew had to go to unpleasant lengths to get materials to print. There's little reason for this. Not only do many of our coming events not show up in the newsletters, few successes are reported after the fact. Let's celebrate our successes as well as print poems we have published that we still have rights to.

Bob



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PSV POETRY FESTIVAL	2-4
POEMS	5
ANNOUNCEMENTS	6-7 & INSERT
CONTRIBUTORS	7

### INSERTS:

PSV CONTEST BROCHURE  
PSV POETRY FESTIVAL  
REGISTRATION



**Festival Dates: Friday, May 17 through Saturday, May 18, 2019**

All workshops, presentations, and readings: Tucker Hall, English Department, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia 23187

Closing Banquet with Open Reading, Saturday evening: Ford's Colony Country Club, 240 Ford's Colony Dr., Williamsburg, VA 23188

- Registration fee: \$40
- Saturday boxed lunch: \$12 (Please see registration form for menu options, and make your selection.)
- Banquet: \$25 (Please see registration form for menu options, and make your selection. All plated entrees include a side dish and salad, coffee/tea, taxes and gratuities; there will be a cash bar for other drinks. Dessert, compliments of the PSV.)

**Please fill out the registration form, indicate your meal selections for lunch and the banquet, and send your check, payable to the Poetry Society of Virginia and postmarked no later than April 30, to: Sofia M. Starnes, 4951 Burnley Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23188.**

**Festival Schedule**

**Friday, May 17, Tucker Hall, English Department, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg**

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|------|---|
| 6:30 | Registration  |
| 7:00 | Opening remarks by Virginia Poet Laureate Henry Hart and introduction of Festival Keynote<br>Presenter, Debra Nystrom |
| 7:15 | Poetry Reading, Debra Nystrom   |
| 8:00 | Book signing and reception  |

**Saturday, May 18, Tucker Hall, English Department, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg (except for Closing Banquet with Open Reading)**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Registration   |
| 10:15 – 11:30 | Seminar by Jefferson Holdridge, <i>Palimpsests of Conquest: Nature, Home, and Landscape in Irish Poetry</i>                                    |
| 11:30 – 11:50 | PSV Elections (PSV members)  |
| 11:50 – 12:45 | Lunch and book-browse  |
| 12:45 – 2:00  | Workshop by Marjorie Maddox, <i>This Is Your Life: Making Characters Their Own People</i>  |
| 2:00 – 2:10   | Break  |
| 2:10 – 3:25   | Workshop by Jon Pineda, <i>The Element of Surprise: Building Images in Poems</i>   |
| 3:30 – 4:15   | Announcement of Book Award winner and reading by Awardee*  |
| 4:15 – 6:00   | Break  |
| 6:00 – 9:00   | Closing Banquet with Open Reading, for attendees and their guests, at Ford's Colony Country Club, 240 Ford's Colony Dr, Williamsburg, Virginia |

\*If the winner of the PSV Book Award is unable to attend, we will host a panel by our guest speakers— Jefferson Holdridge, Marjorie Maddox, and Jon Pineda—on the subject “Anxiety of Influence: Inheritors of the past, originators of new pathways.”

## FESTIVAL CONT.

## Information about speakers and their presentations/workshops



**Debra Nystrom, Keynote Presenter and Guest Poet**, teaches in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at the University of Virginia. Her books include *A Quarter Turn, Torn Sky, Bad River Road* and most recently *Night Sky Frequencies: New and Selected Poems*. Her poetry, fiction and nonfiction have appeared in *Best American Poetry, The New Yorker, Ploughshares, The Kenyon Review, Slate, The American Poetry Review, VQR, Harvard Review, Narrative, Conjunctions*, and *Yale Review*, and have received awards from *The Virginia Quarterly Review, Five Points, Shenandoah*, The Virginia Commission for the Arts and The Library of Virginia. She is currently at work on a memoir.

Debra Nystrom will give a Poetry Reading, followed by conversation, on Friday evening.



**Jefferson Holdridge, Seminar Title: *Palimpsests of Conquest: Nature, Home, and Landscape in Irish Poetry***

**Seminar description:** This seminar will present an overview of Irish poetry, using home as a binding thesis. “From 1600 there is a discernibly Irish style of house,” writes Roy Foster. “The castle would take a hundred years to become the country house . . . often demonstrated even today, in the eighteenth-century farmhouse grafted on to a late medieval keep: a palimpsest of conquest.” The Irish house often exists in isolation, yet is defined by the surrounding landscape, whether the dark encroachments of nature around the Big House or the bogs and wells that surround the cottages of the peasantry. The tension between the two haunts the literature, from Maria Edgeworth’s *Castle Rackrent*, to Yeats’s *The Tower and Other Poems*, to Heaney’s “A Peacock’s Feather,” his sonnet sequence “Clearances,” and even the poetry of his last volumes. There will be occasion for audience participation.

**Presenter’s Bio: Jefferson Holdridge**, Director of Wake Forest University Press and Professor of English at WFU in North Carolina, is the author of three volumes of poetry, *Eruptions* (2013), *Devil’s Den and Other Poems* (2015), and *The Sound Thereof*, (2017). He has written two critical books entitled *Those Mingled Seas: The Poetry of W.B. Yeats, the Beautiful and the Sublime* (2000) and *The Poetry of Paul Muldoon* (2008). He has also edited and introduced two volumes of The Wake Forest Series of Irish Poetry (2005; 2010), as well as *Post-Ireland? Essays on Contemporary Irish Poetry*, which he co-edited and introduced with Brian O’Conchubhair (Winston-Salem, NC: Wake Forest University Press, 2017).



**Marjorie Maddox, Workshop Title: This Is Your Life: Making Characters Their Own People**

**Workshop description:** Too often in creative writing workshops, poets create a narrator completely like themselves. Others haphazardly sketch a cardboard persona with little insight into how that person thinks, feels, acts, and reacts. To combat both, this workshop for poets, will focus on using several exercises to discuss voice and narrative, to experiment with point of view, to use diction to try on diverse personas, and, if time, to interview each other as characters.

**Presenter’s Bio: Marjorie Maddox**, Sage Graduate Fellow of Cornell (MFA) and Professor of English at Lock Haven University, has published 11 collections of poetry—including *True, False, None of the Above* (Poima Poetry Series; Illumination Book Award Medalist); *Local News from Someplace Else; Wives’ Tales; Transplant, Transport, Transubstantiation* (2004 Yellowglenn Prize; re-release Wipf & Stock 2018); and *Perpendicular As I* (Sandstone Book Award)—the short story collection *What She Was Saying* (Fomite); and over 550 stories, essays, and poems in journals and anthologies. Co-editor of *Common Wealth: Contemporary Poets on Pennsylvania* (Penn State Press) and assistant editor of *Presence*, she also is the author of 4 children’s books.

FESTIVAL CONT.

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**Jon Pineda, Workshop Title: *The Element of Surprise: Building Images in Poems***

Workshop Description: The poet Robert Frost famously wrote, “No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader.” Though we may sense this maxim as poets, we are also inclined to fall short of our goal. In this workshop, the participants will be provided with writing prompts and exercises for generating “surprising” images for our readers.

**Presenter’s bio:** Jon Pineda is a professor of creative writing at the College of William and Mary. His work has appeared widely in such journals as *Poetry Northwest*, *The Literary Review*, *Sou’wester*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Many Mountains Moving*, and *Puerto del Sol*, as well as in various anthologies. Among his published books are *Little Anodynes*, 2016 Library of Virginia Literary Award for Poetry, *The Translator’s Diary*, 2007 Green Rose Prize for Poetry from New Issues Press, and *Birthmark*, first-place winner in the 2003 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry Open Competition Awards. His novel *Apology* won the 2013 Milkweed National Fiction Prize. His newest novel *Let’s No One Get Hurt* (Picador, 2019) was originally published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

**LODGING (of special interest to out-of-towners)**

Two blocks of rooms at special rates have been set aside in the following hotels:

**Hampton Inn and Suites**

1880 Richmond Rd. Williamsburg, Virginia  
Tel. no. 757-229-4900

Please indicate “Poetry Society of Virginia, PSV Festival” when making your reservation for the special group rate: \$129, plus tax per room, two queen-size beds. Includes full breakfast for two.

**NOTE:** Reservations at the Hampton Inn and Suites need to be made by May 3rd to ensure availability at the PSV rate.

**Holiday Inn Express and Suites**

1452 Richmond Rd., Williamsburg, Virginia  
Tel. no. 757-941-1057

Please indicate “Poetry Society of Virginia, Group Code PSV” when making your reservation for the special group rate: \$115 plus tax per room, two queen-size beds or one-king size bed. Includes full breakfast for two.

**NOTE:** Reservations at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites must be made by April 16 to ensure availability at the PSV rate.

**PARKING**

On Friday evening, parking is free and often available on Richmond Road, very near Colonial Williamsburg and the College, as well as in the Merchant Square lot.

For Saturday, the most convenient parking would be in the parking garage at Prince George Street, entrance at 230 N. Henry Street, approximately two blocks from the College of William and Mary. Tucker Hall (English Department) is the second building behind the Wren Building. Directions are easily accessible on line at <https://www.wm.edu/about/visiting/campusmap>.

If you have any questions, please contact Sofia Starnes, [smstarnes@cox.net](mailto:smstarnes@cox.net), or Mary Haines, [mjshalom@cox.net](mailto:mjshalom@cox.net).

The Poetry Society of Virginia wishes to express its heartfelt gratitude to those who contributed generously to its Poetry Festival, specifically, Paul Verkuil and his wife, Judith Rodin, Anne Willis, in memory of her husband, Prof. John Willis, as well as the English Department of the College of William and Mary through the support of Henry Hart, Poet Laureate of Virginia.

## POEMS

## HOLDING ON TO LET GO

by Joan Casey

I shopped for a little black dress  
because my husband said I put on weight,  
and asked my mom how it looked.

Hours later she slipped into a coma  
and I admitted her to the hospital,  
not knowing what else to do.

She had said she was ready to go  
long ago, when my dad died.  
I won't have talk like that I said.

We went to doctors  
for appointments with more doctors,  
pep talks and pills.

When all else failed, I felt I failed her  
and wore the little black dress  
to greet people and grieve

in the way we are shown to do,  
handcuffing our tears,  
throwing dirt on a flower.

I packed up the past  
for the trash and Goodwill  
and saved the sorrow

in a little pouch on the third shelf  
of my closet,  
where I left it when I moved.

Years later, driving down a strip  
of naked beach  
sorrow caught up with me.

Why didn't I just hold her hand  
to let her go?

## THE TASTE OF CONVERSATION by Linda Partee

Recall the flavored words of young romance,  
those waltz-time murmurings of sweet nothings,  
like pink-boxed cream puffs delicately soft  
with sugared sentiments and lip-licked dreams.

Forever friendships speak of yesterdays—  
“remember whens” and “have you heard abouts”—  
Hors d'oeuvres before tomorrow's plat du jour;  
aged cheese and wine that linger long on tongues.

## MEDICAL EXAMINER

by Robert P. Arthur

Seawater winters in oblique light  
washed by rain  
Terns skim the marsh waters  
Ice scrapes the rushes  
clean, the tumps, asleep,  
slipping into shadow  
Soon, white fire behind the pin-holed  
skein of dark will be stars  
Shadows fall into my brain  
like depakote and loxapine

*I was not comprehensible, but there was a nurse to wash me.*

The cottages with their curtains  
have dreams of breathing  
All night long there will be a prowling of dragonflies,  
in skulks,  
heads dropping into moons  
I am thinking of a darkened road, my best feet  
skittering, the black skimmers  
of evening gone to roost  
with gulls  
in the shallows

A woman is weeping but she is not my woman.

The boy on the table has bled out internally, a gash on  
his head, bones speaking their language,  
a rooting syringe  
drawing blood from his heart  
His brains have been knocked from one side  
Of his head to the other  
He had a father and mother  
In Hazelton, Pennsylvania

In pressure cooker times for raising kids,  
can parents manage meaningful exchange  
between the Lucky Charms and fast food foil?  
Is wisdom's flavor slurped or dumped as trash?

Do hand-held gadgets fill the emptiness—  
those forkless, habit-forming finger foods?  
Addictive like a bag of salty chips,  
they don't ease hunger more than biting nails.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### Deadline Extension for PSV Annual Poetry Contest

by Jeff Hewitt

To the Honorable Membership of the Poetry Society of Virginia:

To those who may not know me, let me take a moment to introduce myself. I have been a member of the Poetry Society on and off since the mid-90s. Over the past four years, I have served as member of the Board as a Literary Advisor and Webmaster. As of this year, I am also the Chair in charge of running both the Student and Adult Annual Poetry Contests.

Some of you have expressed dismay and concern over the unusual step taken this year with the deadline extensions of our annual student and adult contests. In the interest of full transparency, I wanted to take a moment to lay out the circumstances surrounding this year's process which led to that decision.

Due to the recent government shutdown and the effect it had on financial markets, I—along with the President and other members of the Board—became deeply concerned about a sharp and significant decline in invested funds. As you may be aware, the Society is required by our by-laws to invest our operating capital in financial institutions. We rely upon those funds to conduct the business of the organization, which includes the administration of the annual contests.

While several options were discussed, ultimately, we decided that it was in the best interest for the long-term health of the funds we are entrusted to administer that the deadlines be prolonged in order to allow time for the market to recover value before contest expenditures were withdrawn. This was an emergency decision that was in my hands, as there was not sufficient time before the deadline to form a quorum with the full board to inform the proceedings. The President of the Society was consulted, and he approved the final decision.

As the contest Chairperson, I have the highest respect for the traditions stretching back decades around our competition. This was not a decision I took lightly, and it was made in the interest of ensuring the long-term viability of the Society's ability to continue funding these efforts for our soon-to-be next one hundred years.

Some members have expressed that they consider a deadline extension to be unfair in light of those who submitted within the original timeframe. After some consideration and consultation with the board, I agree with you. As such, we have decided to allow anyone who has submitted to edit and resubmit their entries if they so wish. You may do so by re-entering your submissions via our website at [Poetrysocietyofvirginia.org](http://Poetrysocietyofvirginia.org). Any contest fees paid for the original submissions will be transferred to new submissions instead.

Again, to summarize:

- All Adult & Student Contest deadlines have been extended to March 31st.
- Any entrant who has already submitted may resubmit by reentering their poems on the website and choosing the "re-entry" option provided in the payment section. and all fees paid will transfer to the new submissions. We will be contacting all who have entered already via email to apprise them of the opportunity to re-submit.
- We are keeping the original rule that a valid entry must be previously unpublished and not scheduled for publication before May 1st.
- Contest winners will be announced and posted on the website by May 31st. At this point, we're looking at mid to late June to hold the Awards Ceremony at the James City County Library in Norge. An announcement will be made on the website once the date and location has been secured.

I am available to discuss this further with any member who has questions or concerns via email at [j.hewitt@me.com](mailto:j.hewitt@me.com) or by phone at 757.412.5642. I also stand ready to assist any member who needs help re-submitting or who has questions on how to do so.

I thank you for patience and understanding in these matters, and I wish you all success with your entries. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns, comments, or questions.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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David Black's double-dactyl entitled "Before the Written Word" was just published by the *Virginia English Journal*: [www.amazon.com/David-Black/e/B075FXQYF9/ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_1?qid=1526409689&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/David-Black/e/B075FXQYF9/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1526409689&sr=1-1)

Clay Harrison's memoir, *Wings of Faith*, is available now from the publisher Lulu.com. The book is 282 pages of heartwarming stories from Clay's life: childhood poverty, an Army MP during the Vietnam era, 32 years as a police officer in Tampa, Florida, and family struggles with muscular dystrophy, breast cancer, and heart attack, proving you can rise above your trials and tribulations on the Wings of Faith as you encounter angels unaware. The book includes 100 poems, family photos, original art, and letters from five presidents and other VIP's for whom Clay has written poems. Cover art is by Danny Hahlbohm who painted *Footprints in the Sand*.

Andrew Jarvis was selected to attend the Bread Loaf Environmental Writers' Conference at Middlebury College in June 2019. Congratulations!

Joan Mazza's poem "Telling My True Story" is published at *Life in 10 Minutes*: <http://www.lifein10minutes.com/your-10/2018/11/24/telling-my-true-story>, and "What We Call News" is published at *New Verse News*: <https://newversenews.blogspot.com/2018/11/what-we-call-news.html>

Judith Stevens and Jack Callan have announced that their "Heal the World" Poetry Ensemble is performing on Sunday, March 10, 2019, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at "The Fairmount Five Poetry Reading" in Norfolk, Virginia, 2931 Somme Ave., Norfolk 23509, for a repeat performance of the program presented to The Poetry Society of Virginia at the annual Holiday Luncheon in Williamsburg. In addition, PSV Poet Eric Forsbergh of Northern Virginia will be featured, followed by an Open Mic. FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. For information, call 757-622-8721.

Patrice Wilkerson has created a new website for her poetry book, "Through It All, I'm Going to Make It." Please check her website: <http://www.patricewilkerson.com/>.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Robert P. Arthur has four new books of poetry to be released over the next two years, bringing his total number of published books to twenty-seven. He is currently looking for agents for two new novels and a producer for three new plays, one written with Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda. "Medical Examiner," written from personal experience, was published in *Black Gum against Thunder*, by Northampton.

Joan Ellen Casey, Ed.D., worked as an editor for New York publishers, authored many educational materials, then turned to writing poetry. She won the Metrorail Public Art Project Award from the Poetry Society of Virginia and has been published in the last five volumes of *The Poet's Domain* and two other anthologies: *Distant Horizons* and *Captured Moments*

Jeff Hewitt is a co-founding member of the Hampton Roads' performance poetry scene, an interdisciplinary artist, actor, musician, and an award-winning photographer. He has been an active participant on nearly every poetry stage throughout the 757 for two decades and competed in poetry slams for over a decade, both statewide and nationally. He is a literary Advisor to the Board of the Poetry Society of Virginia, as well as the owner and Editor-in-Chief of San Francisco Bay Press, which has been publishing poetry and prose since 2006. In January of 2018, he launched a web-based photojournalism site, The Norfolk Anonym, covering local arts, music, and politics. Jeff's photography has been featured at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, and in 2018 he was named Hampton Road's Promotional Photographer of the Year by *Veer Magazine*.

Linda Partee is a retired educator from California who didn't realize she had a passion for poetry until she moved cross-country to Williamsburg, Virginia. Enjoying the creative process as much as the product, her work speaks to the common human experiences—its dramas, emotions, complexities, and beauty. A published poet, she is a member of the Poetry Society of Virginia, the James City Poets, the Williamsburg Poetry Guild, and Creative Critique. Linda also provides poetry instructions through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the College of William & Mary; her work has received a variety of awards.

Guy Terrell is a former PSV President. After retiring, he co-wrote, with Jack Trammell, *The Fourth Branch of Government: We the People* and *A Short History of Richmond* published in December 2017. Prior to that, he has published poems in *Streetlight* (now an online journal) and in *Tar River Review*. Guy has a poem coming out this summer in an anthology devoted to Walt Whitman's 200th birthday celebration to be called *LoveJets*.

# POETRY VIRGINIA

1709 Memorial Avenue  
Lynchburg, VA 24501

RAY/MARIN ABELL  
4500 BASSWOOD WAY  
WILLIAMSBURG VA 23188

## PSV EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & ADVISORY BOARD 2018-2019

President	Robert P. Arthur	robert.peebles.arthur@gmail.com
President Pro Tempore	Derek Kannemeyer	
Southeast Regional VP	Eddie Dowe	melned1@verizon.net
Northern Regional VP	Mike Maggio	mikemaggio@mikemaggio.net
Central Regional VP	Gail Giewont	gail.giewont@gmail.com
Eastern Regional VP	Terry Cox-Joseph	
Treasurer	Talya Chatman	tchatman4@cox.net

### Executive Directors

Luisa Igloria	Luisa.Igloria61@gmail.com
Ann Shalaski	ashalaski@msn.com
Henry Hart	hwhart@wm.edu
Sofia Starnes	smstarnes@cox.net
Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda	cforonda@va.metrocast.net
Anna Evas	annaevashello@gmail.com

Archivist	Dr.Melissa Johnson	mcjohnson@vcu.edu
Adult Contest Chair	Jeff Hewitt	j,hewitt@me.com
Membership	Charles Wilson	charles.wilson4.ctr@navy.mil
Newsletter Editor	Janice Hoffman	janhoffpoetry@gmail.com
Nominating Chair	Jeffery Hewitt	j,hewitt@me.com
Chair for Poet Laureate	TBA 2020	
Development Chair	Sally Zakariya	sally.zakariya@gmail.com
	Pia Borsheim	pia.borsheim@gallaudet.edu
Out-of-State Coordinator	Linda Nottingham	nottlinda@aol.com
Parliamentarian	M.J. Kledzik	kledzikmj@gmail.com
Poetry in the School	Cathy Hailey	haileycp@gmail.com
Recording Secretary	Pat Casey	pat.kayc@gmail.com
Student Contest Chair	Trilla Ramage	trilla17@verizon.net
Social Media Coordinator	David Anthony Sam	davidanthony.sam@gmail.com
Web Designer	Jeffery Hewitt	j,hewitt@me.com

Communications	David Anthony Sam	davidanthony.sam@gmail.com
Festival Chair	Sophia Starnes	smstarnes@cox.net
Finance Committee Chair	Otis Douglas	otisdouglas@hotmail.com
Book Award Chair	Nancy Powell	nancyp1734@aol.com
Virginia Chair/Editor	Tom Williams	blogferatu119@gmail.com
Saturday Series contact	Bill Glose	billglose@cox.net

### Literary Advisory Board

June Forte	home1270@msn.com
Ron Smith	smithjron@aol.com
Ken Sutton	thebinkerman@aol.com
Tom Williams	blogferatu119@gmail.com
Pia Borsheim	pia.borsheim@gallaudet.edu
Sally Zakariya	sally.zakariya@gmail.com

