

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

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### **CPS Honorary Board**

Antoinette Brim-Bell, Connecticut Poet Laureate

Margaret Gibson, Connecticut Poet Laureate,  
2019-2022

Rennie McQuilkin, Connecticut Poet Laureate,  
2015-2018

Marilyn Nelson, Connecticut Poet Laureate,  
2001-2006

Vivian Shipley, CSU Distinguished Professor  
Emeritus

### **CPS Officers**

President: Pat Mottola

Vice President: Sharon Smith

Secretary: Amy Graver

Treasurer: Patti Fusco

Membership: Patti Fusco

Contests: Kathleen McIntosh

Webmaster: Tony Fusco

CRR Editors: Ginny Connors & Debbie Gilbert

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

POP Director: Jeanne LeVasseur

Chapter Liaison: Pat Mottola

Youth Outreach: Nancy Manning



*Happy Holidays*

### **POP: Poets on Poetry**

Our popular POP series will continue to be in a ZOOM format. The Zoom links will be available soon.

On January 26, at 7 pm, **Ruth Hoberman** will host a program about the poet **Diane Seuss**. Diane Seuss, author of five books of poetry, published the first of these at age forty. Born in Indiana and raised in Michigan, she describes herself as a midwestern, working-class poet. She is also a brilliant and inspiring presence on the contemporary poetry scene. Her poems combine a uniquely edgy, earthy voice with a generosity of spirit that readers fall in love with. *frank: sonnets*, published in 2021, won the Pulitzer Prize.

The program's host, **Ruth Hoberman**, taught modern British literature at Eastern Illinois University for thirty years, and her own poetry is widely published.

## President's Message

Hello Dear CPS Members!

We are reaching the end of 2022 already! Thanksgiving is just behind us, and we look forward to the December holidays. This is a time of year to remember and be grateful for those who have enriched our lives.

CPS is planning many special events for 2023! We'll start off the year with our New Year's Party for members, scheduled for Saturday afternoon, January 14, at the beautiful Riverfront Community Center in Glastonbury. We will continue our President's Workshops. The last PW of 2022 is scheduled for Sunday, December 18, at 6:30 p.m. January's dates are January 8 and January 22. Please contact me at [ctpoetryline@gmail.com](mailto:ctpoetryline@gmail.com) if you would like to participate!

POPs and MOMs will continue as popular monthly events. And of course our wonderful contests! We are ever expanding our programs – keep your eyes peeled for notices about readings and workshops, as I will be sending out emails as they are set and dates are secured.

I would like to take this time to thank all of our donors – many of whom choose to remain anonymous – for their generous contributions to CPS. These gifts, along with your dues, allow us to plan special programs and events for you, as well educational programs and events for all our fellow poets in Connecticut and beyond.

### ***By the way...GOTTA MINUTE?***

Want to be more involved in CPS? Want to be the creator or co-creator of all things wonderful? Organizer of the special and/or unusual? Would you like to be a Coordinator of Anything? Program planner? We need volunteers to help

expand our programs! Got an idea? Suggestion? I would love to hear from you! Email me your ideas or your availability. It will be a gift to CPS and to yourself! Remember, **you** are the best of CPS! I wish you the very best December and a happy, healthy New Year.

***“Every year you make a resolution to change yourself. This year, make a resolution to be yourself.” –unknown***

Sincerely,  
Pat Mottola, President

## Oreanaug Chapter Hosts Ekphrastic Writing Workshops

The Oreanaug Chapter has begun hosting ekphrastic writing workshops in the art gallery at Woodbury Public Library. The group met in October to spend time with and write about the works of award-winning pastel artist **Peter Seltzer**. The poems, read by the poets, and the artwork are available for you to enjoy at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wygfo9LRBVU>.

The chapter will host its next workshop on December 10th at 1 pm in the library's art gallery, where the works of **Marc Chabot** will be on display. An artist's reception will follow at 2 pm. The workshops, which will continue in the new year, are free and open to the public. Woodbury Public Library is at 269 Main Street South. Contact **Sandy Carlson** at

[oreanaugchaptercps@gmail.com](mailto:oreanaugchaptercps@gmail.com) if you have questions.

## 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](mailto:finchwhistlehaven@gmail.com)

This chapter meets at the Bethel Library on the second Saturday of each month, from 2-4 pm. Bring copies of a poem to discuss.

### Farmington Valley

Debbie Gilbert  
[debbiewgilbert@hotmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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  
[margararts1000@gmail.com](mailto:margararts1000@gmail.com)

This online chapter welcomes CPS members interested in reading and writing haiku. Members of the group share haiku and senryu regularly.

### Manchester

Matthew Borrelli  
[matthewborrelli296@gmail.com](mailto:matthewborrelli296@gmail.com)

Manchester's Wit and Wisdom group moved to a ZOOM format in February and will continue meeting on the second Saturday of each month. It is hoped that Face to Face meetings will resume soon.

### Middletown

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

### New Haven

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

The New Haven chapter has been meeting on the third Saturday of each month. Presently they meet via Zoom, for the safety of all members.

### Pomfret

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

This chapter is resuming 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.

### Oreana Chapter: Woodbury, Watertown, Southbury, Roxbury, Bethlehem

Sandy Carlson  
[oreanaugchaptercps@gmail.com](mailto:oreanaugchaptercps@gmail.com)

This new chapter meets on the first Saturday of Each month at 3 pm. Participants meet virtually. Contact Sandy Carlson for more information.

### Ridgefield

Barb Jennes  
[barbjennes@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:barbjennes@gmail.com)); they will subsequently receive the Zoom link and an email address to which their poems should be sent.

### Wilton

Ray Rauth  
[Rayrauth@optonline.net](mailto: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. We are hoping to resume in-person meetings before long.

## Poet in the Spotlight: Margaret Plaganis

Poet and visual artist **Margaret Plaganis** began attending poetry readings after she retired from teaching art in the Hartford public schools. She has particularly enjoyed programs sponsored by the Riverwood Poetry Series. The featured poets and open mics have inspired her. Plaganis began participating in open mics and attending poetry workshops around this time. She joined Connecticut Poetry Society and is grateful for the creative resources CPS sponsors and for the community of resourceful poets who continue to inspire her.



Margaret Plaganis

Margaret Plaganis's creative energy is expressed in her artwork as well as in her writing. She works with graphics, textiles, collages, and mixed media. She also enjoys spending time in her garden and in the company of friends and family.

Plaganis has been writing since early childhood; she has a long practice of writing in journals and creating poems. In the 1980's she began writing art reviews for the *Hartford Advocate*. She explains that rendering her impressions of art "into meaningful column inches forced me to practice writing skills, to meet deadlines, collaborate with editors." She likes the challenge of writing in various genres. "As I shift from prose to poetry or to dialogue for a play, those domains present unique problems to solve. It changes my senses, makes me notice more."

Her poems are often grounded in themes of family, childhood, and relationships. Recently she's been working on short pieces based on

conversations between three generations of women in her family. She is refining a collection of persona poems too. In her writing she works toward sharp images and clear narrative voices. She composes until she feels she's reached the heart of a poem, and then she wrangles with words and phrases until the poem makes sense. Plaganis speaks of the "arduous shaping of the spirit of a poem," and calls it a slow process that "brings another kind of light."

When she is reading or listening to poems by other writers, she finds that the surprise of a beguiling voice is what forces her to pay attention, engage, and feel connected. Presently she is keeping company with poetry by **Linda Gregg, Antoinette Brim-Bell, Julien Strong, Alicia Suskin Ostriker, and Stanley Kunitz.**

## Contest News

In September the results of the second **Experimental Poetry Contest** were announced. **Brandon Kelley** of Philadelphia won for his audio poem “Straight White Guys.” **Richard Deming** judged.

Named as finalists were: **Abigail Weiss**, **Nikki Ummel**, and **Julián Bañuelos**.

Winners in the second **Vivian Shipley Poetry Award**, judged by **Charles Rafferty**, were announced in October. They are:

**1<sup>st</sup> – Srinivas Mandavilli** for “Blackouts”

**2<sup>nd</sup> – Rosa Lane** for “Dents de Lion”

**3<sup>rd</sup> – Claire Scott** for “Cold Bleak Lack Versus Spring Crocuses”

An Honorable Mention was awarded to **Chuck Madansky** for “Cross Examination.”

Congratulations to all of these poets! See the poems now on the CPS website.

## Current and Upcoming Contests

The **Nutmeg Contest**, a contest for Connecticut residents only, is open for submissions now through January 31. The 2023 Nutmeg judge is **Joan Kwon Glass**, poet laureate of Milford, Connecticut. See guidelines on the CPS website.

**Margaret Gibson** will judge the **Margaret Gibson Poet Laureate Poetry Award**. This special contest for Spring 2023 will offer first, second and third place prizes for a poem on *nature in a time of global climate change*. Submissions will be open March 1 through April 15. There is no fee to submit; see

guidelines on the CPS website.

The **Connecticut Poetry Award** will open on April 1. It’s open to all poets! See guidelines in the 2022 *CRR* and on the CPS website.

CPS members are also members of **NFSPS** (National Federation of State Poetry Societies). Among the benefits of this organization is the opportunity to submit to any or all of their 50 annual poetry contests, which accept entries from January 1 — March 1. They offer cash prizes large and small. Get more information at

[http://www.nfsps.com/poetry\\_contests.htm](http://www.nfsps.com/poetry_contests.htm)

## Membership Reminder

Members should make sure that CPS has your most current contact information so we can stay in touch. Send updated info to **Patti Fusco**, [pwfusco@gmail.com](mailto:pwfusco@gmail.com), or 311 Shingle Hill Road, West Haven, CT 06516. We want to keep you up to date!

## Wintonbury Poetry Series

The next Wintonbury poetry program will occur on December 15 at 7 pm. Sign up here to register for this virtual program and to sign up for the open mic:

<https://bplct.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=10529&backTo=Calendar&startDate=2022/12/01>

**Antoinette Brim-Bell** and **Susan Frischkorn** will be the featured readers. **Garrett Phelan** will host. Antoinette Brim-Bell is the state poet laureate, an author, editor, and educator. Susan Frischkorn is the award-winning Cuban-American author of three poetry books and five chapbooks.



## Holiday Peace Poetry Reading

Celebrate the peace and hope of the holidays with some of our best local poets reading the finest work of the season. After many challenges in recent years, our laureates want to unite us to remember the true purpose of the holy day: peace, light, and love. Join in a community of joy and put aside your shopping lists for one night. Sponsored by the Oliver Wolcott Library, this program will take place via Zoom on December 15 from 7-8:30 pm.

[click here at 7 PM on December 15 to Zoom to the Event.](#)

Poets who will read include:

**Rennie McQuilkin** - CT Poet Laureate Emeritus; **Ginny Lowe Connors** - West Hartford Poet Laureate Emerita; **Robert Piazza** - Litchfield Poet Laureate; **Sandy Carlson** - Woodbury Poet Laureate; **Rick Magee** - Bethel Poet Laureate; **Barb Jennes** - Ridgefield Poet Laureate; **Karen Silk** - Washington Poet Laureate; **Joan Hoffman** - Canton Poet Laureate; **Deborah Rose** - New Milford Poet Laureate; **Jack Sheedy** - Harwinton; **Patricia Martin** - Torrington; and **Jim Kelleher** - Goshen.

Each poet will read a poem of their own or a classic by a favorite author.

**Connecticut River Review** will begin accepting submissions on February 1st. The deadline is April 15th, and submissions are considered on a rolling basis. Please send us your best original, unpublished poems via our Submittable Page.

<https://connecticutriverreview.submittable.com/>  
Guidelines can be found on the CPS website.

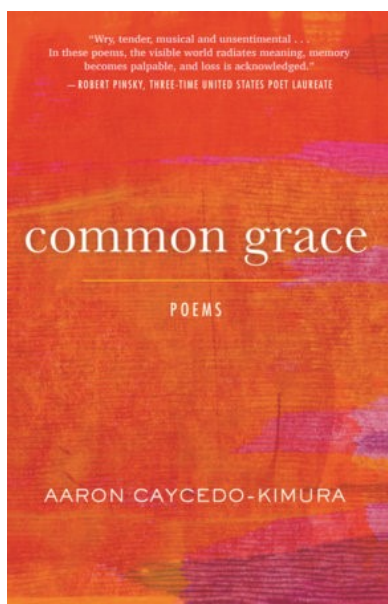
## Poets at Large to Present Programs in Connecticut and Massachusetts

Poets at Large, a regional poetry group, has presented programs at the Roseland Park in Woodstock, Connecticut and will soon expand to the Rose Room Café in Webster, Massachusetts. The poetry readings will be held Sundays at 2 pm on February 26th and March 26<sup>th</sup> at the Rose Room Café, 4 East Main St, in Webster, with additional spoken word/poetry programs to be held in the spring. Open mic segments are always included, and refreshments are available.

Some of the poets who will be reading in 2023 include the current Connecticut State Poet Laureate, **Antoinette Brim-Bell**, as well as the current Massachusetts Beat Poet Laureate **Tommy Twilight**. Among other participants will be Poet Laureate of West Haven, Connecticut **Tony Fusco**, Beat Poet Laureate for Life **Paul Richmond**, Pegi Deitz Shea, and T'Challa Williams.

## New Book Published by Aaron Cacedo-Kimura

Beacon Press has published the first major poetry collection by Aaron Caycedo-Kimura, an award-winning student of Robert Pinsky. Poems in the book explore the inherited trauma within his Japanese American family, his life as an artist, and his bond with his wife. In 65 lyric poems organized into a triptych, *Common Grace* offers an important new lens into Asian American life, art, and love.



## Poets Are Not a Luxury

Five poets recently came together to present a panel discussion about the importance of writing to an appreciative high school audience in West Haven. **José B. González, Joan Kwon Glass, Natasha Gambrell, Frederick-Douglass Knowles II,** and **Antoinette Brim-Bell** came together for “Poets Are Not A Luxury,” an afternoon of poetry, conversation, and the joy of books at West Haven High School. The title of the program is derived from Audre Lorde’s 1985 essay [“Poetry Is Not A Luxury.”](#)

ArtsWest Connecticut organized the event, with support from Connecticut Humanities, the Arts Council of Greater New Haven, and the Sustainable CT Community Matching Fund. Books flowed throughout the event. Each panel member spoke of what propelled them to write.

One wrote to connect with ancestors. Others wrote to remember their past, to honor those who came before, to hone their craft, or as a way to teach. Joan Kwon Glass spoke about how music helped her overcome a writer’s block. Natasha Gambrell spoke in great detail about how her experience as a member of the Eastern Pequot Tribal Nation shaped her methodology when writing poetry. Gambrell also pointed to the way poetry can help young people write through trauma they are experiencing and share their own feelings with a wider audience. While her work acknowledges the vast trauma Indigenous people have experienced, she said that her focus is on uplifting and inspiring her people.



Photo credit: Asher Duke



### In Memoriam: Dr. Barry Zaret

We sadly note that long-time CPS member **Dr. Barry Zaret** died after an automobile crash recently. He was a prolific writer, the author of nonfiction books such as *Heart Care for Life: Developing the Program that Works Best for You*, and three poetry books: *Journeys*, *When You Can't Do Any More*, and *A House of Many Rooms*. He also served as the founding editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Nuclear Cardiology*.

Dr. Zaret was a professor emeritus at Yale Medical School, a respected teacher and mentor, and the recipient of many awards. He is survived by his wife, Renee Drell, and his sons.

### Riverwood Poetry Series

Riverwood Poetry Series @ Real Art Ways will host **Terry Blackhawk** on Wednesday, December 14, 7 PM, at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor Street in Hartford. This is a live event. An open mic will follow the featured reader. **Terry Blackhawk** is founding director (1995-2015) of Detroit's InsideOut Literary Arts Project and recipient of the John ([www.insideoutdetroit.org](http://www.insideoutdetroit.org)) and recipient of the John Ciardi Prize (for *Escape Artist*), the Pablo Neruda Prize, a Kresge Arts in Detroit literary fellowship and various prestigious grants. *Kirkus Reviews* named her fifth full-length collection *One Less River* a Top 2019 Indie Poetry title.

### Wordhouse Reading Series

The Wordhouse Reading Series takes place at the Noah Webster House, 227 South Main Street, in West Hartford, and is hosted by **Jim Finnegan**. On December 10<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm, **Julie Choffel** and **Kryisia Jopek** will be the featured readers, who will share samples of their work after the open mic.

**Julie Choffel** is the author of *The Hello Delay* (Fordham UP) and the chapbooks *The Chicories* (Ethel Press) and *The Inevitable Return of What We Do Not Love* (forthcoming from Finishing Line Press). Originally from Austin, Texas, she currently lives near Hartford and teaches at the University of Connecticut.

**Kryisia Jopek's** third book *DIRGE: a ballet for 13 dancers* is forthcoming (December, 2022) with Pierian Springs Press. *Maps and Shadows*, her lyrical novel, won a Silver Benjamin Franklin award in Historical Fiction. She is the Founding Editor of *diaphanous micro*, an e-journal of literary and visual art.

### Student Named Poet Laureate of Vernon

**Caitlin Chatterton** was recently appointed Vernon's Poet Laureate for a one-year term. She is a scholar-athlete, and co-editor of the Rockville High School newspaper. She has won awards in the national Scholastic competition, and its "Letters About Literature" contest. Her work has been published in *Unsolved* and *CT Student Writer*. She completed an apprenticeship at the Mark Twain House and has performed at the CT Literary Festival.