

Language of Enchantment



May 2014

Volume 3, Issue 1

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This issue introduces the new board members.

Check out the article for the state convention coming up in June.

The state poet laureate initiative is up and running.

Message From The President

I am honored that you have elected me NMSPS President, and I look forward to meeting you all as I visit each chapter in the coming months. Although this is my first newsletter article to you, don't think the new Board hasn't been busy since being elected on November 2.

Within hours of taking office at the State Convention, several of the Board were on our way to Santa Fe to help kick off the NM State Poet Laureate initiative. That subject is addressed elsewhere in this newsletter; please read about this important project.

While the Poet Laureate issue is dear to my heart, I have put it in other hands in order to focus on my major goal, which is outreach to poets outside the Rio Grande Corridor. On February 6, with the director of creative writing at Luna Community College in Las Vegas, NM, I co-hosted an open mic on the LCC campus that drew an audience of 33.

The next morning, I participated with Rick Haymaker, owner of Tapestry of

Sound in Tucumcari, and Mesalands Community College creative writing instructor Gregg Howard in an on-air interview on Tucumcari's KQAY FM radio. The 13-minute spot advertised an open mic we were to co-host that evening at Artspace on the town square, and proved quite effective. Local poets, joined by Albuquerque slam poet Zach Kluckman and I read for 42 people.

I went to Clovis on February 27 to tape a 30-second radio spot on KTQM 99.9 FM to publicize a Society-sponsored open mic on March 10. I arrived at KTQM early, and Grant McGee invited me to chat with him on his live morning show, getting in seven or eight plugs for the open mic and NMSPS. Later that day, I visited Portales to record a 30-second PR video for the Clovis open mic to air on KENW, the public television station run out of ENMU.

I invite any NMSPS member who wants to take a "poetry road trip" to join in any of these out-of-town open mics. I have found that folks deeply appreciate having our poets reach out

this way. Here is my list of prospective visits: Hobbs, Artesia, and Carlsbad; Ruidoso, Las Cruces, Deming, and Silver City; Grants, Farmington, and Gallup. The Board has allocated some money for travel expenses, so if you have other "destinations" where you would like to help with NMSPS-sponsored open mics, please let me know.

Navajo Nation Poet Laureate Luci Tapahonso has said she will help in the Gallup area, and Andi Penner (ABQ Chapter) will tackle Farmington. Shirley Blackwell will try to do a swing through Las Cruces, Deming, and Silver City. Please contact Andi or Shirley directly if you can help. As always, I welcome your ideas on ways to build a stronger society and grow our membership!

VP Georgia Santa Maria will be "Fil"-ing in while I'm on an overseas work assignment during March 20-May 4. Please give her your support.

Fil Peach
NMSPS
President



We're on the Web!
www.nmpoetry.com

Shirley Blackwell
NMSPS Chancellor

State Poet Laureate Initiative Up and Running

NMSPS is playing an important role in creating the position of NM State Poet Laureate, which could become a reality in 2015. On November 3, 2013, NMSPS member Susan Gardner and her husband, Devon Ross, owners of Red Mountain Press in Santa Fe, along with NMSPS, cosponsored a meeting to start the process of instituting the post of NM State Poet Laureate.

The gathering of about 40 people was held at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe. It featured a panel of poets laureate discussing their experiences and what benefits a state laureateship brings to the populace. The meeting was picked up by AP wire service, appeared in numerous regional media outlets as well as a "happenings around the nation-style" article in *USA Today*, and was filmed as a documentary by an IAIA film student.

Those on the panel, moderated by Susan G. were: Kansas Poet Laureate (PL) Denise Low, former PLs Walter Barga (MO)

and Michael Glaser (MD), and Luci Tapahonso (named Navajo Nation PL last May). Other NMSPS members who journeyed to IAIA were Fil Peach, who had just been elected NMSPS president, Shirley Blackwell, Joanne Bodin, Basia Miller, Gary Worth Moody, Elizabeth and Jim Raby, and Ken Gurney. NM State Senator (Bernalillo) Bill O'Neill was present; he and State Rep. Brian Egolf have jointly introduced legislation to create and fund the position.

NMSPS is advising on the program, which will be overseen by the NM Cultural Affairs Department. On December 9, Ken G., Susan G., and Shirley B. attended a meeting of the State Senate's Financial Affairs Committee, where Sen. O'Neill introduced the resolution and Devon Ross and Albuquerque PL and NMSPS member Hakim Bellamy spoke in support of it. A strategy meeting in Sen. O'Neill's office followed, with Devon and most of the NMSPS attendees present.

Sen. O'Neill is keeping in touch with NMSPS on further developments; he attended the SFPT regular monthly meeting at Teatro Paraguas in Santa Fe on February 3 to speak about the PL project. He and Rep. Egolf's secretary, who also attended, read their original poetry during the read-arounds.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Blackwell
 NMSPS Chancellor



NMSPS Annual Meeting & Convention in June



The third annual NMSPS State Convention, hosted by the Rio Grande Valencia Chapter (Bernadette Perez, chair), will be held on Saturday, June 14, at venues near the Rail Runner stop in Belen. The all-day event is still in its planning stages, so stay alert for details on programs and registration.

Tentative plans include morning coffee and open mic readings; workshops; socializing and informal read-arounds. We have reserved space at the Belen Public Library and other local venues.

At 2:00 p.m., newly appointed Albuquerque Poet Laureate and our keynote speaker/performer **Jessica Helen Lopez** will take the stage at Harla May's Fat Boy Grill (yes, they actually have a stage in this reincarnated performance space, plus some of

the best burgers around). Sometime in the afternoon we will hold a short annual meeting. The agenda is being planned around train arrival and departure times to accommodate those who want to take the Rail Runner for even more fun on this Viva Belen! weekend, which offers several other entertainments for non-poetical companions of our NMSPS members.

The event is free and open to NMSPS members and guests; memberships will be available at the registration desk. Meals and transportation will be self-pay. So, flag your calendars now for June 14 (Flag Day) and plan for a fun-filled gathering.

Dear Poet:

A series by
Jeanne Shannon

Dost Thou Know Thyself?

Dear Poet,

Dost thou know thyself? As a poet, that is?

The first step to expanding your horizons and finding your authentic voice as a poet is, to follow the advice of philosophers ancient and new, “know thyself.” A way to “know thyself” as a poet might be to ask yourself these questions.

- What am I truly interested in writing about?
What topics do you find compelling? Is it relationships and family? Social issues such as war, poverty and bigotry, and how these things affect the people who appear in your poems? Or do you want to give a lighter outlook and include humor in your work? Do you want to give music to the world in the form of language that sings? Do you want to be an artist who paints pictures with language instead of with paint or watercolor?
- Am I willing to try something different?
If you are drawn to writing exclusively in forms, would you try your hand at free verse?
If you think free verse is the only approach that works for you, would you try writing a poem in a strict form such as a sonnet or villanelle?
Would you try writing something that is neither a strict form nor free verse as we think of it? For instance, a prose poem or a haibun?
- Am I willing to explore?
Do you read the work of numerous poets who write in different styles, or do you stick with a few favorites? Read widely, and don't be afraid that your work will be influenced by the work of other poets. If the poetry is good, so much the better if reading it improves yours. And you're in charge—you can't be influenced unless you want to be.

Do you look at poetry that is considered experimental and try to see what the poet is getting at? And do you just give up when you can't quite figure out what the poet means? Much of the poetry that we see today is puzzling to a lot of readers. Reading it without trying to figure out an exact meaning can be a fruitful exercise.

Do you read books or articles about the craft of poetry? Books such as *In the Palm of Your Hand: The Poet's Portable Workshop* by Steve Kowitz (it's my favorite “how to” book on writing poetry). Do you like to explore glossaries of poetic terms such as John Drury's *The Poetry Dictionary*? Do you read the “nuts and bolts” articles in *Writer's Digest* and in the annual *Poet's Market* published by Writer's Digest Books, for instance.

Do you read magazines such as *Poetry* and the numerous small-circulation magazines that devote considerable space to discussions about poetry and reviews of poetry books? *The Writer's Chronicle* carries at least one in-depth article about poetry in every issue. Membership in the Academy of American Poets brings you *American Poets* magazine twice a year. It's a treasure. It carries articles about poets of the past and of today, including generous samples of their work, and introduces new poets to the poetry-reading public.

Do you visit the websites of The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org) or the Academy of American Poets (www.poets.org)? They are both rich sources of information of interest to anyone who reads or writes poetry.

I hope these suggestions are helpful.
Happy exploring, happy writing!

Jeanne Shannon



Chapters: Need Funding?



Have a good idea for a group function or event? Need money for contest flyers or study handouts at your monthly meetings? Want to sponsor a youth contest or reading in your community? Want to do some poetry outreach to other communities?

The Society (NMSPS) has funds in its treasury, and a willingness to listen to ideas for projects. Please discuss this in your chapters, and contact the NMSPS Board with your Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) if you need financial help.

Ideas should benefit our membership as a whole

and/or help further our purpose as an organization, which is to promote poetry: its writing, creation, performance, and appreciation throughout New Mexico. The Board will decide which RFPs to fund and to what extent they will be supported on a case-by-case basis, so make sure you provide clear and complete information on why and how the money should be spent. For example, you should include: event, date, location, estimated expenses, sponsoring group/person, and the full amount requested.

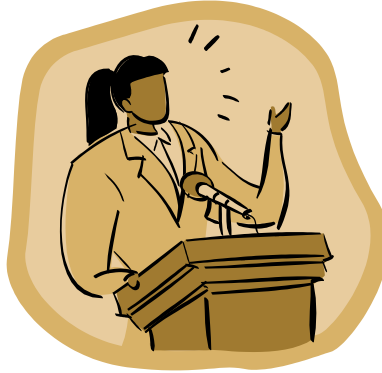
If this is a chapter-only fundraiser and you meet your profit goals, you may

be asked to repay any start-up funding from the Society. Let's support one another and those new chapters in the making!

Georgia Santa-Maria
NMSPS Vice President



Children's Poetry Project: Alvarado Elementary



The NM Children's Poetry Project is now a collaborative effort between the NMSPS and Alvarado Elementary School in Albuquerque. Over the last three years, Alvarado School Librarian Alison O'Leary has invited NMSPS poets to visit K-5 classes to read poems and conduct writing exercises during National Poetry Month. This year, April 4 was selected as "Alvarado's Poets in Your Classroom Day."

John Candelaria of the Albuquerque Chapter, NMSPS, began recruiting during the 2013 Annual NFSPS Convention in June 2013 to get the 18 poets needed for a group he calls "Poets and Presenters at Alvarado." The group included poets from his chapter, the South West Writers, and other interested parties. John held an orientation session for veteran and new participants on March 5, which proved to be an excellent model for future runnings of the event.

Fifteen poets and presenters conducted workshops on April 4 for all but two first-grade classes in grades K-5. These sessions also helped students prepare for

the school's "Poem in Your Pocket Day" on April 30. A second visit on April 21 presented to another first-grade class, but a scheduling conflict prevented another class from participating.

Feedback from teachers, poets, and presenters is positive. John and Alison will prepare a final report for the NMSPS that looks at recruitment of poets and presenters, analysis of feedback from all participants, and expansion of the Alvarado prototype program to other schools.

John J. Candelaria
Project Assistant

Know Your NMSPS Board

Elected Board (Officers and Chapter Chairs)

Appointed Board (Project Leaders)

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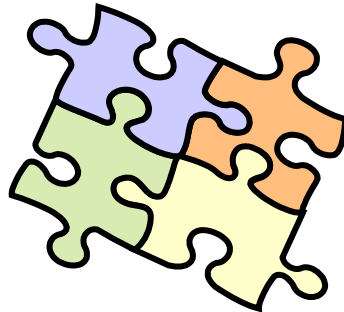
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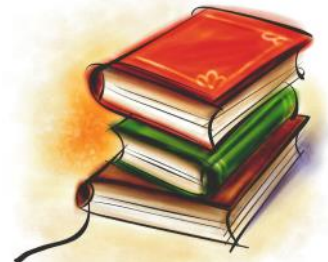
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MEMBER BOOK MARKET WEB PAGE

<http://nmpoetry.org/nmsps-market.shtml>

Want your book included in the Members' Book Market? Look for the submission guidelines on the NMSPS website. A \$10 set-up fee lets you list up to three books



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The Enchantment of New Mexico

Have you ever gone on vacation to someplace that is supposed to be incredible or awe-inspiring according to the literature? Excitement tickles and laughs among your thoughts. Upon arrival at your destination, you are puzzled as to why this place is so wonderful? Everything looks strange or lacking. You try to give it a chance, but nothing compares with where you live.

New Mexico has worked her way into your very soul. Only when you return, does everything feel right and perfect. What could compare to the brilliant sun which lives in the rich, turquoise sky that caps the incredible landscape spread before you? How about the spicy fragrance of the cold rain which cools off a summer day? What about the quiet snow that brings everything to a halt until it melts? It doesn't matter whether it is the stately mountains or the rolling deserts and plains, its perfect!

This heaven on earth inspires us poets with her incomparable, wild beauty. The seasons dance across

the years displaying New Mexico in all her glory. Sigh, I get all tingly just thinking about it.

New Mexico also has a mix of cultures that make her unique. There is inspiration to be found in every community here. We have both ancient and recent influences. From the Native Americans to Hispanics to Anglos, each has become a thread woven into the fabric of our state. There is no lack of creative material for the next poem to grace the pages in your new book.

We poets have a way of capturing what we love so that it can be shared with others. we paint with words and punctuation. We showcase the magic and enchantment of New Mexico.

Dawn Huffaker
PL of the Newsletter

