

STANZA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MAINE POETS SOCIETY

VOLUME 23, NUMBER 3

November 2015

Regional Gatherings to Replace 2016 February Meeting

Instead of our usual February meeting in Southern Maine (most recently in Saco at the Dyer Library), we are instituting a pilot program of three regional meetings during the winter months. There will be no contests. There will be a \$5 registration fee which will be used to cover costs associated with the meeting. Anyone is welcome to participate in any or all of the three. Please note that an RSVP is asked for one month prior to each meeting.

Regional Gathering Midcoast Area Saturday, January 9, 2016 – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

HOST: Carol Bachofner

Location: Lincoln Street Art Center, 24 Lincoln Street, Rockland

BRING: \$5 registration fee. A brown bag lunch. Get your coffee locally before you arrive; none will be provided on site. Bottled water and birthday cake will be provided. (It's Carol's birthday!)

RSVP by December 9th to Carol at mainepoet@me.com or 207-594-8954

FORMAT: 12-16 people

9:30	Check-in; meet and greet
10:00	Breaking boundaries in poetry with 3 short writing exercises and handouts
12:15	Brown bag lunch (with sharing of ideas about writing during lunch)
1:00-2:00	Sharing of written exercises plus Q&A
2:00-2:45	Reading in the Round. Either one poem from the day's exercises or one brought from home; voting on 3 poems to be sent to the <i>Stanza</i> .
2:45-3:00	Fill out evaluation forms
3:00	Farewell and homeward

NOTE: Please bring a poem to read in the round. There will be a vote by participants on which 3 will be included in the *Stanza*. Keep line length to 24 lines, the normal number for contests.

Regional Gathering Augusta Area Saturday February 13, 2016 – 9 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

HOST: James Breslin

Location: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 209 Eastern Ave, Augusta

BRING: \$5 registration fee. A brown bag lunch.

RSVP by January 13 to James at jameslindabreslin@gmail.com or (207) 872-5469

FORMAT: Up to 15 people

8:30-9:00	Registration; meet and greet. Coffee and munchies provided.
9:00-10:00	Discussion of what a poem is. Archibald MacLeish. Participants should bring their own definition of "poem." Discussion will include an overview of some features of poetry: rhyme, meter, formal verse vs. free verse. Examples will be read; handouts provided.
10:00-12:00	Experiment in verse. An introduction. Examples of short forms. Write a short poem no more than four lines, which includes some mention of winter.
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:30	Reading in the Round. (Bring one poem 24 lines or fewer). The group will vote on 3 poems to be sent to the <i>Stanza</i> .
2:30	Fill out evaluation forms
2:45	Farewell and homeward

**Regional Gathering Southern Maine Area
Saturday, March 12, 2016 –10 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

HOST: Jenny Doughty

Location: The home of Alice Persons, 16 Walton Street, Westbrook.

NOTE: There are cats at this location

BRING: \$5 registration fee. A brown bag lunch, a notepad and pen, and poem(s) to share. Coffee/tea and water will be provided. Also cookies (everything goes better with cookies).

RSVP by February 12 to Jenny at jmdought@maine.rr.com or (207) 839-7440.

FORMAT: Up to 12 people

EMPHASIS: The basics of syllable counting and stress patterns.

9:30	Check-in and coffee
10:00-12:00	Review of meter in verse – stresses and syllables, common metrical patterns and their effects. Writing exercises and handouts making use of this information.
12:00	Lunch and conversation
12:45-2:30	Workshop. Please include in your RSVP if you would like to bring a poem with you to be workshopped and bring 12 copies of the poem with you. If more wish to participate than time will allow, slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis according to when the request was received. If you have never taken part in a poetry workshop before, please check out http://www.mshogue.com/poetry/wkshp.html . Line length of poems should not exceed 24 lines.
2:30-3:00	Reading in the round, vote on 3 poems to send to the <i>Stanza</i> . 24 line limit.
3:00	Fill out evaluation forms; farewell and homeward

In Memoriam

MPS members may remember Henry Braun, who was our guest judge in February of 2014 in Saco for poems on the subject “Hibernation.” Sadly, he died on October 11, 2014. He gave a careful and skillful reading to our contest entries, and even sent in an entry to the next contest (although it didn’t place).

He was a poet, a teacher, an anti-war activist and a devoted family man.

Henry was born in Olean, NY, in 1930, and after the early death of his mother had a fractured childhood and education, until he received a full scholarship to Brandeis, met his wife, and studied with some notable teachers. After graduation he received a Fulbright Scholarship to study in France, and later got his MA at Brandeis. He began his working career at Boston University, where he was a teaching assistant to Robert Lowell and a classmate and friend of Anne Sexton and Don Junkins.

Henry spent most of his working life teaching literature and creative writing at Temple University, including a year in Tokyo. His first book of poems, *The Vergil Woods*, published in 1968 by Atheneum, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and his second book, *Loyalty, New and Selected Poems*, was published in 2006 by Off The Grid Press, receiving the Maine Poets and Writers Award for the best book of poetry published in Maine that year. It was described by Maine’s first Poet Laureate, Kate Barnes, as, “Poetry too good to be gulped, it is to be relished, to be read slowly and many times. What tremendous tact (his) poems all show, never a word too much, nothing insisted on, a light touch that looks easy, but...takes tremendous art to achieve.”

Here are a couple of links to his poetry.

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse/118/1#!/20595101>

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse/118/1#!/20595103>

SEPTEMBER 2015 AM CONTEST WINNERS
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Contest—Subject: Confusion; Judge: Weslea Sidon**First Prize—Anita Liberty****Delirium**

My thoughts are sightless
 Flurried things,
 Like bats exposed to probing light,
 Colliding in the lasered air,
 Unconscious on the dappled grass –
 Revived by moon and speckled sky.

**Third Prize—Carol Bachofner
Half-Haunted**

Carol Bachofner's poem, "Half-Haunted," which won 3rd place in the "Confusion" contest, is unavailable for our publication since it has been accepted by Cafe Review. Cafe Review has acquired First North American Serial Rights to this poem. We therefore may not publish it either in print or online. The poem will be in CR's Fall Edition and may be viewed online there after the publication date, probably in December.

Second Prize—Michelle Faith**To the Robins Who Over-winter in Southern Maine**

Hardy, foolhardy souls,
 what drives you to dig in when wiser birds
 head off to warmer parts?
 Does the word "south" confuse you,
 as it does some other Mainers?
 Or do you hoard some secret store
 of knowledge, like where to find
 elusive substitutes for those
 currently unavailable earthworms?

I empathize with your instinct
 to hunker down for the duration,
 stretching the limits
 of your well-defined world
 like characters in a tale
 by Jane Austen.

If this were March instead of early February,
 coldest on record here in Maine,
 I could take you as a sign that Spring
 cannot be far away. As it is,
 I cling to hope and wish you well,
 hunting and pecking
 beneath bare branches
 where red berries dot
 the persistently rising snow.

**First Honorable Mention—Sherry Barker-Abaldo
His New Passport Photo**

How did we end up here,
 in this place just down the road
 from where we started?
 There is no one like us.
 Are you the one who took me
 out of my own skin

and put me back with stars swiped
 from Andromeda in my eyes,
 full moon in my head, grass stains
 on new jeans, sweat on my lips?
 You said my veins looked like
 blue tree branches.

You said we never had to stop
 traveling. In Santorini was it you
 hiking Skaros in construction boots
 and I in boat mocs? You kept
 saving me. When I asked why,
 you always said I took a vow.

I took a lot of things, I answered.
 What were we talking about?
 So many times I almost drowned.
 Who but us would go to a beach
 called Slaughterhouse with a picnic?
 Did you ever want what I wanted?

Second Honorable Mention—Margie Kivel**Moon Freight Out of Town**

Concussion poetry crinkles words, spins
dates on a wheel, gives monkey
power over the remote.

Blue star curtain begins to fall,
as brain tries to decode
breakfast-scramble quiz.

Brain white-out can be a mercy,
a thick blanket over the abyss —
impact of careening fates.

No need for those memories.
It's fine with her if they take
the moon freight out of town.

In memory's side show, they ask
what color her car is,
she replies, *looking into darkness*.

Each day is reconnection
to commanders and cats,
flowers in the garden

chilled to the speed of light,
she drifts in and out
on cerebral tides.

Third Honorable Mention—Sally Rowe Joy**State of Confusion**

There was a time when Mother used to say:
Confusion? That's the state I live in.
With dementia in an early stage,
she understood she was forgetting
and could find some humor in it.

Do I believe in the hereafter?
Absolutely. I often walk into a room,
look around and ask myself:
Now what am I here after?

Time passed, and photographs
record her sad decline
as her demeanor came to show
how very real confusion had become.
It was indeed, for several years,
the state she lived in.

Her eyes grew bright with recognition
when we walked into her room.
That did not mean she knew our names
or how we were related.
And who was that old woman who stared at her
from the window on the wall?
No point in trying to help her understand a mirror.

Confusion – a sad place to visit.
Not a state where anyone would live by choice.

Historian is Interviewing Members

Anne Hammond, MPS Historian, has begun interviewing members to record their interests and thoughts about the society with the intention of sharing some of the information in upcoming issues of the *Stanza*. See the profile of Anita Liberty on page 8.

Please Remember to Let MPS Know When Your Contact Info Changes

Because most copies of the *Stanza* are distributed by email, it is especially important that you let us know of changes as soon as they occur. Margery Kivel, Membership Secretary, is the person to contact with changes (address, phone number, and/or email address). She can be reached at mtkivel@gmail.com Thank you.

SEPTEMBER 2015 PM CONTEST WINNERS
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Contest—Prose Poems; Judge: Carol Bachofner**First Prize—Catherine Neuhardt-Minor****Pebble Bee**

young girl shimmers like ribbon her fingers wrap around chalk
 scrubs bearing down hard flowers like bees swarming
 layer after layer petal by petal

she worships movement how her body funnels the day
 how the day swarms after her queen her music
 she believes she's a pebble washed onto shore while sleeping

her pebble grows wings carries her through fire escaping the burn and
 blackness of ash colors rock like water in her hands she scribbles them on the walk
 pebble-bee stings wings magnify around her

she sees clearly the tiniest veins in a leaf teetering on the curb dreaming the arabesque
 all bees know she twirls powdering the air pink and purple
 onionating the day with light

Second Prize—Sherry Barker-Abaldo**Lanai** (a prose sonnet)

1. In the jacuzzi on the penthouse lanai with you after scuba diving
 2. carbed up on macaroni with butter and sea salt for next morning's
 3. live entry back wall drift dive, with heavy current and shark
 ledges, 4. beneath fiery stars I feel the truth: the sky is a woman.
 Pele 5. gulps the sun each night, gives birth to it again each morning.
 6. Round-mouthed madonna ourobouros. Pregnant in darkness. *Ka
 wahine ai la* 7. Hair red flames long as mountains, or black waves 8.
 of cooled lava flows. Wild lipped. She controls volcanoes. 9. Sunset
 her swallowing. Dawn her newborn. 10. You wonder why a local
 ever told me, a *haole* without breath, this – 11. You wonder why I
 listened. I remind you we both rubbed the dead 12. eye of a marlin
 for luck, down on the docks, before lunch. 13. We have entered into
 magic now. How can we live like this? 14. I say I will never go
 home. *Dakine*. You suggest a kiss.

ka wahine ai la – ka wah-hee-nee I lay - sun-eating woman
haole – howl ee – not a native
dakine – da kine (as in "kind") – the real thing, the ultimate

Second Prize—Woody Woodsum

Casting into Mirrors

With every cast, you catch something: the sky where your fly, your lure, takes flight. Your cast arcs or beelines before splashing down or coming to rest, on gentle casts, where hungry fish await. Sometimes you snag a cloud, briefly, or your cast crosses the path of a bird. Sometimes, when line is unspooling off your reel, birdsong is unthroating, too: the hermit thrush in the deep woods where the trout are shy. Or you spy, behind the fishing line's thin veil, a moose come to feed on underwater weeds. On slow days, you cast, cast, and cast again catching the hot August smells of island pines or catching a whiff, in the stiffening breeze, of rain showers in the offing. You might catch the reflection of the sun.

There are fish, too, plenty of fish to catch with a cast, but mostly you catch nothing, which is everything, but fish, in this world of casting forever into the waters, which are mirrors, every fisherman knows. You send out concentric circles of waves, rings of water from every cast that lands. And your cast is the bull's-eye, the perfect catch, something you see, hear, and feel. A fish does too, and there you are...the two of you.

Honorable Mention—Margie Kivel

Time Out

1. Out in left field is the loneliest position for relationships. The wait made me wonder about that last chill, the downward thrust of a handshake instead of a shoulder touch you left me with. Lots of messages were caught in that net of gestures. It felt like another cloakroom decision to wobble my comet, a do-not-enter door slam from the 3rd gallery. I'm making a new chart, without rules or names, using a magic marker for flexibility, and definitely a new body.

2. My sense of continuity blew away on the winds of your departure. I wanted more time. A year later I saw your blue Honda CRV ahead of me, the driver tall in the saddle like you rode. I thought you had reincarnated yourself, come back to pick up a new life, without entanglements. I heard you. My ears got your explanation, but my heart-package muffled the sounds. Now I recognize them as apologies that have been leaking life since the bang of time.

Honorable Mention—Muriel Allen

Learning Method

Precursor passion pulls you in. Arresting sense. Not seen before, not thought of, not imagined. Heart stop. Sudden in breath. Ignore? Impossible!

Further inspection fosters questions. What can it be? How many petals? Sepals present? Tufted crown? Striking supercillium? Spots? Leaf swirl?

Habitat examined. Sun or shade? Forest floor litter or tree tops? Measurements precise. Detail made bigger by binocular. Magnified by microscope. Answers found (or not) in field guide and website.

Prediction verified by professionals. A name to underpin opinion. Thought reformed from first emotion. No longer love affair, now long term marriage—divested of fantasy, devoted to fact.

Reweigh results. Determine what memory has retained. Round out by retrospection. At last to see it all—the stark beauty of science, the seductive science of the beautiful.

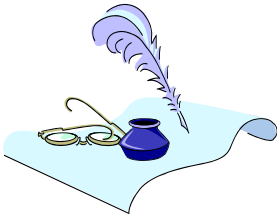
Honorable Mention—Bruce Spang In the Light of Night

Her paw presses on my shoulder. 12:52. I'm in a dream of driving down a superhighway glazed with ice and there's no steering wheel, but my foot is on the pedal. *Do you really need to go?* Paw. She sits there, right by me like a black sphinx. I pull on my shirt and pants, follow her down the dark stairwell into night. But it's not night. Daffodils drift on the hillside in a May evening under the full moon with a certain unearthly glow, the yellows and whites bathed in a milky translucence. They appear almost as if they were in muted day light, a light softened as in movies when the lens is slightly out of focus, blurring the image so even an old movie star whose face no longer has that luster appears nonetheless blushing with moon glow, young and ethereal, a transfigured image of themselves as they once were. Far off, I hear the blasts of a fog horn in the bay, its steady pulse "Not here," letting anyone know where they'll get caught up on the unseen. The dog sniffs and tugs at the leash. She pees and lifts her head, alert. The creek gurgles under the roots of a fallen ash. The sky is clear. There's such clarity that the air seems brushed and better, less imposing than day light, a time I could spend my life in, washed in the sanguine lilt of being here under a godlike calm when traffic is diminished, the getting here and there, quiets in this amazing light. She pulls on the leash and I follow under the umbrage of willows, their braided tangles. She stalks by the understory of shrubs and more daffodils, undreaming my life as she takes me from tree to tree, her attentiveness to each, sniffing with me behind, knowing she onto something, following the smell of light.

Publication News

Poems

Sherry Barker-Abaldo has two poems in *The Aurorean*, Fall/Winter 2015-2016, 20th Anniversary Issue and one poem in *Haiku Journal* #39. Both publications are available in print and online.



President's Ink

Two things are on my mind as fall has arrived, with winter not far behind:

1. I am excited about our winter gatherings, hoping for good turnouts in all three. Members have some great opportunities here with some hands-on experiences where the traditional *sit and listen* model is replaced by the *get-in-and-do-it* model. Check the schedule of gatherings here and on our website. Get your winter on!
2. I am growing more and more concerned about the lackadaisical manner in which the Robins are being used. We have three which seem to be doing well. The rest are not. Any suggestions, members?

Enjoy the lovely fall, and get some good ink flowing!

Carol Bachofner

Member Profile - Anita Liberty

by Anne Hammond, Historian



Anita Liberty, first prize winner of our “Confusion” contest, is a long time prizewinner. She has been a member of Maine Poets Society for 38 years. A recorded prize was in 1985, the year she was president of the Poetry Fellowship of Maine, former name of the Maine Poets Society. As a vintage poet, she has many stories to tell.

The membership rules of the society have changed. You had to submit three poems and one of them had to be published. At that time there were 118 members.

Born and raised near Sanford, Anita is a homemaker for children and grandchildren.

She published two books and her *Maine Taproot* poem was used for the title of the last Maine Poets anthology in 2010. She taught poetry at Alfred Library and the Sanford Junior High School. She ran the Biddeford Ice Arena food concession. One year she packed apples.

Anita’s poetry is inspired by nature, no doubt because she was raised on a farm in South Sanford and worked the crops with her parents. She was an only child, but never lonely; she had hiding places and her books to read. The farm was successful, but a hard way to make a living. Once her mother told her father, “Don’t plant anything new! It will grow!”

Her house in Alfred is a story in itself. It was a store for her parents but was moved to Alfred when Anita and Bob got married. It was three small rooms, a small house to raise two children, so they added on. They’ve been in the house 50 years and just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Anita loves poetry because you get a whole story in one piece, the passion, the emotion of each writer. You don’t need history books if you read poetry. Her poems come easily because “I think that way.”

She enjoys the society because she feels part of a group, sharing and learning something.

She loves hearing other people’s poems as everyone has a different idea for a contest.

Asked “What has poetry done for you?” she answered: “You learn about yourself. I discovered I wasn’t so bad as I thought.”

Membership Opportunity Grants Update

This is a reminder that Opportunity Grants (on a first-come, first-served basis) are available to members in good standing for help (up to \$300) - for attendance at a workshop, to take a class, or to attend a poetry festival or residency. Grants are to be issued solely for the purposes of defraying the costs of attending conferences or writing experiences, taking classes or courses, whether online or face-to-face. Grant money is not for purchase of materials or products, contest submissions, travel, etc. other than for computer software needed to access an online course. These grants are designated for actual educational experiences for our members.

You can download a Membership Opportunity Grant Application and guidelines from our website (see below). There is still \$450 available for 2015. Anyone who has previously benefitted from the program will not be eligible for another grant until three years have passed.

An Explanation of Round Robins and Comments from Some Who Take Part

Round Robins are composed of six or seven members who constructively criticize each other's poetry by mail. When a participant receives the Robin, she/he puts in an original poem, comments on the other poems, and sends the packet on to the next person in the list. As the Robin is sent, a postcard is sent to the Round Robin Secretary who tracks the Robin's progress. When the Robin comes round again, the old poem – now covered with comments – is removed, replaced and the packet sent on as before.

We asked three members of Round Robin #5 to comment on their experience as members of that group.

Yamile Craven says:

I've been a member of Maine Poets Society since August 2004, I believe. My reason for joining was to participate in the Round Robins as I live too far away to attend the meetings.

I enjoy the Robins. They show me what others are writing, and writing about, these days. I am able to critique them and let the poets know how I understood their poems.

Also the critiques on my poems are often useful, allowing me to see how my poem is understood, or misunderstood. If these were discontinued, I would lose the contact with many Robineers that I now have. Please keep them flying.

Sharon Bray says:

The RR does, as Yamile wrote, keep me in touch with the society. I have not found a writing group to join in my area, so the MPS Round Robin provides some of what I would expect from a local writing group. Feedback from other poets in the RR (and from MPS contests) ranges from enlightening to puzzling — sometimes actually humorous when a reader totally misses the point of the poem (mine or another member's). I look forward to the arrival of that thick envelope of poems every few weeks.

I do remember that the first MPS meeting I attended must have been in the early 1990s. I came with Minnie Bowden and later joined at her encouragement.

Sharron Campbell says:

When I joined The Maine Poets Society in 2006, becoming a member included the option of participating in a Round Robin. I knew being a part of this smaller group of poets would allow me to grow as a poet and, maybe, even to increase and improve my writing.

Round Robin #5 has accomplished all of these goals and has given me hours of pleasure over the years, reading the poems of, and getting to know, the individuals in my group. We embrace both the seasons of the year and of our lives, together in poems. Writing isn't always easy, but it is rewarding and it is fun.

If you are not currently a Robin member and would like to be, please email Carol Bachofner, Round Robin Secretary at mainepoet@me.com. putting "Request to be in a Round Robin" in the subject line.

Reminder: Your Maine Poets Society dues include membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Thus, you may enter many of their contests offering cash prizes. Visit their website: nfsp.com. Click on "Strophes" at the left-hand side of the home page to get access to their newsletter.

STANZA, Maine Poets Society
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FIRST CLASS

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

FMI or to join, write
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Check out our Website!

Please check out the MPS website (MainePoetsSociety.com) for all you need to know about the Maine Poets Society: Gatherings, Directions, Membership Application, Contests, Contact Information, President's Message, and more.