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Jim O'Brien

Brookfield – W. Suburban  
Caroline Johnson

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Tom Chockley

Lisle – SW Suburban  
Wilda Morris

Northbrook – N. Suburban  
Mary Beth Bretzlauf

Pontiac - N. Central  
Kathleen Murphy

# President's Message



Dear Poetry Family,

Yeah, spring!

I want to thank all of you who participated in the collaboration with Addison Center for the Arts! Those of you who sent in poems can feel good knowing your fellow poets took up the mantle and brought your words to life with the artwork next to them. Our relationship with these creative groups inspires and challenges us. You are all incredible poets!

Recently, we had a virtual reading of our contest winners. I was thinking how nice it would be having a monthly virtual open mic for members. Let me know what you think about that.

April is Poetry Month, so there are many opportunities that involve writing and sharing poetry. I'm working on daily prompts for all of us to write a poem a day and we'll have a virtual open mic at the end of the month. Also, Highland Park Poetry has a wonderful postcard poem challenge – information is in this newsletter.

On **Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>** at 2 p.m., join us on Zoom for **Meet Emily Dickinson: The Belle of Amherst!** Paddy Lynn will bring Emily and her poems to life for us. The event is free. [*Flyer on page 2*] To RSVP: [isps.manningham@gmail.com](mailto:isps.manningham@gmail.com) Subject: **Emily Dickinson**

On **Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., we will be at the Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State Street, participating in Chicago Poetry Fest. Come for the workshops and readings, stop by our table and say hello!

Mark your calendar for The National Convention June 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> in Roswell, Georgia. You can find out more here: [nfsp.net](http://nfsp.net).

Keep on writing,  
Mary Beth Bretzlauf

# Emily Dickinson Celebrates Poetry Month with ISPS

ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY PRESENTS

## Meet Emily



2:00 p.m.  
**Saturday**  
**April 13**

Request free  
Zoom link:

[isps.manningham@gmail.com](mailto:isps.manningham@gmail.com)

Emily Dickinson  
Performed Live  
by Story Teller  
**Paddy Lynn**

*Coming Soon!!  
Secrets of Poetry Book  
Publication  
in Late March 2024*

*This virtual panel discussion includes  
ISPS members:  
Cynthia S. Gallaher  
Gay Guard Chamberlin  
Susan T. Moss  
Lennart Lundh  
Wilda Morris  
Jennifer Dotson  
& Mary Beth Bretzlauf, Facilitator*

*Watch your e-mail for details.*

**Help us keep our database up to date!!!!!!**

Please let our treasurer, Marjorie Rissman, know of any address, phone number or email changes. We can only communicate with correct info. [marjorierissman@gmail.com](mailto:marjorierissman@gmail.com)

## Addison Center for the Arts Ekphrastic Collaboration



Several ISPS members participated in the **Addison Center for the Arts Ekphrastic Collaboration**. Here are the poets pictured from the culminating poetry reading at the Addison Center for the Arts.

Front row (left to right): Bakul Banjeree, Susan Moss, Rene Park, and Karian Markos

Back row (left to right): James Wilkerson, Donita Ries, Lennart Lundh, Kathryn Haydon, Michael Escoubas, Jill Spealman, and Mary Beth Bretzlauf

# ISPS Chapter News

**ISPS West Suburban Chapter** – NOTE THIS NEW PERMANENT LOCATION AND TIME!! Next meeting is **Saturday, March 2, 2024, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm CT at the Brewed Awakening Coffee Shop, 19 West Quincy Street, Westmont, Illinois.** Please bring 8 - 10 copies of up to two poems for critique. There is no fee to attend, but you are encouraged to purchase a beverage and pastry. You can bring your own snacks if you wish. Any questions please contact the facilitator, [carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com](mailto:carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com).

**ISPS-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter - Illinois State Poetry Society-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter.** The ISPS-HSA Haiku Chapter held its bimonthly Zoom chapter meeting on Sunday, February 18, 2024. Those who attended were Jocelyn Ajami, Susan Auld, Tom Chockley, Jeanne Cook, Janice Doppler, Margie Gustafson, Kathryn Haydon, Sangita Kalarical, Jeff Kressmann, William Lederer, Win Morgan, Michael Nickels-Wisdom, Elizabeth Shack, Jill Spealman, and Jim Wilkerson. We began our meeting with an old haiku chapter tradition, discussion of a published haiku that delights. Then we enjoyed the discussion of participants' haiku. These were presented anonymously. And each poet had a chance to talk about the haiku moment that evoked the haiku as well as to ask for any additional feedback regarding the haiku.  
**Our next Haiku Chapter Zoom Meeting: Sunday, April 21, 2024.** The deadline for RSVPs to attend will be *Tuesday, April 16*. Contact Tom Chockley ([tomzhaiku@outlook.com](mailto:tomzhaiku@outlook.com) or [thomassem2@hotmail.com](mailto:thomassem2@hotmail.com)) to receive further information and to receive the Zoom meeting link to attend.

**ISPS Northern Chapter and ISPS Champaign – Central Chapter (Champaign)** will hold a joint meeting via Zoom and will meet on **Sunday, March 10 at 1 p.m.** on Zoom. Chapter meetings are open to all ISPS members. Those wishing to attend the meeting can contact Mary Beth at [ISPS.Manningham@gmail.com](mailto:ISPS.Manningham@gmail.com). You can also submit a poem for critique at that time as well.

**ISPS North Central Chapter (Pontiac)** will meet on **Saturday, April 13 at 10:00 am** via Zoom. Contact Kathleen Murphy, Facilitator, [kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com) for how to participate.

**ISPS Southern Chapter** has two upcoming meetings: (1) **1:30 p.m., Sunday, March 10**, at the Carbondale Library, 405 West Main, Carbondale, IL 62901. For directions, visit <https://www.carbondale.lib.il.us>. Please bring 10-12 copies of your poem for critiquing. (2) **1:30 p.m., Sunday, April 14**, meeting via Zoom. Kathy Cotton, Facilitator, [sipoets7@gmail.com](mailto:sipoets7@gmail.com). Check out some of the Southern Chapter's activities and member accomplishments in Member News.

**ISPS Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)** The Chapter meeting in February will be hybrid. The meeting will be in-person at Lisle Public Library, 777 Front Street, Lisle, as well as on Zoom, at **1 pm CT on Sunday, April 7, 2024**. Zoom information: Meeting ID: **871 2367 4737**; Passcode: **241408**; Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87123674737?pwd=bHZYMHNgaEJkQW43V1dnOEgva1Zpdz09>  
You may submit up to three poems (or three pages) for critique to [wildamorris@ameritech.net](mailto:wildamorris@ameritech.net) so they can be distributed ahead of the meeting. Please, if possible, put your poems in one document, with each poem beginning on a separate page, with your name in the upper right-hand corner of each page [*not in a header*]. Poems should be submitted by Thursday, April 4. Those attending in person should print out the poems for themselves. You may want to bring some water, soda, or lemonade for yourself.

It is never too late to renew your membership!  
For membership information, renewal form, joining ISPS email [marjorierissman@gmail.com](mailto:marjorierissman@gmail.com), our new treasurer!

The Last Sunday of the Month Poetry Readings at **Brewed Awakening** in Westmont from 12:30 – 2:00 pm (co-sponsored by ISPS) will resume in January. Email Wilda Morris [@wildamorris@ameritech.net](mailto:@wildamorris@ameritech.net) to recommend someone as featured poet.

# Welcome New Members!

**Colleen McManus Hein** is a writer from Riverwoods. She has published poems in *East on Central* and with *Highland Park Poetry*. Recently, she self-published a chapbook, "Come December," at the Fed Ex store. She worked hard to overcome a crippling fear of public speaking and has shared poems at local open-mic poetry events.



## Please Come In

Please come in.  
I have people and places to show you.  
They live in my head but  
They want to be seen.  
You see, I paint with words.  
I saw your face,  
And I want to frame you.

~ Colleen McManus Hein



**Nancy L. Staszak** is a retired Art teacher, inveterate gardener, hiker, reader, painter, and poet. Nancy tells us, "Peripheral vision delights me---noticing things that might not obviously be considered important, but might offer great beauty, meaning, and sometimes incongruity!" Her website for her work as a visual artist is <https://nancystaszak.com/>.



Startled starlings flock  
and flee the hungry hawk, the  
fox, the owl and me!

~ Nancy L. Staszak

Published in *Haiku*, October 2023

**TJ Morris** is a poet, an author, and a storyteller. She is also known as *Storiword*. Based in Waukegan, TJ is a new member of the North Chapter of ISPS. TJ has published four books, including two poetry collections. Her current poetry book, *Poetry with a Passion*, is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Her other

publications include a book of historical fiction, *Blood is Thicker Than Water*, and a children's book, *Who's the Strange Looking Kid?* TJ Morris loves the arts and genealogy. She loves a good poem or a good tale, short or long. To learn more about TJ Morris, you can visit [www.tjmorris.info](http://www.tjmorris.info).

## Watch What You Ask For

We ask for many things in life  
We put lots of thoughts and words, OUT INTO  
THE UNIVERSE  
We often think that the Universe only hears those  
specific prayers that we really request  
The Universe Hears It All  
The positives  
The negatives  
The maybes  
The not so surest  
Watch What You Ask For  
Because you will get it  
And then you'll be saying  
"This wasn't what I wanted"  
Maybe you did not realize what you asked for  
Maybe this was not what you had in mind  
If you put it out in the Universe,  
the Universe will respond  
So, WATCH WHAT YOU ASK FOR  
You just might get it

~ TJ Morris

# ISPS Member News



## Celebrate April 2024 / National Poetry Month with Highland Park Poetry's Postcard Poem Challenge

Register by March 15, 2024.  
Commit to writing ten (10) postcard poems to poets on an assigned list.

Visit [www.HighlandParkPoetry.org](http://www.HighlandParkPoetry.org) to download the program guidelines and instructions.

Questions? Reach out to Jennifer[at]highlandparkpoetry.org



**Michael Lee Johnson** is an internationally published poet in 45 countries, a song lyricist, has several published poetry books, has been nominated for 7 Pushcart Prize awards, and 6 Best of the Net nominations. He has 300 plus YouTube poetry videos. He encourages ISPS members to check out

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTgb9HNjyqc> This is a revised version of the original Crows (V2)-correcting mistakes. He asks, "Please subscribe, Like, leave Comments on my YouTube channel." Crows are brilliant birds who face hunger in hard times and winter and migrate to escape the cold but seldom travel far in search of food. They know of the winter and the sun and fall harvest. Follow them, their wings and mysterious flights through the seasons.

**Wilda Morris** provided this photo from the January 28, 2024 Brewed Awakening gathering featuring new members Uma Morris and Judith MK Kaufman. From left to right: **Bakul Banerjee, Barbara Eaton, Wilda Morris (emcee), Uma Morris (featured poet), Julie Isaacson, and Judith MK Kaufman (featured poet).**



**Paul Buchheit's** newest collection, *Sonnets of Love and Joy*, has won the Gold/1st Place award in the 2024 Feathered Quill Book Awards Program for the Inspirational category and Bronze/3rd Place in the Poetry category.

## Poetry, Photography and Music

2 pm Sunday March 10

at Oak Brook Public Library

with **The P2 Collective**  
and cellist **Martine Benmann**

ADMISSION FREE

Images will be projected while poems are read by the poets with some mood-setting music



Oak Brook Public Library  
600 Oak Brook Road, Oak Brook, IL 60523  
Phone: (630) 368-7700

THE P2 COLLECTIVE: Alexa Frangos • Steve Geer • Suzanne Metzel  
Maureen Tolman Flannery • Caroline Johnson • Wilda Morris • Susan T. Moss

The **P2 Collective**, including ISPS members **Maureen Tolman Flannery, Caroline Johnson, Wilda Morris, and Susan T. Moss**, announces the next **free performance of their latest work "Collective Visions II"** at 2pm on Sunday March 10 at Oak Brook Public Library. Poems will be read whilst the photographs that inspired them, or that were inspired by them, are projected. We would love to see you there. After the performance there will be an opportunity to ask questions and talk with the P2 members. To learn about the

P2 Collective: <https://stevegeer.com/P2.html>

# More ISPS Member News & Events

**Poets Critique Plus** on **March 12, 2024** from **3PM – 5PM** at Trinity Episcopal Church, 425 Laurel Avenue, Highland Park. *East on Central* writer-educators will facilitate a model for productive and inspiring critique groups, teaching you how to do the same with your own fellow writers as you give and receive feedback on poems. Come ready to write, share, and provide feedback. Please bring 4 copies of one or two poems for a critique. This event is free but advanced registration is required. Register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FJRKDQF> More info: <https://www.eastoncentral.org/events>

**Jill Spealman** will lead a **haiku walk** on **Sunday, March 17, 2:00 – 3:15 PM**, at the St. James Forest Preserve, 25541 Winfield Road, Warrenville, IL 60555 (use west entrance off Winfield Road). Learn about haiku, a poetic form that originated in Japan, on a leisurely walk. Then, create your own haiku inspired by your fresh experiences. Ages 12 and up; under 18 with an adult. \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-933-7248. Jill is a docent at the St. James Forest Preserve. Event occurs regardless of weather. To sign up: <https://www.dupageforest.org/things-to-do/calendar-of-events?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D171157558>

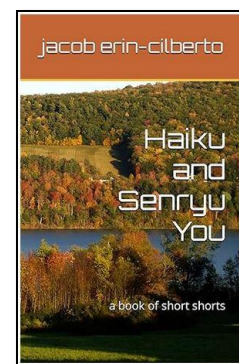
**SIBLING REVELRY** (sister-poets Anara Guard of Sacramento and **Gay Guard-Chamberlin** of Chicago) presents Wednesday Revelry on the last Wednesday of the month. Begin - or rejuvenate - your writing (poetry or prose) with us on **March 27th, 7:00-9:00 p.m. CST** for "Tricksters & Fools". Tricksters are known for their pranks, but the Fool often speaks the truth. We will play with bringing puns, jokes, trompe l'oeil and other tricks to our truth-telling. Suggested donation: \$20. Register at <https://newwindpublishing.com/events/revelry/>



**Maggie Kennedy** recently published her first book of poetry, *Unraveling the Script*, with Pine Row Press. The book is available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). In the collection, Maggie yearns to make sense of the often “indecipherable script” of life. She uncovers as many questions as answers while “stumbling after” a more benevolent and joyful way to live where we might “dare embarrassment for a chance at rapture,” celebrate the “capacity we have to glow,” and find forgiveness and solace in “beauty, extraneous as a sparrow.”

For Poetry Month, the **Southern Chapter’s 14th annual National Poetry Month** display will be hosted at the Carbondale Library throughout April. The display will feature chapter members’ poems and poetry books.

Southern Chapter Member’s 23<sup>rd</sup> Book - **Jacob Erin-Cilberto’s** 23<sup>rd</sup> book is a small collection of small poems: 21 haiku and senryu and 15 “short shorts.” *Haiku and Senryu You* is available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). Erin-Cilberto is a member of Southern Chapter.



**ISPS Southern Chapter** collaborated with **Act 2 Writer’s Group** to publish a collection of **Bill Harshbarger’s** poems, essays and drawings, gleaned from three years of emails. The 159-page book was presented to him as a surprise gift. Bill is a member of Southern Chapter.



**Jennifer Dotson**, author of *Late Night Talk Show Fantasy & Other Poems* and founder of [www.HighlandParkPoetry.org](http://www.HighlandParkPoetry.org), is reading and answering questions for the **Naperville Writers Group** on **Saturday, April 6 from 1 PM to 4PM**. Event is held at the 95<sup>th</sup> Street

Library Branch of the Naperville Public Library, 3015 Cedar Glade Drive, Naperville, IL 60564. Copies of her books will be available for purchase.

# More ISPS Member News



Congratulations to **Karian Markos** for her manuscript

***Esemplastic - Many and One***

2024 Winner of

**The Prairie State Poetry Prize  
for a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Book of Poetry**

This year's judge, Lennart Lundh, poet, photographer, and author of *How I Went into the Woods* (Kelsay Books, 2023) and dozens more, selected Karian Markos' winning manuscript, *Esemplastic - Many and One*. Karian Markos is a Greek American poet, fiction writer and nonprofit attorney living with her husband and three children in Chicago's western suburbs. Her award-winning work has been published in magazines and anthologies such as *Living Crue Magazine*,

Highland Park Poetry, *Prairie Light Review*, *Bombfire* and elsewhere. **Publication by Highland Park Poetry Press in Summer 2024!**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – *My Tongue Carbon Dates Your Skin* by Marianne Peel
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – *The Poetry of Riding Freight Trains Across America* by David J. Rogers

Next year's contest opens for submissions in July 2024. Guest judge will be Jan Chronister.  
[www.highlandparkpoetry.org](http://www.highlandparkpoetry.org)



## Chapter Contacts

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](mailto:kacotton7@frontier.com)

### Central Chapter (Champaign)

Jim O'Brien, facilitator  
[journaljim@gmail.com](mailto:journaljim@gmail.com)

### West Suburban Chapter (Brookfield)

Contact Caroline Johnson, facilitator  
[carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com](mailto:carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com)

### Haiku Chapter

Contact Tom Chockley, facilitator  
[tomzhaiku@outlook.com](mailto:tomzhaiku@outlook.com)

### Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)

For the Zoom link, contact  
Wilda Morris  
[wem@americtech.net](mailto:wem@americtech.net)

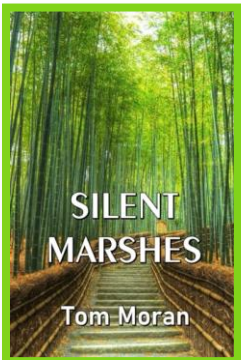
### North Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)

Contact  
Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator  
[ISPS.Manningham@gmail.com](mailto:ISPS.Manningham@gmail.com)

### North Central Chapter (Pontiac)

Contact  
Kathleen Murphy, facilitator  
[kathleenzmurphy@mail.com](mailto:kathleenzmurphy@mail.com)

**Highland Park Poetry** offers monthly reading & open-mic events on the Second Saturday of each month from 4PM – 6PM. Venues vary so be sure to visit the events page at [www.highlandparkpoetry.org](http://www.highlandparkpoetry.org). Upcoming features include: March 9: **Emily Thornton Calvo** & S. Yarberry / April 13: **Maria Bellefeuille** & Anne Myles / May 11: **Michael Escoubas**.



**Tom Moran** recently published his second poetry collection, *Silent Marshes* (Cyberwit.net, 2024). Tom says that his wife Christine was his inspiration for this volume. It is available for purchase on Amazon.

**Charlotte Digregorio** will be the guest speaker for the National Poetry Month program of the Haiku Society of America's Southeast Region. She's the author of

"Haiku and Senryu: A Simple Guide for All." In other news, on her blog, [www.charlottedigregorio.wordpress.com](http://www.charlottedigregorio.wordpress.com), she posted a popular feature: "Love Poems: the Good, Bad or Ugly," selecting 66 haiku, senryu, or tanka by global poets on Feb. 14. Further, she invites ISPS members to follow her blog for "The Daily Haiku." Contact her at [c-books@hotmail.com](mailto:c-books@hotmail.com) with questions for haiku submissions.

**Brewed Awakening:** Please join us for the monthly poetry reading and open mic at Brewed Awakening on the last Sunday of each month from 12:30-2:00 p.m. No reading in March - conflicts with Easter. Winners of the Book of the Year Awards (*which have not yet been announced*) will be invited to be featured readers on April 28.

**Procedure for Posting ISPS Member Poems on Website** - ISPS members may submit one poem and/or one haiga for posting on our website ([illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org)). Poets whose last initial is N - Z may submit from March 1 - 7, and poets whose last initial is A - D may submit from April 1 - 7. For submission guidelines, please go to "Submitting Poems" ([illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm](http://illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm)) in our site.

