MAGNOLIA MUSE JULY 2023

Happy summer, everyone! I trust all of your ac's are working reliably. As I write this, WREG meteorologist Wendy Nations is talking about temps in the low nineties, heat indexes in the high nineties, and storm warnings. Please pray for the many storm victims.

MPS has already had some great experiences in 2023: the magnificent festival hosted by South Branch, the revealing of the annual contest winners, and receiving the journals, which are SO well done. Now we can look forward to more exciting 2023 events. Before long, we'll be paying our 2024 MPS dues, submitting sponsor forms for the annual contest, and writing poems to submit!

POETRY SLAM COMPETITION UPDATE: Bill Hill of Southaven made it through the first round. Elizabeth Polk placed sixth. **Both reported having a good time**. We thank you both for representing MPS and Mississippi in Des Moines!

NOW, FOR SOME BRANCH NEWS

NORTH BRANCH last met on June 3 in the auditorium of the Lee County Library in Tupelo. Attending were Andreanna Page, Lizzie Washington, Madison Peterson, Emory and Glenda Jones, Carey Myers, Bill Hill, Dorothy Wiman, and Janice Canerdy. The first three are teen-agers. We were thrilled and honored that they came and shared their poems. Lizzie is an MPS member. Emory opened the meeting with prayer and a devotional based on Psalm 23. Presenters and their topics were as follows: Emory, gloss poetry; Carey, Gerard Manley Hopkins (English poet and Jesuit priest, 1844-1889); Dorothy, songs written by her really talented Mother, Dessie Anderson Caulfield. Dorothy's rendition of one of these songs was lovely; and Bill Hill, updates on efforts to schedule open mic sessions (for youth and youth-friendly) at Coffee Central in Southaven (There have been setbacks, but he's not giving up.) and the Christian Writers Group of Byhalia. Our poetry read-around and discussion was lively, informative, moving, and entertaining. We will meet again at Starkville McAlister's on September 9.~~Janice Canerdy

THE CENTRAL BRANCH held its monthly meeting on Saturday, June 17, and welcomed new members Cathy Carr and Michelle Holifield. Peggy Shumaker presented a short program on the poet Joyce Kilmer, and we enjoyed learning about his life and hearing his poetry read. We continue to enjoy participating in the monthly Poetry Open Mic nights at Pacesetter Gallery in Flowood. This month the challenge was to write an Ekphratic poem about one of the watercolors painted by David Rawlinson, who provided the picture that appeared on the cover of the 2023 Mississippi Poetry Journal. There were many poems written and read with many of them submitted by MPS members. This event continues to be very popular and has led to the addition of new members to MPS. Our current POY—Linda Owen—continues to receive recognition for her achievements and publicity for MPS through publication of an article in *The Rankin County News* and an article published online in *Our Mississippi Home*. Central Branch member Alicia Gabrielle has recently published a book of poetry called *Afterglow Effect.*

To Tommy and Diane Little~~who recently got married, a huge CONGRATULATIONS!

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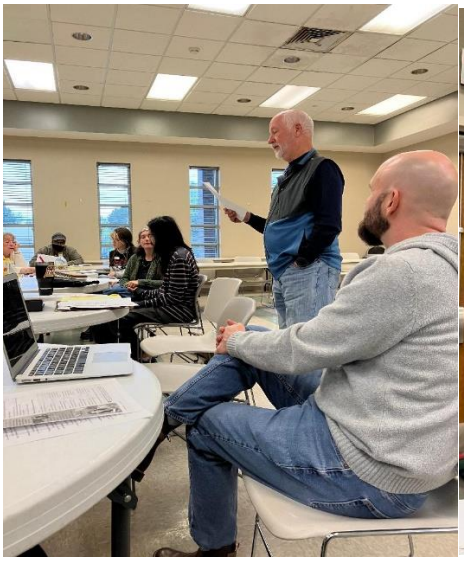
Jeanne and Phil Kelly, 50th wedding anniversary (photo used with permission)

Photos provided by Linda Owen:




EXIT
EXIT


EXIT

SOUTH BRANCH Patty Butkovich has provided photos that tell a story of their own~~a few highlights from the festival.

Friday night festival fun

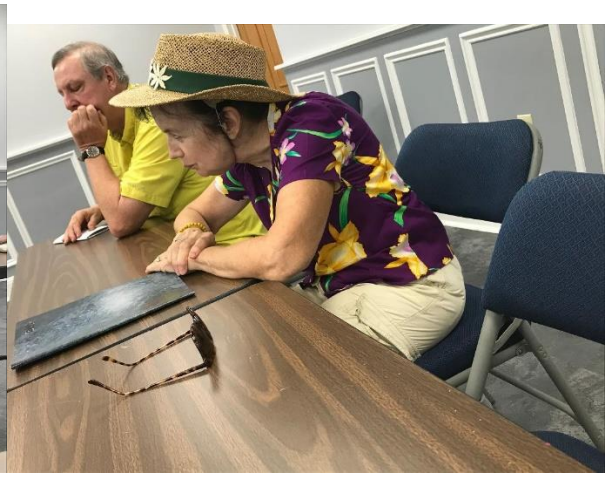
Saturday night banquet favors

In dappled light from the huge live oak (an allusion to our POY's book title)

Our student winners (Many supporters came to hear them read.)

Brenda won the grand prize, one hundred dollars! She looks happy!

WEST BRANCH met June 10 at the Armstrong Library. Six writers were in attendance, and shared their written works. Branch leader G. Mark LaFrancis encouraged them to pursue poetry this summer and said the branch would hold a "poetry out loud" evening in the fall.
~~Mark LaFrancis



MPS MEMBERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

MARY JANE ANDOL

*"Forty Feet," (about her daughter's cat, age 15!) finalist, the TAC (Tishomingo Arts Council) Pet Poetry Competition, June; also won an HM in the MPS contest
*"Key Differences," HM in the TAC Ekphrastic Competition, April
*"Heads or Tails" and "Am I Disappeared," finalists in the TAC Ekphrastic Competition (responses Colin Hayes's *Beauty and Neglect* and Samantha Buell's *I Am Disappeared*)

JANICE CANERDY

*"Ode to Breakfast," "It's Here (spring)," "Beautiful Scars of the Resurrected Lord," and "Salutations, Spring," *Spare Mule* (Missouri State Poetry Society's newsletter), April
*"Salutations, Spring," Society of Classical Poets, online, April 28
*"Early Autumn," *Texas Poetry Magazine* and "Poetry World no. 6" (Wax Poetry and Art publications), online since May 1~~~waxpoetryart.com/texas/published.html
*"The Days," "Spring Sensations," and "Cold Weather Joys," *The Hypertexts Magazine*, online, June
*"The Need to Be Needed" (an ode to my highly reliable manual can opener!) *Lighten Up Online* quarterly, summer
*"Still Waters, Living Waters," *Spirit Fire Review*, online July

ANN CAROLYN CATES

*She is very glad "to see poetry back in the news." *The Desoto Times Tribune* has published two articles about her, about her being MPS POY in 2022 and her 10 honors in the 2023 annual MPS contest. She has enjoyed recent newspaper articles about her fellow MPS members.

BRENDA FINNEGAN

*"I Cannot Close the Doggie Door," a finalist in the Tishomingo Arts Council pet themed contest, June. The awards were presented at the Apron Museum in Iuka, MS, on June 22. Poets from Alabama Mississippi and Tennessee entered the contest.

WILLIAM HILL

State society honors:
*"The Last Ace" -- HM from Tennessee *"The Big Six Oh!" --HM from Utah
*"Truth" -- HM from Utah
" A Painter Views an Autumn Sunset" --HM from the NFSPS Convention Madness contest
*3 certificates--Mississippi
*with the help of several other writers, started the Mid-South Christian Writers Monthly Roundtable, which meets the third Saturday of each month in Byhalia
*pursuing the possibility of forming a Northwest Branch of MPS (to be voted on at the '24 festival)
*interviewed by Beth Sullivan, reporter from the *Daily Memphian*, June 16. Miss Sullivan gave me permission to share the article with MPS members. A PDF was sent a few days ago.

Dear friends,

I want to thank MPS, NFSPS, Mid-South Christian Writers, Bolin Grove Farms and many, many individuals who contributed to my efforts to represent Mississippi and MPS at the NFSPS convention and the many, many others who have bought my books and paintings. Most of all Anna without whom none of this would be possible.

Yours in Christ,
Bill

Emory Jones

*"Bones Die Hard" Third Place in Category #7 (Red Rock Writers Founder Award) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2023 Contest.
*"Shooting Star" Third Place in Category #12 (Marilyn Marshall Award) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2023 Contest.
*"Tin Roof: An Etheree" Third Place in Category #27 (Geraldine Felt Memorial) of the Utah State Poetry Society's 2023 Contest.
*"Playful Spring: A Kyreille" 3rd Honorable Mention in The Lost in Translation Category of the League of Minnesota Poets 2023 Contest
*"Divine Sculpture" Spring issue of *Peninsula Poets* of the Poetry Society of Michigan.
*"Aces and Eights" Third Place in the May 2023 Members-Only Contest of the Poetry Society of Tennessee.
*"Divine Sculpture" and "Painted Desert" Volume 49, Number 1, Spring *California Quarterly.*
*"Aces and Eights" third place in the May 2023 Members Contest of the Poetry Society of Tennessee.
*"Upon Putting an Anthology of Poetry in the Community College Bookstore" *Imitation Fruit Literary Journal* Issue 19, 2023.
*Haiku "Crepe myrtle bursts forth—…," Haiku *"The warm spring sunshine…," and* Haiku *"Baby robins chirp" The Avocet* Issue 550 for June 2023.
"Sea of Grass," "Divine Sculpture," "The Hill," and "Wild Horses" Spring *Pasque Petals.*

Sam Kealhofer

*"Dog Walking," finalist in the Tishomingo Arts Council Pet Poetry Contest, June

Mark LaFrancis is the Poet Laureate of Natchez, and recently released an original poem for Unity Night in Natchez. The poem was "Unity is a Flat Tire," and was posted online. LaFrancis has been asked to create an original poem for the Fourth of July Celebration in Natchez. In addition, he continues work on a major project "My Natchez," a photo/poetry book scheduled for full-color publication in October

Mary Beth Magee

*two stories appearing in the new *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Get Out of Your Comfort Zone*. The volume releases in July 25.

Catherine Moran

*"My Oldest Dog" and "Together in Quiet," finalists in the Tishomingo Arts Council Pet Poetry Contest, June

LINDA OWEN

*First Place in the Tishomingo Arts Council's 2023 Ekphrastic Competition with the poem "Marshland Moonglow"
*April 3: Guest Poet at Brandon First United Methodist's Senior Social
*April 6: Presented a Lenten Poem at Brandon First UMC Maundy Thursday service
*April 15: Collaborated with the Chastaine-Flynt Library (Flowood) Youth Services in a Poetry Workshop for National Poetry Month
*April 15: "Glimmers" published in *Visual Verse* online
*April 23: MPS Spring Fest--Received the MPS Poet of the Year 2023 Honor and placed First in the MPS Award Category
*April 24: Presented a poem at the Chastaine-Flynt Library for National Poetry Month and to honor Alecia Gabrielle's recent book publication *man made motion sickness.*
*May 4: Presented poetry at Pacesetter Gallery's "Poetry Open Mic Night" event
*May 15: "Banshee Lullaby" published in *Visual Verse* online
*June 1: Presented poems at Pacesetter Gallery's "Poetry Open Mic Night" in honor of artist David Rawlinson whose art graces the cover of our most recent MPS Journal
*June 7: *Rankin County News*, MPS 2023 Poet of the Year Award recognition article

JERRY PALMER

*May 29 was a day to enjoy canoe and kayak rides along with native plant walks, native plant sales, and poetry books for sale. All this benefited the Friends of the Chakchiuma Swamp. Hosted by Robin Whitfield, local artist and environmental leader.

Friends of the Swamp Day in Grenada

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MICHAEL SHELTON An article about Michael is available online. Here are the details: "Michael Shelton: retired teacher turned poet," *Starkville Daily News*," June 8, 2023

DOROTHY WIMAN*Scheduling open-mic events for youth at Humphreys County Library
Pictured: Andreanna Page, Lizzie Washington, Madison Peterson; Lizzie and Dorothy Wiman
The PDF (separate attachment) contains a Belzo*ni Banner* article about the first open-mic event.

Celebrating our Flag, an Acrostic

First summer of the Civil War
Legend says Flag Day was celebrated
At Hartford, Connecticut, in 1861.
Glory to the red, white and blue

Declaration of Independence was about one year old
At the birth of our U.S. flag
Yet it flies today to unite us as one

Just as we celebrate our nation's birthday on the fourth of July
Unfurl the flag on June 14th and celebrate its birthday.
Never forget the military who defend this USA
Ever in peace and war, the flag speaks freedom

14th of June is the day to fly Old Glory proudly!

Patricia Butkovich

Blessed USA, a Work in Progress

We sing beneath these "spacious skies"
where proudly flies
this symbol of
the land we love.

We sing, "God shed His grace on thee,"
land where we're free,
because the brave,
so much they gave.

"May God thy gold refine," we sing.
Sweet peace, please bring.
Divisions, quell.
Unrest, dispel!

a minute, by Janice Canerdy

That Little Band

That Little Band of faithful men,
Braving all to start a new,
Soon left the shores of cruel fate
Hoping life could now be true.

In a time that tried the soul
With tyranny and scenes of hell,
They would have been so greatly joyed
To learn their work turned out so well.

True, the scenes of turmoil came
When human bondage was replete
But men awoke once more to cries
And summer soldiers gave retreat.

Country boys grew strong in cunning,
Knowing where injustice lay,
And they carried out with courage
Till they won their noble day. John W. Crawford (Unpublished)

Flying Our Flag

Trees join in; their music rumbles
over my years. Someone clicks a light
and we remember how it was then.
There were heroes – people who fought
for the good, Rockwell paintings
of a policeman treating a boy to ice cream,
a soldier limping home from the last war.
Wars brought sorrow. Pain journeyed through
families; the flag encouraged us to continue,
tall, courageous. We stood, reverence brought
hands over hearts. So proud of America.
We said, “thanks”, and “can I help you?”
Saturdays after wringer washers were empty,
we rode bikes through quiet towns. Street
lights blinked on and we headed home.
Carefree ruled our lives. We had pride
in country and gave thanks for freedom.
Sorrow continues to visit. Together, we
pray for peace. We’ve become adults,
hands over hearts, flying our flags.

…publ. *Wyoming newsletter*, 2022 by Gail Denham

Midnight at the Memorial
Ocean Springs, Mississippi
May 30, 1997

The families have gone.
The vigil lights flicker and gleam
on the black granite squares, six deep,
still wet from the early evening rain.
The drops drip down faces laser-etched in cold stone;
young boys and men, who thirty years ago
did not return from Vietnam.

Today widows came, and grown children,
some who had never seen their fathers;
a few aging parents, sisters, brothers;
the first invited to see these two tall rows
of white walls covered with over six hundred
polished squares, names below the ledge,
where now lay some limp roses in cellophane,
and a curious little zebra figure standing guard.

Tomorrow, in sunlight, this Mississippi monument
will be dedicated by the governor, and a band will play.
Choppers will fly over, and a 21-gun salute
will shatter the quiet of this place, repeating the last sounds
many of these soldiers heard in rice paddies,
torched jungles, or make-shift tent hospitals.

But tonight, in the misty darkness, the faces flicker
in candlelight, gaze across the open space at each other
and seem to whisper…….“We’re home.”

Brenda Finnegan

“Midnight at the Memorial” made the top 100 non-rhyming poems in the annual 1998 *Writers Digest Magazine* Annual Contest, but was not published. It was later published in “Missing Persons” (book- by Poet of the Year -Brenda Brown Finnegan, MS Poetry Society, 2001)

THE PATRIOT

Clayton Beauchamp turned seventy-five today,
But still wears beret,
And cammies,
With tropical lightning patch,
On special occasions—
Like Veterans Day
And Memorial Day
When tears come easy now
Even when the high school band
Plays the National Anthem
At football games
With his right hand
Over his heart
And Old Glory swimming
In his eyes.

Half a life ago,
He took names
In the Nam
Amid splash of AK rounds
And RPG blossoms.

He still takes names—
Rubbings
From polished black stone.

Clayton Beauchamp turned seventy-five today,
But he still remembers.

Emory Jones

Praying for My Country

My country, ‘tis for thee now on my bended knee,
For thee I pray.
Come back to freedom’s start-faith at your deepest heart.
May God His strength impart
To thee, I pray.

Sweet land I hold so dear, regain your mission clear.
Stand up once more.
God, in Your grace sublime, draw us back to the time
When we toward You climbed,
To You adore.

This land, my country fair, lovely beyond compare,
Brings me great joy.
Even more joyous though, knowing the gifts you show
Reflect God’s love below
For our employ.

Once proud, we held it all and, shoulders lifted tall,
We praised His name.
Oh, that we might return, find then the love we spurn,
And faithlessness unlearn.
His love proclaim.

This poem was included on The Presidential Prayer Team website that year.

Defining ourselves

We are Americans concerned for our nation
and our neighbors living in it.
In the twists and turns of the Covid arena,
overworked medical teams transfuse
their care like pints of blood
streaming into the jammed emergency rooms.
We keep in touch with our loved ones.
We are Americans aware of our ancestors
who forged out west
and planted one fruit tree at a time.
They breathed the idea of creation
that grew alongside them in the wilderness.
Our nation is holding on to their pioneer spirit.
We are Americans who open our arms
to aid the sick and working class and homeless.
It is the warmth of our country
that will cure the heartbreak.
Our extra beds and extra workers
have become the hearth and home
welcoming our people to what we can offer.
We are Americans who will extend
our unfailing care
like a ribbon of hope to the nation
we call our own.

Catherine Moran, written a few years ago

July Fourth

Hats off to the good ole USA!
May every voice be raised today
to thank God for a land so free
that He has given to you and me.

May all be moved to do what counts
to follow right, the wrong renounce.
Let's hold up high the flag that stands
for truth and freedom throughout our land.

May the blood so bravely shed in wars
be remembered and cherished in this land of ours.
May those who died to make us free
find us faithful in keeping our liberty.

Let us not let comfort lull us to sleep
or cause us to selfishly horde and keep
the blessings that we have been handed here.
Lord, help us to rise, fit and prepared.

Fit for a purpose that seeks to befriend
those who are ravaged by iron hands.
Prepared to help and to undergird
when those oppressed need voices heard.

A free ride to freedom is never free.
Grant wisdom, strength, and clarity
in the struggle to tender great power and might
with the will to do what is ever right.

Linda Owen

Many thanks to all of you who submitted reports, photos, and patriotic poems for the summer *Magnolia Muse*. Till next time . . . .

Janice