

Connecticut Poetry Society



September 2025

CPS website is <http://ctpoetry.org>.

Contact us at ctpoetryline@gmail.com

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

CPS Honorary Board

Antoinette Brim-Bell, Connecticut Poet Laureate

Margaret Gibson, Connecticut Poet Laureate, 2019-2022

Marilyn Nelson, Connecticut Poet Laureate, 2001-2006

Vivian Shipley, CSU Distinguished Professor Emerita

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Vice President: Jeanne LeVasseur

Secretary: Amy Graver

Treasurer: Patti Fusco

Membership: Patti Fusco

Contests: Ed Dzitko

Webmasters: Patti Fusco & Tony Fusco

CRR Editors: Ginny Connors, Debbie Gilbert, John Surowiecki & Pat Hale

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

POP Director: Jim Finnegan

Publicity & Social Media Director: River Ripa

CPS, an affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS), is dedicated to the promotion and enjoyment of poetry.

Check out our NEW website:



CPS Summer Celebration SUCCESS!

The Summer Celebration in Woodbury was successful beyond our expectations. So much of the credit goes to our Woodbury members **Sandy Carlson** and **Ed Dzitko**, who organized and offered the best of Woodbury, establishing Woodbury as a welcoming community rich in history. The Woodbury Senior and Community Center came alive with a catered luncheon featuring many vegan options, a book fair featuring CPS authors, poetry games, and a stellar open mic with the theme "My Hometown." Copies of *Connecticut River Review* were distributed to CPS members, and everyone left with something to treasure.

More on the Summer Celebration...

This year we invited three new local poets laureate – **Bailey Quinn** of Middlebury, **Katie Baker** of Woodbury, and **Katherine Schneider** of Norwalk – as featured readers to start the open mic. And what a bonus—Oreanaug Mountain Publishing is producing an anthology of the poems read at the open mic. The anthology will be available for purchase at the November 22nd event in Branford. Proceeds will benefit CPS. This will be a great opportunity to buy a gift for your favorite poet, friend, relative, or teacher.



enjoying the summer celebration

President's Message September 2025

Dear CPS Members,

Each time I read through our newsletters past and present, I am amazed: by its professional appearance, by the amount of valuable information it contains, and by the accomplishments and dedication of our members individually and of our organization as a whole. We all know that the newsletter doesn't write itself, but do we ever really think

about what goes into making it happen? I do. And I want to sincerely thank our Newsletter Editor **Ginny Connors**, who is invaluable to CPS in so many ways. She makes it look easy... but we all know better. You can find back issues of our newsletters on our website: <https://ctpoetry.org/newsletters/>

To say I am proud of our organization is an understatement. CPS has grown so much and accomplished so much because of you, our members. Welcome to our new members! I am so happy each time I see you all at our in-person events.

Success! Our annual Summer Celebration in Woodbury, CT had the highest attendance so far of any in-person event. To say it was energizing is an understatement! We welcomed many new members! Special thanks to **Sandy Carlson** and **Ed Dzitko** for making this happen!

We welcome Ed Dzitko as our new Contest Chair. Ed will oversee all our contests. It's an overwhelming job, and I want to express our thanks to him for stepping up and offering so much of his time and expertise to CPS.

Thanks to **River Ripa**, Publicity Chair, for Facebook and Instagram updates. Check for the most current/upcoming CPS events and member news. Check us out at: [@connpoetry](https://www.instagram.com/connpoetry)

Enjoying our beautiful CRR 2025? Thank the editors! And of course, the contributors! Look forward to our annual CRR online reading by contributors on September 20.

More of the President's Message

The Vivian Shipley Poetry Award is in progress; deadline is September 30. Check out the details on our website:

<https://ctpoetry.org/vivian-shipley-poetry-award/>

Speaking of contests... we are looking for someone to sponsor one of our contests. Please email me if you want to know more!

Be sure to catch our next POP on September 29 at 7:00 p.m.: Montale, Quasimodo & Ungaretti: Italian Modernist Poets of the 20th Century – A discussion led by **Gian Lombardo**. Zoom Registration link: <https://tinyurl.com/4yyjrp6z> Thanks, **Jim Finnegan**, for a fascinating lineup each season!

Check out our table at the CT Lit Fest on October 18 at Real Art Ways in Hartford and experience all the festival has to offer. The best of the best!

Save the date: November 22, our Fall Festival in-person event at the Blackstone Library in Branford. We will have more information for you about that before long.

Wow, much more to come! Our Board of Directors <https://ctpoetry.org/cps-board/> is working to implement new and exciting opportunities for you this coming year.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." –Helen Keller

See you soon!
Pat Mottola, President



Sandy, Pat, and Ed at the Summer Celebration

Poetry to Inspire

Riverwood Poetry Series will host **Sean Thomas Dougherty** on September 10 at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor Street, Hartford, from 7–9 PM. They will also host **Ciaran Berry** and **Luisa Caycedo-Kimura** as they launch their new books on October 8, same time and place. An open mic will precede each of these featured readings for the first ten sign-ups.

Pat Hale, Christine Beck, and Debbie Gilbert will launch their latest poetry books on Saturday, September 27 at the Barney Library, 71 Main Street, Farmington, from 1–3 PM. Park in the lot off Church Street. An open mic will precede these readings. Refreshments and book signing will follow. All are welcome.

The Farmington Valley and Hartford Chapters of the Connecticut Poetry Society will read together on Monday, November 3, from 7–9 PM, in the community room at the Clubhouse for Hunter's Run Condominiums, One Huntington Glen Road, Avon. All are welcome. Refreshments and book signing will follow.

CPS Chapters & Presidents

If you want to know more about meeting with a specific chapter, please get in touch with the chapter president.

Bethel

Michael Garry

mgarry1955@gmail.com

This chapter meets at the Bethel Library on the second Saturday of each month, from 1-2 pm.

Bring 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. Meetings are held in person at One Huntington Glen Road in Avon. Bring ten copies of your poem to share for critique.

Greater Hartford

Pegi Deitz Shea

pegideitzshea@aol.com

This chapter will meet on the second Tuesday of each month (except for July and August) at 6:30 pm, via Zoom, and will be managed by Pegi Deitz Shea. We welcome all current CPS members of towns in the Hartford area. If you would like to join, please contact her at pegideitzshea@aol.com.

Haiku Chapter

Tony Fusco

cpshaiku@gmail.com

Members of the group share haiku in response to a prompt. The chair collects the poems in advance. Poems are due by noon on the 15th of the month. Send poems to Tony Fusco with "CPS Haiku for (month & year)" in the subject line. and then look for them on our website at the members' poems page. <https://ctpoetry.org/member-poems/> Make sure you sign your name as you

want it to appear. This program is for CPS members only!

Manchester

Victoria Dubiel

victoria.dubiel@hotmail.com

Manchester's Wit and Wisdom group meets on the second Saturday of each month from 1-3. They meet at the Manchester Historical Society, 175 Pine Street in Manchester.

New Haven

Tony Fusco

tfusco357@gmail.com

The New Haven chapter meets on the third Saturday of each month from 10-12. Presently they meet via Zoom.

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

Sandy Carlson

oreanaugchaptercps@gmail.com

The Oreanaug chapter meets in person on the second Saturday of each month at 9:15 am. Meetings occur at Hollow Park from June-September and at St. Paul's Church in Woodbury from October-May.

Wilton

Ed Ahern

salmonier@aol.com

The Wilton Workshop meets from 2-4 on the third Saturday of each month at the Wilton Library. Email a copy of your poem to Ed in advance, or bring copies when you attend the meeting.

Poet in the Spotlight: Jefferson Singer

A clinical psychologist in West Hartford and a professor emeritus from Connecticut College, **Jefferson Singer** has once again turned to poetry as an important part of his life. His interest in writing poetry began in high school when a Poet in the Schools, Richard Raymond, spent six weeks visiting his English class. He encouraged Singer, who went on to gain recognition in Scholastic Magazine's National Contest. During his college years, Singer continued to study poetry, and he took seminars with Robert Fitzgerald and Seamus Heaney.

Later, as a clinical psychologist, Singer's writing consisted of academic articles and books on memory, personality, and psychotherapy. Now, however, poetry has moved to the front stage. Compared to academic writing, he says poetry is "image- and emotion-based with much more emphasis on sound and the way words present on the page." Writing poetry fully absorbs every part of him. "When I am working on a poem, hours can pass without my awareness. This 'real work,' as Donald Hall called it, always pulls me back to the page because I am never fully satisfied with what I have done, but there are moments of pure pleasure when a line or image clicks just right.

Jefferson Singer has published poems in several journals, and Shanti Arts Press recently published his book, *In Common Things*, which is available through the publisher or through amazon.com. Presently Singer is writing a series of poems about his brother, who recently passed away due to an aneurysm. A brilliant scholar who was on the autism spectrum, the social challenges he



Jefferson Singer

faced and the ways he was able to find meaning in his life are explored in the poems.

Belonging to the Connecticut Poetry Society has provided many advantages. "I have benefited immensely from my membership in CPS and would recommend it to anyone in Connecticut with an interest in writing and reading poetry. I belong to a CPS monthly workshop run through the Farmington Chapter. We share our poems and provide honest constructive feedback. It is invaluable, and a lot of fun." Additionally, Singer belongs to Faxon Poets, a group that meets monthly at the Faxon Library in West Hartford.

Like all poets, Singer spends time reading the work of other poets. Recently he has been reading Kevin Young's poetry, especially his book *Stones*.

When he's not working with clients or engaged with poetry, Singer likes to spend time with his family, and he enjoys hiking, biking, running, and watching baseball.



in memoriam

Janet Christine Henderson

With sadness we note the passing of **Janet Henderson**, poet, CPS member, and generous contributor to her community. She is survived by her husband Richard, as well as by her children and grandchildren.

Janet won numerous poetry awards. She provided foster care for eleven infants awaiting adoption, prepared many meals which were served in homeless shelters, and coordinated antique shows as fundraisers for her church. Hers was a life well-lived.

Outstanding Accomplishments

CPS member **Jonas Zdanys** is profiled as an American and Lithuanian poet in *Heritage, Connection, Writing: Conversations with North American Lithuanian Diaspora Writers* (Peter Lang Publishers). His latest anthology titled *Weaving Shade, Contemporary Dream Poetry* (Lamar University Press) is set for Fall 2025. In addition, a grant from the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture supports his sixth and newest full-length book of poetry, written in Lithuanian, titled *Išėivystės fragmentai* (immigration fragments) by Peter

Lang Publishers. His book *My Uncle's Watch* was published as a fine arts numbered, limited edition handsewn into handmade paper

wrappers by Gray Willow Press of Brooklyn, in collaboration with Forgetgutenberg and Timberline Press of Boston. Also, Jonas's ekphrastic poetry is discussed in a new scholarly book currently titled *Ekphrastic Poetry: An Introduction*, by Prof. Cassandra Atherton, of Deakin University in Australia. The book is being published this fall by Princeton University Press; and, he was invited to be part of the Australian anthology *100 Poets*, ed. by Brian Purcell and Kit Kelen (Markwell, NSW, Australia: Flying Island Books, 2025).

Contest News

Vivian Shipley Poetry Award

With your best poem, you could win the \$1,000 top prize in the Vivian Shipley poetry award contest hosted by the Connecticut Poetry Society (CPS). A second prize of \$100, and a third prize of \$50 will also be awarded. Winning poems will be published in *Connecticut River Review*. You may submit up to three original poems in a single file, without contact information. Only electronic submissions through Submittable will be accepted. There is a \$15 reading fee per entry. The contest's submission deadline is September 30. Email contests.ctpoetry@gmail.com with questions.

NFSPS Contest Results

Results of the annual series of contests sponsored by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies show that **Elaine Zimmerman** earned honorable mention recognition in five different contests, and **Srinivas Mandavilli** earned an honorable mention in another contest. Way to go, Elaine and Srinii!

Let's Stay Connected!

Follow the Connecticut Poetry Society on Instagram and Facebook and tag us in your poetry-related posts and stories—we love highlighting member voices. It's a simple way to cheer each other on, stay connected and discover exciting poetry events across Connecticut.

<https://www.instagram.com/connpoetry>

<https://www.facebook.com/connpoetry>

Anthologies Accepting Submissions

Oreanaug Mountain Publishing is planning two anthologies, one centered on Christmas and the other focusing on the New Year.

Burl Ives sings in the 1965 song that he wrote "Goodwill is in the air, you can feel it everywhere, Christmas can't be far away." The time between Thanksgiving and Christmas, there's a special kind of magic in the air, a magic you could feel in the stillness of a snowy night, in the searching for just the right tree, in the finding or creating of just the right gift for a loved one. Your poem should be an invitation for the readers to pause and reflect on the season's most special moments and events. The deadline for submissions is November 1st.

The New Year anthology will focus on themes of reflection and closure, of hope and new beginnings, of resolution and self-improvement, of time and mortality, or of human connection. Deadline November 15th. To learn more about these opportunities, go to <https://www.orenaugmountainpublishing.com/about/submissions>.

Connecticut Literary Festival

Mark your calendar for Saturday, October 18, for the next Connecticut Literary Festival!

The **CT Lit Fest** is a fall book festival to be held at Real Art Ways, 56 Arbor Street in Hartford. It will be a literary hub under one roof, at the center of Connecticut—a day for writers, teachers, students, and readers to discover and connect with new voices. Events run throughout the day. Admission is free.

The Fest will include readings, talks, performances, and an interactive typewriter installation. A book fair will showcase publishers, journals, writing programs, and organizations such as Connecticut Poetry Society. Food trucks will be on site. This annual event is not to be missed.

Connecticut River Review Virtual Launch

On Saturday, September 20, several contributors to CRR will share their poems virtually. There will be two sessions, each featuring different readers, and you are invited to attend one or both sessions. We know you love many of the poems in our latest edition; this is a chance to hear some of them live and discuss them with the authors afterward. Registration in advance is required. After registering you will receive a confirmation email.

To register for the 11 AM session, use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/OQ9XJ-FgRDqUnRpk1I0GKA>

To register for the 7 PM session, use this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/BzaleU9iTjKTZfd0QBupQ>