

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 1

March 2025

NEWS OF OUR NEXT MEETING

Our spring in-person meeting will take place May 10 at Christ Episcopal Church, 2 Dresden Avenue in Gardiner. On-street parking is available. This will once again be a hybrid meeting. A link will be sent to all current members a day or two prior to the meeting. **If you plan to attend in person, please do let us know so our Hospitality Host can know how many to prepare for.** The judge for the spring members-only contest and workshop leader will be Dr. Jim Brosnan. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will start at 10:00. Those attending will be able to vote on the revision to the bylaws; the draft will be emailed to members for review sometime in March. There'll be a half-hour break for lunch and a 45-minute workshop beginning at 12:30. (Details on Page 2.) There will not be an attendance fee, but there will be a donation jar on the table with hopes of offsetting some of the cost of refreshments and renting the facility.

May Members-Only Contest

Times New Roman or Arial font preferred.

(**REMINDER:** Submission to a contest constitutes permission to publish.)

Deadline: April 10, 2025

Contest Details

Contest Poem—30-line limit. A narrative poem focusing on nature and using anaphora. Anaphora is a literary device that requires the writer to repeat a word or phrase in multiple lines (usually at the beginning of multiple lines) usually to emphasize meaning and create rhythm.

Examples:

We Real Cool

By Gwendolyn Brooks

The Pool Players.
Seven at the Golden Shovel.

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

Still I Rise—Maya Angelou, [Still I Rise | The Poetry Foundation](#)

The Raven—Edgar Allan Poe, [The Raven | The Poetry Foundation](#)

Some Feel Rain—Joanna Klink, [Some Feel Rain | The Poetry Foundation](#)

London—William Blake, [London | The Poetry Foundation](#)

Let Me Begin Again—Major Jackson, [Let Me Begin Again by Major Jackson - Poems | Academy of American Poets](#)

THE JUDGE

Dr. Jim Brosnan: Jim's recent publications include *Long Distance Driving* (poems and original color photos focusing on places west of the Mississippi) and *Nameless Roads* (poems and original color photos focusing on New England). His poems have won several awards in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies competition as well as having poems published in the US, Canada, England, India, Ireland, Singapore, Wales, and West Germany. He was also a runner-up in the Blue Light Press chapbook contest. Jim holds the rank of full professor at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, RI. Dr. Jim currently serves as a member-at-large on the MPS executive board.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Only current MPS members are eligible and only one entry per person is permitted. Note that Times New Roman or Arial font is preferred.

If submitting by USPS: Mail to: Jenny Doughty, 31 Rustic Lane, Portland ME 04103, 2 copies of your poem (ONE with your name; one without) in a letter-size (#10) envelope marked "CONTEST." **Must be postmarked on or before April 10 to be considered.** Please be sure to enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Email entries must be sent as an attachment on or before April 10 to jennydoughty@icloud.com. In the upper right-hand corner, include your name, address, telephone number and email address. **Please send the poem in a .doc, .docx or .rtf format. Do not send it as a .pdf.** We suggest **Member Contest Entry May 2025** or something similar in the subject line.

Workshop: Creating Memories Through Persona Poems by Dr. Jim Brosnan

In this generative workshop participants will recall memorable individuals from their childhood community. They will then compile a potential list of individuals who could be the subject of a persona poem in the spirit of Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*. Finally, the participant will relay a memorable event in that individual's life and create a free verse poem.

A Reminder of NFSPS Contests

Just a reminder that membership in the Maine Poetry Society includes membership in NFSPS. The 2024-25 contests are now open with a **March 15 deadline** (50 of them, including one which we sponsor, but do not judge). The Maine Contest theme is "On the Street Where You Live." It is Contest #48.

Members-Only "Reading in the Round" on Zoom Saturday, March 15, 2025 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

The suggestion of an earlier start time was made in the December 2024 *Stanza*. No one has responded, so unless we hear otherwise very soon, the event will start at 10:00 a.m. as usual. However, if starting at 9:30 and continuing until 11:30 would make a difference for you (positive or negative), please let us know. Email your response to Sally Joy at srjoy43@gmail.com. A reminder of the reading will be sent sometime the week before and the Zoom link to all members a day or two before the reading. This really is a good way to get to know other members of the society and hear them share their work in their own voices. If you haven't joined in yet, we hope you'll consider giving it a try.

If our Membership Fee is a financial burden, let us know. We can help.

At the annual meeting in the fall of 2023, the Maine Poets Society board voted to underwrite membership for folks who may find joining MPS cost prohibitive. Because we value the engagement of Maine poets of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, we decided to offer a waiver of annual dues for those who are facing financial hardship. It is our hope that no writer need forego MPS membership only because they can't afford it. The waiver is good for one annual membership. A recipient may reapply when membership renewal is scheduled. Current members or prospective members may apply at any time during the calendar year. It's not necessary to provide a reason for applying, but if you wish to provide a very short statement of need, you may. Names of applicants and recipients will be held in confidence by the Society. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity when needed. Email our treasurer, Gus Peterson, at glp3324@gmail.com for more information.

Saco Library Helps to Preserve Maine's Poetry History

On a chilly January day, Jenny Doughty and Jeanne Julian, MPS president and secretary, visited the Dyer Library and Saco Museum to follow up on an intriguing lead: the library archives were said to house materials documenting the long history of Maine Poets Society. The Society originated in 1936 with the merger of The Waterville Poets Club and the Dover-Foxcroft Poetry Circle to form the Poetry Fellowship of Maine. In 1993, the Fellowship's name was changed to Maine Poets Society. With the 90th anniversary (the Nonagintennial?) of the society approaching in 2026, it seemed like an ideal time to investigate.

Carolyn Roy, Collections and Archives Manager for the library, accompanied Jenny and Jeanne and introduced them to an upstairs room full of Saco memorabilia, old books, and other treasures. Carolyn left and soon returned with two cardboard file boxes. Inside was a trove of Maine Poets Society files, dating from the 1930s through the 1970s: business records, membership lists carefully enscribed longhand, and newspaper articles about local poetry events.

Former "constitutions" provide a glimpse of an organization that has evolved yet stayed true to its roots. The mission then as now was to bring working poets together, "promote the interests of poetry in general," and "create a high standard of creative poetic work in Maine." In the early days, however, poets had to apply, submitting three poems that would "meet the standards of the Board of Review." By the mid-1970s, "any person with...resident status...whose work shows promise but does not yet meet the standards of the Fellowship" was "eligible to become an Apprentice Member," and apply for full membership after one year! These days, MPS is more inclusive. Three meetings a year have been replaced by two. However, those meetings are now offered hybrid between in person and Zoom, to allow for members experiencing difficulty with travel, and we also offer three workshops a year, either run by contest judges or by members with appropriate skills to share.

There also were contests and "round robins," but these were held in person, unlike the online readings of today which allow for participation at a distance. In 1953, annual dues were \$2.00; by 1974, dues had doubled.

How did these archival materials for a statewide organization end up in Saco? It appears that Saco writers were very active members. For example, poetry by Grace Kerry McNally, a children's librarian at Dyer Library for 35 years, was published by the Fellowship. The late Earlene "Kitty" Ahlquist Chadbourne, an author who wrote about Saco and who served on the board of the Dyer Library, also served as president of Maine Poets Society.

MPS is seeking to augment the collection with more recent materials, especially several decades worth of *Stanza*. An application will be submitted to the library this spring.

"To our knowledge, the most valuable past records illuminating the history of the Society are already held there, thanks to connections between MPS members and the Saco community," Jenny said. "We hope to be able to build upon this foundation, and to honor the 90th anniversary, by safely preserving Maine Poets Society's more recent history at the Dyer Library."

A Recap of the 2025 Winter Workshop with MPS President Jenny Doughty

“More than meter, more than rhyme, more than images or alliteration or figurative language, line is what distinguishes our experience of poetry as poetry.”— James Longenbach, *The Art of the Poetic Line*

A February workshop on line breaks in poetry brought together seven MPS member poets to study different examples of poetic craft and to offer feedback on each others’ work. Led by Jenny Doughty, the workshop included a handout of her essay on how “line breaks are a major tool in a poet’s arsenal.” Jenny shared thoughts on the “strategies” poets can use to enhance in their poems rhythmic, pacing, and structural impacts; emotional and thematic effects; and visual aesthetics.

The group enjoyed exploring a variety of possible intentions and techniques, reading works by well-known poets including Marianne Moore, Ezra Pound, Walt Whitman, and Youna Kwak. “Surrender, A Prayer for My Mother,” by Lindsay Wilson, became a prompt for considering different line-break alternatives. Jenny presented Wilson’s poem as an un-lined passage of prose to be edited into poetic lines and stanzas. Participants then compared their choices.

After socializing over a brown-bag lunch, the poets shared their own work and offered helpful feedback.

Participants were Bill Frayer, Alice Haines, Jeanne Julian, Nancy Sobanik, Linda Spalding, and Kathryn Tracy. All left that afternoon inspired by their experience of what Jenny calls “the ripple effect in both sound and meaning” that line breaks provide.

Opportunity Grants Available

Opportunity Grants of up to \$100 (some of which could be used for gas/travel expenses) are available for any type of online or in person poetry seminar/workshop experience. Members who joined or renewed MPS membership for the current year by the end of January may apply. Individual members can only have one grant in any three-year period. The grant recipient is required to write a short piece for *Stanza* afterwards to tell other members about their experience.

Up to \$500 in total a year is available for grants – first come, first served. If interested, go here to print out an application: [2025-Opportunity-Grants-explanation-and-application.pdf](#) or go to the Maine Poets Society website, click on the Membership tab, and then on “a Membership Opportunity Grant Application.”

— Gus Peterson, Treasurer

Poetry festival in Augusta to feature workshops, open mic

The annual Plunkett Maine Poetry Festival will be held on Saturday, April 26, at the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA). Writers may register for an hour-and-a-half poetry workshop, with each session limited to 15 participants, led by one of three distinguished guest poets:

- Mihku Paul, a Wolastoqey writer and visual artist. She is a graduate of the Stonecoast MFA program and her poetry has appeared in multiple anthologies.
- Jeri Theriault, Maine Poets Society member, a visual artist and the author of several poetry collections, as well as the recipient of the 2023 Maine Arts Commission Literary Arts Fellowship, and the 2022 NORward Prize.
- Natalie Diaz, the festival keynote speaker, and author of the poetry collections *Postcolonial Love Poem* (2020), winner of the Pulitzer Prize; and *When My Brother Was an Aztec* (2012). Her other honors and awards include the Nimrod/Hardman Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, the Louis Untermeyer Scholarship in Poetry from Bread Loaf, the Narrative Poetry Prize, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship. She is Mojave and an enrolled member of the Gila River Indian community.

The festival also includes book vendors, a conversation about poetry and writing with Dawn Potter and Betsy Sholl, an open mic, and an evening program featuring the keynote by Natalie Diaz.

The festival was established in 2002 to honor the memory and accomplishments of Terry Plunkett, an English professor at the University of Maine at Augusta for nearly thirty years.

For more information or to register, visit <https://www.uma.edu/about/events/plunkett-festival/>

April is National Poetry Month!

According to the Academy of American Poets, which launched the initiative in April 1996, “National Poetry Month is a special occasion that celebrates poets’ integral role in our culture and that poetry matters. Over the years, it has become the largest literary celebration in the world.”

It has become a tradition among some poets to attempt to write “a poem a day” in April. If you’d like to try to meet that creative challenge, these resources provide prompts to help get you going:

- [Writer’s Digest](#): Robert Lee Brewer offers fun and inspirational prompts.
- [NaPoWriMo](#): posts a daily prompt and features a different participant each day, as well as a daily poetry-related resource.
- [A teacher’s blog](#): you can find 30 days of themes, styles, and examples from poetry luminaries on a site designed for teaching poetry to a young audience. Brush up on metonymy and synecdoche! Other poetry resources on this page, as well.

Poets Welcome at Lewiston Open Mic

Member Alice Haines suggested we include this information: Open Poetry Mic: at 6:30 every third Thursday of the month at Cafe Obscura, 108 Lisbon St., downtown Lewiston. Come early to sign up and/or order great food or drink. The crowd size ranges from 8 to 18, always welcoming.

Thoughts on Getting Your First Book of Poems Published the (Mostly) Traditional Route

As you know, membership in the Maine Poets Society does not mean you have to be a published poet. It actually doesn’t even mean you need to write poetry, although the majority of our members do. Membership is open to those who simply enjoy reading poetry and listening to it being read. However, we believe that many of our members, particularly those who don’t have a history of submitting their poems anywhere, are interested in knowing what the process would be if they should want to put a chapbook together and attempt to get it published. Gus Peterson, with two books to his credit to date, has written an interesting piece explaining the process from his personal perspective. We’ve asked our Webmaster to put it on our website under “Craft Talking.” Here is the link. [Thoughts on Getting Your First Book of Poems Published](#)

Publication & Member News

Poems:

Robert Paul Allen had three poems accepted by *Piker Press*. “First Snow” will appear March 17, “The Cabbie” on April 7, and “Lake Smoke” on May 5, 2025.

Laura Buxbaum’s poem “Tattoo” appears in the Spring/Summer 2025 issue of *Rat’s Ass Review*, which came out on Valentine’s Day. Her poem “Accidental Poetry” appeared in *Thimble Literary Magazine* in September 2024.

Richard Foerster’s poem “Salabhasana”—a meditation on the yoga locust pose—will appear in the next issue of *One* (<https://one.jacarpress.com>).

Dr. Emory Jones continues to submit his work to a wide variety of organizations and has won prizes and been awarded Honorable Mention from many. These include the Poetry Society of Texas; the Poets’ Roundtable of Arkansas; the Poetry Society of Oklahoma; the Arizona State Poetry Society; the Illinois State Poetry Society; the Alabama State Poetry Society; one of the NFSPS 2024 contests; and the White County Creative Writers Contests. He has also had poems published by the Arizona State Poetry Society and in *Pennsylvania’s Poetic Voices* (February 2025).

Elizabeth Koopman's poem "Oxygen" appeared in Issue 9 of *Pensive* in January 2025.

Jim Krosschell has poems in [Naugatuck River Review](https://sandyriverreview.com/2024/10/21/turkeys/), [The Orchards Poetry Journal](https://sandyriverreview.com/2024/10/21/barkskins/), and two in *The River*: <https://sandyriverreview.com/2024/10/21/turkeys/> and <https://sandyriverreview.com/2024/10/21/barkskins/>.

Anne Rankin's poem "Dear Acadia National Park" can be seen in The Gallery, a collaborative effort of Paloma Press and Poets for Science (see <https://natureofourtimes.poetsforscience.org/tag/anne-rankin/>). The poem appears alongside two previously published poems. She has work forthcoming in *The Main Street Rag*, including a short story ("wedding day").

Deborah Smith's poem "My Country: Right or Wrong?" was selected for inclusion in the upcoming Dirigo Democracy Project's poetry anthology, *Defiance! Maine Poets Hear America Calling*, which will be published by Evergreen Press in the spring with a book launch in Belfast.

Nancy Sobanik had two poems accepted by *MacQueen's Quinterly*: "Poem In Which I Shift" and "The Third Rail Waits." They will appear in Issue 27 this March. Also, *Synkroniciti Magazine* accepted "Diaspora From Which I Derive" for Vol. 7 No. 1 (the March issue), with the theme "Identity."

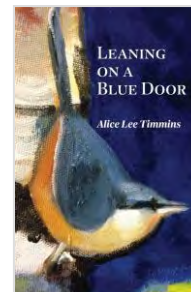
Books:

Carol Bachofner's new book, *Every Place I Look, Women with Embers at Their Feet*, has been accepted for publication by *The Main Street Rag*. This is her 8th book. Publication date TBD.

Richard Foerster's latest collection, *With Little Light and Sometimes None at All* (Littoral Books, 2023), was honored with a Gold Medal at this year's Independent Publishers of New England Book Awards ceremony.

Gus Peterson's first full-length poetry collection, *Male Pattern*, will be published this May by Finishing Line Press. Preorders can be placed through Finishing Line's website through April 4, or feel free to contact him directly for details. [Male Pattern by Gus Peterson – Finishing Line Press](#)

Alice Lee Timmins' first chapbook, *Leaning on a Blue Door*, has been published by Finishing Line Press. [Leaning on a Blue Door by Alice Lee Timmins – Finishing Line Press.](#)



Member News:

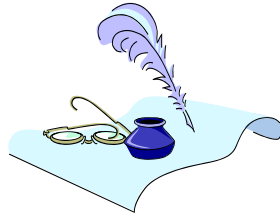
Carol Bachofner will be a featured workshop presenter at the upcoming Camden Poetry Festival, May 17, 2025. She will also be conducting a class (Write As If Your Mother Isn't Watching) for Maine Coastal Senior College. The generative class will cover writing about family, and when (or if) to publish sensitive poems. The class begins in April and will run for four weeks, Tuesdays, 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Mark Saba has an impressive number of books available:

print books: [The Shoemaker](#) (fiction); [Flowers in the Dark](#) (poetry); [A Luke of All Ages / Fire and Ice](#) (fiction, novellas); [Ghost Tracks: Stories of Pittsburgh Past](#) (fiction); [Calling the Names](#) (poetry); [Painting a Disappearing Canvas](#) (poetry); *The Landscapes of Pater* (fiction)

fiction eBooks: [Letters from Novosibirsk](#); [Signs](#); [Tipping Points](#)

Susan Van Alsenoy has been participating in a six-week course in prose poetry being taught by Carol Bachofner for Coastal Senior College.



President's Ink Spring 2025

As I write, the world is white outside and snow is whirling across the window. It's mid-February, which my husband always calls 'breaking the back of winter', but at the moment the only one who is breaking his back is him as he pushes the snowblower over the driveway and sweeps snow off the cars. He volunteers to do this. I offer to go and help and he turns me down firmly, so I stay indoors and write instead.

Maine Poets Society needs volunteers too. I have always been a volunteer at one activity or another. I'm not saying this to make myself look or feel good or to brag about it. It's nothing to brag about—it's just what I like to do. However, it's given me a very good understanding of how voluntary organizations work. They work because people are prepared to give a portion of their time to making them work. For the last seven or eight years I've volunteered my time to the Maine Poets Society, first as Vice President and more recently as President.

Friends, we are in trouble here at MPS. Our board has shrunk to five people, one of whom (Gus Peterson) has already served as Treasurer and then Vice President and wants to step down for personal reasons. He agreed to stay on to serve as interim Treasurer because without a Treasurer to comply with the regulations governing us, we would have to fold anyway. Without a Vice President, that workload falls on the President—me. Our secretary, Jeanne Julian, has a really good handle on her job and does it excellently. *Stanza* editor, Sally Joy, now handles the job of the Membership secretary as well. Diane Hunt, our Hospitality chair, does a wonderful job at our meetings and those are her boundaries—she doesn't want to do admin of any kind, and who can blame her? Jim Brosnan is our member-at-large, but he is not local to Maine and also has a full-time job.

We really, really, need a VP and a Treasurer. We are at serious risk of folding as a society if we can't solve these problems. The existing board can't carry the whole load, especially when terms of service have been extended beyond the call.

Given that next year we are celebrating our 90th anniversary of a society that began in 1936 with the Poetry Fellowship of Maine, please can we revive the spirit of volunteerism? We are really hoping to begin work, at our May meeting, on organizing an anthology to celebrate our 90th year, but that will be a hollow achievement if the entire society collapses and we all retreat to our small local poetry groups. I am beginning to feel that I have put my time in here, but I look around and see nobody coming forward to replace me.

None of the work of being on the MPS board is heavy or hard. We enjoy the camaraderie and the satisfaction of doing our part to keep Maine's literary community welcoming and lively. It doesn't occupy a large amount of time, but it is ongoing and it needs attention. Please will you seriously consider offering your time?

Jenny Doughty
President, MPS

"Be willing to write past your own endings in a poem. Don't stop once the poem clicks shut or "feels done." Keep the clay wet, aim for surprise, and keep getting out of your comfort zone."—Matthew Gellman in *Poets & Writers*

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
16 Riverton Street
Augusta, ME 04330

FIRST CLASS

Stanza is the tri-annual
newsletter of the
Maine Poets Society
promoting good poetry
since 1936

FMI or to join, write
Gus Peterson
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Board Members

Jenny Doughty, President, jennydoughty@icloud.com
Currently Vacant, Vice President & Program Chair, _____
Gus Peterson, Interim Treasurer, glp3324@gmail.com
Jeanne Julian, Secretary, jmcjulian@yahoo.com
Diane Hunt, Hospitality Chair, DL.Hunt@ATT.net
Sally Joy, Newsletter Editor & Membership Secretary, srjoy43@gmail.com
Dr. Jim Brosnan, Board Member at-large, opmewriter@gmail.com

Webmaster, Lisa Montagna LMontagna@apitechnology.com

MPS website (MainePoetsSociety.com)

MPS Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1747588905507733/>. When you indicate an interest in joining the group, Jenny or Jeanne (as Administrators) will be able to confirm your request. You can also search within Facebook for Maine Poets Society. Choose the option that says “public group.”