

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

President: Pat Mottola

Vice President: Victor Altshul

Acting Secretary: Mark Sheridan

Treasurer: Mark Sheridan

Contests: Kathleen McIntosh

Webmaster: Tony Fusco

Membership: Patti Fusco

CRR Editors: Ginny Connors & Debbie Gilbert

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

Publicity: David Cundy

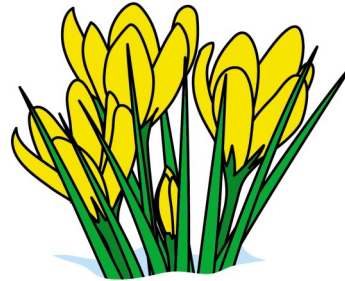
POP Director: Jeanne LeVasseur

Chapter Liaison: Pat Mottola

Youth Outreach: Nancy Manning

CPS Secretary Position Open

CPS is looking for someone to fill the position of Corporate Secretary. Please email Pat Mottola at patriciamottola@yahoo.com if you are interested, or if you have questions.



CPS Chapter News

The Quiet Corner Chapter is set to resume in-person meetings at the Pomfret Library in March.

The Southbury Chapter members are staying touch remotely, but have not met during the past year.

The **Farmington Valley Chapter** is meeting via Zoom on the first Mondays of each month. New members are welcome. Email **Debbie Gilbert** at debbiewgilbert@hotmail.com to receive the Zoom link. Poems will be collected by Debbie and sent in one batch to attendees for feedback during the Zoom session. Each session will be capped at ten members.

Ridgefield Chapter members should email **Barbara Jennes** barbjennes@gmail.com for the library's registration URL, which changes monthly. After registering at the library, they will receive a Zoom link and an email to which they will send their poems for the meeting.

President's Message

Hello dear CPS members!

Here we are in March of 2021! Just ahead of us is Spring, the season of new beginnings, when fresh buds bloom, animals awaken, and the earth seems to come to life again. Did you know that Springtime makes us more creative? Extra hours of sun can actually change the way people think and leave our minds open to new information and creative thoughts.

So many wonderful events take place in March! Did you know that March 21st is **World Poetry Day**? A decision to proclaim 21 March as World Poetry Day was adopted during UNESCO's 30th session held in Paris in 1999. The very first World Poetry Day was held on March 21, 2000.

World Poetry Day celebrates one of humanity's most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity. Practiced throughout history – in every culture and on every continent – poetry speaks to our common humanity and our shared values, transforming the simplest of poems into a powerful catalyst for dialogue and peace.

Speaking of wonderful events in March, I will be hosting another Monthly Open Mic on – you guessed it – March 21st, World Poetry Day! I am so glad that these **Monthly Open Mics (MOMs)**—yes, we have POPs so why not have MOMs—are so popular. I plan to host one each month, so check your emails for details and flyers. I certainly look forward to when we can again gather for our fabulous in-person events!

Also, a reminder that NFSPS Contests are happening right now. The deadline is March 15th.

Please read the Rules for Online Submissions [HERE](#). Note that some contests are for NFSPS members only. **Yes, that's you!** As a member of CPS, you are automatically a member of NFSPS – yet another perk that your CPS dues support! P.S. Don't forget, your dues are renewable in April – Poetry Month!

See you soon!

Pat Mottola, President

More Chapter News

Manchester's Wit & Wisdom Club has a cordial working relationship with *The Journal Inquirer*. The newspaper publishes a poem by one of the members every month. Currently, the Manchester chapter members are exchanging poems through email each month.

Some of our CPS chapters are relatively new; others have been existence for 15, 20, 25 years, or even longer! Chapter members are expected to be CPS members. Visitors can attend two or three meetings before deciding whether or not they want to join CPS and attend the chapter meetings regularly.

Nancy Manning Joins the CPS Board

We are excited to welcome Nancy Manning to the executive board of CPS. She will serve as Youth Outreach Coordinator. One of her first actions was to contact high schools throughout the state to encourage student poets to enter the Lynn DeCaro contest. Young people are the future of poetry. Many people, young and not so young, were inspired recently by Amanda Gorman's outstanding presentation of an original poem during Joe Biden's presidential inauguration.

CPS Chapters & Presidents

COVID-19 has changed the way our chapters meet. If you want to know more about meeting with a specific chapter, please get in touch with the chapter president.

Bethel

Liz Massey
finchwhistlehaven@gmail.com

Members are meeting via Zoom, and correspond informally using email.

Farmington Valley

Debbie Gilbert
debbiewgilbert@hotmail.com

This chapter meets on the first Monday of each month, from 7-9 pm. Email Debbie to submit your poem for critique and to receive the Zoom link. So as to have enough time to respond to each poem, we cap each meeting at ten participants.

Greater Hartford

Julia Paul
Julia.Paul@cox.net

Currently, this chapter is meeting via Zoom. Members are looking forward to the resumption of in-person meetings.

Haiku Chapter

Marita Gargiulo
MarGarArts@mail.com

This chapter welcomes CPS members interested in reading and writing haiku. Members of the Haiku Chapter will be invited to share haiku via email on a regular basis.

Manchester

Kimball Hunt
kimballhh@gmail.com
860-384-4163

This chapter is exchanging poems via email.

Middletown

Pamela Guinan
860-563-5761
Pamela.cps@hotmail.com

New Haven

Laura Altshul
lauraaltshul130@gmail.com

The New Haven chapter has been meeting on the third Saturday of each month.

Pomfret

Christine Kalafus
CEKworks@charter.net

This chapter is set to resume in-person meetings. Meetings will be held at the Pomfret Library, 449 Pomfret Street, from 7-9 pm on the second Monday of each month.

Ridgefield

Barb Jennes
barbjennes@gmail.com

This chapter will meet every fourth Saturday from 10 am to noon, via Zoom until the Ridgefield library re-opens. Email Barb to get the library registration page URL, which changes monthly. Interested CPS members can register on the library website (barbjennes@gmail.com); they will subsequently receive the Zoom link and an email address to which their poems should be sent.

Shoreline

Roger Singer
cabanaph424@verizon.net

This chapter held their first meeting in June of 2020. Contact Roger to get particulars about upcoming meetings.

Southbury

Marion McGauhy
860-354-2157
Mcgauhy@aol.com

Chapter members are staying in touch remotely.

Wilton

Ray Rauth
Rayrauth@optonline.net

The Wilton Workshop will meet from 10:30 until noon on the third Friday of each month, via Zoom.. Registration will be through the Wilton Library. After next June we are hoping, perhaps, to once again have in-person meetings.

Poet in the Spotlight: Charles Margolis

South Windsor's Poet Laureate, Charles Margolis, says "My pen is my memory. Writing about my childhood, home, and family allows me to be there again. Writing is a portal through time."

He came to poetry relatively late in life, when he listened to an interview with poet Donald Hall discussing his book *Without*, about the illness and death of his wife, poet Jane Kenyon. "I was mesmerized and teary-eyed. At the time, I was a volunteer visitor with Hospice. The following morning, I awoke in the pre-dawn and wrote 'The Hospice Butterfly,' my first official poem," he says of that experience. He was a teacher at the time, and friendly with a School Resource Officer, Ciara McDermott. She was much admired in the school community, and was a talented poet. She became his friend and mentor, encouraging him to write.



The Connecticut Poetry Society is a source of inspiration to Margolis. He is impressed with the poetry events and workshops offered by the organization and its members. He is pleased to see that members can express their concerns relating to the environment and to social justice through poetry.

Margolis' most recent book, *P.S. Poems and Short Stories* was written as a tribute to his brother David, who had an extraordinary career as the Associate Assistant Attorney General of the United States. An earlier book, *Class Dismissed! A Teacher Says Goodbye*, was written when Margolis was retiring from his teaching career. He's also the author of *Did I Really Say That? A Guide to the Pageant Interview*. This is not a poetry book, but a guide to handling interviews. Margolis is an interview and public speaking coach, always interested in individual speaking styles and the creative process. At the moment, he is working on a book of reflections on life which he hopes to leave as a legacy for the two-year-old twins who live next door.

Charles Margolis is co-founder of the Connecticut Coalition of Poets Laureate. Through this organization he has met many talented poets. In his role as South Windsor Poet Laureate, he initiated a community poetry project that resulted in a book of poems written by South Windsor residents, from noted poets to school children. 150 people attended the publication party.

Along with Manchester Poet Laureate **Ryan Parker** and Vernon Poet Laureate **Pegi Deitz Shea**, he is planning a series of outdoor summer readings called *Coming Out of Covid: A Celebration of Poetry & Community*. Poems, photos, and audience reflections on the pandemic will be compiled into a book. CPS members are invited to participate.

Your CPS Membership

Annual membership for the Connecticut Poetry Society runs from April 1 to March 30. You will be receiving an email from Patti Fusco, our membership chair, if you need to renew your membership. Dues are \$30 per year (students \$15) and can be paid via PayPal or by sending a check to CPS Membership, 311 Shingle Hill Road, West Haven, CT 06516. Please make sure we have your current information, phone, address and email so that you receive all publications and information. For the PayPal link and more information, visit <https://www.ctpoetry.net/membership.html>.

Membership in CPS entitles you to membership in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies and allows you to enter contests that they sponsor. As a member of CPS, you can join a local CPS chapter where you can workshop your poems and meet with fellow poets. You will also receive a complimentary copy of *Connecticut River Review*, a national poetry journal which is published annually. CPS is presently holding monthly open mics for members only, so make sure your dues are current.

Glastonbury Seeks Next Laureate

Applications are now being accepted for poets interested in serving as Glastonbury's Third Honorary Poet Laureate. **Alexandrina Sergio** was their first laureate and **Michael Lepore** is currently in this position.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old and a resident of Glastonbury. Duties include fostering public appreciation of poetry in the Glastonbury area, three public presentations each year, and editing the monthly poetry column in the *Glastonbury Citizen*. Interested applicants should apply by April 30.

Please submit a cover letter, resume and 4-5 selections of your work, either in paper format or electronically. Submit to:

Barbara.Bailey@glastonbury-ct.gov ;

send paper submissions to Welles-Turner Memorial Library, Attn: Poet Laureate Committee, 2407 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033

Recent Poetry Books by Our Members

Kimball Haines Hunt, who leads the Manchester chapter of CPS, has published a poetry book called *Deciphering Uncertainty*. For this book he collaborated with his daughter, whose paintings provided illustrations for the book and for the cover. Many of the poems in this book are sonnets or villanelles.

Kelsay Books has released **Curt Curtin's** second full-length poetry book: *Kerry Dancers*. Curt is a first-generation Irish-American who grew up in Boston. The book contains poems of family and of the Irish immigrant experience in the early 20th century. To hear the poet read from his work, go to YouTube or to www.curtcurtinpoet.com.



Next POP Program Focuses on Dante

This year marks the 700th anniversary of Dante's death. From what instances is poetry born and what state of mind does it inspire? These are questions that lie at the heart of Dante's work. Join us on Saturday, **March 27th at 11 am** as we discuss Dante Alighieri, his sonnets, and an excerpt from *Purgatory*. Look for an email soon about how to register for this exciting program.

Our presenter will be Andrea Celli, chair of the Italian Studies program at the University of Connecticut. His research focuses on cultural interactions between Mediterranean Europe and the Islamic world in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. The title of his forthcoming book is *A Mediterranean Comedy. Dante and Islam, from Medieval Tuscany to Post-Colonial Italy*.

Wintonbury Poetry Series

The Wintonbury Poetry Series, hosted by CPS members **Tom Nicotera** and **Sheri Beddingfield**, continues to be a popular venue.

On March 18th at 7 pm **Polly Brody** and **Nancy Kerrigan** are the featured readers: "A Poet Ornithologist and a Poet Psychotherapist."

On April 15th at 7 pm Poet Laureate of Connecticut **Margaret Gibson** will share some poetry.

For more information, go to the Bloomfield library website at bplct.org, The Virtual Calendar of Events shows the programs and allows

Calendar of Events shows the programs and allows you to register for the readings. You can also sign up for the Open Mic.

In May, two different workshops will be hosted by **Ginny Lowe Connors**. They are scheduled for May 13th and May 20th at 7 pm. The offerings include a workshop on "Writing a List Poem" and a workshop on "Pathways to Publication."

Riverwood Poetry Series

The spring events hosted by Riverwood will be virtual, via Zoom. On March 9th at 7 pm, Native American Voices will be represented by **Max Early** and **Cheryl Savageau**. This program is not to be missed!

On April 13, at 7 pm, there will be a reading from some of the contributors to *Waking Up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis*, edited by **Margaret Gibson**. In their own particular and indigenous words and images, these poets say where they are, who they are, and what else lives with them in their surrounding world, be it terrestrial or oceanic, forested or plain, ice-bound or tropical. These poets bind us to the earth.

A discussion and Q & A session will follow the reading. There will be no Open Mic for this program.

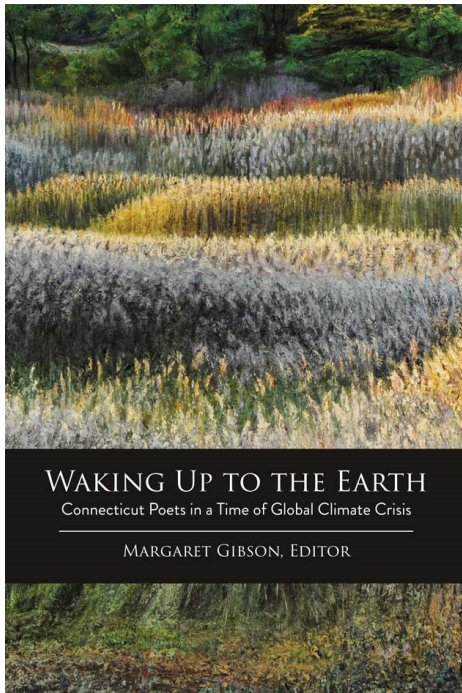
On May 11th, the esteemed poet **Vivian Shipley** will conduct a reading of some of her work.

Registration for these events is through the Riverwood Facebook page: Riverwood Poetry Series, Inc, or through Real Art Ways' website:

<https://www.realartways.org/> .

New Anthology of Connecticut Poets

Connecticut Poet Laureate **Margaret Gibson** has edited an anthology of poems entitled *Waking Up to the Earth: Connecticut Poets in a Time of Global Climate Crisis*. The volume, funded by a grant from the Academy of American Poets, includes poems by 63 Connecticut poets, many of them CPS members.



The anthology will be the focus of several readings and events during April, National Poetry Month. These include a Zoom reading sponsored by the Stonington Free Library on Sunday, April 11th at 5 pm, and one sponsored by Riverwood Poetry Series on Tuesday, April 13th. The White Memorial Conservation Center will feature recorded video readings by selected poets, a Zoom talk on nature poetry and climate crisis by **Margaret Gibson**, and a Green Poetry Workshop led by poet **Edwina Trentham**. **David Leff** will coordinate these events and offer introductions. To register for the workshop, contact him at onktaadn@comcast.net.

Information on the Earth Day program and other events can be found at <https://whitememorialcc.org/>.

Contest News

The **2021 Nutmeg Poetry Award Contest** was successfully completed at the end of February. The awards are as follows:

First Place: **David Epstein** for his poem "Demeter"

Second Place to **Sharon Charde** for her poem "Hostage"

Third Place to **Srinivas Mandavilli** for his poem "My Grandmother's Cook."

The text of all three poems will appear on the CPS website, accompanied by comments from judge **Sean Frederick Forbes**. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all who participated in this contest.

The **Lynn DeCaro Poetry Contest** for Connecticut High School students is currently in progress.

The **2021 Connecticut Poetry Award Contest** will open to submissions on April 1, with a deadline of May 31. The 2021 contest will be judged by former Connecticut Poet Laureate **Rennie McQuilkin**. Prizes of \$400, \$100, and \$50 are offered, along with publication in *Connecticut River Review*. This contest is open to all poets. You can find guidelines and the submission link on the CPS website.

NFSPS Poetry Contests

CPS members also belong to the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. They sponsor over 50 different contests annually with prizes of up to \$1000. You must enter by March 15th. Click here for more information http://www.nfsps.com/poetry_contests.htm .

We would love to see some of our members take home big prizes for their poems!

Exciting New Poetry Contest Coming This Summer

\$1,000 and publication in *Connecticut River Review* will be awarded to the winner of the **Experimental Poetry Prize**, a cutting-edge contest sponsored by the Connecticut Poetry Society. **Richard Deming**, Director of Creative Writing at Yale University, will judge the contest.

Submissions may include poems composed using 1) an entirely new form; 2) an existing form that is considered experimental; or 3) a radical subversion of a traditional form. Your innovation should be apparent to a serious but non-academically-trained reader and should be in the service of ingenuity and piercing the armor of expectations.

Look for more on this contest in the next newsletter.



Submissions For *Connecticut River Review*

Submissions to *Connecticut River Review* are open through April 1st. Because of the high number of submissions we receive, acceptance for publication is competitive, but we always include some wonderful poems by Connecticut poets, alongside poems by others from across the nation.

Send up to four pages of poems on a single document, no more than one poem on a page. Include your name on the submission as well as on the submission form.

Your cover letter and a brief bio of no more than 75 words should go on the submission form. Simultaneous submissions are acceptable if we are notified immediately on acceptance elsewhere.

Electronic submissions only: <https://connecticutriverreview.submittable.com/>