Right now, as I’m typing this note, I hear pops, sizzles, booms and KA-BOOMS as our neighbors welcome in New Year 2019. “Out with the old, and in with the new,” as the saying goes! Well, here at MPS we have plenty to celebrate, too. Our 2019 Competition is in full sway and is warming up our winter with a February 1 deadline for the Student ‘Rising Stars’ Contest. A February 15 deadline is also just around the corner for the Adult Contest. Unless you’re a chronic procrastinator like I am, I’m sure you have already put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboards, in bringing to life some ‘knock your socks off’ verse for the competition. Whether at Spring Fest or around our Branch tables, I’m always transported by the talents of you, our MPS writers. Far more than just talent, though, each poet’s passion for our craft sparkles in every oral reading, propelling each poem into altitudes of pure bliss! I am so looking forward to Spring Fest 2019, April 6-7, and I hope you are, too! Hearing some of the best verse in the country presented right here in our own capital city will be an exhilarating...a de-Light-full...show! Be sure to come! Let your light shine! There is no doubt at all that you will be SO glad you did! ...a very Happy New Year to you and yours!

Poetically yours, Linda Owen, MPS President
Come One! Come All!
...To a Super Celebration of Poetry!

Spring Fest 2019!

Guest Speaker: Natchez author, Mark LaFrancis
April 6-7
Cabot Lodge, Millsaps
North State Street
Jackson, MS
601-948-8650
https://www.cabotlodgemillsaps.com/

Mention Mississippi Poetry Society for the group rate!

Dive into the 2019 Contest!
Adult Category Challenges include:
- Mississippi Happenings
- Family Heritage
- Storms
- A Mississippi ‘Stand-Out’
- Mississippi Wildlife (Plant or Animal)
- Your Favorite Song
- Grands (Parents or Children)
- The Environment
- Medical Care
- Stumps
- Make Me Laugh!
- Transplants
- English Sonnet
- Villanelle
- Rhymed and Metered or Free Verse
- And plenty of open topics!

Dive into the 2019 Contest!
Student Levels include:
- “Fledglings”: Grades 1-3
- “Taking Flight”: Grades 4-5
- “Word Blazer”: Grades 6-8
- “Rising Writers”: Grades 9-12
- “Ascending Voices”: College Undergrad

No Fees for Students!
Open Topics and Forms!
Help Us Spread the Word!
Tell a Teacher, and
Point the Way for a Parent or Mentor!
Let the Fun Begin!

Visit Our Web Page for Details...
http://www.misspoetry.net/contests.html
**North Branch**

North Branch members always experience enjoyable and inspiring poetry sharing. All styles, moving descriptions, and effective use of literal and figurative language are a delight as we gather around the poets’ table during our meetings. “Iron sharpens iron,” and we sharpen our skills together.

We congratulate Janice Canerdy whose sonnets were recently published by both the *Society of Classical Poets*, and *Your Daily Poem*.

http://classicalpoets.org/2019/01/02/you-poor-unfortunate-woman-and-other-poetry-by-janice-canerdy/


Congratulations go to Emory D. Jones for his 2nd place win in the Winter 2018 Georgia State Poetry Society’s Edgar Bowers Award for his poem, “Cloister”. Also, Emory’s informative article, “Poetry Defined” appears in the NFSPS Strophes current issue!


North Branch members and friends will be meeting according to the following schedule in 2019. Each location is reserved for 11-2pm, but meeting lengths vary.

- February 23—Lee County Library in Tupelo
- May 18—McAllisters’ Restaurant in Starkville
- August 17—Union County Library in New Albany
- November 9—Casey Jones Museum in Water Valley

**South Branch**

Guest speaker, Dr. Robert Hirsch, poet and author of a series of books on the Crusades, delighted South Branch members during the November meeting. He spoke about his books and his unusual life as a Korean-American child and his living in France as a teen.

In early December, our own Elaine McDermott was honored with a well-attended book signing at the home of local author, Johnnie Bernhardt. Elaine’s new poetry chapbook, *Kite in the Wind*, has been published by Brother Mockingbird Press and is available through Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

https://www.amazon.com/Kite-Wind-Elaine-McDermott/dp/1732215545

On December 8, South Branch members enjoyed a fun-filled Christmas potluck luncheon and poetry contest at the home of branch president, Patty Butkovitch. A prize was given for each of several Christmas categories that included: My Christmas Stocking, Twelve Days of Christmas, Mary, O Holy Night, and Joseph. Shelia Griceo’s daughters, Merry and Laura, were guests. All of the poems were a real treat, as they always are, for South Branch’s annual Christmas contest. Sadly, member Mary Lee Terry, our 2018 Festival Queen, lost her son to cancer just before Christmas.

Our loving thoughts and prayers go out to our friend Mary Lee Terry and her family during their time of earthly loss. May your hearts be comforted.

--- The Mississippi Poetry Society ---

**Central Branch**

Central Branch is busy with Spring Fest ’19 plans under the leadership of Jeanne Kelly, contest and festival chair. We’ve also risen to ekphrastic challenges led by Bill Gressett.

In November, Jeanne Kelly, Bill and Mary Gressett, Jason Ervin, Doris Jones, and Linda and Randy Owen shared poems with the Waterford Retirement Community.

We are delighted to announce Tommy Little’s upcoming poetry workshop, “Capturing Mood in Free Verse.” The workshop will meet Tuesdays, 6-7:15pm throughout the month of February at the Brandon Public Library. All poets are welcome!

We congratulate Jeanne Kelly on the publishing of her book, *Family Matters: A Collection of Stories and Poetry*. Written primarily as a legacy for her children and grandchildren, Jeanne’s book is pure enjoyment for any reader, as, with wry wit and affection, she brings to life generational personalities and relationships.

Congratulations to Daniel Pickett for his 2nd place win in the 2018 Illinois State Poetry Society’s Highland Park Award category with “Winter’s Prey”. Daniel also received an honorable mention in the Ida Kotyuk Award category.

Linda Owen’s poem, “Perspective on Mohasses ‘Untitled’” was recently published in *The Ekphrastic Review*.

Central Branch meets at Belhaven University’s Student Union in the Joy Lackey Room from 2-4pm on the third Saturday of each month.
New Year 2019: A Great Time for a Writing Recharge!

...for when gears get a little rusty...

MPS member, Doris Jones, leads “Pennin’ and Grinnin’,” a writing-worship group in Madison, Mississippi. As each year opens, Doris shares this list, encouraging writers to focus on what practices will help them to recharge and refresh their craft. She has generously offered to share the list with MPS, so here it is, a great few questions.

Thank you, Doris!

1. What activities have given your writing a boost this past year?
2. What environments have nurtured your creative growth? How have they nourished you?
3. What spaces or activities have been hindrances?
4. Did you achieve any personal bests in the last year or have any moments that you thought were extra special as a writer?
5. What one change that if implemented on a regular basis would make a tremendous positive difference in your writing?

*Professor Goodwords’ Janu-wordy Challenge!*

The Prof says, “Which of these words will you choose?”

New Beginnings  Icicle  Slush  Cozy  Fireside

“Use some, or use all!
Now write away... write away...
write away all!”

“Bring your poems to your next meeting!”

Poets! Check out the NFSPS (National Federation of State Poetry Societies) 2019 Contests!
Deadline is March 15! 50 Categories! Here’s the detailed list: [http://www.nfsps.com/NFSPSContestBrochure.pdf](http://www.nfsps.com/NFSPSContestBrochure.pdf)

Be sure to take a look through the whole NFSPS website, including the online “Strophes” newsletter. Great topics! Great cash prizes! Great recognition! Go for it!!

Our 2019 National Convention will be in beautiful Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 23-26! What a great get-away!

(Unfortunately, a mistake was made by National in the publishing of *Strophes* that gave an incorrect deadline for our Mississippi 2019 Spring Contest. Please check our own info for correct dates.)
I recently asked MPS members to share with me how you came to be a member of the Mississippi Poetry Society. Brenda Finnegan graciously replied with the following note. Thank you, Brenda, for allowing me to share your story here in the January newsletter.

L.O.

“When I was a young, harried mother of three, a friend and neighbor of my mother’s, Sue Entrekin, who was retired and living on the coast, mentioned the Mississippi Poetry Society to me. I don’t remember how she knew I liked to write poetry, but at the time, I was taking literature classes at the local community college. I attended a meeting with her in Jackson at one of the hotels near the Old Capitol and met many soon-to-be friends! I had a wonderful time and walked from there on Sunday morning to nearby St. Peter’s Cathedral for Mass. I started competing in the contests, and thoroughly enjoyed the competition! Within a couple of years, (1982) we formed our own South Branch, and the president, Louise Wilkerson Conn of Hazlehurst, came to the coast to swear in the officers at the old Biloxi fire station. (I was sworn in as vice-president.) I have been both branch and state presidents, as well as held other offices since, and I treasure the friendships I’ve made in MPS! I have fond memories of Goldie Jane Feldman, Henry Tim Chambers (who invited several of us to stay at his home in Pearl) and our sweet late Dessie Anderson Caulfield. MPS hosted the NSPFS in 1997 in Biloxi, and that was quite an experience! (Nina Mason and I were the local chairmen.) I was privileged to receive the first Poet of the Year award in 2001 and MPS published my book, Missing Persons. Our Spring Festival was in Ocean Springs that year, and I had a book-signing at a local book store, which allowed many local non-writers to attend, purchase my book and meet my writer friends! Great memories!”

Each One, Reach One!

Invite someone to visit MPS!

We’ll all be glad you did!
Yikes!  
Do your Dues!

State MPS treasurer Patty Butkovich is issuing a ‘Last Call’ for members who may have forgotten to send in your dues. It’s been a busy holiday season, but it’s not too late. Please get your check in the mail ASAP to your branch treasurer. One year dues is only $25. Thank you!

The Mississippi Poetry Society

“...Toward the Stars...”

A Place at the Poetry Table...

We are accountants, students, clerks, and teachers,  
Nurses, plumbers, yard and house keepers,  
Scientists, retirees, musicians, cooks,  
Technicians, pastors, writers of books,  
Civil servants, sports fans, managers, waiters,  
Dreamers, thinkers, movers, and shakers.  
Poets. Oh, yes! We are poets all,  
Friends in verse, short and tall.  
‘Birds of a feather’, or ‘motley crew’?  
Come join us! Here’s a chair waiting for you!