



## ISPS Board Members

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Kathy Cotton

Champaign - Central  
Jim O'Brien

Brookfield - W. Suburban  
Caroline Johnson

Haiku (meets via Zoom)  
Tom Chockley

Lisle - SW Suburban  
Wilda Morris

Northbrook - N. Suburban  
Mary Beth Bretzlauf

Pontiac - N. Central  
Kathleen Murphy

# President's Message



Dear Poetry Family,

I hope all of you had a productive Poetry Month! We capped it off with an all-member open mic on Zoom on the 30th. If you were able to join us, I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did! If you weren't, know that we missed you! However, I am thinking of doing this more often, so send me your feedback.

Connecting with other people who have poetry in their DNA is the best way I know of to feel welcomed and validated. It happened to me a couple weeks ago when I had the opportunity to meet poets in the Decatur area. It was a wonderful blend of people and poems. Thank you, Jim Wilkerson, for the invitation!

Looking forward, we will have our usual Chapter meetings, but also, we'll be celebrating our mothers, fathers, and graduates. Poetic pearls of wisdom or gratitude for these people in our lives can say what sometimes our lips can't bring forward.

On our horizon is a new website! Our website master, Alan Harris, is retiring from this position. The website committee is asking each of us the following:

- A current bio (no more than 75 words) (a word doc is just fine)
- A headshot
- Photos of your book covers
- Link to corresponding book for purchase.

Please send these to Jim Wilkerson at [jimwilky1974@gmail.com](mailto:jimwilky1974@gmail.com) by **May 22nd**.

In one month, I'll be headed to Roswell, Georgia for the National Poetry Convention. I can't wait to share with you what I got out of it.

Keep writing,  
Mary Beth

# 2024 Student Contest Winners

## Senior Division

### **Fantasy & Science Fiction Award (In Memory of Ray Bradbury)** **Sponsored and Judged by James Lowell Hall**

**First Place:** "Hope in a Lost World" by Clara Bruno of Seneca, IL  
Teacher: Rebecca Liberatore

**Second Place:** "My Favorite World" by Lainey Bartels of Ashland, IL  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**Third Place:** "On the Wind in Which the Wild Roam" by Max Kesselring  
of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**HM #1:** "On the Wind in Which the Wild Roam" by Rehan Mathew Koshy  
of Chicago, IL Teacher: Allison Gillick

**HM #2:** "The Future" by Tara Taft of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz Sinclair

### **The Noel Lederer Award (In Memory of Noel Lederer)** **Sponsored by William Lederer, Judged by Mary Beth Bretzlauf**

**First Place:** "The Orchestra" by Rehan Mathew Koshy of Chicago, IL  
Teacher: Allison Gillick

**Second Place:** "Harmony's Embrace" by Landon Rocke of Ashland, IL  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**Third Place:** "Music Speaks Volume" by Jordan Rebbe of Ashland, IL  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**HM #1:** "Song for My Mother" by Ian Smiddy of Port Byron, IL Teacher: K.  
Stewart

**HM #2:** "The Best Medicine" by Mallory Guillou of Ashland, IL Teacher:  
Liz Sinclair

### **The Oceans Award (In Memory of Richard Bretzlauf)** **Sponsored and Judged by Mary Beth Bretzlauf**

**First Place:** "Beauty Hides Secrets" by Valeria Mercado of Wesclin, IL  
Teacher: Jessica Pilgreen

**Second Place:** "Aquatic Reverie" by Landon Rocke of Ashland, IL  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**Third Place:** "Mysterious Ocean" by Drew Marr of Ashland, IL Teacher:  
Liz Sinclair

**HM #1:** "Landlocked Mermaid" by Delaney Jokisch of Ashland, IL  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**HM #2:** "Beautiful Blue" by Jayce Privia of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

### **The Time Award** **Sponsored and Judged by Ida Kotyuk**

**First Place:** "Tick Tock" by Drew Marr of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

**Second Place:** "precious seconds" by Grace Tobias of Sterling, IL  
Teacher: Donna Spencer

**Third Place:** "Harvest Time" by Cyrus Ratiiff of Ashland, IL. Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

**HM #1:** "Letters Left Unsent" by Louise Mari Entereso of Wauconda, IL  
Teacher: Libby Shogren

**HM #2:** "Back to the Woods" by Olivia Mulderink of Sterling, IL Teacher:  
Donna Spencer

### **Wonders of Nature Award (In Memory of Rachel Carson)** **Sponsored by James Lowell Hall, Judged by Judy Cummings**

**First Place:** "Nature's Beauty" by Abby Taft of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

**Second Place:** "The Weeping Willow Tree" by Averie Summerlin of  
Carbondale, IL Teacher: Betsy Geiselman

**Third Place:** "Outside My House" by Anna Pherigo of Ashland, IL  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**HM #1:** "First Summer Day" by Clara Bruno of Seneca, IL Teacher:  
Rebecca Liberatore

**HM #2:** "Submit!" by Zion Fiorini of Sterling, IL Teacher: Donna Spencer

## Junior Division

### **Fantasy & Science Fiction Award (In Memory of Ray Bradbury)** **Sponsored and Judged by James Lowell Hall**

**First Place:** "Broken Melody" by Nathalie Aguirre of Aurora, IL Teacher:  
Laura Kreuger

**Second Place:** "Undeniable Mystery" by Lydia Larsen of Downers Grove,  
IL Teacher: Tasha Squires

**Third Place:** "This Messed Up World Exists for Us" by Kayla Haynes of  
Aurora, IL Teacher: Laura Kreuger

**HM #1:** "Artificial" by Piper Sobel of Naperville, IL Teacher: Page Weston

**HM #2:** "Dr. Figgle Hairsburry Boon" by Ryland Sobel of Naperville, IL.  
Teacher: Page Weston

### **Love of Nature Award** **Sponsored and Judged by William Marr**

**First Place:** "My First Memory" by Elsa Bravo-Wurtz of Chicago, IL.  
Teacher: Gay Guard-Chamberlin

**Second Place:** "The Woods were our home" by Ryland Sobel of  
Naperville, IL Teacher: Page Weston

**Third Place:** "Up and Down" by Raelyn Houghton of Chicago, IL  
Teacher: Meg Flinn

**HM #1:** "Best Things about Nature" by Jackson Richard of Ashland, IL.  
Teacher: Liz Sinclair

**HM #2:** "Interesting Nature" by Vivian Thomas of Ashland, IL. Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

### **Pets in My World Award** **Sponsored by M. E. Hope, Judged by Mary Beth Bretzlauf**

**First Place:** "Man's Best Friend" by Piper Sobel of Naperville, IL Teacher:  
Page Weston

**Second Place:** "Nine Loves" by Vivian Adams of Chicago, IL Teacher:  
Meg Flinn

**Third Place:** "An Ode to Earl Grey" by Elsa Bravo-Wurtz of Chicago, IL.  
Teacher: Gay Guard-Chamberlin

**HM #1:** "Pets in Our Lives" by Wyatt Hays of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

**HM #2:** "Tuptim" by Kaidence Goodall of Ashland, IL. Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

### **Shadows Award** **Sponsored & Judged by Ida Kotyuk**

**First Place:** "Skymasters" by Henry Sobel of Naperville, IL Teacher:  
Page Weston

**Second Place:** “Reminders” by Lydia Larsen of Downers Grove, IL  
Teacher: Tasha Squires  
**Third Place:** “The boy’s shadow story” by Piper Sobel of Naperville, IL  
Teacher: Page Weston  
**HM #1:** “In the Deep Dark” by Lydia Hinegardner of Ashland, IL Teacher:  
Liz Sinclair  
**HM #2:** “Dying Message” by Kayla Haynes of Aurora, IL Teacher: Laura  
Krueger

**The Oceans Award (In Memory of Richard Bretzlauf)**  
**Sponsored & Judged by Mary Beth Bretzlauf**

**First Place:** “Salt” by Piper Sobel of Naperville, IL. Teacher: Page  
Weston  
**Second Place:** “Oceans” by Risa Bush of Chicago, IL Teacher: Meg  
Flinn  
**Third Place:** Beauties of the Deep” of Chicago, IL. Teacher: Meg Flinn  
**HM #1:** “My Ocean!” by Raelyn Houghton of Chicago, IL Teacher: Meg  
Flinn  
**HM #2:** “My Hope” by Lydia Hinegardner of Ashland, IL Teacher: Liz  
Sinclair

**Wonders of Nature Award (In Memory of Rachel Carson)**  
**Sponsored by James Lowell Hall, Judged by Judy Cummings**

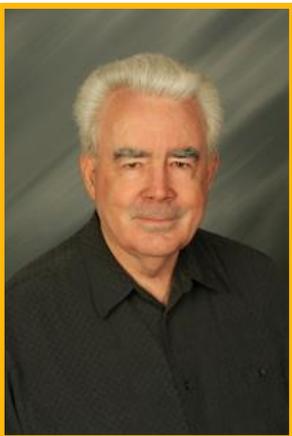
**First Place:** “The 7 wonders of the world” by Piper Sobel of Naperville, IL.  
Teacher: Page Weston  
**Second Place:** “Tulip Tree” by Elsa Bravo-Wurtz of Chicago, IL. Teacher:  
Gay Guard-Chamberlin  
**Third Place:** “Eternal Balance” by Lydia Larsen of Downers Grove, IL.  
Teacher: Tasha Squires  
**HM #1:** “Through the wind I soar high” Ajeet Kapur of Burr Ridge, IL  
Teacher: Nancy Deaton  
**HM #2:** “Wonders of Nature” by Ayanna Armstrong of Chicago, IL  
Teacher: Meg Flinn

**Special Recognition: Manningham Finalist Kade Parker of Ashland,  
IL for “Running at Night” which placed HM #4 in the 2024 Senior  
Division!! Congratulations Kade!!**



**Fresh Ink 2024**, our second anthology of ISPS Student Poetry Contest prize poems, will be available on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in May. Submissions to the Senior Division (grades 9–12) and Senior Division (grades 6–8) came from schools throughout the state.

## With Gratitude to Alan Harris – ISPS’ First Webmaster



**Alan Harris**, a past ISPS president, recently announced his retirement as our web master after 24 years of hosting [illinoispoets.org](https://illinoispoets.org). Among the many website features he has provided continuously, Alan estimates that he has posted about 3,500 member poems on the site.

Before moving to Tucson, Arizona, Alan served as a computer programmer, systems analyst, and web developer in Chicago. Between 1982 and 1995 he print-published ten books of poems and aphorisms for friends and family. Visit his website, [alhharris.com](https://alhharris.com), for links to his prolific literary collection of poems, essays, aphorisms, short stories, photographic essays, and his free 27 books in downloadable PDF format.

Alan has assisted the ISPS web committee's plans for an upcoming website based in new technologies. It will take a team of volunteers to replace the remarkable gift of his work as our web master. Thank you, Alan, for your generous gift of service to ISPS – deeply appreciated!

# ISPS Chapter News

**Champaign – Central Chapter (Champaign)** will hold a meeting via Zoom on **Sunday, May 5** at **1 p.m.** on Zoom. To RSVP and if you wish to have a poem critiqued, please submit it to facilitator Jim O'Brien, [journaljim@gmail.com](mailto:journaljim@gmail.com), no later than Saturday night prior. Jim will forward the link and the poems early Sunday morning.

**Founding Chapter (Lisle)** hosts a hybrid meeting at **1 pm CT on Sunday, June 2, 2024**. Join in-person at Lisle Public Library, 777 Front Street, Lisle, or on Zoom. Email [wildamorris@ameritech.net](mailto:wildamorris@ameritech.net) for the Zoom link. You may submit up to three poems (or three pages) for critique to so they can be distributed ahead of the meeting. Please put your poems in one single 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, May 30. Those attending in person should print out the poems for themselves. You may want to bring some water, soda, or lemonade for yourself.

**ISPS-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter** - The ISPS-HSA Haiku Chapter held its bimonthly Zoom chapter meeting on Sunday, April 21, 2024. Those who attended were Tom Chockley, Susan Farner, David Green, Kathryn Haydon, William Lederer, Rita Melisano, Elizabeth Shack, Jill Spealman, Jennifer Thiermann, 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, June 9, 2024.** Please note that this is the **second Sunday in June, not our usual third Sunday.** The deadline for RSVPs to attend will be Tuesday, June 4. 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.

**North Central Chapter (Pontiac)** held their April meeting Saturday, April 13, at 10AM via Zoom. In attendance were Michael Escoubas, Mary Monical, Connie Kostelc and Kathleen Murphy, facilitator. Our April poetry themes were spring, spring weather, the eclipse, April Fool's Day, taxes and Shakespeare, since his birthday is in April. Michael read two poems about spring weather, and how it can be rough, but we can get through rough times. Mary read a poem about the eclipse and how it makes us think about the wonders of nature. We agreed that they were very effective and thought-provoking poems. Kathleen went with the Shakespeare theme, and wrote a poem about Shakespeare's history play *Richard the Third*. Michael is an editor and offered to do a workshop on what editors like to see in poetry submissions. We agreed this would be very helpful. We're going to do that in August, because we're not able to have a June meeting. Connie wrote a great short story, but unfortunately we were having internet problems, so we had to cut the meeting short. We all have a copy, and she's going to read it at the August meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, August 10** at **10AM** via Zoom. Contact Kathleen Murphy, Facilitator, [kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com) for how to participate.

**Northern Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)** - Meeting will be held on **Sunday, May 19** at **1PM** via Zoom software - contact Mary Beth Bretzlauf at [isps.manningham@gmail.com](mailto:isps.manningham@gmail.com). Those wishing to attend can RSVP to Mary Beth. You can also submit a poem for critique at that time as well.

**Southern Chapter (Carbondale)** has two upcoming meetings: (1) **1:30 p.m., Sunday, May 19**, workshop 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, June 9**, 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.

**West Suburban Chapter** – Next meeting is **Saturday, May 4, 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. Any questions please contact the facilitator, [carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com](mailto:carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com).

Reminder! To continue your annual ISPS membership, send your fee, information to Treasurer Marjorie Rissman by the end of June. Email queries to [marjorie\\_rissman@gmail.com](mailto:marjorie_rissman@gmail.com). Forms available on website, [illinoispoets.com](http://illinoispoets.com).

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

## ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY

# Book of the Year 2023

**WINNER: *Sonnets of Love and Joy*  
Paul Buchheit, Chicago, IL**

From the sumptuous front cover to reviewing the well-earned accolades on the back, the reader is transported into another world, one where the beauty of art, nature, language, and the beloved are still proper subjects for the poet's pen and where intimacy with friends, family, and lovers can still be celebrated with passion and joy. The sonnets on their own are masterfully written but rise to another dimension as ekphrastic poems. Each sonnet avoids the pitfalls of description and instead focuses on how the artwork affected the poet's soul. The poems here may look Olde Tyme in form but they are timeless in content and effect. The author has given us a rare gift—a few hours of respite from a strident world in which to once again embrace the joy of lush language and unapologetic love.



**RUNNER-UP: *Aligned with the Sky*  
Kathy Lohrum Cotton, Anna, IL**

The author writes with eloquence, unflinching honesty, and realistic optimism about connection to other humans, to nature, to the cosmos, and to one's own soul. The writing is at times playful, poignant, stark, nostalgic, or struck with wonder, but it is never dull and always relatable. The author's real forte is metaphor, and the ability to sustain it in lovely language.

*Excerpts from judge, Shirley Blackwell, Los Lunas, NM*

## Congrats to ISPS Book of the Year 2023 Honorees

*Sonnets of Love and Joy* by **Paul Buchheit** of Chicago was named the ISPS 2023 Book of the Year. Runner-up was *Aligned with the Sky* by **Kathy Lohrum Cotton** of Anna.

Join ISPS members for a free **ekphrastic poetry writing workshop** on

**Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 2PM.** The program will occur at the Highwood Public Library, 102 Highwood Avenue, Highwood, Illinois.

Look for program details in email from Wm. Shakespeare.

# Welcome New Members!

**Johanna Haas** recently joined the Southern Illinois Chapter. She lives there in a cottage with four lions. From there she writes fiction, non-fiction and poetry with a focus on contemporary fantasy and magical realism. She is neurodiverse, disabled and a former professor. Her work has appeared in *Bewildering Stories*, *The Chamber Magazine*, *Young Raven's Literary Review*, *Skipjack Review*, *\*82 Review*, and *Do Geese See God?* When not writing, you can find her playing with plants and animals or tying a long string into many knots. You can find her at <https://johannaahas.com> or sign up at <https://johannaahas.substack.com/> to get silly poems weekly and occasional thoughts.



## thunk

I wish I were a poet  
And I knew which wurds ta pick  
But until I git the hang of this  
It's gonna sound perty sic

Now I thunk about alotta things  
But I have such trubble wit dee wurds  
That I tend ta keep what i thunk inside  
'cause dem wurds iz fur dee birds

Reckon, if I spent 'nough time  
I could git what's inside – out  
Then I'd have a heck of a time  
Figurin out what its all 'bout

If I could git it down on paper  
Now that there's whut I need ta do  
'cause once it's down on paper  
I cen change a thing er two

Now dat I found dee resolution  
My problems seems sah few  
I dun run outta things ta think  
So I'll quit this hullabaloo.

~ **Beth Langdon**

**Beth Langdon** is originally from Freeport and came to Decatur to attend Millikin University, graduating with a degree in Biology in 1982. She then attended Northwestern University and received a degree in Physical Therapy and returned to Decatur to work. She mainly practiced Physical therapy in home care, initially for the Visiting Nurse Association and then for St. John's Home Care. In 2017, she retired and began pursuing other interests including writing. Having dabble in poetry throughout her life, she started taking it more seriously recently, often taking on a spiritual tone. She feels many of the poems are "inspired" and often wakes in the night with a line or two in her head and then she "just runs with it". In 2022, she worked with her church, Mt. Calvary Lutheran in Decatur, and published a book of poetry entitled, *From my Heart to Yours*.

## Ode to a Toque

You keep my head warm  
and are of inestimable aid on bad hair days.  
Sometimes you are crowned with a pom-pom.  
Occasionally a friend knits you themselves  
and fills you with powers of love.  
Count the toques in a Zoom meeting.  
See who is trying to save money or the environment  
or just their terrible terrible hair.

**Johanna Haas**

**Ian Smiddy** is a high school senior at Riverdale High School in Port Byron Illinois. He has committed to attending the University of Iowa in the spring of 2024. He plans to study electrical engineering but is considering a transfer to the school of liberal arts for communications and

## A Dandelion ~ Ian C. Smiddy

When the wind takes my seeds,  
I shall still be beautiful.  
When the gardeners uproot me,  
I shall still be alive.

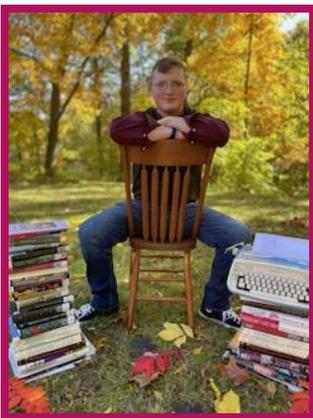
When the rains push me down,  
I shall still be standing.  
When the snow buries me,  
I shall still be growing.

When the children pick me,  
I shall still be one with the earth.  
When they give me to their mother,  
I shall still be freed from solitude.

When the world starts to go by,  
I shall still be young.  
When the water begins to vanish  
I shall still be refreshed.

When my stem curls,  
I shall still be happy.  
When my life comes to an end,  
I shall still be loved.

creative writing. He looks forward to continuing writing as a pastime and releasing publications of his works for a long time. Ian began writing poetry in his sophomore year. He had tried poetry writing after an English class assignment. Poetry piqued his interest and he found it helpful to deal with his anxiety that had sprung up during COVID-19. His poetry studies led to a spot on the Varsity Scholastic Bowl team his sophomore year. [Editor's note: *Ian has earned awards in both ISPS' Manningham contest and Highland Park Poetry's annual Poetry Challenge. In fact, Ian got a trifecta with winning poems in each of this year's categories.*]



# Welcome New Members! - continued



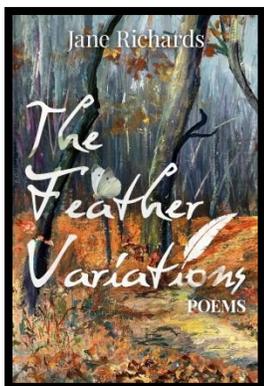
A native Chicagoan, **Judy SooHoo**, rekindled her childhood interest in creative writing after retirement from the corporate world and while family caregiving. Her writing is informed by history, and current and life events. Her poetry and creative non-fiction have been published in several anthologies including *The Write City Review* (2023) and *TallGrass Writers Guild Play* (2022). In 2024, her

poetry was recognized in the Highland Park Poetry Challenge and Poets & Patrons 67<sup>th</sup> Chicagoland Poetry Contest. In 2022, her poetry was published in *Write City Magazine* and placed in the Stephen A. DiBiase Poetry Prize. She has been a featured reader for the Chicago Public Library, TallGrass Writers Guild, and other venues.

Spring Equinox ~ Judy SooHoo

To capture that moment  
When time floats –  
A bud about to burst  
Into a blooming boogie dance  
The sun peeks over the horizon  
Before blazing into bounteous dominion  
Bubbles bounce giddily  
Into shapeshifting translucent colorings  
And our inner child breaks out  
To capture that moment  
The jouissance  
Of the moment  
Time to freefall  
And not look back

## ISPS Member News



**Jane Richards** is happy to announce the publication of her new collection, *The Feather Variations: Poems*. The poems intertwine the natural world with the rhythms of relationship, loss and recovery and are very approachable poems that speak from the heart. The book is available now on Amazon.com. Jane has a book sale and signing event at the Richmond Cafe, 10321 N. Main St., Richmond, Illinois, on **Saturday, May 25 from 10AM -1PM**. It is a neat little hang out in downtown Richmond, with delicious breakfasts and lunches and good coffee. While you're in town you can visit Richmond's unique shops. Jane would love to see you there!

Two of **M. E. Hope's** poems have been selected as semi-finalists in the James H. Nash contest from the Saint Louis Poetry Center, St. Louis, MO. They are titled "The History of Silence" and "What We Will Find."

Monday, April 8, 2024 was the day of a noon charity recital of the Kansas City Musical Club at Asbury Hall. **Marie Asner** was to begin with a poetry reading celebrating April Poetry Month, and then musicians from the Kansas City Symphony would perform. The eclipse just happened to be on the same day. What to do? We did not expect anyone to show up--however, one of our members was able to get the special glasses and word was passed around that you could sit in the building parking lot afterward and see the eclipse. The result? There was a nice crowd and donations toward music scholarships. Later, concert-goers, musicians, poet and anyone else who wanted to tag along were there in the parking lot. A group of people from all over the city, together, to watch the sun disappear for a moment. But, know, in unity, we are all one on this planet. We breathe the same air and watch the same sun.

**Kathryn P. Haydon** will be reading from her book *Unsalted Blue Sunrise* at Mother Earth Market on **Saturday, May 11, 2024 from 11:30AM – 12:00PM**. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Mother Earth Market is at Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods and is a free event, open to the public, featuring and celebrating local artists, makers, vendors and organizations who are inspired by Mother Earth and working towards a more sustainable future. Visit - [https://www.brushwoodcenter.org/store/c821/Mother\\_Earth\\_Market\\_2024\\_%7C\\_May\\_11\\_%26\\_12%2C\\_2024.html](https://www.brushwoodcenter.org/store/c821/Mother_Earth_Market_2024_%7C_May_11_%26_12%2C_2024.html).

# More ISPS Member News & Events

**Michael Lee Johnson** invites readers to watch the YouTube video of his poem, **In My Will**, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN-Sn2ainjA>. With aging comes the necessity of contemplating a will as the end of life on this earth draws closer. Some have large families, and the distribution of family assets is relatively easy. But if you have little or no family, you get to dream and fantasize about how you want to go out with a bang and a spiritual reverence all in one closure. **Michael Lee Johnson** is an internationally published poet in 46 countries or republics, a song lyricist with several published poetry books, nominated for 7 Pushcart Prize awards, and 6 Best of the Net nominations. Over 308 YouTube poetry videos as of 03-2024. Do a Google search for poems by Michael Lee Johnson.

**Ravinia Festival** •  
April 16 at 12:04 PM •

April showers bring the beauty of words for Poetry Month! 🌧️ We're taking this opportunity to highlight a handful of poetic moments in the 2024 season. This summer, get ready to immerse yourself in incredible poetry experiences. Read more about them below:

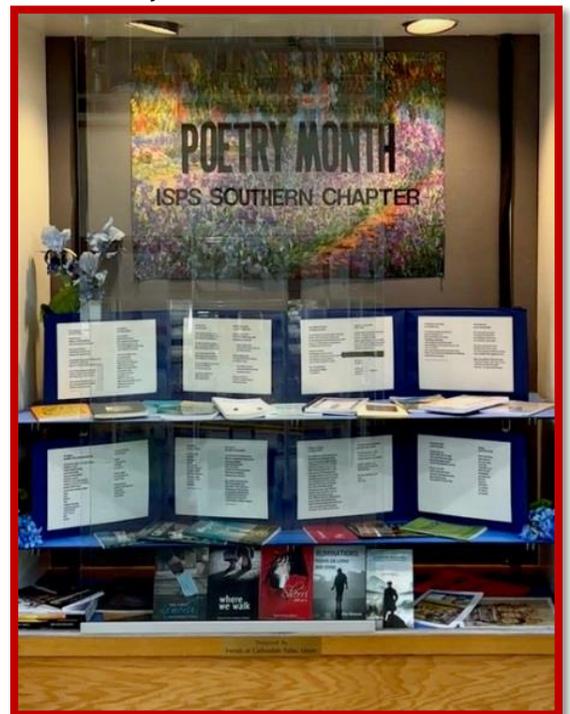
- ✓ **Wild Symphony | July 27:** Fusing family-friendly sounds and pithy poetry with a positive message, **Wild Symphony** by **Dan Brown** is an immersive feast for eyes, ears, and mind — all at the same time.
- ✓ **Matthias Goerne, baritone | August 13:** Matthias Goerne and pianist Anton Mejias perform songs derived from the poetry of Heinrich Heine as well as pieces inspired by other German writers.
- ✓ **J. Ivy | August 14:** This Grammy- and Peabody Award winner's poetry is pioneering and trendsetting in the arenas of music and television. Together with Robert Glasper, the two artists make their Ravinia debuts.
- ✓ **"Mentor in Torment" with Graham Johnson, pianist | August 17:** This program traces the story of the complicated friendship between composer Franz Schubert (1797–1828) and the poet Johann Mayrhofer (1787–1836) and presents a selection of the great songs that were composed as a result of their collaboration.
- ✓ **Poems While You Wait at RSMI | August 21:** This collective of poets & manual typewriters appear around the city in public places to provide a magical, unexpected, unpretentious, & decontextualized encounter with poetry.

Let the rhythm of poetry guide your summer! 🎵  
Tickets go on sale April 24:  
<https://bit.ly/Ravinia2024>  
#PoetryMonth #SummerPoetry



**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: May 11: **Michael Escoubas**.

The **ISPS Southern Chapter** celebrated Poetry Month with a display at the **Carbondale Library**. The month-long exhibit included poems and poetry books by chapter members.



ISPS Members may be interested in the poetry programming offered by Ravinia Festival (pictured left).

Join ISPS members and others on the last Sunday of each month from 12:30 – 2PM at **Brewed Awakening**, 19 West Quincy in Westmont (across from the train station) or on Zoom. There is always an open mic, so bring a poem (1 page or shorter). Featured poets for **May 26** are **Judy Sohoo** (read her profile on page 7) and **Myron Stokes**, a ten-year Air Force veteran and winner of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Gwendolyn Brooks Open-Mic Poetry Competition in 2023.

One of features for **June 30** is **Mike Orlock**.

## Vernal by Judy Kassouf Cummings

I wonder what it feels like  
to be a tree in Spring  
as frozen roots thaw  
and sugar rushes to your upper branches?

Does it tingle after a deep chill,  
after you've steeled yourself  
against an icy world for months  
with only a chickadee  
stopping by to say, "Hello?"

Opening wide your arms,  
you clasp the sun's warm rays.  
Greeting the song  
of a red-winged blackbird:  
"Terra, Terra, Terra."

Soon papery-winged notes  
helicopter from heaven,  
twisting and turning to earth  
below, whispering:

"It's easy,  
you too, can float  
on changing winds."

# More ISPS Member News & Events

## Judy Kassouf

**Cummings** enjoyed  
having her poem, *Vernal*,  
experience some rare  
broader exposure when it  
was aired on "All Things  
Considered" on  
WNIJ/WNIU. Follow this  
link

<https://www.northernpublicradio.org/wnij-news/2024-04-15/poetically-yours-transitioning>.

Congratulations, Judy,  
and we're pleased to  
share your poem here as  
well!

## 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 (Westmont)

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)

### Founding Chapter (Lisle)

Contact Wilda Morris, facilitator  
[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)



## POETRY AT THE ART CENTER

Award-Winning Poet/Author

**TERRY LONCARIC**

presents

### DEMOCRACY - EVER FRAGILE

her timely poems on the shaky state  
of our democratic republic.

*Is freedom given, or does democracy require diligence and discourse?*

May 18 - 1-3p.m. @ The Art Center  
1957 Sheridan Road, Highland Park

Hosted by Lynn West  
*Open-Mic follows*

Mark your  
calendar for  
Saturday, May  
18, 2024 from 1  
– 3 PM at The  
Art Center of  
Highland Park.

### Terry

### Loncaric

reads from her  
self-published  
chapbook,  
"Democracy –  
Ever Fragile."

**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 E - H may submit from May 1 - 7, and poets whose last initial is I - M may submit from June 1 - 7. For submission guidelines, please go to "Submitting Poems" ([illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm](http://illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm)) in our site.