

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 Editors: Ginny Connors & Debbie Gilbert  
Newsletter: Ginny Connors  
Publicity: David Cundy  
Outreach: Christine Beck  
Chapter Liaison: Pat Mottola  
Program Director: Victor Altshul

#### **Save the Date: May 2nd for Poetry Blast**

Our annual Poetry Blast will be held on Saturday, May 2nd at Work\_Space in downtown Manchester, at 903 Main Street, beginning at 1 pm. and lasting until 4. Expect an enjoyable program, an open mic, refreshments, and a book sale and/or swap. There is plenty of parking behind the building. More information will be forthcoming. Guests are welcome at this annual event.

#### **Submit Your Poetry**

The Lynn DeCaro Poetry Competition, open to Connecticut High School students, is accepting submissions through March 15.

The *Connecticut River Review* journal is accepting submissions through April 15. There is no fee to submit, but because of the many submissions we receive, selection for publication is quite competitive.

The Connecticut Poetry Award will accept submissions between April 1 and May 31. Prizes of \$400, \$100, and \$50 are offered, along with publication in *Connecticut River Review*.

Find more information on our website!

## 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- 4 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 has changed its meeting time and place. It now meets on the 4th Monday of each month in the library at the Farmington Library, 6 Monteith Dr, from 6-8 pm. Contact Terrence 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 The Cardinal House, 2205 Main Street, Glastonbury. Bring copies of a poem to share if you want feedback on your work.

### Manchester

Kimball Hunt  
[kimballhh@gmail.com](mailto:kimballhh@gmail.com)  
860-384-4163

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. It meets from 7:00-9:00 pm; the new location is the Pomfret Library, 499 Pomfret Street.

### 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.

### 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

"Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child that knows poems." –Rainer Maria Rilke

Spring is almost here, and we hope you have enjoyed the mild winter. Yes, we are pushing Spring! Daylight savings time is soon upon us, and let's face it, nothing feels better than to wrap up your workday and find that the sun is still shining.

Speaking of shining, CPS is on a forward roll, moving onward and upward as our membership blossoms from the seeds we have sown over these last few years. Now over 230 members strong and counting, we are extremely proud and pleased that CPS can offer so much to its members and to the community. POPs continue to be POPular; *Connecticut River Review* is attracting ever more poets and readers; our contests continue to offer opportunities for prizes and publications; and we look forward to another exciting Poetry Blast, on Saturday, May 2nd, at Work\_Space in Manchester. This year's Blast will host a book exchange: if you have published a book lately, bring it in! *Bring one, take one!*

Meanwhile, CPS has created a new initiative: Co-President Pat Mottola will be serving as Chapter Liaison. Pat will be visiting each CPS chapter in the coming months. Our chapters are doing great things and representing CPS well; we want to see and share what new and exciting things you are about!

So then, think spring, the season of hope, rebirth, rejuvenation, and renewal!

–Co-Presidents Pat Mottola and Tony Fusco

## Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Connecticut Poetry Society dues are due on April 1st (no fooling!). If you are not up to date, you will receive a reminder via email. You can renew your membership three ways: using PayPal online, with a credit card, or by regular mail using the form found on the website. Here is the [link for membership renewal](#).

If you choose to send a check, send it to CPS Membership Chair, 311 Shingle Hill Rd, West Haven, CT 06516. Please make sure we have your current info: address, phone number, and email. It will help us stay in touch with you!

You can keep up with CPS by checking our website and reading our newsletter. Newsletter and announcements are sent by email unless you have none, in which case we will mail them. Our contest dates and guidelines are also on our website.

As in previous years, members who are up to date with their dues will receive a copy of our excellent poetry journal, *Connecticut River Review*, around August. You are also automatically enrolled as a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies whose information is available at [their website](#).

They also sponsor annual contests with cash prizes of up to \$1,000. The deadline for these poetry contests is March 15<sup>th</sup>. You can choose to enter one or all of the [50 different contests](#). Enter by using Submittable or regular US Mail.

We hope you enjoy the poetry events, chapter workshops, and celebrations. *Thank you for your support.*

## Poet in the Spotlight: Nancy Kerrigan

As a psychiatric nurse and therapist, Nancy Kerrigan is used to writing psychiatric evaluations, psychosocial histories, developmental histories, and discharge summaries. In this kind of writing, it's important not to leave out any details, such as lab values, medication dosages etc. Poetry has offered her the opportunity to try a different kind of writing. She admires the succinct use of language in poetry. She was able to combine insights from her career with the practice of poetry in her first chapbook, *The Voices: The Poetry of Psychiatry*. This collection offers the kind of humane and personal perceptions that textbooks just can't offer.

One thing Kerrigan admires in poetry is the use of metaphor. She also looks for interesting syntax and intriguing subject matter. Kerrigan agrees with Billy Collins, who has compared reading a poem to getting into a boat with a stranger: you'd like to know fairly soon if you want to go on the trip, but you don't want to sink in words or drown. This metaphor encapsulates a lot about the importance of making a poem inviting to the reader. The poem as a little journey is an apt way of looking at it.

A Chicago native, Kerrigan moved to Connecticut over twenty years ago, as part of a big life change. She says she had been reading poetry for a while, but "I did not write my own poetry until my life started to go off the rails." Her poem, "A Future in Past Tense," included in her newest book, illuminates this facet of her experience.

As well as reading and writing poetry, Kerrigan continues her work as a therapist, part-time. She has always enjoyed going to the theater, and

now some of her theater excursions involve attending plays her daughter directs as a high school drama teacher. She has been mesmerized by performances that include her granddaughters among the actors.



Connecticut Poetry Society has offered Kerrigan exposure to many fine poets and different forms of poetic expression. The POPs series sponsored by CPS has augmented the deficiencies of her literary background. She is finally taking her mother's advice. Her mother used to say, "Get your nose out of those textbooks and read some literature so you'll know how real people behave." Kerrigan's mother was an avid reader. You can meet her and other relatives and ancestors in Kerrigan's newest poetry collection, *Lucky Enough: A Journey*. Working on this book gave her a reason to take three trips to Ireland, the homeland of her grandparents, to do research and to give readings of her work.

## Find Inspiration in Local Poetry Readings

Poetry pops up all over the place in springtime, perhaps because April is National Poetry Month, or maybe just because people are eager to come out of hibernation and find some inspiration. Here are some highlights.

**Kate Rushin** will be sharing her poetry at the Russell House, Wesleyan University, on March 25th at 6 pm. It's free and open to the public. 350 High Street in Middletown is the location.

The Noah Webster House poetry Read-In, hosted by **Maria Sassi**, will feature poets **Jason Tandon** and **David Mello**. This event includes an open mic and light refreshments. Come to Noah's lovely living room on May 3rd at 1 pm. The Webster House is located at 227 South Main Street, West Hartford.

The Guilford Poets Guild will host **Charles Rafferty** on March 12th, from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Guilford Free Library, located at 67 Park Street. An Open Mic is part of the program. On April 9th they will host **Ginny Lowe Connors** and on May 14th the Guilford High School Poetry Contest Winners will be featured.

Hartford's poet laureate **Frederick-Douglass Knowles** has an extensive lineup of readings for the spring, including appearances at several community colleges and literary festivals. Check [this link](#) to find out more about his BeatLit Tour.

## CPS Members Are Busy Writing...and Publishing!

**Katharine Carle's** 4th book, *The Order of Things: New and Selected Poems*, has just been published. She will read from it on Sunday, April 19 at 2:30 pm in the chapel at Seabury Life Community, 200 Wintonbury Dr., Bloomfield. You can also catch **Nancy Kerrigan** reading from her new book at Seabury, on March 17 at 7:15 pm, in the chapel there. Her book, *Lucky Enough: A Journey* is described this way by Suzanne Strempek Shea: "From Chicago to Hartford to Ireland and back, to the mind's eye and the heart of the home, through a life lived and into others imagined, hearing what mother said and feeling what a daughter hoped. Rosa on the bus, Kennedy in the car, a poet on Clare Island, a loving whisper in the ear, and years later a heart-shaped potato in hand. Count yourself fortunate to have *Lucky Enough* in yours."

**Mathew Borrelli** has written a poetic memoir called a *Standing in the Waves Way: A Poemair*. He will offer a reading from his book at Mary Cheney Library, 586 Main Street in Manchester, on April 13, 2020 at 7 pm.

**Julia Paul** has a chapbook coming out this month called *Staring Down the Tracks*, a collection of poems giving voice to people affected by addiction. Mariam Greenspan, psychotherapist and noted author, has said of this collection, "If Sylvia Plath were the mother of an addict, she would write poems like 'Holding the Pin Between Her Teeth,' 'Spell for Detaching,' 'The Summer of Fire,'" and so many others. Everyone should read this."

## **The Many Offerings of Our POP Poets on Poetry Program**

Poets on Poetry Programs, offered at the Hartford Public Library and other area libraries, continue to be very popular.

Coming up at the Hartford Library, 500 Main St., from 10 am to noon in room 139:

March 28: Luisa Caycedo-Kimura moderates a program on Gabriela Mistral

April 25: Maria Sassi hosts a program on Galway Kinnell

May 30: Antoinette Brim guides a discussion on Robert Hayden

At the Southington Library, 225 Main Street, from 6:30—8 pm

April 13: Christine Beck leads a program on Mary Oliver

May 4: Luisa Caycedo-Kimura guides a discussion about Pablo Neruda

At the Avon Free Public Library, 281 Country Club Rd, from 2-4 pm

March 12: Maria Sassi shares insights on Galway Kinnell

April 9: Christine Beck leads a program on Mary Oliver

The Wallingford Public Library, 200 North Street, from 6:30-8:30 pm

April 29: Marita Gargiulo guides a discussion about Basho

May 27: Christine Beck leads a program on Mary Oliver

Glastonbury's Welles Turner Library, 2407 Main St., from 6:30-8 pm

May 21: Christine Beck guides a program about Joy Harjo

## **Journal Inquirer Features Members' Poems**

The *Journal Inquirer* has agreed to publish a poem from Manchester's Wit & Wisdom club every month. Look for poetry when you read this paper!

## **A Poem by Lisel Mueller**

Lisel Mueller, a Pulitzer Prize winning poet, passed away last month at the age of 96. Language, nature, and history, including her own escape from Nazi Germany, were among her themes. Here is one of her poems.

### **Things**

by Lisel Mueller

What happened is, we grew lonely  
living among the things,  
so we gave the clock a face,  
the chair a back,  
the table four stout legs  
which will never suffer fatigue.

We fitted our shoes with tongues  
as smooth as our own  
and hung tongues inside bells  
so we could listen  
to their emotional language,

and because we loved graceful profiles  
the pitcher received a lip,  
the bottle a long, slender neck.

Even what was beyond us  
was recast in our image;  
we gave the country a heart,  
the storm an eye,  
the cave a mouth  
so we could pass into safety.