

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

Secretary: Mark Sheridan

Treasurer: Mark Sheridan

Contests: Kathleen McIntosh

Webmaster: Tony Fusco

Membership: Patti Fusco

CRR Editors: Ginny Connors, Debbie Gilbert,
& Luisa Caycedo-Kimura

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

Publicity: David Cundy

POP Director: Jeanne LeVasseur

Chapter Liaison: Pat Mottola

Youth Outreach: Nancy Manning



Hurray for summer!

CPS Chapter News

The CPS Haiku Chapter is celebrating its one-year anniversary in June. This online group shares monthly haiku and senryu among members throughout the state. They often write in response to prompts. For more information and links regarding haiku, click on "Haiku Day 2020" on the CPS website or [here](#). New members are always welcome.

Several chapters will be on hiatus at this time, including the Quiet Corner Chapter, the Shoreline Chapter, and the Southbury Chapter.

The Bethel Chapter will resume in-person workshops at the Bethel Library, beginning on June 12th, from 2-4 pm. Masks are required. Members are asked to bring five copies of a poem to be appreciated and discussed.

President's Message

Looking Up and Moving Forward!

Dear CPS Members,

Dealing with the unprecedented change and uncertainty of the past year, CPS has shown remarkable strength and resilience. I would like to extend a special thank you to *you*, our loyal CPS members. During the pandemic you have been patient and supportive as we shifted our activities to online formats and, thanks to you, have kept our poetry community alive and thriving.

We are looking up and moving forward! I am happy to announce that we are planning our "first-in-a-while" in-person event for CPS Members! **Save the date** – our Annual August Summer Party will take place the afternoon of **August 28** at the beautiful Glastonbury Riverfront Community Center, a safe and spacious venue. We want to make this event very special for you – a catered event with the focus on fun, socializing, free gifts, and of course our ever-popular open mic! I look forward to meeting new members and reconnecting with old friends. Every member will receive a copy of the hot-off-the-press 2021 *Connecticut River Review*. More information to follow as the time gets near.



Our MOM and POP Series (Monthly Open Mic and Poets on Poetry) will each have one more presentation this season and then resume in September – check your emails for dates and times.

Also, look for our brand new Experimental Poetry Contest with a \$1000 prize for the winner! (Submission period is June 15 – July 31) As always, check our CPS website (www.ctpoetry.net) for the latest information.

Reminder: our new CPS Email is ctpoetryline@gmail.com.

So, dear friends, enjoy the summer, stay safe and well, and I'll see you all in August!

Pat Mottola, President
Connecticut Poetry Society

New Board Member

We are pleased to welcome **Luisa Caycedo-Kimura** as a new CPS Board Member. She will be one of the editors of *Connecticut River Review*. As our poetry journal has gained wider recognition, the number of submissions has skyrocketed. This year we received submissions from over 1500 poets, so Luisa's contributions to the production of the journal are especially appreciated. A former attorney, she left the legal profession to pursue her passion for writing. Luisa's poetry has appeared widely and she is the recipient of a number of fellowships, residencies, and honors.

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 will again be meeting in person, starting on June 12th, at the Bethel Library, 2-4 pm. Masks required. Bring five copies of a poem to discuss.

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

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

The **Shoreline Chapter is not currently meeting.**

Southbury

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

Chapter members have not been meeting recently.

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. We are hoping to resume in-person meetings before long.

Poet in the Spotlight: Charles Chase

Charles Chase has published four books of poetry, all of which include "Runway Lights" in the title. He has evolved as a poet from the time he was a high school student who couldn't make sense of Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn"—until suddenly, wow, it did make sense!

He began writing poetry by imitating the styles and approaches of other poets, adding his own creative twists. Then he developed an approach in which he describes three things: the physical page of the poem, his location during writing, and his own emotional "weather." Here is a snippet that gives an example of that approach:

"Little book, snow is falling / from a gray sky / as this slow flurry / drifts onto your fields."



He started writing short prose pieces and then discovered prose poems. These allow him to use his narrative impulse and avoid the unnatural "poet voice" that had been creeping into some of his work. More recently, he's been writing both extended

prose pieces and haiku. Chase says he's indebted to Marita Gargiulo and the CPS Haiku chapter for inspiring him to do more with haiku.

Nature appears as either the subject or the background in most of his poems. Chase, like many writers, also explores the experience of being human, with consciousness, emotion, and imagination part of the mix. Recently, some of his poetry has become more overtly philosophical.

Chase keeps a writing journal in which he jots down ideas and early drafts of poems. He generally works on more than one poem at a time, and his journal is an invaluable resource during the writing process. He finds poetry writing demanding. Revision helps him find and change awkward word choices, clichéd thinking, or shallow writing—writing that hasn't yet burrowed down into the heart of what he wants to say. That often leads to insights he wasn't aware of when he began the poem.

"Reading literature and being a poet has enriched my life enormously," Chase remarks. "Were I to be born again, my one wish would be that I would once again find my way to become a poet. I agree fully with the sentiment of William Carlos Williams when he wrote in 'Asphodel, That Greeny Flower':

'It is difficult / to get the news from poems / yet men die miserably every day / for lack / of what is found there.'"

Rose Garden Reading in Elizabeth Park, Including Open Mic

June begins the season of roses blooming, and it's a great time to visit Elizabeth Park in West Hartford and Hartford. On June 19th at 1:00 pm, the Friends and Enemies of Wallace Stevens will present a poetry reading by two Connecticut-based poets, **Antoinette Brim-Bell** and **Sophie Cabot Black**. This will take place under the tent near the rose gardens in the park. Antoinette Brim-Bell is the author of *These Women You Gave Me*, *Icarus in Love*, and *Psalm of the Sunflower*. She is a Cave Canem Foundation fellow. Sophie Cabot Black's poetry collection, *The Misunderstanding of Nature*, received the Poetry Society of America's First Book Award.

At 2:30, West Hartford Poet Laureate **Benjamin Grossberg** will host an open mic reading under the tent.

For more information on the open mic, contact Ben Grossberg at Grossberg@Hartford.edu. For directions to Elizabeth Park and info on parking, use this link: <https://www.elizabethparkct.org/visit/directions-and-parking>



Poetry Bus Brings Poems to the People

Melanie Faranello, a Youth Arts Initiative teaching artist and the founder of Poetry on the Streets, worked recently with Charter Oak Cultural Center and area youth to produce poems for the Poetry Bus, which has rolled through the streets of the Greater Hartford area this spring. Young writers wrote poems inspired by Robert Hayden's poem "Frederick Douglass." Find out more and read some of the poets on the Poetry on the Streets website: <https://www.poetryonthestreets.com/>

Renew Your Membership

If you haven't already renewed your CPS membership, please consider doing so now. CPS members are automatically members of the National Federation of Poetry Societies, and members are able to participate in their contests, as well as contests from other states' poetry societies. As a CPS member, you will receive *Connecticut River Review*, a national poetry journal, when it comes out later in the summer. With our chapters starting to open up for live workshops, and our summer picnic occurring soon, you will want to make sure you are up to date! Thank you!

Contest News

The **DeCaro Poetry Competition** for Connecticut High School students was completed in April. Thanks especially to Board members **Mark Sheridan** and **Nancy Manning** for their publicity assistance, which helped produce a record number of submissions in the 2021 contest, and to Luisa Caycedo-Kimura, who judged the entries. The winners were as follows:

1st place, **Cindy Truong – Platt High School, Meriden**

2nd place, **Kaylin Maher – Rockville High School, Vernon**

3rd place, **Emma Blanchet – Rockville High School, Vernon**

Hon. Mention, **Shui Se Phoe – Westminster School, Simsbury**

A special Zoom event on May16 featured these winners reading their poems, remarks by the judge, and conversation with guests and Board members. Congratulations to these outstanding Connecticut student poets!

The 2021 **Connecticut Poetry Award** is currently in progress; watch for winning poems on the CPS website in July, along with remarks by judge **Rennie McQuilkin**.

Changes in Our Contest Offerings

While we will no longer be offering the *Connecticut River Review* Contest, we are pleased to announce two *new* CPS contests made possible by generous donors:

The **Experimental Poetry Prize** will award the winner \$1000, along with publication in *Connecticut River Review* and on the CPS website.

The winner also gains a free, two-year membership in CPS. Four finalists will also be named.

Submission period for the Experimental Poetry Prize is June 15 through July 31. Richard Deming of Yale will judge.

The **Vivian Shipley Poetry Award** will also offer a 1st place prize of \$1000, as well as \$100 for 2nd place and \$50 for 3rd place. Winning poems will be published in *Connecticut River Review* and on the CPS website. Winners will receive a free, two-year membership in the Connecticut Poetry Society. Submission period will be August 1 through September 30. Robert Cording will judge.

These contests are open to all poets; submission links can be found on the CPS website.

Debbie Gilbert Wins Ekphrastic Review Birdwatching Poetry Prize

Congratulations to **Debbie Gilbert**, whose poem, "Woman with a Bird Cage," won *Ekphrastic Review's* Bird Watching Contest, which asked writers to respond to one or more of several artworks focusing on birds. The judge, Tricia Marcella Cimera, had this to say about the poem: "The feelings of wistfulness, sorrowfulness, hopefulness, taking flight, opening a door, breaking free, as well as the gorgeous alongside-comparison to plants and flowers was overpowering to me. I *felt* this poem. It is beautiful on many levels. The language is gorgeous, the homage/inspiration to the seed painting by József Rippl-Rónai is strong, the subtlety coupled with accessibility makes for an understandable yet enigmatic poem."

CPS Members Are Publishing!

Several CPS members are celebrating the publication of their new books.

Robert Claps's poetry book *Castings* is offered by Antrim House Books. Jim Daniels calls the book "a moving mixture of poems that look back and poems that live in the present moment." He calls Claps "a master of zooming in on the resonant, telling detail."

Gerda Walz-Michaels is a visual artist as well as a poet. Her new book, *The Four Seasons: Poems and Paintings*, is now available through amazon.com.

Mary Hills Kuck has published her first chapbook, *Intermittent Sacraments*, put out by Finishing Line Press. This is a book about grace, and the joy and comfort it brings into our everyday lives.

Aaron Caycedo-Kimura's beautiful chapbook *Ubasute* came out earlier this year from Slapering Hol Press, after winning the Slapering Hol Chapbook Competition. Robert Pinsky praised the collection this way: "Aaron Caycedo-Kimura's poems in *Ubasute* are detailed, elegiac meditations within a particular American family. This compact, artful book evokes the eternal rhythms of grief and memory, loss and gratitude, including the evil of internment camps and the dignity of a suburban garden. Here is the restorative clarity of art." Aaron has a full-length collection coming out in the fall from Beacon Press. It's called *Common Grace*.

The poems in **Anthony Marcucio's** book *Reflections of a Shattered Mind* take us on a journey through the experiences of depression, anxiety, love, and perseverance. He believes it is time to end the stigma surrounding mental illness and to start the conversation to move us forward without fear. This book is an attempt to do that.

Nancy Manning Honored

Our Youth Outreach Coordinator, **Nancy Manning**, has recently completed her MFA from Southern Connecticut State University. A teacher at Woodland Regional High School in Prospect, she has been named the 2022 Region 16 Teacher of the Year. Along with Board member **Mark Sheridan**, she made sure that high schools around the state were aware of our most recent DeCaro Poetry Competition for Connecticut high school students.

Barb Jennes Earns Two Poetry Prizes

Congratulations to **Barb Jennes**, whose poem "From the Room of an Unknown Girl" was awarded the Leslie McGrath Prize for Poetry by *Helix Magazine*. Additionally, two of her poems were selected to receive the 2021 Bea Gonzalez Prize for Poetry by *Stone Canoe Magazine*.

Next POP Focuses on Tony Hoagland

Our next Poets on Poetry discussion will take place on Thursday, June 17 at 7 pm, via Zoom. **Christine Beck** will moderate a conversation on Tony Hoagland, a poet of extraordinary imagination and sly humor. We'll examine a few of his poems as well as some excerpts from his essays about poetry. Zoom details forthcoming.