



2017, ISSUE 1

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Also available on our website
illinoispoets.org/news-links.htm

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Writing Practices: "Any Day I Can Write Is a Good Day"

On my poetry shelf, a 25-year-old book, *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron, begins with a basic tool to creativity: free-write three unedited pages of anything on your mind each morning. This "brain drain" is her resource for clearing mental clutter and making way for the creative.

Another practice comes from poet Lynne Knight, who says, "I go to my writing room at the same time every day with a cup of hot tea (Earl Grey). I start my computer; I start a poem (checking email first = killing the poem). Some days (rare days), instead of sinking into a clumsy exercise, the poem takes off. I think of those as the good days, but the truth is, any day I can write is a good day. Even when nothing much comes of it, I love doing it."

To be a poet, one obvious practice is to write. Check page two for other ideas from ISPS poets to encourage your best writing in 2017. ~Kathy Cotton, Editor ✍



A Message from the ISPS President

As we begin another year, we have the opportunity to shake off any residual sadness and disappointments and gather the opportunity of abundant joy and creative possibilities. The past three hundred and sixty-five days have been filled with exciting ISPS events including the third volume of *Distilled Lives* and another Gala on November 5. Brewed Awakening has continued to be a monthly success, as has been our newest haiku chapter in Northbrook, among other gatherings throughout the state.

With a growing number of members, there are more voices sharing their talents and energy as noted at chapter meetings, the NFSPS and ISPS poetry contests plus poems that appear on our website. The Gala this year offered a chance for some of the newer as well as long-established members to share a day filled with programs and readings from our newest anthology. The panel presentation on publishing evoked some good questions and encouraged several unpublished poets to more seriously consider sending out their work. Lee Gurga's commentaries on contemporary haiku also prompted interest and good questions. Morning music and poetry relating to Carl Sandburg added lively entertainment by Mark Dvorak. The day was complete with members reading their poems from our anthology.

The ISPS board is discussing some more events in this coming year, including at least two shared reading opportunities with other poetry groups and again sponsoring April Poetry Month library displays. It is not too early to start working on poems about "travel" as this year's theme. Many more plans will be forthcoming as the new year progresses.

Those of us who live in a colder climate may start to feel a sense of drawing in and disappearing from even ourselves. This might be a good time to observe from the inside out and then record a different outlook around and within us. As we wrap ourselves in sweaters and warm blankets, we can become more removed from life as we freely live it when not encumbered by boots, mittens and other such apparel. What might be hiding in the shadows of our inner selves that calls to greater insights, fresh approaches and creative growth in our poetry? With more time to stay indoors and travel quiet places, we have the opportunity to begin a new poetic journey that lasts throughout the coming year.

Happy writing and may good health and inspiration surround you during 2017. ~Susan T. Moss ✍

ISPS New Members / Members' News



JAMES REISS of Wilmette died of a heart attack at age 75 on Dec. 2. He was the author of five volumes of poetry as well as the 2016 novel,

“When Yellow Leaves.” His wife, Mary Jo McMillin., noted that Jim always felt that poetry should tell a story rather than just be an abstract idea or a series of words running together that might sound interesting. “He wrote every single day,” she added.

ISPS 2016 POETRY CONTEST JUDGES receive our gratitude for their volunteer work, plus a year's ISPS membership. We welcome new members Jim Ahern, Rochester, MI; Jim Barton, Huttig, AR; Valerie Martin Bailey, San Antonio, TX; Paul Ford, Sandy, UT; Russell Strauss, Memphis, TN; Julie Warther, Dover, OH; and Jill Lapin Zell, Dayton, NJ.

EVE LOMORO of Aurora is a returning patron member of the Southwest Suburban Chapter in Lisle.

FRANK HUBENY of Northbrook is a software engineer who occasionally writes poetry. His poetry blog is at frankhubeny.wordpress.com.

JIM BARTON'S poetry has been published in over 125 journals nationwide and has won more than 450 awards. He is the author of four poetry collections including the Morris Memorial Chapbook award-winning *At the Bird Museum*. Barton serves as treasurer of his local branch, treasurer of Poets' Roundtable of Arkansas and president of NFSPS. He is a public speaker and poetry-event organizer in his spare time. He is married, and he and wife Cathy have seven children and five grandchildren. They live in the wooded bayou country of extreme south Arkansas. In his younger days, he lived

for three winters in Fox Lake, IL.

JILL LAPIN-ZELL is a former English teacher who resides in New Jersey. She has a BA in English from Temple University, an EdM in secondary education from Rutgers University and a master's in educational administration from Rider University. Jill is the author of *Vanishing Into Life*, her first collection of poetry, published in 2015. Some of her poetry has previously appeared in *A Hudson View Poetry Digest*, published by Skyline Publications. She has also edited and written numerous reviews of poetry collections.

ISPS Members Take Wins in Poets and Patrons Contests

FIRST PLACE

(3) Kate Hutchinson, Palatine, IL
 (2) Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
 Mardelle Fortier, Lisle, IL
 Susan T. Moss, Evanston, IL
 Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL

SECOND PLACE

Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
 Daniel Feingold, Chicago, IL
 Mardelle Fortier, Lisle, IL
 (2) Melissa Huff, Champaign, IL

THIRD PLACE

William T. Carey, Glencoe, IL
 Gay Guard-Chamberlin, Chicago, IL
 Kate Hutchinson, Palatine, IL
 Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL
 Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
 Marjorie Rissman, Highland Park, IL
 Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL
 Curt Vevang, Palatine, IL

HONORABLE MENTIONS

1st HM Gail Denham, Sunriver, OR
 1st HM Curt Vevang, Palatine, IL
 2nd HM Mary Ann Eiler, Oak Park, IL
 2nd HM Gay Guard-Chamberlin, Chicago, IL
 2nd HM Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL
 2nd HM Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
 3rd HM Maureen A. Geary, Park Ridge, IL
 3rd HM Melissa Huff, Champaign, IL
 3rd HM Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL
 3rd HM Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
 3rd HM Beth Staas, La Grange Park, IL ✍️

More Writing Practices

Continued from page 1

BE CAUGHT UNAWARES, Lee Gurga

I have never had much luck setting aside a time to write, as successful haiku are frequently dependent on being "caught unawares." So I guess my advice to aspiring writers is to be caught unawares as much as possible!

LIMIT DISTRACTIONS, Sheila Kirscher

At one point I rented an office because I felt it was too difficult to keep at it [writing poetry] at home—too many distractions, household and family distractions.

RELAX, LET GO, Nancy Schaefer

I don't panic or try to force it. I'll just step away from the keyboard and concentrate on something else. I'll go for a walk. Play with my pets. Read. Listen to music. Relax. Let go.

TAKE 10 MINUTES, Marcia Pradzinski

I set a timer for ten minutes and do a free-write on a prompt or idea I want to explore. Often my writing continues past the ten-minute limit.

COLLECT WORDS, Mary Ann Eiler

What "plunges" me into the deep end of a poem is—WORDS. Certainly this is the case for the French poetry that I write—a phrase from Baudelaire, Verlaine, et. al., compels me to grab my notebook and I am off. This approach also works for English.

READ, Tom Roby and Jenene Ravesloot

We are both voracious readers who attempt to remain open to our world. That always seems to lead to poetic impulses and creativity.

DON'T FORCE IT, Jacob Erin-Cilberto

I am a constant writer. I don't force it, or write at any particular time, but when it comes, I do it. I have always said that I feel more like a conduit: the words just come through me and my job is to get them onto the paper.

A LITTLE EACH DAY, David Gross

I try to write, read, or revise a little each day. I believe poetry comes from an unknown place, that we are only receptors.

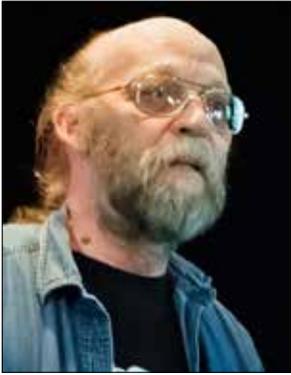


Photo by Jen Pezzo

Spotlight on ISPS Poet Lennart Lundh

Lennart Lundh is a poet, short-fictionist, and historian. Now retired, he's held jobs ranging from nursing home janitor to retail manager to consultant for the Federal Reserve. A Vietnam vet and pacifist, he holds interdisciplinary degrees from NEIU focusing on history and sociology. Len and his wife, Lin, are northern Illinois natives who met in high school. Len can be contacted at lenlundh@aol.com and on Facebook.

When did you begin writing?

I started writing stories at four, and edited a class newspaper in 5th grade. Poetry became a creative outlet for me in 1962, followed by history in 1964. The amount of time I've spent in each field has varied over the years. For now, poetry has most of my attention.

Where has your work been published?

Since 1965, my work's appeared in over 150 magazines, journals, anthologies, and books. Videos and audios of readings are on the web. This year, I released *Poems Against Cancer 2016*, a chapbook; *The Bear Whispers in the Night*, a micro-chapbook; *Jazz Me*, a book of prose poems; and *Antique Shopping*, a collection of short stories.

Who were your early influences?

For poetry and fiction, they were a mixed and inseparable group that included Sandburg, Atwood, Brautigan, Whitman, Bradbury, and McKillip. Of course, every writer I've read has helped teach me what I think works and what doesn't.

How do you practice good citizenship in the writing community?

I do an annual fundraiser for St. Baldrick's in the form of a chapbook in the *Poems Against Cancer* series. I attend readings and launches when I can, and share other writers' successes through social media. I buy a lot of small press titles, and have started writing reviews.

Do you have a regular writing schedule or particular habits as a writer?

Not really. I write when I need to, rather than forcing work for its own sake. I keep notebooks, do research, and read a lot. Since I write when and where the words finish taking their first form in my head, I have no favorite place or tools for writing.

What advice would you offer novice writers?

Write and revise and revise. Read at every open mic you can afford. Submit, get turned down, and submit again. Find your own voice and style, your own subjects, rather than trying to satisfy anybody else. The visions you give words to are yours alone, even as their sources are universal.

What are your current projects and plans?

I have one book of poems taking shape with Writing Knights Press, and a chapbook making the rounds. Next year, I hope to do more individual submissions, and plan to release two poetry titles and one of stories. ✍

Poems by Lennart Lundh

To Each Lost Love Its Elegy

This is for you, for me, for us but not only.
This is for the haunted, and for the ones
who never thought to be their ghosts. This is
for the scars, and for the ones who thrust
love's knife.

This:

I'm holding the memory of you right now like
you held my breath in yours the first time we
made our bodies offerings on the altar of
mutual need.

Poems Against Cancer 2016

Rereading Sandburg

There are stories born to be remembered
and young men read them on the train in the early morning
while old men rock next to them dreaming of youth

There are stories that lose their way early or late
and no matter how they're called for in the middle of the
night
never quite find their way back from the forest
never quite grow up

There are stories that are rewritten years later
when the language they speak is extinct
and mean as much as when they were born

There are stories set to paper for one special woman
and maybe she keeps them in a drawer with old photos
and maybe she spills the morning coffee on them
and throws them away already forgotten

Four Poems

Water Colors

Like a Wyeth:
White farmhouse, tree line for windbreak;
dark, deep clouds tower behind it.
The weatherman said nothing about rain,
but as the train goes by
ducks break from ponds,
gray on gray with white washes.

Pictures of an Other Day ✍

ISPS Board Reports on Gala at Park Ridge and Looks Toward Next Event



At the December 2016 ISPS board of directors' meeting, reports presented on the November 6 Gala were all positive. President Susan Moss commented that "the day went swimmingly well."

Gala features included the fine setting and dining of Park Ridge Country Club, Lee Gurga's session on contemporary haiku, musician/story-teller Mark Dvorak's presentation on Illinois poet Carl Sandburg,

a panel discussion on publishing led by Joan Colby, Gail Goepfert and Lee Gurga, and a book swap. The board discussed venues and ideas for the next gala event. (Gala photos by Carolyn Jevelian)

ISPS Members: A Dozen Wins and Nine Honorable Mentions

In the 24th Annual ISPS Poetry Contest, our members took five first-place wins, three second place, and four third place. Members' poems also were awarded nine honorable mentions. The contest drew submissions from across the United States and from Canada.

FREE VERSE, Judge Jill Lapin-Zell
 1st. Susan Spaeth Cherry, Evanston, IL
 3rd. Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL
 2HM Hugh Muldoon, Carbondale, IL

FORMAL VERSE, Judge Russell Strauss
 1st Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
 2nd Kolette Montague, Centerville, UT
 3rd Michael Escoubas, Bloomington, IL
 1HM Susan Spaeth Cherry, Evanston, IL
 3HM Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL

HAIKU, Judge: Julie Warther
 1st Susan B. Auld, Arlington Hts, IL
 1HM Kolette Montague, Centerville, UT
 3HM Judith Tullis, Indian Head Park, IL

CELESTIAL, Judge James Ahearn
 3rd Daniel J. Fitzgerald, Pontiac, IL
 3HM Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL

MUSIC, Judge Jim Barton
 1st Mary Jo Balistreri, Waukesha, WI
 2nd Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL
 2HM Donna Pucciani, Wheaton, IL

COMPASSION, Judge Paul Ford
 1st Caroline Johnson, Willow Springs, IL
 2nd Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL
 3rd Wilda Morris, Bolingbrook, IL
 2HM Mary Jo Balestreri, Waukesha, WI
 3HM Bakul Banerjee, Wheaton, IL ✍

Prizes Awarded at Holiday Brewed Awakening

Holiday themes at the open mic instead of featured poets' readings at Brewed Awakening's last 2016 event brought prizes to several ISPS poets. John Gordon won the prize for best parody of a winter song, with "Rudolph, the Rhyming Reindeer." Gordon was asked for a repeat performance at the December meeting of the Lisle ISPS chapter.

Other prizes went to Susan Moss, best winter poem; Bakul Banerjee and Wilda Morris (tie), best holiday poems; and to John Gordon, best humorous winter or holiday poem. New ISPS member Maureen Greary won a prize for the most correct answers in a grinchy quiz concerning winter and holiday poetry. ✍



Chapter Meetings

CENTRAL CHAPTER, PONTIAC

1:00 p.m., **Saturday, Feb. 11**
Pontiac Public Library, 815-844-7229
211 E. Madison St., Pontiac, IL

HAIKU CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., **Sunday, Feb. 19**
Northbrook Public Library, Civic Room
847-272-6224
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
Bring 10 copies of 6 haiku for critique.
Guest speaker Lee Gurga.

NO. SUBURBAN CHAPTER, NORTHBROOK

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., **Sunday, Jan. 8**
Northbrook Public Library, 847-272-6224
1201 Cedar Lane, Northbrook, IL
Bring 8-10 copies of poems for critique. No food/
beverages allowed in this room.

SOUTHERN CHAPTER, CARBONDALE

2:00 to 4:00 p.m., **Sunday, Jan. 8**
Carbondale Public Library, 630-986-1976
405 West Main, Carbondale, IL
Bring 12 copies of poems for critique.

SOUTHWEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, LISLE

1:00 to 5:00 p.m., **Sunday, Feb. 5**
Lisle Public Library, 630-971-1675
777 Front St., Lisle, IL (enter lot off Kingston)
Bring your beverage, 20 copies of poems for
critique, and a snack to share.

WEST SUBURBAN CHAPTER, DARIEN

1:00 to 4:00 p.m., **Saturday, Jan. 7**
Indian Prairie Public Library, (630) 887-8760
401 Plainfield Road, Darien, IL
Bring your beverage, dish to share and 20
copies of poems for critique.

ONLINE CRITIQUE GROUPS

To request a copy of the guidelines or to
join an ISPS Email Critique Group, contact
coordinator Wilda Morris at wildamorris@
ameritech.net. Put "ISPS Email Critique
Group" in the subject line of the email and
be sure to include your name with your
request. ✍

Events & Deadlines: Mark Your 2017 Poetry Calendar

JAN. 15, Rattle Chapbook Prize: publi-
cation of a manuscript and \$1,000.
Information at [rattle.com/chap-
books/guidelines](http://rattle.com/chap-
books/guidelines).

JAN. 19, 6:30 p.m., first of a 6-week
poetry workshop series by Jennifer
Dotson at Highland Park Library.
Register at www.hpl.org.

JAN. 29, Brewed Awakening, featured
poet Curt Vevang and open mic, 12:30
p.m., 10 West Quincy, Westmont.

JAN. 31, deadline, NFSPS College Un-
dergraduate Poetry Competition.
Submit 10-poem manuscript at [nf-
sps.submittble.com](http://nf-
sps.submittble.com); details at [nf-
sps.com](http://nf-
sps.com).

FEB. 1, deadline, Heartland Review
2017 Joy Bale Boone Poetry Prizes,
[theheartlandreview.elizabethtown.
kctcs.edu](http://theheartlandreview.elizabethtown.
kctcs.edu).

FEB. 1, Michael Waters Poetry Prize,
Southern Indiana Review, \$3,000
and publication, [usi.edu/sir/
awards-contests/waters-prize](http://usi.edu/sir/
awards-contests/waters-prize).

FEB 1—14, ISPS member poetry sub-
mission period for illinoispoets.com

website publication. Send one poem
to webmaster Alan Harris, [oasis@
alharris.com](mailto:oasis@
alharris.com).

FEB. 25, 1:00 p.m., Harold Washing-
ton Library, 400 S. State St., Chica-
go. Poets and Patrons workshop on
prose poetry, facilitated by Kathleen
Rooney.

FEB. 26, Brewed Awakening featured
poets and open mic, 12:30 p.m., 10
West Quincy, Westmont.

FEB 28, deadline, Highland Park Poet-
ry annual Poetry Challenge; themes:
(1) Pioneers & Prairie, (2) The Se-
cret Life of Insects & Spiders (3)
Epistolary or Letter Poems. Guide-
lines at highlandparkpoetry.com.

MARCH 15, deadline for NFSPS annual
50 contests. See [nf-
sps.com](http://nf-
sps.com) for de-
tails. Electronic entry available for
the Founders Award and Student
Award at [nf-
sps.submittable.com](http://nf-
sps.submittable.com).

MARCH 15, deadline for new NFSPS
BlackBerry Peach Awards contest
for spoken word poetry. Submit au-
dio files to [nf-
sps.submittable.com](http://nf-
sps.submittable.com).

Vevang to Read at January Brewed Awakening



Chicago native Curt Vevang will be a featured poet at Brewed Awakening, Sunday, Jan. 29. He has recently published his first full-length poetry book, *A Scant Bagatelle*, and is also the author of two rhyming children's books, illustrated by 6th grade students. His books are available at Amazon or can be downloaded free at his website, www.curtvevang.com.

Vevang's poetry has appeared in anthologies, poetry maga-
zines, newspapers, newsletters, and various poetry websites, and has won hon-
ors from the Illinois State Poetry Society, Poets and Patrons, and the *Journal of
Modern Poetry*. He notes that many would-be poets say they are encouraged by
their friends to write poetry; his friends encourage him not to. Vevang is especial-
ly known for subtle humor in his poems. He and his bride of more than 50 years
reside in Palatine.

The January 29 event from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m., also includes open mic readings.
A cover charge of \$10 covers coffee/beverage and a snack. Brewed Awakening is
located at 10 West Quincy, directly across the street from the Westmont train station.

Among the poets scheduled to appear at Brewed Awakening in 2017 are Marjorie
Rissman (February), Sheila Elliott and Donna Puccini (March), Tom Roby and
Jenene Raveslout (April), and Georgian Foley (May). ISPS members are invited
to recommend poets to be featured at future Brewed Awakening events. ✍