



June, 2019

## The Connecticut Poetry Society Newsletter

The CPS website is <http://ctpoetry.net/>.

While you're online, *Friend us on Facebook.*

### CPS Honorary Board

Margaret Gibson, Connecticut Poet Laureate  
Rennie McQuilkin, Connecticut Poet Laureate,  
2015-2018

Marilyn Nelson, Connecticut Poet Laureate,  
2001-2006

Vivian Shipley, Connecticut State University  
Distinguished Professor at SCSU

### CPS Officers

Co-Presidents: Tony Fusco & Pat Mottola

Vice President: Victor Altshul

Secretary: Christine Beck

Treasurer: Mark Sheridan

Contests: Joan Hofmann

Webmaster: Tony Fusco

Membership: Patti Fusco

CRR Editor: Ginny Connors

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

Outreach: Mark Sheridan & Christine Beck

Program Director: Victor Altshul

Board Meeting Coordinator: Julia Paul

### Interested in Getting More Involved?

We are looking for someone to serve as Publicity Chair. Contact Tony Fusco or Pat Mottola if you can help.

### Success! CPS Poetry Blast 2019!

On May 5, Cinco de Mayo, the annual CPS Poetry Blast was held at Real Art Ways in Hartford. We celebrated with a tribute to Mexican poet Octavio Paz, and a bit of whimsy—creating colorful “Cinco de Mayo” flowers. The program included a poetic interactive activity that elicited thoughtful responses from CPS members and guests. CPS made its annual presentation of POP books to the Hartford Public Library, and the Blast also featured a bookfair, refreshments, door prizes, and a stellar open mic. As always, camaraderie was in abundance. Thanks to all who participated!



Christine Kalafus at Poetry Blast

## **CPS Chapters & Presidents**

### **Bethel**

Liz Massey  
[finchwhistlehaven@gmail.com](mailto:finchwhistlehaven@gmail.com)

This chapter meets at Bethel Library, 189 Greenwood Avenue, on the second Saturday of each month, from 2:00 - 4:00 PM Bring 6 to 8 copies of a poem for the workshop, or just come to listen and respond. To receive an e-mail reminder each month, contact Liz.

### **Farmington Valley**

Terence McCaffrey  
860-416-6684  
[tmccaff24@hotmail.com](mailto:tmccaff24@hotmail.com)

This chapter meets one Tuesday of each month in the library at Tunxis Community College from 6-8 pm. Contact Terrence to get more information and to get on the email notification list. Bring copies of your poem if you want feedback.

### **Greater Hartford**

Julia Paul  
[Julia.Paul@cox.net](mailto:Julia.Paul@cox.net)

The Greater Hartford chapter meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month, Sept. through June from 2-4 pm at Welles Turner Library, 2407 Main Street, Glastonbury. Bring copies of a poem to share if you want feedback on your work.

### **Manchester**

Linda Richardson  
[wwpoetryclub@gmail.com](mailto:wwpoetryclub@gmail.com)

The Manchester chapter meets from 1-3 pm on the second Saturday of each month from September through June at The Arbors, 403 West Center Street in Manchester. Bring ten copies of a poem to share, although we do not give serious critiques of the poems. The chapter meets informally in July and August at the same location.

### **Middletown**

Pamela Guinan  
860-563-5761  
[Pamela.cps@hotmail.com](mailto:Pamela.cps@hotmail.com)

The Middletown chapter meets at the Russell Library, 123 Broad Street at 6 pm on the last Wednesday of each month. Bring copies of a poem for reading and critique.

### **New Haven**

Vic and Laura Altshul  
[lauraaltshul130@gmail.com](mailto:lauraaltshul130@gmail.com)

The New Haven chapter meets on the third Saturday of the month at the Friends Room at Miller Memorial Library, 2901 Dixwell Ave., Hamden, from 10:15 am-12:15 pm.

### **Pomfret**

Christine Kalafus  
[CEKworks@charter.net](mailto:CEKworks@charter.net)

This chapter meets the second Monday of every month, excluding July and August. The meeting time is 7 pm and the location is Pomfret Town House, 17 Town House Road, Pomfret.

### **Southbury**

Marion McGauhy  
860-354-2157  
[Mcgauhy@aol.com](mailto:Mcgauhy@aol.com)

The Southbury Chapter meets on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2 pm. Meetings are held at the Southbury Public Library, 100 Poverty Road. New and prospective members should contact Marion for summer meeting schedule times as the library's hours change during the summer.

### **Wilton**

Ray Rauth  
[Rayrauth@optonline.net](mailto:Rayrauth@optonline.net)

This group meets every third Saturday from 2 to 4 pm in the Wilton Library, 137 Old Ridgefield Road. Members bring in copies of poems to distribute to all of the attendees. The poems should be no more than 40 lines.

## Presidents' Message

—Tony Fusco and Pat Mottola

*How did it get so late so soon?  
It's night before it's afternoon.  
December is here before it's June.  
My goodness how the time has flown.  
How did it get so late so soon?*

—Dr. Seuss

Yes, the days do fly by, and CPS is proud to look back at all that we have accomplished this year and over past years, including planning our future events and activities through 2019. Our gatherings are well-attended and it is a joy to see new faces as well as familiar faces. Look forward to our Summer Picnic—date TBD. Our Holiday Party will take place in December, date also TBD. So much to look forward to! Let us not forget to enjoy and cherish each day and each moment.

*In early June the world of leaf and blade and  
flowers explodes and every sunset is different.*

—John Steinbeck

And, dear members, CPS would not exist with you. We are grateful for your loyalty and your continual support of poetry. Your dues enable us put on educational programs such as the popular and ever-expanding POPs, the Blast, Summer Picnic, Holiday Party, and of course the publication of our nationally renowned poetry journal, *Connecticut River Review*. Your accomplishments make our organization shine.

We would also like to acknowledge our Board Members who work every day of every month to brainstorm new programs and ideas for CPS's growth: Tony Fusco, Co-President. Membership Chair, Webmaster; Pat Mottola, Co-President; Victor Altshul, Vice-President; Mark Sheridan,

Treasurer; Christine Beck, Secretary/POP Administrator; Ginny Connors, CRR Editor, Newsletter Editor; Joan Hofmann, Contest Chair; Julia Paul, member at large. Our success is due to this outstanding team effort—and what a team we are!

## Marilyn Nelson Wins Lilly Poetry Prize

Marilyn Nelson, Honorary Board Member of CPS and Poet Laureate Emeritus of Connecticut, has been awarded the Lilly Poetry Prize by the Poetry Foundation. This honor, which includes an award of \$100,000, is in recognition of lifetime achievement in poetry. Don Share, editor of Poetry Magazine, which is published by the Foundation, said that Nelson “has been committed throughout her career to meticulously chronicling the contemporary and historical experience and contributions of black people in America. Everyone who cares about how life is lived and felt in this country should read her vivid and deeply considered work.”

Nelson is the author of numerous poetry collections, including *Carver: A Life in Poems*, about George Washington Carver, *Wreath for Emmett Till*, a heroic crown of sonnets, *The Freedom Business: Including a Narrative of the Life and adventures of Venture, a Native of Africa*, about Venture Smith, who was captured in West Africa during childhood and sold into slavery. He eventually purchased his own freedom, and he's buried in East Haddam, Connecticut. She also wrote *Fortune's Bones: The Manumission Requiem*, about an enslaved man who died in Waterbury. His skeleton, long anonymous, was held by the Mattatuck Museum for many years.

## Poet in the Spotlight: John Stanizzi



John Stanizzi's ninth book will be in print this fall, and his publication list keeps growing. He began writing poetry at the age of nine, and he insists that poetry has been a lifesaver, and not just metaphorically. He's working on a memoir right now that includes more about that.

Stanizzi finds the demands of these two different writing genres, poetry and creative nonfiction (as in his memoir), to be quite different. He uses an intense, sometimes almost microscopic focus when he's writing poetry. Creative nonfiction requires a step back and a broader look at the subject. No matter what kind of writing he is doing, Stanizzi finds that the process helps him find fulfillment. He typically rises at three in the morning and writes for a few hours during that quiet time, and then rests a bit before going on with his day.

Stanizzi finds that the friendships he's made through the Connecticut Poetry Society and through all of his poetry work have been invaluable. After interviewing Ted Kooser for the Hill-Stead's Sunken Garden program, he's kept in

touch with Kooser and shared thoughts about poetry. Kooser has twice featured poems by Stanizzi in his program "American Life in Poetry."

Stanizzi reads widely and has been influenced by many poets, including W.S. Merwin, Adrienne Rich, and John Berryman.

Along with his wife Carol, Stanizzi lives in Coventry, where they enjoy birding, reading, and spending time with family. He also teaches a class at Manchester Community College.

### The Fallen Leaves – II by John Stanizzi

*-The Things that never can come back, are several —  
Childhood — some forms of Hope — the Dead  
— 1741, Emily Dickinson*

We cannot blame the fog or blame the fallen  
leaves.  
You are just gone; how can we blame the fallen  
leaves?

There was rain that night, and fog, and then you  
vanished.  
This wasn't fog's plan, or the aim of fallen leaves.

People milled about in the yellow light of fog,  
dazed and sad, not seeking the plane of fallen  
leaves.

Mourners bundled in rain gear; I did not know them;  
they meant well when they came upon the fallen  
leaves.

In your absence, those you love will try to exist;  
broken, they embrace the remaining fallen leaves.

The tree will still be there, and the stones on the  
road;  
the same ruts will be there, and the same fallen  
leaves.

On the table are strewn a thousand photographs,  
as if the pile had been raked and named *fallen*  
*leaves*.

*The Things that never can come back, are  
Several—  
some go, others remain after the fallen leaves.*

## Co-President Tony Fusco Named Poet Laureate of West Haven

Tony Fusco was recently named Poet Laureate of West Haven, Connecticut. Tony is co-president of the Connecticut Poetry Society. Over the years he's also served as President, Vice President, Publicity person, and Secretary. He has been writing poetry for over fifty years. Fusco was editor for ten years of *Caduceus*, the poetry journal of the Yale Medical Group Artplace. Tony also produced a public access television program for Citizen's Television in New Haven. Called *West Shore Poets*, it featured poetry events and poets reading. Fusco has served as editor of *Connecticut River Review* and *Long River Run* and currently is the Web Master for CPS, as well as co-president. He has published several books and anthologies by Connecticut poets through his publishing company, Flying Horse Press, and he's published four of his own books of poetry and three chapbooks, including *Extinction* (2018), *Java Scripture* (2014) *Droplines* (2010), and *Jessie's Garden* (2003). His poetry has won prizes in many contests including the Sunken Garden Poetry Prize, and has appeared in over one hundred publications.

## Co-President Pat Mottola Receives Prestigious CT Board of Regents Teaching Award

Pat Mottola was recently named the Connecticut Board of Regents Outstanding Adjunct Professor. The award is based on evidence of outstanding teaching characterized by exceptional teaching skills, innovative/creative instructional delivery, impact on student learning, and collegial collaborations. Mottola has taught Creative Writing at Southern Connecticut State University since 2011. She also teaches poetry to senior citizens across Connecticut. Mottola served as editor of *Connecticut River Review* from 2011-2017. She is the author of two full-length collections of poetry, *Under the Red Dress*, 2016, and *After Hours*, 2018. She was recently featured in the Southern Alumni Magazine.



Pat Mottola and Tony Fusco

## Co-Presidents to Read at Best Video

On Tuesday, June 25, at 7:30 pm, Pat Mottola and Tony Fusco will give a joint reading at Best Video, 1842 Whitney Avenue, Hamden. This will be the second reading in a quarterly series that was initiated in March by Laura and Vic Altshul.



## Mark Sheridan Leads Interactive Poetry Events

The Treasurer of the CPS, Mark Sheridan, was one of the artists invited to this year's *FIGMENT* participatory arts festival on Roosevelt Island in New York City. For two days Sheridan facilitated interactive poetry events, in which groups of people used an "interactive poem" as a prompt to start a dialog about interesting and important topics. The topics included homelessness, refugees, hate speech, and celebrating differences. An interactive poem is different from a traditional poem in that its purpose is to raise questions in the minds of its readers about the topic being discussed. At an interactive poetry event, the group reads the poem and then participates in a facilitated dialog which identifies the questions being raised and explores how they might address them.



Interactive Poetry, with Mark Sheridan

## A New Poet Laureate for the State of Connecticut: Margaret Gibson

Margaret Gibson, of Preston, has been appointed Connecticut's seventh state poet laureate. She follows Rennie McQuilkin, who was appointed in 2015. Governor Ned Lamont said about the appointment, "Connecticut's cultural heritage is part of what makes our state so unique. The poet laureate serves as an ambassador to Connecticut's literary world, and we are excited to have Margaret at the helm of this position."

Gibson hopes to work collaboratively with other Connecticut poets and town poets laureate. She is especially interested in green poetry, or poetry related to the environment.

The author of twelve poetry collections, Gibson has won much recognition for her work. Recent titles include *The Broken Cup* and *Not Hearing the Wood Thrush*, books inspired by her late husband's struggle with Alzheimer's Disease.

## Wit and Wisdom Club Doings

The Wit and Wisdom Club, Manchester's CPS chapter, held a reading at Mary Cheney Library in April and a workshop led by John Stanizzi in May. They will share poetry with the Arbor residents on June 27.

## POP: Poets on Poetry

The POP series continues to flourish. Don't miss Maria Sassi's presentation on Rita Dove, June 29 at 10 am in the Hartford Public Library, which is located at 500 Main Street.



### **Remembering James Mele**

We are sad to note the passing of James B. Mele, of Bristol, who died in April after a long illness. He was a widely published, prize-winning poet as well as a short story writer, and the author of the poetry collection *Dancing in Eurynome's Shoes*. Mele was active in the Farmington chapter of CPS. He taught English for forty years in private schools and colleges in the U.S. and Europe. In 2014 he retired from St. Peter-Marian High School in Worcester, Massachusetts. At various times in the course of his career he also worked as a construction worker, farm hand, and a coach for football and wrestling.

### **Guilford Poets Guild Announces Winners of Guilford High School Poetry Contest**

Several student poets were awarded prizes by the Guilford Poets Guild during National Poetry Month. First place winner was Meredith Bloss. Julia Rubbo took the Gordy Whiteman Prize, Ella Stanley earned second place, and Lauren Mitzelfelt was awarded third place. Winners received cash prizes and books of poetry, and were invited to read their winning poems at the Guild's Second Thursday Poetry Reading, which took place on May 9.

### **Poetry in the Park: Rose Weekend**

Rose Weekend begins on June 15 at Elizabeth Park in Hartford/West Hartford. As well as beautiful rose gardens and a variety of vendors offering crafts, delicious treats, and all-around fun, poetry is featured under a large tent near the gardens.

The poetry schedule is as follows:

11:30-11:45: Frederick-Douglass Knowles II, Hartford's poet laureate

11:45-12:00: John Stanizzi

12:00-1:00: Poets from the CT Coalition of Poets Laureate, including Rennie McQuilkin, Margaret Gibson, and others

1:00-2:30: Annual Rose Garden Reading sponsored by the Friends & Enemies of Wallace Stevens: Bessy Reyna and Sean Frederick Forbes

2:30-3:00: Julie Choffel, poet laureate of West Hartford

### **The Quiet Corner's New CPS Chapter Gathers Momentum**

Our newest CPS chapter, in the part of Connecticut known as "The Quiet Corner," is gathering steam. May's meeting had a good number of attendees, and the group will meet again on June 10th (then there will be a break until September). Kudos to Christine Kalafus, group facilitator, who is visiting libraries in the region to get the word out.