



Illinois Poets

News of the Illinois State Poetry Society

July - August 2022

ISPS Board Members

- Susan T. Moss**
President
- Mary Beth Bretzlauf**
Vice President
- Thomas Chockley**
Secretary
- Judith Tullis**
Treasurer
- Mike Freveletti**
Historian and
Wm Shakespeare
- Sheila Kirscher**
At-Large Board
Member
- Alan Harris**
At-Large Board
Member
Webmaster
- Jennifer Dotson**
Newsletter Editor

Chapter Facilitators

- Carbondale - Southern**
Kathy Cotton
- Champaign - Central**
Kathy Robinson
- Darien - W. Suburban**
Caroline Johnson
- Haiku chapter (meets in
Northbrook)**
Tom Chockley
- Lisle - SW Suburban**
Wilda Morris
- Northbrook - N. Suburban**
Mary Beth Bretzlauf
- Pontiac - N. Central**
Kathleen Murphy

President's Message



Poems have been submitted for our next anthology. This biennial collection is one of the benefits of ISPS membership and a popular way to share with each other and those who have an opportunity to read the poetry. As always, the topics and styles vary and create optimal insights and reading pleasure.

One of the themes that has occurred more than once is Covid in its various iterations. The need to express our fears, loneliness, gratitude to the caretakers, and efforts to cope with a pandemic are some of the common threads that have been addressed.

Poetry offers this opportunity to share our views of whatever concerns us. We poets are fortunate to have the ability to express these ideas in a compact and literary format that focuses on the heart of a subject in an explicit, artistic and interesting way.

What do nature, politics, familial and friendship ties, among other topics, have to say to us? What can we learn from daily events and connections and how can we condense our creativity into the essence of chosen topics? Sometimes it's helpful to sit or go for a walk and think about ideas. When some thoughts occur, record them on your phone or carry a little tablet of paper and a pen. Some good ideas can fly away if not held fast.

While thinking about what to write next, keep in mind that our annual fall contest will offer opportunities to put your work out for a little competitive word jousting. Summer can be a relaxing time to open the floodgates of word possibilities. What good ideas may be hiding among blooms and green leaves, cheerful bird calls, longer days into shorter nights? What can we learn from living in each precious moment that offers both the good and bad news of our lives? Naomi Shihab Nye's poem "A Single Slice Reveals Them" finds deeper meaning in an apple:

An Apple on the table
hides its seeds
so neatly
under seamless skin.
But we talk and talk and talk
to let somebody
in.

Happy writing,
Susan T. Moss

Upcoming Poetry Events at Brewed Awakening

For over 15 years, ISPS has been co-sponsoring a monthly poetry reading with Brewed Awakening in Westmont. During the pandemic, we made the events hybrid so you can listen in and even participate in the open mic via Zoom if you are unable to attend in person. We are also featuring and encouraging young poets, coupling them with seasoned poets. These events take place from 12:30-2:00 p.m. on the last Sunday of every month except December. The \$12 cover charge for those who come to Brewed Awakening entitles them to coffee and a snack. There is a \$5 charge for the Zoom link. Complete information (*including the Zoom link*) is posted on our ISPS website at illinoispoets.com. We always have an open mic.

The featured poets for July are ISPS President **Susan Moss** and **Kara Pucket**, a high school student whose poetry has been winning awards. The August reading will feature **Maggie Kennedy**, a newer poet, along with **Al DeGenova**, who is well known in the Chicago poetry community. The September reading will feature **John Gordon**, long-time member of ISPS who is known for his humor and his poems of social conscience. He is paired with **Hana Ferguson**, a college student whose writing has been nourished for a number of years by the Rockford Writers' Guild.

Kara Pucket is a lifelong resident of Illinois who will be starting her senior year of high school after this summer. Last year, her poem "Hands" won fifth place in the Manningham Trust Poetry Competition at the national level. Kara's awards also include: 3rd place for her dramatic scene "Deep Spaces" in this year's Dukane Literary Festival and 3rd place in short fiction at last year's Dukane Literary Festival for her short story "Amber." Her current projects also include a choose-your-own-adventure story and the screenplay for a TV show.



Susan T. Moss & Kara Pucket

Susan T. Moss is the author of three books of poetry including one full-length collection entitled *Mapping A Life* and two chapbooks, *In From The Dark* and *Keep Moving 'til The Music Stops*. Her work has appeared in numerous publications including *Vermont Literary Review*, *Caduceus*, *After Hours*, *the Kerf*, *Steam Ticket* and *Soundings Door County in Poetry*. Susan has read her work on WLWU-FM and Highland Park cable television's "Poetry Today." Further credits include two Illinois Humanities fellowships and a month-long residency at the Vermont Studio Center. Presently, she is serving a sixth term as president of Illinois State Poetry Society. Susan holds a Master of Arts from Middlebury College Bread Loaf School of English.

Maggie Kennedy spends early mornings staring out her window at a row of sycamores towering over her neighborhood in Brookfield, Ill. Once in a while, a poem comes along. Her work has appeared in *Epiphany*, *Meat for Tea*, *Cloudbank*, *Atticus Review*, and other publications. She says she got the creative writing bug by studying under Brice Guernsey at Eastern Illinois University. She went on to get a Masters in English and creative writing from the University of Chicago.



Maggie Kennedy & Al DeGenova

Al DeGenova is a poet, publisher, and teacher. He is the author of four books of poetry and three chapbooks. His most recent book is *Black Pearl: poems of love, sex and regret*; his collection of haibun and poetry, *Postcards to Jack*, was recently released in a second expanded edition. His chapbook, *Mama's Blues*, is forthcoming this August from Finishing Line Press. His work has also appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. He received his MFA from Spalding University in Louisville. He is the founder of After Hours Press and co-editor of *After Hours* magazine, a journal of Chicago writing and art, which launched in June of 2000. DeGenova is also a blues saxophonist and one-time contributing editor to *Down Beat* magazine. He splits his time now between Sturgeon Bay, WI, and the metro Chicago area.

John J. Gordon developed his interest in poetry later in life. He began writing poems for family and friends to commemorate special occasions. Poetry classes, workshops and group memberships followed. He is currently a

member of ISPS, Poets & Patrons and the Arbor Hill Gang. Among many topics, he writes about family, travel, music and social conditions, using free verse and rhymes. He appreciates accessible poetry where extensive explanations are not required. His poems are published in anthologies, reviews, journals and online.

Hana Ferguson is a full-time Rockford University student majoring in English and history and has one year before receiving her bachelor's degree. Hana works part-time at a local library and part-time at an antique shop. She is the recording secretary of the Rockford Writers' Guild. In her (little) free time, Hana likes to read, write, paint, and spend time with her fiancé and brother.



Photo: Hana Ferguson & John J. Gordon

ISPS Chapter News

ISPS West Suburban (Darien) Chapter - The Darien ISPS critiquing group will meet **Saturday, July 2, from 1 - 4 p.m.** at the Indian Prairie Library, 401 Plainfield Rd, Darien. We meet on the 2nd floor, in the board room. Bring 8 - 10 copies of up to 2 poems to share for critique. Also bring a food item to share, and a beverage for yourself. Also bring a mask in case they are required.

ISPS-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter held its bimonthly Zoom chapter meeting on June 12, 2022. Those who attended were: Susan Auld, Jo Balistreri, Tom Chockley, Jeanne Cook, Janice Doppler, Susan Farnier, Michael Kozubek, Jeff Kressmann, William Ledder, Diane Lotko Baker, John Mori, Michael Nichols-Wisdom, Leslie Peet, and Jennifer Thiermann. We began the meeting looking at haiku that delight or mystify from the Modern Haiku 53.1 issue. Then we moved on to the workshop conversation of draft haiku from participants, who wanted feedback regarding their poems. Each haiku was presented anonymously and discussed.

Our next Haiku Chapter Zoom Meeting: Sunday, August 21, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CDT. The deadline for RSVPs to attend will be Tuesday, August 16. Contact Tom Chockley (tomzhaiku@outlook.com) to attend the Zoom meeting and to receive further information.

ISPS Northern Chapter and the **ISPS Pontiac Chapter** will meet together on **Sunday, July 10, 1:00 p.m.**, via Zoom. Questions or to receive the link, email Chapter facilitator Mary Beth Bretzlauf, mbbretzlauf@comcast.net.

ISPS Southern Chapter will meet next on **Sunday, July 10, 1:30 p.m.**, at the Carbondale Library.

Kathy Cotton, facilitator, announces with sadness the passing of **Carole Dooley** of Carbondale, a longtime member of Southern Chapter and an accomplished artist, on April 15. An exhibit of her poetry and paintings is planned.

ISPS Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle) The next meeting is **Sunday, July 3, 2022, 1 p.m. via Zoom**. The Southwest Suburban (Lisle) chapter of ISPS will meet on Zoom at 1 p.m. on Sunday, July 3, instead of meeting in June, so as not to conflict with the virtual meeting of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Email [wildamorris\[at\]ameritech\[dot\]net](mailto:wildamorris@ameritech.net) for the link. You may email up to three poems for critique by the group (preferably in one doc or docx file). We may or may not have time to critique all the poems submitted.



Page 4 is the flyer for the 2022 ISPS Poetry Contest. Submissions don't open until September 1st but you can spend your summer writing in response to 12 different contest challenges!

**1. ISPS Board Award**

Sponsored by ISPS Board of Directors

- SUBJECT: The New Normal
- FORM: Any
- PRIZES: \$75, \$55, \$35

2. Wedding Anniversary Gift Award

Sponsored by Ida Kotyuk

- SUBJECT: Traditional anniversary-year gift (paper, silver, etc.) as metaphor/simile for the marriage
- FORM: Any
- PRIZES: \$75, \$50, \$25

3. Animal Thoughts Award

Sponsored by Jill and Aaron Langlois in memory of Dolores Langlois

- SUBJECT: Animals
- FORM: Any
- PRIZES: \$60, \$40, \$20

4. Kathy Cotton Award

Sponsored by Judith Tullis to honor Kathy Cotton for years of artistic & poetic support

- SUBJECT: My Secret Garden
- FORM: Any
- PRIZES: \$60, \$40, \$20

5. Southern Chapter Award

Sponsored by ISPS Southern Chapter, Carbondale IL

- SUBJECT: Possessions
- FORM: Any
- PRIZES: \$50, \$30, \$15

6. Free Verse Award

Sponsored by ISPS

- SUBJECT: Any
- FORM: Free Verse
- PRIZES: \$50, \$30, \$15

7. Formal Verse Award

Sponsored by ISPS

- SUBJECT: Any
- FORM: Any set form (Identify the form at the top of the submission)
- PRIZES: \$50, \$30, \$15

8. Traditional Haiku (5-7-5) Award

Sponsored by ISPS

- SUBJECT: Any
- FORM: Traditional 5-7-5 haiku
- PRIZES: \$50, \$30, \$15

9. Modern Haiku Award

Sponsored by ISPS

- SUBJECT: Any
- FORM: Modern haiku
- PRIZES: \$50, \$30, \$15

10. Summertime Award

Sponsored by Nancy LaChance

- SUBJECT: In the Good Old Summertime
- FORM: Any
- LINE LIMIT: 24
- PRIZES: \$25, \$20, \$10

11. Highland Park Poetry Award

Sponsored by Highland Park Poetry

- SUBJECT: Any
- FORM: : Tricube (3 stanzas of 3 lines with 3 syllables each)
- PRIZES: \$25, \$15, \$10

12. Compassion Award

Sponsored by Curt Vevang

- SUBJECT: Compassion
- FORM: Any
- PRIZES: \$25, \$15, \$10

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. **Eligibility.** Contest is open to anyone.
2. **Original, unpublished work.** Not in print or published electronically.
3. **Previous Awards.** Poems which have won monetary awards are not eligible.
4. **Poem format**
 - In English.
 - Typed or computer-generated, 12 or 14 point; no fancy fonts or illustrations.
 - 40-line limit, unless specified.
 - One single-spaced poem per 8.5" x 11" page.
5. **Titles.** Except haiku, title all poems. Title and one following blank line are not included in the line count.
6. **Poems.** No poem may be submitted in more than one category.
7. **Simultaneous Awards.** No poet will win two awards in the same category.

8. Submit two copies of each poem:

Originals. In the upper left-hand corner include: Number and name of contest; your name, address, e-mail, and phone number; the word "MEMBER" if you have current membership in ISPS.

Duplicates. In the upper left-hand corner include ONLY number and name of contest.

Two Stacks. Separate originals from duplicates and stack in numerical order with originals on top.

Entry Fees

- **ISPS Members:** \$8 for up to 8 poems, \$1 each additional poem.
- **NON-ISPS MEMBERS,** \$10 for up to 8 poems, \$1 each additional poem.

SUBMISSION PERIOD

Submissions must be postmarked:

September 1 to October 31, 2022

SUBMISSION MAILING

Mail submissions with check, payable to Illinois State Poetry Society to:

**ISPS c/o Mary Beth Bretzlauf
426 Park Avenue
Highland Park, IL 60035**

For a copy of the winners' list by mail, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope with your submission.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the contest chair:

**Mary Beth Bretzlauf
ISPS.manningham@gmail.com**

JOIN US or VISIT US...

For information on how to join ISPS or to see this year's list of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and three honorable mention awards in each category, visit our website:

www.illinoispoets.org

More ISPS Member News

Ron Villejo is a ISPS member in the Northbrook Chapter. When asked how he started writing poetry, Ron says, "If you count the lament of a lovesick teen as poetry, then it all began then. But I'd say it was during my English classes at Northwestern that my poetry began to take shape and rhythm. All those classes were the minor to my psychology major, which I eventually labored into a PhD in clinical psychology, also at Northwestern. I love the suggestiveness and sparse beauty of poetry; it's a momentary calm and space in a sea of stuff around us."



The Song Poems

WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN

After watching Joanna Wang's cover of the Carpenters' song
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNBHyis0g28>

Your voice is easy sway of hammock – side by side
We lie as if we ride a summer breeze.

The air is temperate, and afternoon shall bide
Its time, so we can do what we may please,
Which may be nothing but the silence of a love –
Our simply holding hands along this sway.

So this is just beginning, and what compass of
A life we use is not a thought today.

So, too, the places where we've come from, not a thing
That occupies the breath that we release.

The more we simply lie and let these moments sing,

The more we crystallize a certain ease

Of sliding into evening, where we wish to follow

Whatever sway will take our moments 'til tomorrow.

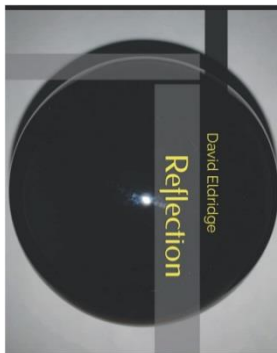
~ Ron Villejo

ISPS Member News

Gail Denham, an At-Large Chapter Member from Bend, Oregon, reports that she has received the following awards or publications: Poems in *Poetic Voices* (Pennsylvania); "My Rebellious Feet" publ. in *Pennsylvania Anthology*; 3 poems used by Wyo. Newsletter; *Well Versed* using "My Beautiful Day", "Majesty", and "Lava Pile"; 2nd and 3rd in Missouri contest; Highland Park using "Ode to Black Curly Hair".

Charlotte Digregorio recently judged the Winnetka-Northfield (IL) Public Library District's "Grand Poetry Contest." ISPS member **Gay Guard-Chamberlin** took First Place. In other news, Digregorio is quoted extensively in the new book, "Teaching and Learning Haiku in English," published by David McMurray, haiku professor and scholar in Japan. Digregorio is the author of "Haiku and Senryu: A Simple Guide for All," and edits "The Daily Haiku" on her blog, www.charlottedigregorio.wordpress.com. Her blog features poets from sixty-one countries, and ISPS members are welcome to participate by contacting Digregorio with previously-published poems of all forms at c-books@hotmail.com. Further, Digregorio was recently interviewed about haiku in *Boston Literary Magazine*.

Jennifer Dotson, Northern Chapter Member, is thrilled to collaborate with visual artist Catherine Schwalbe again. Jennifer provided poems about sequoia for Schwalbe's General Sherman Tree installation as part of the Nature Lovers exhibit at the South Shore Arts in Muncie, Indiana which opened June 23.



David Eldridge, an At-Large Chapter Member, began writing poetry in 1995. While writing and publishing individual poems, he has also been working on meeting a personal goal of publishing a book. His recently self-published book, Reflection, a compilation of previously unpublished works spanning his entire period of writing poetry, marks the accomplishment of his goal.

More ISPS Member News

Chicagoland's **Poets & Patrons** organization is holding their two annual contests again this summer, each with cash prizes available: 1.) The Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest. FREE. Two categories [*Traditional and Modern*]. **Deadline is July 15th.** 2.) The 66th Annual Chicagoland Poets & Patrons Contest with 12 categories (*includes free verse, formal verse, humorous, nature, and many more*). Categories open to all except category 12, which is Chicago-only. Cost is \$12 for P&P members, \$15 non-members, and covers one poem per category. **Enter July 15 – Aug. 31.** Go to poetsandpatrons.net for all the details and guidelines for both contests. Electronic entries only.

The **East on Central/Habitat HP Art and Poetry in Nature** will be held at The Art Center of Highland Park on **July 16, 2022 at 2 p.m.**

Highland Park Poetry has two exciting opportunities for poets: 1) The **Prairie State Poetry Prize for a 1st or 2nd Book**. Prize is \$150, publication of the manuscript, 20 copies, and a featured reader spot for HPP. Deadline for submissions is October 31st and Chicago poet Cynthia Gallaher in the final judge. 2) **The Poetry Pentathlon – North Shore Edition** is coming back Saturday, September 10. Five rounds, three judges, and one champion. Register by August 1st! www.HighlandParkPoetry.org
Highland Park Poetry also offers monthly in-person poetry readings and open-mics at Madame ZuZu's, 1876 First Street, Highland Park, Illinois. All events at Saturdays at 5PM. Poets may read up to 3 poems in the open-mic. There is no cover charge but attendees are expected to purchase an item from the café. The upcoming line up includes ISPS members as featured poets:
July 9 – Susan T. Moss, *Mapping a Life* and **Kate Hutchinson**, *A Matter of Dark Matter*
August 13 – Cynthia Gallaher, *Frugal Poets Guide to Life*
For more details, please visit www.HighlandParkPoetry.org.

Procedure for Posting ISPS Member Poems on Website

Between July 1 through July 7, member poems/haiga for Web posting can be submitted by poets whose last initial is N - Z. For August 1 through 7, the last initial will be A - D. Email one poem and/or haiga to Alan Harris at oasis@alharris.com. All poems submitted will be posted on our website. For further guidelines on submissions, please see illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm.

Chapter Contacts

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

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

Southern Chapter (Carbondale)

Contact Kathy Cotton, facilitator
kacotton7@frontier.com

Central Chapter (Champaign)

Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator
mbbretzlauf@comcast.net

West Suburban Chapter (Darien)

Contact Caroline Johnson, facilitator
twinkscat@aol.com

Haiku Chapter

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

Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)

For the Zoom link, contact
Wilda Morris
wem@americitech.net

North Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)

Contact
Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator
mbbretzlauf@comcast.net

North Central Chapter (Pontiac)

Contact
Kathleen Murphy, facilitator
kathleenzmurphy@mail.com

If you have bio updates to share, send to oasis@alharris.com.

For possible member news or Welcome New Member (*brief bio, photo and two short poems*), send to ISPS newsletter editor Jennifer Dotson, Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org (be sure to include "ISPS News" in the subject line of your email.

The ISPS website is at: illinoispoets.org