



March, 2018

The Connecticut Poetry Society Newsletter

The CPS website is <http://ctpoetry.net/>.

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

CPS Honorary Board

Rennie McQuilkin, Connecticut Poet Laureate, 2015-2020

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: Tony Fusco

CRR Editor: Ginny Connors

Newsletter: Ginny Connors

Program Director: Victor Altshul

Board Meeting Coordinator: Julia Paul

New Treasurer Announced

Our long-time treasurer, Michael Lepore, is stepping down from the position he has served with distinction for years. Under his administration our membership has grown, our financial position has improved, and sponsors have underwritten the costs of our contests. He and his wife have sponsored one of the contests

for several years running.

Although we'll be sad to lose Michael Lepore as treasurer, we are happy to say that Mark Sheridan has volunteered to take over this position. Many CPS members know Mark from presentations he has done as part of our POP (Poets on Poetry) series and through other CPS events. He has energy and ideas and will surely do well as part of the executive board of CPS.

Presidents' Message

Our holiday party was yet another example of teamwork and ingenuity, creating a strong sense of community and support that is so needed in these times, and that poetry provides so well. Looking forward to spring, literally and figuratively! "It is spring again. The earth is like a child that knows poems by heart." —Rainer Maria Rilke

Great events are planned for Poetry Month and beyond. We look forward to our annual Poetry Blast on May 19th. Let us take time again to thank our Board members, who work tirelessly and endlessly to ensure that Connecticut Poetry Society remains on the cutting edge of the poetry scene.

CPS Chapters & Presidents

Danbury

Elizabeth Massey
liz.massey@juno.com

The Danbury chapter meets at Danbury Library, 170 Main Street, on the second Saturday of each month, from 2:00 - 4:00 PM (12 - 2 PM in June, July and August). 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 Elizabeth.

Farmington Valley

Terence McCaffrey
860-416-6684
tmccaff24@hotmail.com

This new chapter meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the library at Tunxis Community College from 6-8 pm. Bring copies of your poem if you want feedback.

Greater Hartford

Julia Paul
Julia.Paul@cox.net

The Greater Hartford chapter meets on the 2nd Sunday of each month, Sept. through June from 1:15-3 pm at Welles Turner Library, 2407 Main Street, Glastonbury. Starting in June the meetings will begin at 2 pm.) Bring copies of a poem to share if you want feedback on your work.

Manchester

Linda Richardson
wwpoetryclub@gmail.com

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 if you want feedback from your group. The chapter meets informally in July and August at the same location.

Middletown

Pamela Guinan
860-563-5761
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
victor.altshul@yale.edu

The New Haven chapter meets the third Saturday of the month at the Friends Room at Miller Memorial Library, 2901 Dixwell Ave., Hamden, 10:15 am-12:15 pm.

Southbury

Marion McGauhy
860-354-2157
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. During the summer, new and prospective members should contact Marion for summer meeting schedule times as the library's hours change during the summer.

Wilton

Ray Rauth
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 poem to distribute to all of the attendees. The poems should be no more than 40 lines.

No chapter in your area?

Consider starting one! All that's required is a regular meeting time, a place to meet, and a willingness to work with CPS poets.

CPS Annual Poetry Blast

Our spring Poetry Blast really will be a blast, so mark your calendar with a reminder to attend on May 19th from 1-4 pm at Work_Space (formerly known as MCC on Main), 903 Main Street in Manchester. There is plenty of parking available behind the building. You can look forward to great refreshments, plenty of time to mingle with other poetry-lovers, a book sale (if you've published a poetry book you are welcome to sell it there), a wonderful, educational poetry program, and an open mic. More news on this to follow!

CPS Represented on the Colin McEnroe Show

Many of you may be fans of WNPR's Colin McEnroe show. On a recent program focusing on Danbury, which was once known far and wide as Hat City, a Danbury CPS member, Chris Booth, was tapped to read a poem by Billy Collins called "The Death of the Hat." Chris's voice is perfect for the radio; he did a great job. It was the Danbury chapter's new leader, Elizabeth Massey, who put the show in touch with Chris Booth.

Should Your Poem Be on the CPS

Website?

The CPS online Poetry Page

<http://ctpoetry.net/members-poems.html>

features two poems a month by members of CPS. Send one poem for consideration, no longer than 60 lines, using the online submission form located here:

<http://ctpoetry.net/members-only-poetry-submission-form.html>



Co-presidents Pat Mottola and Tony Fusco at the holiday party in December

Poetry Contest News

We expect winners of the Nutmeg Poetry Award to be announced soon. The Lynn DeCaro poetry contest for Connecticut high school students closes on March 15th. The 15th of March is also the closing date for submissions to the annual group of contests sponsored by our national organization, National Federation of State Poetry Societies. We always like to see some of our members represented among the winners! The grand prize is \$1000, and many other prizes are awarded. Check out their website www.nfsps.com for contest information and to read their newsletter, *Strophes*.

Connecticut River Review

We are getting a great many submissions from around the country for our national poetry journal, *Connecticut River Review*. The deadline to submit is April 15. Electronic submissions only. <https://connecticutriverreview.submittable.com>

Poet in the Spotlight

Each quarter, we will feature a CPS member in the newsletter. Our March, 2018 poet is Doris Henderson. Christine Beck interviewed her.

Doris Henderson, a long-time member of CPS is moving to New York to be closer to family. We want to thank Doris for all her contributions to CPS.

Doris started writing poetry as a child, although she was more interested in drama at that time. She started writing seriously while volunteering at a Women's Center. She was working on the battered women's hotline, taking calls from women in crisis. Her writing began to take on a new reality. Then a new member of the Center started a writing group, where she learned how to "free write" rapidly.



Doris Henderson

Doris joined CPS a little over 30 years ago. About CPS, she says, "I have gotten much friendly, helpful advice. Members learn to listen at meetings and make helpful suggestions. And there are many opportunities to be in group readings. I got to know local librarians who like to provide opportunities for poets to perform."

Her own contributions to the society include serving as secretary and vice-president of CPS, and

acting as president of the Danbury chapter for about 20 years. During that time her own poetry has appeared in a number of journals, has won some local prizes, and she's published a book called *What Gets Lost*.

Among Doris' favorite poets are Edwin Arlington Robinson and Charles Simic. Robinson came from a small village in Maine and Doris can relate, as she is also from a small town. About Simic she says, "He had many tragic and frightening experiences, but never lost his sense of humor."

Asked about practices she recommends to new poets, Doris says, "write often, observe the world around you, do frequent free writes, and try hard to remember your dreams - write them down as soon as you wake up!"

POP: Poets on Poetry

This popular series, hosted at the Hartford Public Library and the Southington Library features local poets sharing poetry of and discussion on well-known poets. Upcoming programs at the Hartford Library, 500 Main Street, 10 am to noon, include the following:

March 31: Kate Rushin will lead a discussion on the poetry of Claudia Rankine

April 28: David Cappella will focus on Maxine Kumin.

May 26: Christine Beck will illuminate Gerard Manley Hopkins.

June 30: Maria Sassi will share the work of Billy Collins.

In Memoriam



December was a difficult month for the poetry community in Connecticut. We lost at least three outstanding poets.

Hugo E. DeSarro, of East Hampton, CT for 38 years, passed away in December at the age of 98. Hugo served in the US Army Air Corps during WWII. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Connecticut in 1950 and his Master's Degree from Trinity College. He was a member of the Connecticut Coalition of Poet Laureates and a member of the Connecticut Poetry Society and was appointed Poet Laureate of East Hampton, CT by the town council in 2015. He is the author of *Stone Steps*, a collection of poetry which he published at the youthful age of 96. It was a moment of great pride and personal achievement when this book was placed in circulation at the University of Connecticut library. In addition, Hugo penned *Point of View*, a weekly column for the Rivereast News Bulletin, for over 30 years. Hugo was a devoted family man who shared his love of art, literature and music with the community. Hugo is survived by his wife, Marietta, and his three daughters.

Edward J. Zagorski, 74, of Wethersfield, died peacefully in December and is now rejoined with his beloved Frank.

Edward spent his early life in Illinois, where he earned a BA in education in 1966. He taught English and Speech at Argo Community High School. He left teaching to earn his MA in Oral Interpretation of Literature from the University of Illinois, Urbana. He then moved to Connecticut, accepting a position as editor at *My Weekly Reader*. He also worked on the 6th grade English publication editing for *Read Magazine*. Continuing in the editorial field, he worked for Coleco, a toy manufacturer in West Hartford as the Copy Writing Manager. Ed completed his professional career as the Director of Communications at the Credit Union League of Connecticut.

He was a devoted member of the Connecticut Poetry Society; he also was the Founder of the Annual Poetry Festival in Wethersfield. Ed was a kind and loving person who touched the hearts of all who knew him.

Dick Allen of Trumbull, who was the poet laureate of Connecticut from 2010 to 2015, died after suffering a heart attack on Christmas. He was 78.

“There was no pain, and there was a palpable feeling of peace in the room when he passed over,” his daughter, Tanya Allen wrote in her Facebook post. “By chance a Buddhist-Catholic priest was in the hospital to say prayers over him with Mom and myself ... which would have amused and hopefully pleased my father, as he was known as a Buddhist/Christian poet.”

Richard Stanley Allen was born in Troy, N.Y., and grew up in Round Lake, N.Y. He received a bachelor's degree at Syracuse University and a master's at Brown.

His was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for *Overnight in the Guest House of the Mystic*, won the New Criterion Poetry Prize for *Shadowy Place* and won the Connecticut Book Award for *Present Vanishing*. He received the Robert Frost Prize, the Pushcart Prize, the Hart Crane Poetry Prize and fellowships from National Endowment for the Arts and the Ingram Merrill Foundation.

Allen cited Ralph Waldo Emerson, A.E. Housman, Ben Jonson and Robert Frost as his greatest influences. He co-founded the Expansive Poetry movement and was a major figure in the New Formalist movement.

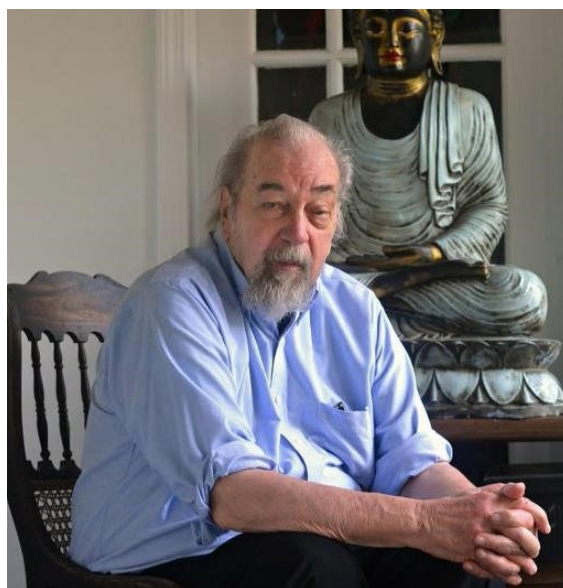
Allen also was a longtime student of Zen and that philosophy influenced his work. Rennie McQuilkin, who succeeded Allen as Connecticut's poet laureate, praised Allen as a poet, a supporter of others' work and an ambassador for poetry.

"When the terrible shooting occurred at Sandy Hook, he wrote a beautiful poem that told us in ways only he could what the people of Sandy Hook and the families of those kids were suffering," McQuilkin said. "He rose to the occasion as a poet laureate should."

Allen is survived by his wife, Lori; his daughter Tanya, his son, Rich, and his grandson, Lincoln Weir.

Here is a link to the poem Dick Allen wrote after the Newtown tragedy:

<http://wnpr.org/post/simple-solemn-tribute-sandy-hook-victims>



Dick Allen

Photo by Peter Casolino, Hartford Courant

Symphony and Poetry – Hamden Combined Arts Event

Winning poems from the Hamden Arts Commission poetry contest will be featured during the Hamden Symphony Orchestra's spring concert. The concert will be held in the Hamden Memorial Town Hall auditorium on Sunday April 29 at 3pm. Musical selections chosen to inspire poets are: Sibelius: Karelia Suite – "Alla Marcia" and Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance March # 1 – "Land of Hope and Glory." The theme for creative inspiration is "identity". Submission deadline is March 15th. For more information regarding this event and contest see the CPS website under "Call for Poems"

<http://ctpoetry.net/events.html>

Wintonbury Library Poetry Series

Every third Thursday, the Wintonbury Library in Bloomfield, 1015 Blue Hills Avenue, offers a poetry series beginning at 7 pm and followed by an open mic. On March 15th poets Mary Elizabeth Lang and Tarn Granucci are featured.

Mishi-maya-gat Spoken Word & Music Series

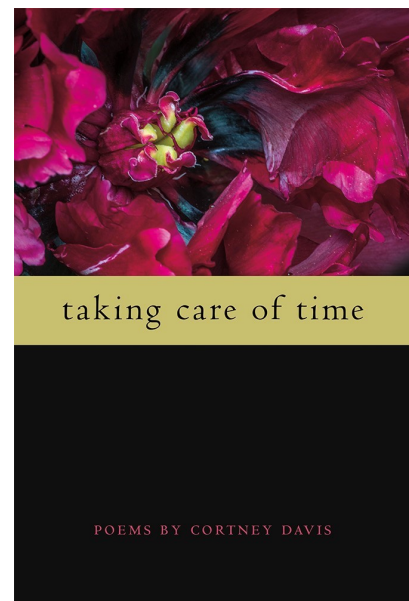
This long-running series of poetry and music resumes on Thursday, March 15, from 6:30-9 p.m., in Manchester Community College's Dehn Gallery (formerly MCC on Main; the building, now called Work_Space) in downtown Manchester, 903 Main Street, Manchester. The evening will open with a reading at 6:30 p.m. by poet/writer DeMisty D. Bellinger. The gypsy jazz quartet, Chat Noir, featuring Markus Centola, accordion; Andrew Studenski, clarinet; Dan Liparini, guitar; and David Uhl, bass, will perform at 8:00 p.m. All Mishi-maya-gat events are free and open to the public.

Poets to Appear in Wyndham Theater Guild Presentation

On April 18 at 7 pm, Doug Anderson, Alexandrina Sergio, Steve Straight, and some Windham High School poets will participate in a reading. The fine poet and editor Alexander "Sandy" Taylor will be remembered during this event. The Theater Guild is at 779 Main Street in Willimantic. Tickets cost \$8 for adults, \$5 for students. Call 860-423-2245 or email windhamtheatre@aol for more information.

Old Is Not a Four-Letter Word

Alexandrina Sergio's new poetry book, *Old Is Not a Four-Letter-Word*, published by Antrim House Books, is now available. "In savoring the mortal, the temporary, these poems make one long for permanence," says Danielle Pieratti about the poems in this book.



New Book by Cortney Davis

Taking Care of Time is the new poetry collection by Cortney Davis, just published by Wheelbarrow Books. For nurse practitioner Davis, the truth revealed through poetry is similar to what she has experienced in the heightened and urgent dramas that occur in health care. We are vulnerable, her poems say, and we are dependent on one another—on the ways in which we care or fail to care for one another, in how we love or fail to love.

Manchester Chapter to Participate in Poem in Your Pocket Day

The Manchester chapter is preparing to distribute poems in mid-April for “Poem in Your Pocket Day.” They will deliver poems to Manchester libraries, businesses, and even in some surrounding towns. This event, part of National Poetry Month, takes place on April 26. On this day, people are encouraged to select a poem, carry it throughout the day, and share it with others.

The Wit and Wisdom Poetry Club (aka the Manchester chapter of CPS) will also be doing a reading for residents for the Arbors in May.

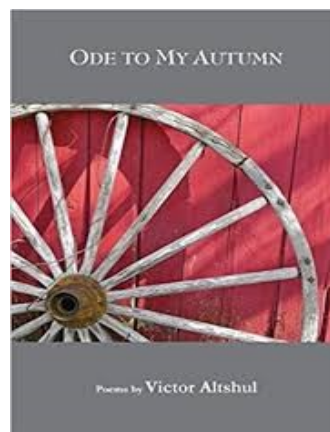
Mindfulness Poetry at RJ Julia in Middletown

The editors of the popular poetry collection **Poetry of Presence** will appear at Wesleyan RJ Julia in Middletown (413 Main Street) on March 22 at 7 pm to briefly discuss the book and share some of the poems from it. Along with editors Phyllis Cole-Dai and Ruby R. Wilson, Ginny Connors, David Leff, Sherri Bedingfield, and Joan Hofmann will be reading a few poems from the book. This will be a nice opportunity to escape briefly from the clamor and tumult of our difficult times.

Independent Author Event at RJ Julia in Madison

Laura Altshul, Victor Altshul, Ginny Connors (and contributors to the **Forgotten Women** collection), and Andrea Fry will appear at RJ Julia’s flagship Madison store on April 9 at 7 pm. Location is 768 Boston Post Road in Madison. They will be reading short selections from these new books: **Bodies Passing, Ode**

to My Autumn, Forgotten Women, and The Bottle Diggers.



Modern American Poetry Class Offered as Part of Glastonbury Continuing Education

Our new treasurer, Mark Sheridan, will be teaching a two-session class for adults at Glastonbury High School on April 24 and May 1 from 6:30-8:30. Poems from over a dozen poets will be shared in class. Those who have attended some of the POP (Poets on Poetry) sessions at Hartford Public Library or Southington Library know that Mark is a knowledgeable and engaging presenter. You can register through www.glastonburyus.org/adulted or call 860-652-7253 for more information.

Wilton Workshop Reading

Members of the Wilton Workshop will read at the Weston Library, 56 Norfield Road, on April 28, followed by an open mic and reception. Call 203-222-2665 for info.

Claudia Rankine and Her Book *Citizen*

Claudia Rankine will give a keynote address on April 26 at 5:30 pm at the Center for Contemporary Culture, located on the first floor of the Hartford Public Library, 500 Main Street.

Rankine's subject is race, particularly the racism felt by black people in America. Her 2014 book *Citizen* has the subtitle, "An American Lyric." *Citizen* was chosen as the book for Hartford's *Big Read* program in 2018.



Claudia Rankine

CT Poets Laureate to Read at ECSU

Daniel Donaghy, Poet Laureate of Windsor County and a professor at Eastern Connecticut State University has organized a poetry reading that will include a number of Connecticut's current and emeritus poets laureate. This will take place on April 10 at 5 pm in the Student Center Theater at ECSU on Windham Street in Willimantic.

CPS Members to Appear at the Poetry Institute

As part of the December holiday party, four CPS board members made brief presentations on the poetry of nationally recognized, recently deceased poets: Julia Paul spoke on John Ashbury, Pat Mottola presented the work of Derek

Walcott, Christine Beck discussed Richard Wilbur and Ginny Connors shared poetry and information on C.D. Wright. If you missed this program, don't despair! A brief recap of the program will take place at The Poetry Institute, located in the Institute Library, 847 Chapel Street in New Haven on May 17 at 7 pm. If the work of any of these poets is unfamiliar to you, here's a chance to get a nice introduction; possibly it will spur you on to learn more.

Pegi Deitz Shea: Writer and Photographer

Pegi Deitz Shea was a featured reader at "Here in Windham: A Gathering of Local Poets" in February at Eastern Connecticut State University. As well as being a talented poet, she is known as a prolific author of children's books. Pegi is a photographer too. Her solo show of photographs and poems, "Through a Poet's Eye," is exhibiting at Duncaster Residences in Bloomfield during the month of March, and at Tolland Arts Center in Tolland during the month of May. Check it out!

Edward Ahern Published in New Anthology

Fairfield member Edward Ahern will see two of his poems published in a book called *Connecticut's Best Emerging Poets*, which is offered by Z Publishing House. It is always great to hear of new publications by our members!