A Message from the President

Several other ISPS members and I will be attending the NFSPS convention in Salt Lake City in late June. This yearly event, held in varying parts of the country, offers a variety of opportunities to hear informative speakers, meet new poets and visit with those already known from previous years. Energy runs high with anticipation of presentations by fine poets, possibly winning contest awards and sharing optional daily open mic readings.

Energy should also be part of our writing. Recently, I spent a week in a poetry workshop at The Clearing in Door County. Three other ISPS members were also there and shared their work and discussions about writing poetry. One topic was how we fill our poetry with vitality. Some of the ways include keeping a balance or tension such as between gain and loss, past and present, opposites of feelings, levity and seriousness, among many other themes, tones and approaches.

It can be a challenge to find new and fresh approaches to poetically transcribing something calling to us. Early drafts may be list-like in recording the event, feeling or observation and thereby, miss the underlying breath and subtext driving the desire to make a subject more elevated and inspirational. At this juncture, we need to evaluate what drew us to the initial idea and then delve deeper into our intimate self, and the motivating élan that needs to share something with a larger audience.

When I considered how I get energy into my poetry, I took a cause and effect approach. First the idea, thing, etc. emanates its vigor and kindles my interest. Then I write down these initial responses and try to capture the intention and goal to further discover yet a deeper purpose—the soul of the poem. Next, I step back, take a walk or do something else to provide a little time away in order to let the first thoughts marinate and form their own voice that often speaks to me if given a chance.

The following phase is the reworking of the structure, word choice and rhythm that help energize the poem. Eventually, the poem dances or in some way slips off the page into a broader realm of existence, thus combining the message and animation to deliver a poem. At completion, I have tried to capture, hold and then send out to the world a piece of myself that will perhaps also speak to others.

To be a poet is know what and how something affects us. Detecting and defining what motivates an idea, listening to its message and deciphering the code into poetic language become the ultimate challenges and creative joy. Happy writing, Susan T. Moss
**How Maya Angelou Wrote**

April 4, 1928 – May 28, 2014

We remember Maya Angelou, one of the most influential women of our time, for powerful poems like "And Still I Rise," which has more than 1,500,000 hits on youtube.com.

In a 1983 interview Angelou described her process for writing. She found it difficult to write in a "pretty surrounding" like her home. "It throws me," she said. So her creative space was a plain hotel room.

Angelou leaves us with the inspiration of both her gifted poetry and this peek into the life of a dedicated author of memoirs, poetry, plays and scripts.

"I usually get up at about 5:30, and I'm ready to have coffee by 6, usually with my husband. He goes off to his work around 6:30, and I go off to mine. I keep a hotel room in which I do my work—a tiny, mean room with just a bed, and sometimes, if I can find it, a face basin. I keep a dictionary, a Bible, a deck of cards and a bottle of sherry in the room. I try to get there around 7, and I work until 2 in the afternoon. If the work is going badly, I stay until 12:30. If it's going well, I'll stay as long as it's going well. It's lonely, and it's marvelous. I edit while I'm working. When I come home at 2, I read over what I've written that day, and then try to put it out of my mind. I shower, prepare dinner, so that when my husband comes home, I'm not totally absorbed in my work. We have a semblance of a normal life. We have a drink together and have dinner. Maybe after dinner I'll read to him what I've written that day. He doesn't comment. I don't invite comments from anyone but my editor, but hearing it aloud is good. Sometimes I hear the dissonance; then I try to straighten it out in the morning."


**Mark your Poetry Calendar**

- **JULY 1**, new ISPS year begins. Have you renewed your membership? See form and information on page 6.
- **JULY 1**, deadline Great River Shakespeare Festival/Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest, GRSF.org.
- **JULY 26**, 8 p.m., Albert DeGenova reading and open mic at Madame ZuZu's, 582 Roger Williams Avenue, Highland Park.
- **JULY 27**, 12:30 p.m., poetry readings by Donna Pucciani and Judith Valente followed by open mic at Brewed Awakening in Westmont.
- **JULY 27**, 12:30 p.m., poetry slam, open mic, Chicago Library, North Austin, 5724 W. North Avenue, Chicago.

**ISPS Members Noted in JOMP 16**

ISPS member Joseph Glaser won *The Journal of Modern Poetry* 16 Best Modern Poem Prize for his submission, "Nickel Pickle." The poem was also a 2014 Chicago Poetry Press Pushcart Prize nominee, along with "Workshop Words" by Wilda Morris and "I Can Only Imagine" by Pamela Larson.

ISPS members among those short-listed in the judging process for the 2014 contest were Marcia Pradzinski and Mary Jo Balistreri.

**Members Join Email Critique Groups**

Five-member groups have formed in the new ISPS email critique program. As more members request to participate, additional groups composed of five poets will be assigned in such a way as to maximize geographic diversity, according to coordinator Wilda Morris.

Each group member is entitled to submit one poem for critique monthly and, in turn, agrees to critique poems submitted by the other members.

To join an ISPS email group or to request a full copy of the guidelines, contact Wilda Morris at wildamorris@ameritech.net. Put “ISPS Email Critique Group” in the subject line of the email. Be sure to include your name with your request.
Spotlight on ISPS Poet Patty Dickson Pieczka


*When did you first start writing poetry?*
Growing up in Evanston, I read and listened to lots of poetry, since my father, John Dickson, was a prolific writer. When I was older, I typed his manuscripts on a Selectric II typewriter which required entire poems to be retyped for each revision, so I learned poetry by sheer repetition. He had a compelling, conversational style. My own poetry is more condensed and extremely visual and first came to me in the form of dreams in 1996, about a month after my best friend died of cancer.

*What inspires you to write?*
Magic. Since poetry is my escape from the literal and harsh, I like to look for the "almost possible" in any situation, to saw a poem in half and turn it into two white doves.

*What is your advice to aspiring poets?*
Read and read some more. You'll know the poets who speak to you and those who don't. Follow the writers who inspire you and make you want to locate the nearest pen. Turn your topic inside out, look at things from a new angle, write from your heart.

*Do you have any advice about how to get published?*
It's helpful to have a group like ISPS or a friend who writes to run your work past before sending it out. It's easy to lose objectivity on our own work, and another person may see the flaws more readily. Seek out journals whose work you admire. If you find inspiration in what they're publishing, chances are they'll like your work, too. Then, as my dad used to say, "Just send it out and forget it." Don't get too distracted either way by the response.

*Do you ever get writer's block? How do you overcome this?*
I think most of us do, at times. I try not to censor myself before the words can get to the paper. Instead, I write what comes to mind and edit later. Music helps, staying close to nature or walking barefoot along the shores of the subconscious mind and dipping into the pool of the half-asleep state.

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**POETRY by PATTY DICKSON PIECZKA**

**Songs from an Empty Bowl**

1.
She reads rivers, plants, stars, measures her life between wolf moon and candle-flame, Polaris and roseroot.

Wooly worms and the croaks of toads tell her when to take shelter. Falling stars augur fair weather and a blood moon brings rain: ashes, dirt, swirls of black feathers. She drops a stone into the well but finds the loudest echoes ripple through her mind.

2.
At night she closes her eyes and boards the constellation Carina, the sparkling ship that sails the sky.

She looks back at earth with its broken people and wonders what is left when a snake's rattle makes the night's music.

3.
She becomes a stream, rocks along her spine, vines winding through her fingers, mint, ripe berries, the scent of green. Men dip their cups into her heart; cows lick her toes.

4.
Silences slip between breath and heartbeat, the pause after a bird's call; she fills her hands with emptiness of spaces between leaves and learns to become whole.

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ISPS Chapter Meetings

CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC
1:00 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 9
Pontiac Public Library
815-844-7229
211 E. Madison St., Pontiac, IL

NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK
1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, July 13
Northbrook Public Library (second floor, interactive classroom) 847-272-6224
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
Bring your beverage, 8-10 copies of poems for critique. No food allowed in this room.

SOUTHERN CHAPTER, CARBONDALE
2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, July 13
Carbondale Public Library
630-986-1976
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL
Bring 8-10 copies of poems for critique and a snack to share.

SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE
1:00 to 5:00 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 3
Lisle Public Library 630-971-1675
777 Front St., Lisle IL
Bring your beverage, 20 copies of poems for critique, and a snack to share.

WEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, HINSDALE
1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Saturday, July 5
Hinsdale Public Library
630-986-1976
20 East Maple Street, Hinsdale, IL
Bring your own beverage, 12 copies of poems for critique, and a snack to share.

New Members / Members' News

MARY ANN BARNETT of Cypress is a new member of the Southern Chapter. She is the author of the poetry collection, The Invisible Girl Dresses Herself.

TIM BREITZMANN of Chicago is a new member at large and ISPS Benefactor.

JOAN COLBY has a new poetry book, Bittersweet, available at the special pre-publication price of $6 at www.mainstreetrag.com

EVE LOMORO of Aurora is a new member. Read samples of her poetry in the new volume of Distilled Lives.

SUSAN T. MOSS' new chapbook, From The Dark, will be published in late July.

JAMES REISS is the author of five books of poetry, the latest, Riff on Six: New and Selected Poems. His first collection, The Breathers, was nominated for the National Book Award, and the fourth book, Ten Thousand Good Mornings, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. In January 2015 CW Books will publish Reiss' sixth poetry collection, The Novel. A more extensive and impressive bio of this new ISPS member is available on our website and at www.jamesreiss.com.

ISPS and Brewed Awakening Sponsor Featured Poets and Open Mic Events

Readings by featured poets at 12:30 p.m., followed by open mic, are set for July 27 and August 31 at Brewed Awakening, 19 W. Quincy Street, Westmont. A cover charge of $7 includes beverage and snack.

Like Hope on the Equinox.
Judith Valente is an award-winning broadcaster and poet. Her book, Twenty Poems to Nourish Your Soul, was runner up for the 2008 Eric Hoffer award. She has been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize twice.

AUGUST 31. Albert DeGenova is a poet, editor, teacher, and blues saxophonist. He is the author of two books of poetry and three chapbooks; his latest, in 2014, is A Good Hammer. In June of 2000 he launched the literary/arts journal After Hours, for which he continues as publisher and editor.

JULY 27. Donna Pucciani’s poetry has appeared in diverse journals, has been published on four continents and is translated into Chinese, Japanese and Italian. Pucciani’s fifth and most recent collection of poetry is Hanging Like Hope on the Equinox.

Larry Janowski is an award-winning poet. His book, BrotherKeeper, was published in 2007, and he’s at work on a new manuscript called Second Collection. Although he is a Franciscan friar, the Loyola Jesuits allow him to teach at the University.
Check Out Dozens of Poetry Categories Available in Upcoming Contests

Illinois State Poetry Society 21st Annual Contest

Complete guidelines for the ISPS poetry contest are now available at www.illinoispoets.org.

Four Categories
1. Free Verse
2. Formal Poetry (classical or modern)
3. Haiku
4. Theme of “journey” (any form)

Prizes in each category
First, $50; Second, $30; Third, $15
Three Honorable Mentions

Rules
1. Contest is open to anyone.
2. All poems must be the original work of the contestant, unpublished in print or electronically. Poems that have won monetary awards are ineligible.
3. All poems except haiku must be titled.
4. Poems must be in English, no longer than 40 lines, typed in 12- or 14-point type. No fancy fonts or illustrations.

Schaible Sonnet Contest

ISPS poet Beth Staas took first-place in last year's Helen Schaible International Sonnet Contest. We hope sonnet honors will again go to ISPS members. To enter the no-fee contest send two copies of a Shakespearean or a Petrarchan sonnet to Barbara Eaton, 416 Gierz Street, Downers Grove, IL 60515. One copy should have ID (name, address, phone no. and email of poet) and one should be unidentified. Deadline is September 1; winners will be notified by November 1. Additional information is available at www.illinoispoets.org.

Poets and Patrons Contests

Poets & Patrons 58th Annual Chicagoland Poetry Contest includes seven open categories—religious, humorous, formal verse, free verse, social conscience, miniature poem, and nature. Five additional categories with Chicago themes are available for those who live within 100 miles of Chicago.

Prizes are $45, $20, $10 and three in each category. Non-members may enter all open categories (1 poem per category) for $15; members may enter for $12. Each additional poem fee is $2 ($1 for members). Deadline is September 1.

For complete information, go to www.poetsandpatrons.net/contest12.

Contests from Other NFSPS Member Societies

The Arizona State Poetry Society offers a dozen contest categories, including memorable characters, Facebookeans unite!, cinquain, horses, rhyming poetry, short free verse, breaking words, and longer tales. Deadline for submissions is September 30. For contest details, go to http://azpoetry.webs.com/2014annualcontestinfo.

Georgia Poetry Society has seven contests available with submission period from September 1 through November 15. See contest details at http://georgiapoetrysociety.org.

Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs: 31 Contests

ISFPC's 36th annual poetry contests are open for submissions July 1 through September 1, 2014. For non-members of ISFPC, entry fee is $10 and covers one or all entries.

Submissions must be the original, unpublished work of the entrant. Only one poem may be entered in each category and poems may not concurrently be entered in any other contests.

Send an original and a copy of each poem on white 8 1/2 x 11 paper with no personal identification on the original; name and address in the upper right-hand corner of the copy. All pages must have the contest number and CORRECT contest name in the upper left-hand corner. Separate originals from copies and arrange them in order by contest number.

Make checks payable to ISFPC and send by U.S. Postal Mail to: Caroline Dewey, ISFPC Contest Director, 5309 Stonecreek Trail, Fort Wayne, IN 46825. For complete information, see the society's website: www.isfpc.org.
ISPS Online Submissions: Even Months, First Two Weeks

The next bimonthly submission period for member poetry on the ISPS website is Friday, August 1, through August 14. Members may submit one piece of original work, maximum two pages, to Alan Harris at oasis@alharris.com or by mail to Alan Harris, 543 E. Squirrel Tail Dr., Tucson, AZ 85704. Member poetry is viewable by poet, poem title, or submission period at www.illinoispoets.org.

Happy New Year, ISPS: Did You Renew?

The 2013-14 ISPS membership year ended June 30. Renew now for the continuing benefits of the 2014–2015 ISPS year. For the small investment of $20 (optional $30.00 for Patron status or $50.00, Benefactor status), you support poetry in Illinois and receive all these perks:

★ Triple membership: the Illinois State Poetry Society AND the National Federation of State Poetry Societies AND any of the ISPS chapters.
★ ISPS bimonthly newsletter plus email notices of events throughout the state.
★ NFSPS quarterly publication, Strophes.
★ Special submission rates for annual ISPS and NFPS contests.
★ Free admission to ISPS seminars and lectures and all chapter meetings.
★ Poetry critiques at chapter meetings across the state, plus online critique groups.
★ Bimonthly publication of a poem submitted to the ISPS website.

If you have not submitted a brief bio for the newsletter and website, you are invited to send one with your membership form.

ISPS Membership Form  PLEASE PRINT

Complete the information below and send the form with a check for July 1, 2014–June 30, 2015 annual dues of $20.00 (optional $30 for Patron status or $50 for Patron) to the address below. New members please send also a short bio for our newsletter and website.

MEMBERSHIP:
☐Renewal  ☐New Member  ☐$20 Regular  ☐$30 Benefactor  ☐$50 Patron

VOTING CHAPTER (select one):
☐Central, Pontiac  ☐North Suburban, Northbrook  ☐Southern, Carbondale
☐SW Suburban, Lisle  ☐West Suburban, Hinsdale  ☐At-Large

Name _____________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

Phone (home or cell) _________________________________________________

Email _____________________________________________________________

Mail to: Judith Tullis, 6455 Big Bear Drive, Indian Head Park, IL 60525