



Of Poets and Poetry

Newsletter of Florida State Poets Association, Inc.

www.floridastatepoetsassociation.org



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this, it is January, just before the U.S. Presidential Inauguration. It puts me in mind of a past President's request to the American people to participate. I would like to paraphrase that request from his speech, "Ask not what FSPA can do for you; ask what you can do for FSPA."

This organization is made great by the many members who are giving of their time and talent to make it that way. We need you as an active partner. Please speak up. FSPA is your organization. Don't be shy. Say, "I'll do that." Right now, we need a parliamentarian to make sure we do things properly. We also need a chapter/s or a group of members to host the 2018 Spring Fling and a few other little tasks.

Speaking of Spring Fling, mark your calendars for April 21-22, 2017. Be sure to make your reservations at the Clarion Hotel in Tampa in time to get the discounted rate. (Info on p.8) This is going to be an outstanding event. New River Poets and Sunshine Poets are working very hard to make it the best ever. All three of our Chancellors are presenting programs. You can't get talent, expertise, information, poetry, or anything of this caliber anywhere else for the registration fee of \$25.00. This is NOT to be missed.

Spring is a time of new beginnings, new growth, and it is time for FSPA members to renew their enthusiasm and burst into bloom. Let's make the first blossom a record turnout for Spring Fling. Let's make another blossom be a name for our anthology. Give it the importance and dignity it deserves. Let's make a few more blossoms of volunteers to help us stay strong. Then a few more by a chapter/s willing to take on the next Spring Fling. Now we have a bouquet. Isn't it beautiful!

Mary-Ann Westbrook

Join the Poetic Tradition!

Share your poems and songs of hope and peace; make a difference in the world.

For many generations now, poets the world over have been a valuable voice in bringing an awareness of social injustices at home and around the world to light. Add your voice to other poets' voices to make that VOICE strong in the days and years ahead.

From even before Langston Hughes, through Bob Dylan, Maya Angelou, and more—poet's words spoke truth!

Creative Happiness Institute

Directed by David B. Axelrod
Announces their Winter-into-Spring Arts & Poetry Events!

*Free Speech Event on 3/26
City Island, Daytona Beach*

Contact David Axelrod

at 386.337.4567 or

axelrod@creativehappiness.org
for info and/or CHI newsletter

You are invited!



Florida State Poets Association
presents

Young-As-Spring Fling

April 21-22, 2017

Clarion Hotel, Tampa

Hosted by
New River Poets and Sunshine Poets

Featuring:
Peter Meinke
Lola Haskins
Lee Bennett Hopkins

(Details on pages 3 & 8)

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OPAP On-line supplement follows
with three additional pages.

Florida State Poets Association, Inc.

An affiliate of the National Federation
of State Poetry Societies
Organized October 1974
Henrietta Kroah, Founder

2016-2017 Officers**Executive Board**

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Board of Directors (chapter presidents)**Big Bend Poets—Tallahassee**

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Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

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Miami Poets

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Poetry for the Love of It —Tallahassee

Charles Hazelip, 3011 Barclay Court,
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Sunshine Poets —Crystal River

Cheri Herald, 18 SJ Kellner Blvd, Beverly Hills, FL 34465; 352.746.3394;
c_herald@hotmail.com

Tomoka Poets

Mary-Ann Westbrook, 6 Juniper Drive, Ormond Beach, FL 32176; 386.441.1839; 1poetry.3@gmail.com

**A Chronology of FSPA Presidents:**

Mary-Ann Westbrook 2016
Joseph Cavanaugh 2012-2016
Cheri Neuman Herald 2010-2012
Betty Ann Whitney 2008-2010
Robert E. Blenheim 2004-2008
Caroline Walton 2002-2004
Coleen Ward 1998-2002
Gail Teachworth 1994-1998
Carolyn Walton 1992-1994
Virginia Martin* 1989-1992
Ruth Cunliffe* 1989-1989
Gwen Thomas 1988-1989
Madelyn Eastlund 1984-1988
Agnes Homan* 1982-1984
Robert DeWitt* 1978-1982
Harvey Winters* 1978-1978
Beatrice Branch* 1976-1978
Henrietta Kroah* 1974-1976
*Deceased

**Two Chapters in Need of Members**

Jacksonville Area:

The North Florida Poetry Hub, 3886 Atlantic Blvd, Jacksonville. For more information, contact Steffani Fletcher at steffani@hopeathand.org.

Merritt Island/Cocoa Area:

Space Coast Poets is also in need of poets to become an active chapter once again. Please contact Debbie Keller at 321.453.6197 or kellerda@live.com.

**GET SOCIAL WITH FSPA!**

[Facebook.com/FloridaStatePoetsAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaStatePoetsAssociation)

[Twitter.com/FSPA_Poets](https://twitter.com/FSPA_Poets)

NFSPS**Poetry Contests Deadline**

Is March 15, 2017.

Enter Now!

*Don't forget the **Blackberry-Peaches Contest**. It's New!*

www.nfsp.com

Of Poets & Poetry is published four times per year: August, November, January/February, and April/May. The deadline for submitting Chapter and Member-at-Large News is usually the tenth of the previous month. Deadlines for Special Reports will vary. Send content prior to the deadline to: Patricia Stevenson-Gingrich, *OPAP* Editor (addresses below).

ALL Member News due by MAR 15, 2017 for April issue. **All other reports, news, & photos also due by MAR 15. MUST** submit via the Internet as an email **attachment**: Word (.doc or .docx), RTF, TXT, or PDF format files. **NO embedded html files**. Any photos should be high resolution in JPEG (jpg) format. If you are unable to do this, contact the Editor at 850.445.1302.

Email: patriciasg.bbp@gmail.com
or Mail: Patricia Stevenson-Gingrich
184 McGowin Road
Wilsonville, AL 35186-8033

2017 FSPA Spring Fling in Tampa!

*Young-As-Spring Fling*

April 21-22, 2017

Hosted by
New River Poets and Sunshine Poets

*"Poetry is alive and live things grow
and throw out branches."*
~Peter Meinke, Florida Poet Laureate.

Our poet laureate's quote reminds us that we must nurture a love for poetry in the young. They are the future 'branches' from which our literary form will bloom. The focus of this year's spring fling is discovering our own inner child, broadening and rejuvenating our writing skills, and sharing what we know with the generations that follow us. As we teach them, they will teach us.

We are pleased that this event is being held on Florida's west coast at an easily accessible location in Tampa. The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center is located near the University of South Florida, Busch Gardens, Adventure Island, and the Museum of Science and Industry, among other attractions. The Clarion will honor our discount rates for three days prior and three days after our event for those who want to extend their stay. A complimentary hot buffet breakfast is included with your room reservation, and there is coffee service all day. All presentations and meals will be in the first-floor Palm Room, for your convenience.

We have scheduled an interesting program of presentations, writing workshops, and open-mic readings. You will have an opportunity to bid on terrific items in a silent auction, and member-authors of poetry books are invited to display them on our book-sale tables.

Registration forms and Hotel Registration information is on the last page of this issue of OPAP. Plan now to join your FSPA friends for a wonderful springtime experience!

~Janet Watson & Cheri Herald

Spring Fling Book Sale Instructions:

Please follow the procedure we have been using recently for keeping track of sales. In each book insert a 3x5 index card formatted as follows: TITLE OF BOOK... AUTHOR'S NAME & ADDRESS... COST OF BOOK... and then, NUMBER EACH BOOK: If, for example, you bring 5 books of a particular title, on each card write: 1 of 5 or 2 of 5, 3 of 5, etc.. Money will be collected by our book table chair, and sales will be tallied after the Fling. Checks will then be mailed to each author by the FSPA treasurer. Please remember to pick up your remaining books before you leave at the end of the Fling.

Program for the 2017 FSPA Spring Fling

Young-As-Spring Fling

The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center
2701 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL
(5.4 miles west of I-75, 4.1 miles east of I-275)

Friday, April 21

4pm Registration outside Palm Room

4-6pm Small group readings

6pm Buffet Dinner
"And Speaking of Kids..." – Peter Meinke

7:30pm "Waking Up Our Senses"
Janet Watson and John Foster

8:30pm "Poems of Parent and Child"
Lola Haskins

9:30pm Open Mic Readings

Saturday, April 22

Hot Breakfast Buffet

8am Board Meeting/ Open Mic Readings

9am General Membership Meeting

10:15am "Imagine This" – Al Rocheleau

11:30am "New Voices"
12-Chairs Scholarship Students

12:15am Lunch
"Getting in Touch with Your Inner Child"
Lee Bennett Hopkins

2pm "The Future is Now"
Cheri Herald, Panel Moderator

3pm Open Mic Readings

3:45pm Wrap-up

Reports

YOUTH REPORT

As of this writing, submissions for the 2016-2017 FSPA Student Poetry Contest have been mailed to our judges, Lib O'Brien of New Mexico and Marilyn Downing of Pennsylvania. This year we received 632 entries from middle and high school students throughout the state of Florida--significantly more than last year. We thank all members who publicized the contest in their own local areas.

First-place winners in each grade level will receive the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award for Young People. The hopes of winning that honor surely inspired additional students to enter the contest, and we are grateful for the support of Mr. Hopkins, allowing us to give substantial monetary awards to all our winners. We also thank the many teachers who encourage their students to write and tell us how much they appreciate the opportunity our contest provides for young poets.

This year's Young-As-Spring Fling, April 21 and 22, will focus on connecting and sharing our love of poetry with the next generation. Those who attend will be encouraged to discover their own "inner child" and should experience a rejuvenating approach to their writing. I look forward to seeing you there.

~ Janet Watson, Youth Chair

MEMBERSHIP

FSPA ended 2016 with a total of 239 members. Members-at-Large made up almost half of the FSPA membership. Our 2017 membership roll is off to a rocky start as only about half of the members have renewed. Please send in your membership now! Student membership is \$10, all others are still \$25.00. Your membership supports the various activities of the Florida State Poets Association such as your newsletter four times each year; membership in NFSPS when submitted prior to Jan 15; discounts to both the spring and fall conferences; and the opportunity to be published in our annual anthology each fall; and more. Renew your membership and invite a friend to join as well!

Membership forms may be downloaded and printed from the FSPA website listed in the title banner.

~ Mary Marcelle, Chair

On-Line OPAP

Brings you more color; more photos; and extended content to *Of Poets & Poetry*!

Supplemental information

Begins on page Nine.

FSPA Anthology Name Narrowed to Three Finalists

Send in Your Winning Vote!

As previously announced, FSPA has gone to you, the members, to establish a permanent journal name for our annual anthology. This is in keeping with what other state-based anthologies are doing. The change will more easily and effectively allow poets to use the creative name as a journal credit in cover letters, when submitting poems to other publications. FSPA is dedicated to getting its members in print around America and even world-wide. The new name could help.

It should be noted that the new name will be carried from issue to issue of the anthology with the sub-title of *Anthology of the Florida State Poets Association*.

The many prospective journal names sent in by members over the previous months have been narrowed to three finalists by the Executive Board.

The finalists for the anthology name are:

Cadence
Causeways
Rafters

Please send your single decision on these finalists to Name Project Coordinator, **Al Rocheleau**, via email or postal mail.

email: ARRO40@aol.com

US post: Al Rocheleau, Name Project Coordinator
PO Box 770640
Orlando, FL 32877-0640

Deadline for receipt of your vote is **March 31, 2017**, for email and postmark date for postal mail. The winning name will be announced at the FSPA Spring Fling on April 22, and first appear on the 2017 Anthology.

In Remembrance

FSPA is saddened by the recent loss of four of its poets.

Jacinta (Joey) Everest, former FSPA Membership Chair and member of Orlando Area Poets passed away after an extended illness on Nov. 24, 2016. Joey was a native of Canada and a multi-published poet.

Sam Giordano, an active member of Tomoka Poets died Dec. 29, 2016. Sam was a place winner in the 2016 FSPA Poetry Contests.

Patti Hannaway, co-founder and first president of New River Poets died Nov. 22, 2016. A tribute by Janet Watson will be in the Feb. online OPAP.

Barbara Weston, of Miami Poets died on Jan. 3, 2017. A tribute to the distinguished writer and poet by Tere Starr will be in the Feb. online OPAP.

Member News

STATE CHAPTERS

Big Bend Poets

www.bigbendpoets.weebly.com

Meetings: 2nd Tuesday at 7pm
Barnes & Noble, N Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL

Big Bend Poets (BBP) led by **Summer Hill Seven** continues to use their Group and Community pages on Facebook to stay in almost daily contact to alert one another of upcoming poetry & literary events in the Tallahassee area. At recent meetings, BBP has celebrated "new" original poems for a "new Year"; Seasonal Poems for their Holiday Celebration; and reflected on the Thanksgiving season with both old favorites and new odes to the season.

Both Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan were honored in the December issue of *Scribbles*. Cohen passed away during the fall at the age of 82, leaving a legacy of poetry and song behind. Dylan was honored for winning the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his poetic tradition in song... redefining the boundaries of literature."

Each month, the editor of *Scribbles* provides suggested poetry writing challenges in various guises. Members are also presented with a "book of the month" often it is a book selection from the Poetry Foundation, but not always. The newsletter always includes highlights of activities for FSPA and NFSPS as well as BBP.

Norma Sundberg's "These Valiant Spirits" was published in the January 2017 issue of *Extra Innings*, an online journal of the University of Wisconsin. **SS7** posted several short poems to the Big Bend Poets FB page. **Ali Bilir**, BBP member and award winning poet from Mersin, Turkey, was in Texas for the holidays with family, but is now in Tallahassee with wife and daughter. **Ali** & his wife will be there until April. **Bryan Pitchford** is nearing completion of his MFA in Creative Writing with his concentration in poetry. Bryan recently read his poem "Lunar Communion" at Ancient City Poets in St. Augustine. You can read the poem on the BBP website. Several other BBP members participated in the November 17th Multi-Lingual Night at the Black Dog Café at Railroad Square

in Tallahassee. **Patricia Stevenson Gingrich** had her book, *South of 30° North*, published in early December. Visit "Patricia L Stevenson @ Wild Heron Press" on Facebook for photos, excerpts, and more information. LIKE her page and visit often.

~ Patricia Stevenson Gingrich

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach

Meetings: 3rd Wednesday, 4:00pm, Daytona Beach Regional Library, Board Rm., City Island Library in Daytona Beach, 105 E. Magnolia Ave., off Beach St., near Jackie Robinson Stadium.

The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach holds its workshop meetings on the third Wednesday of each month. Its meeting time has recently changed to start at 4:00 p.m., on the 3rd Wed of the month and the group welcomes any and all to attend. Since 1993, the group has shared and critiqued hundreds of poets' work enthusiastically as it continues to encourage work that is experimental and unconventional.

Recently the Live Poets' monthly challenges have included group members writing unconventional holiday poetry, Spoon River poems, and poems on subjects such as the New Year, the 2016 FSPA Convention, inanimate objects, and on our new 'President.' As usual members have come up with many varied types and styles in their poems, all displaying such amazing talent.

Live Poet **Llewelyn McKernan** is recovering from recent heart surgery while enjoying accolades in response to her newly-published book of poetry, "Getting Ready to Travel"; **Jesse Sam Owens** has been developing not only the excellence of his verse but his performing and guitar playing as well; and publisher **Judith Lawrence** just put out her new issue of *River Poets Journal* literary magazine which includes beautiful poetry by two members of the Live Poets Society, **Alice Norman** and **Justine Mathis**. And, while interest in **Bob Blenheim's** "Poetry Parody Songbook" CD has now waned to the point of seemingly motivating only crickets, **Lenny Schner's** beautiful memoir of his late wife, *Merlin Stone Remembered* continues to sell and garner more awards.

All members look forward to tackling new poetry challenges throughout 2017 while continuing to make The Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach a vibrant and exciting chapter of FSPA!

~ Robert E. Blenheim

Miami Poets

Meetings: 1st Wednesday, Pinecrest Branch Library, 1-3 pm.

Miami Poets celebrated the eighth anniversary of the *Miami Poets Soirée* in January with **Tere Starr** as moderator. On second Mondays from 1 to 3 pm, we join *Group 10*, the critique group led by **Janita Wright**. In November we had meet-ups during the Miami Book Fair and **Patsy Asuncion** visited from VA. In December, **Shirley Seligman** hosted a holiday luncheon at her home. The afternoon was filled with good food and seasonal poetry. 2017 began with sad news, the loss of our dear member, **Barbara Weston**. She was an exceptional person, a talented poet and a true friend to all who knew her. A tribute to Barbara is being planned for February's *soirée*. **Paul Saluk's** book of poems, *The Inescapable Lure of the Rabbit Hole*, was published by Parson's Porch and Company. Five of Paul's poems also appear in the anthology, *Slay Your Darlings*. **Patsy Asuncion** is a new board member for WriterHouse, a non-profit. Her fourth Wednesday open mics at The Bridge in Charlottesville, VA appear on YouTube's *Patricia Asuncion Channel* which has received over 6000 views. Three of Patsy's poems appear in the *Poet's Domain Anthology, Breaking the Rules*. She received first place in FSPA's 2016 Poetry Contest in the "A Poet's Vision" category. **Irv Milowe** received a 1st HM for the "Adrienne Rich Memorial Award." **Tere Starr** hosted a November *Poetry Soirée* for the Brandeis Women's South Miami Chapter. **Ricki Dorn** will chair the *Seventh Annual Mango Writers Conference* for the South Florida Writers Association on February 25, and **Connie Goodman-Milone** will lead a break-out poetry workshop. Connie's letter, "Hope in Miami," was published in the *Miami Herald*. Our words are scattered throughout all the wonders Miami holds. Poetry is our passion.

~Tere Starr, President

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New River Poets

Meetings: 3rd Saturday, 1:00-4:30 pm,
Atonement Lutheran, Wesley Chapel

New River Poets celebrated the end of a great year of poetry with a holiday gathering in December, at the historic schoolhouse home of member **Meg Roman**. With food, poetry, and some songs of the season, we enjoyed socializing and remembering the poetic events of 2016. It was also an opportunity to feature the published works of some of our members. **Stephanie Andrews, John Foster, Lilja Taylor** and **Janet Watson** shared their experiences and enjoyed a few sales, too. **John Foster's** book, *A Gesture of Words*, was published late last year, and he is pleased to announce that sales are approaching 130, thanks to relatives and friends, including those in New River Poets and FSPA members like Terry Hagans, who has promoted the book elsewhere. John launched his book locally with three readings/signings at county libraries in January. He will also participate with a panel of local authors during February.

Although we lost New River's co-founder Patti Hannaway, in November, her legacy lives on as we plan events for 2017, including the *Young-As-Spring Fling* in Tampa, which New River Poets is hosting in partnership with Sunshine Poets. Patti had been following our preliminary plans with much enthusiasm. We invite FSPA poets and guests to join us in April on Florida's west coast. The venue is easily accessible and the program should please everyone. Information is included in this issue of *Of Poets & Poetry* (OPAP). Please add this event to your 2017 calendar.

~by New River Poets

Orlando Area Poets

Meetings: 3rd Thursday at 6:30pm
Maitland Public Library

Each month the **Orlando Area Poets** meet to share and critique their own original poetry. The group is led by chapter President, **Elaine Person**.

In December, **Al Rocheleau** was the featured poet in *Contemporary American Voices, a journal of poetry**. Other

OAP members included in the journal were **Mary Marcelle, Jane Peterson,** and **Ruth Titus.** **Peter Gordon's** poems appeared in two online journals, *Poetry Breakfast* and *Crime Five Two Poetry*. **Elaine Person** continues to be the primary leader of the Maitland Public Library Coffeehouse. The most recent coffeehouse event was held on January 27 and the poetry theme was "Yellow Flashing Lights." Many OAP members attend and participate in this public event which is held quarterly. The next Coffeehouse will be Friday, April 28th at 7pm. For details on future Coffeehouse events, visit the website: www.maitlandpubliclibrary.org.

~Alice Friedman, Secretary

*This is a correction from the original publication.

Poetry for the Love of It

Meetings: 2nd and 4th Mondays at the Tallahassee Senior Center (TSC), 2:45-4:45 pm. N. Monroe St, Tallahassee

Poetry for the Love Of It had their second chapter anthology, *Sage Stanzas by Seasoned Poets*, published in January 2017. It may be purchased on Amazon.

Due to building renovations, there will be no "Grand Relations Art Show Reception" in January this year. PLOI has participated in this Tallahassee Senior Center event for the past several years where they entertained guests with 'rollicking' poetry readings. Instead, PLOI plans to offer a poetry reading for the residents at Georgia Belle, one of Tallahassee's oldest senior apartment complexes.

PLOI continues their monthly meetings as listed above. There are currently seven poets in regular attendance pursuing their love of poetry. New members and guests are welcome.

~Linda Whitefeather, secretary

Sunshine Poets

Meetings: 2nd Saturday at 10AM **NEW**
Crystal River Public Library, Crystal River

Sunshine Poets continues to meet at the Crystal River Public Library on the 2nd Saturday of each month at 10 AM. Homework and critique are optional.

Bring all your writing to share, whether traditional rhymed or free verse. We welcome all ages and levels of poets.

Sunshine Poets is working with New River Poets in the hosting of the FSPA 2017 Spring Fling. Sunshine also made a donation to the FSPA Youth Contest, and are also sponsoring a humor category in the FSPA State Contest. Member, **Joyce Shiver** had wins in contests including: Florida, Indiana, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. President, **Cheri Herald**, was a reader at the FSPA fall convention in Daytona Beach.

~Cheri Herald, president

Tomoka Poets

Meetings: 2nd Wed @5-6:45pm,
Ormond Beach Library, Mtg. Rm.4

Tomoka Poets have had a fun winter. We survived Hurricane Matthew and kept moving ahead. We had many members attend the October Convention in Daytona Beach despite the mess that Matthew left us in. **Joe Perrone, BJ Alligood, Sam Giordano, Kyra Von Brokoph, Mitzi Coats,** and **Linda Eve Diamond** all placed in the 2016 FSPA Poetry Contest. This chapter is thrilled and congratulates all of them.

In November, **David Axelrod** and **Mary-Ann Westbrook** participated in BAMfest Daytona. This is an event featuring books, art, and music. Books and artwork are for sale with the artists and authors present to autograph their work. Musicians along with an improv group entertained throughout the event. **Joe Cavanaugh** of Live Poets Society of Daytona Beach and Past President of FSPA was honored for his work and dedication to our organization and the poetry community. In December, our annual holiday celebration titled Chriskwanzukkah was held at The Casements. Tomoka Poets, Creative Happiness Institute, and Ormond Beach Arts District partnered to create this novel event. It included poetry, music, songs, theatrical readings, book sales, prizes, free cookies, and a winter solstice ceremony. Now we are zeroing in on a new venue to hold our monthly open mics. Stay tuned for the announcement. Our open poetry readings have been greatly missed.

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On a very sad note, we dearly miss Tomoka Poet **Sam Giordano** who passed away December 29th. We will miss his laughter and humorous poetry. He has left a very empty chair at our meeting table.

~ Mary-Ann Westbrook

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Judith Krum, Sanford, FL, was recently honored by having her work included in the anthology, *Dozen: The Best of Breath and Shadow*. The magazine, *Breath and Shadow* is a literary journal of disability culture, written and edited exclusively by people with disabilities. This collection represents the best writing from the magazines first twelve years. The anthology is available in paperback and electronic formats through Amazon, Smashwords, or Barnes & Noble. Please consider making a purchase to help this worthy organization and group of poets and writers.

Madelyn Eastlund, Beverly Hills, FL, has received 3rd Place in the Winter Contest of *Galaxy of Verse*, a Texas magazine for her poem, "Pinocchio, Miss Young, and Crayola®"

From the Editor

I must congratulate all of the many FSPA members whose work has recently appeared in so many different publications and formats; and from a single poem to full collections of poetry. I also congratulate all those who have been winning awards. **Well Done, poets!**

To borrow a sentiment of acclaimed poet David Kirby, "Poetry takes Courage." I have defined that to mean **Writing Poetry is never for the faint of heart**. Dr. Kirby was the keynote speaker for the 2014 FSPA Spring Fling with the topic "Poetry and Bravery." I was curious to hear that speech and what an eye-opener it was for me. It does take courage to stand up and read your own words in front of others and it definitely takes courage to have those same words printed in a book, magazine, journal, etc., or judged in a competition. Poetry is often very personal, very internal, and sharing it is like peeling away layers of your soul. Your soul has been bared for others to see; for strangers to read and behold your naked self.

When I first attended a Big Bend Poets meeting in 2009, I had poems with me, but I had never read out loud in front of strangers. I had read poems to my family and shared them with friends, but never in public. As the poets at the meeting began to read, one after the other, around the circle gathered together that night, my breath grew short and sweat lined my palms, and when my turn came, all I could say was, "Pass."

Obviously, I have come a long way since then about reading in front of a large group, as many of you know. But this past year, I faced the bigger hurdle of publishing my own book of poetry. I had written all the poems, some had even been previously published in BBP and FSPA anthologies, but I was still hesitant. I dithered for months blaming my tardiness on not being able to decide on the cover art or the title. But beneath all of that, I knew I was afraid; I questioned and doubted my own abilities in spite what others told me to the contrary. However, I reached deep inside myself and found the courage to be brave—and after reading and rereading the proof, I smiled and clicked the "send" button on my computer.

So, yes, Poetry does take courage, and I know that FSPA members have that courage!

~ Patricia Stevenson Gingrich, editor

OPAP: Paper or Electronic?

"That is the question."

Of Poets & Poetry (OPAP), the FSPA newsletter is printed four times per year and mailed to each FSPA member, along with the NFSPS newsletter, *Strophes*, plus any additional materials that need to be distributed to the membership. With each mailing, FSPA spends from **\$425 to \$530 per issue** for production, folding, insertion of extra materials, and mailing.

Each issue of OPAP is also posted on the FSPA website for viewing and printed out by members. *Strophes* is also on the FSPA website. Contest information, anthology information, as well as information and forms for various events such as Spring Fling and the Fall Convention are also available on the website.

Thus, FSPA is trying to discern if it would be possible to transition to a primarily electronic OPAP with a computer printed version being sent to members who do not have internet access. Members would also have the option of receiving their e-OPAP through their e-mail Inbox.

Chapter Presidents and several volunteers will be working on this polling project through March. The questions are easy and straightforward. And they will also be updating any name or address changes and verifying all contact information.

It is anticipated that the polling process could take several months. At this printing only Sunshine Poets under president Cheri Herald has submitted their results. Judy Krum will be in touch with other Chapter Presidents in order to begin the Chapter wide polling process. Members-at-Large will be contacted by FSPA volunteers by phone and/or e-mail in the next month or so. After the polling is completed, time will be taken to distill the results to form an opinion on whether to transition or not. If such a transition occurs, it would probably not take place before the next fiscal year which begins on November 1, 2017.

~Judy Krum, Project Coordinator



The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center — Busch Gardens

2701 East Fowler Avenue
Tampa, Florida

(5.4 miles west of I-75, 4.1 miles east of I-275)



(Hotel is the solid circle under Fowler Av.)

Hotel Features:

Handicapped accessible
On-site Free Parking
Comfortable setting near local attractions:
 Busch Gardens, USF, MOSI
Beautiful landscaped courtyard
Outdoor pool
Complimentary high speed internet
24-hour self-service business center
24-hour fitness center
Guest laundry services
Hot buffet breakfast

For Reservations:

Call (813)971-4710, ask for group rates
for the **FLORIDA STATE POETS Spring Fling.**

Group rates: \$99 + tax – King bed (up to 2 guests)
\$109 + tax – 2 Double beds,
(up to 4 guests)

Current sales & room taxes are 12%, subject to change.

Quoted rates will be offered, based on availability,
for three days before and three days after our event.

Cut-off date for discounted group rates:

March 21, 2017 (3/21/17).

Reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card.

2017 SPRING FLING REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS

PHONE

eMAIL

CHAPTER

MEMBER AT LARGE GUEST

REGISTRATION FEE: \$25 – FSPA Member
\$35 – Guest

BUFFET DINNER (Friday) - \$30

BOX LUNCH (Saturday): - \$20
(please check choice below)

Beef deli sandwich w/sides & drink

Turkey croissant w/sides & drink

Veggie wrap w/sides & drink

Please send this Registration Form with check or money order for registration fee and meals, made payable to FSPA, with "Spring Fling" on the memo line.

Send by April 8, 2017 to:

Cheri Herald
18 SJ Kellner Blvd.
Beverly Hills, FL 34465