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Language of Enchantment

President's Message: Come One, Come All!

Inside this issue:

<i>Dear Poet</i>	2
<i>Chapter Chat</i>	3
<i>Sweepstakes Winner</i>	4
<i>New ABQ Poet Laureate Appointed</i>	4
<i>Know Your NMSPS Board</i>	5
<i>State Convention Event Schedule</i>	6
<i>Albuquerque Chapter Hosts Page One Gala</i>	7
<i>Chapter Meeting Times and Locations</i>	7

It isn't often you get to take part in a historic or pioneer event, but our upcoming NMSPS State Convention, scheduled for April 28, will be such an occasion. We have had annual meetings before, of course, but it has been only a year since we ratified a new constitution in which we began to speak of an annual *State Convention* for the Society.

Now that we have eight chapters, dispersed across the state, the idea of "convention" has incredible import, especially as we prepare to host the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS) Annual Convention in 2013.

Few of our NMSPS poets have ever attended the NFSPS national event, so our State Convention will be invaluable practice for what is ahead at the big one in 2013. I can tell you, after having attended several of the national gatherings (and I'll go to the one being held in Indiana in June), that many of the elements you requested us to incorporate into the April 28 event are found aplenty at national, in particular, the sense of camaraderie, reunion, excitement, and joyful learning.

The basics for the State Convention are in place, but we are still working on getting some fabulous folks to drop by, even if it is only to schmooze in the Poets' Cafe. Our workshop leaders, Charles Trumbull, Hakim Bellamy, and Merimee Moffitt, have graciously agreed to change



Photo by Georgia Santa-Maria

the timing on their two workshops apiece so that attendees will be able to take in more than one workshop if they wish; there will be at least three mini-workshops offered; open readings throughout the day; snacks; music, book sales and a free book exchange; and a six-course awards banquet with surprise celebrity guests.

The Albuquerque Chapter

has put together what is sure to be a dynamite pre-convention reception with featured poets and open readings at a local bookstore. See page 7 for details.

Out-of-towners attending the state convention will receive convention rates at Hotel Albuquerque (HotelABQ.com) April 26-30 if they identify themselves as NMSPS members.

Thank you for the many thought-provoking replies in the member survey regarding the State Convention. We listened, and we have revamped plans whenever possible to fulfill your wishes. I think you will find the changes to your liking.

You don't want to miss this event, not only because it is our very first NMSPS State Convention, but also because it will be such doggone fun! I can't wait to greet you there.

Shirley Blackwell

Special interest:

- NMSPS State Convention
- Saturday, April 28
10 am—8:30 pm
(see page 6)

Dear Poet:

“How do I grow and improve as a poet?”

In my first column I promised to address some questions that are of concern to us as poets. I'll begin with a very important one: “How do I grow and improve as a poet?”

The first suggestion I would give is “Read, read, read!” Read *everything*. Other poets, certainly. Poets of the past and poets who are writing now. Read poets you like and poets whose work does not speak to you—you will learn something from all of them. And don't overlook the poets whose work is considered highly experimental. You may not be able to figure out what it means, but “meaning” as we usually think of it was probably not what the poets were aiming at. It might be helpful to think of such poems as abstract paintings in words. Just look at the words—the brush strokes--and don't fret about analyzing them. The unfamiliar juxtapositions of ideas, the use of fragmentary sentences and elliptical “skipping about,” for example, may help you see how you could use similar techniques in your own work.

Above all, go back to the poets whose work you are drawn to and read their work again and again. You will absorb something of their skill, their craft, and though your poems will not become imitations of theirs, unconsciously you will have incorporated some of the strengths of their writing into your own.

When I said read *everything*, I meant fiction as well as poetry. Many passages of pure poetry are to be found in novels, and we can take note of how novelists

sometimes use vivid images to great effect, in ways that would also work well in poems. And if we write narrative poetry, we can look at how the fiction writer handles narrative. Those techniques might be helpful in working out the story line of our poems.

I also meant non-fiction. History, science, biographies, memoirs, or whatever interests you. Books on astronomy, physics, and botany have given me many ideas and images for my poems. Non-fiction can also give us “found” poems. A found poem is taken directly from a source that has nothing to do with poetry—a newspaper or a textbook, for instance. I once wrote a series of poems that are direct quotations from a book on interior design, “Poems Found in the Concise Dictionary of Interior Decorating.” (Fiction, too, can provide found poems. “Miss Scarlett,” posted on the Academy of American Poets website, www.poets.org, is a long quotation from *Gone With the Wind*.)

And of course we must educate ourselves about the nuts and bolts of the poetic craft. For instance, what is a metaphor? What is a simile? What do we mean by imagery, and does it have to do only with the visual? What's a villanelle? What is iambic pentameter? There are many excellent online sources and books we can consult. The Academy of American Poets website provides a wealth of information on what seems like an endless list of topics related to poetry. Or just go to a search engine and put in the name of the topic you want to

Dear Poet:

A series by Jeanne Shannon

explore. Two books I highly recommend are *The Discovery of Poetry* by Frances Mayes and *In the Palm of Your Hand: The Poet's Portable Workshop* by Steve Kowit.

Learn about forms such as the sonnet, villanelle, and pantoum, and decide whether there are some particular forms you would like to try. Even if you decide that free verse is what you want to write, experimenting with writing in forms can be helpful.

If you have questions or comments about anything I've mentioned, you may e-mail me at jspoetry@aol.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Jeanne Shannon



Chapter Chat

The Albuquerque Chapter is hosting a pre-convention reception and Open Mic on Friday, April 27. See page 7 for details.

The Bosque Poets hosted NMSPS President Shirley Blackwell in Corrales in January. She did a workshop on sonnets for them.

Bosque Poets (left to right) are Michael Roake, Leon Wiskup, Joanne Roake, John Ashbaugh; sitting: Susan Paquet (chair of the Bosque Poets), Shirley Blackwell and Linda Wolcott.



The High Prairie Poets welcomed Katherine White, an Albuquerque chapter member, as their guest poet on February 18. Following her presentation, they shared their own poems and received updates on the state convention.

Pictured from left to right (standing) Kaarin Jaager, Gorton Smith, Shirley Blackwell, Ann Applegarth, Candace Jordan-Russell, Alice Wagoner (bending over); sitting are Katherine White and Pat Hittle.

Santa Fe Poetry Trails chapter chair Jim Raby reports that the SFPT poetry reading at Lucky Bean Café on March 5 was a huge success with 51 attendees and 38 poet-prose writers. The reading lasted over one and one half hours. Thanks to all who attended!

Chapter Chat (continued)

Chapter chairs: Has one of your members received an award? Email info to NMSPSnewsletter@nmpoetry.com.

Tri-Chapter Cheer in Socorro Friday the 13th. To celebrate National Poetry Month, the RGV Poets (Valencia County), Rio Abajo Poets (Socorro), and Turtleback Mountain Poets (T or C) sponsored an evening of poetry and music at the Old Town Bistro at the Old Plaza. Mary Dezember and Georgia Santa-Maria were featured readers. Dog Star (NMSPS members Louis Blackwell, Stewart Warren, and Greg Candela) played “down-to-earth” music for a packed house in practice for the upcoming State Convention. Shirley Blackwell emceed an open mic.

Walking Rain Chapter (Taos) has been busy lining up speakers for our 2013 National Convention. The keynote speaker will be announced at our upcoming State Convention.

NMSPS Membership Sweepstakes Winner



Joanne Roake (pictured) is our Membership Sweepstakes winner!

Her prize was a \$50 Amazon gift certificate. Joanne is a member of the newly-formed Bosque Poets.

Welcome, all renewing and new members!

Heartiest
congratulations
to **Albuquerque's**
new (and first)
Poet Laureate,
Hakim Bellamy!



Photo by Greg Gawloski from Sunday Chatter February 22

Mayor Richard Berry proclaimed Hakim Bellamy ALBUQUERQUE POET LAUREATE in a ceremony at the city's Main Library on Saturday, April 14. Bellamy will serve for two years as Poet Laureate. He is an honorary member of NMSPS.

Attendees at the NMSPS State Convention on April 28 will get to meet and hear Bellamy speak. He is leading two sessions of a workshop on *Performing Creative Non-Fiction: The Art of the Historical & the Research Poem*. He and other honored guests, including former Santa Fe Poet Laureate Valerie Martinez and Centennial Poet Levi Romero, will attend the Awards Banquet.

Know Your NMSPS Board

Elected Board (Officers and Chapter Chairs)

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Chuck Russell, Chair (as of May)
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MEMBER BOOK MARKET WEB PAGE

<http://nmpoetry.org/nmsps-market.shtml>

Want your book included in the Members' Book Market? Look for the submission guidelines on the NMSPS website. A \$10 set-up fee lets you list up to three books with links to where your books can be purchased.



 2012 New Mexico State Poetry Society Annual Meeting and State Convention

Event Schedule and Registration Information

Greetings, NMSPS members, NMSPS member guests, and non-members! The 2012 Annual Meeting will be followed by our first-ever State Convention. The Meet and Greet and Annual Meeting are free to all. A single Convention Fee provides you with an all-day pass to everything the State Convention has to offer—including the Awards Banquet! Read on for more details. You can also consult the NMSPS website (www.nmpoetry.com) for ongoing updates.

When: Saturday, April 28, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Monte Vista Christian Church

3501 Campus Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM (Nob Hill area)

From Carlisle (between Lomas and Central), go west on Grand Avenue.

Event Schedule

10:00 to 10:30 a.m. Meet and Greet (& late registration**)

10:30 to 11:45 a.m. NMSPS Annual Meeting Free to all

Noon to 8:30 p.m. 2012 NMSPS State Convention \$40 for each NMSPS member/guest
 \$20 for Youth (members/non-members)
 \$60 for non-member adults

Convention Fee includes an all-day pass to:

Noon to 5:00 p.m. All workshops (Consult info below and www.nmpoetry.com for more details.)

Pre-register early for priority seating, other seats first-come, first-served

Presenter	Session 1		Session 2	
Hakim Bellamy	12 to 2p	Performing Creative Non-fiction	3-5p	Repeat
Charles Trumbull	12:30-2p	Haiku	3:30-5p	Repeat
Merimée Moffitt	2:15-3:15p	Rhyme Royal	3:30-5p	Ghazhal

Noon to 5:00 p.m.

Poets' Café

Open Mics (poetry and original songs)

Snacks and socializing (including make-a-sandwich lunch for small donation)

Impromptu presentations/mini-seminars on various topics of interest

Schmoozing with celebrity poets

Meet the 2013 National Convention steering committee, brainstorm/volunteer

Noon to 8:30 p.m.

Bookstore & Book Exchange (closed during the Awards Banquet)

NMSPS members' and workshop leaders' book sales & signings

Free book exchange (bring 'em and take 'em)

Registration for latecomers**

One of several quiet corners where you can write

5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

“Dog Star” musical entertainment

6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Awards Banquet

Dinner (roast chicken or vegetarian entrée with cheese)

Awards, door prizes

Featured readers and Open Mic

Albuquerque Chapter Celebrates National Poetry Month with Pre-Convention Gala at Page One

Page One Bookstore and the Albuquerque Chapter of the New Mexico State Poetry Society (NMSPS) have partnered to present an Open Mic and Reception to celebrate National Poetry Month and the NMSPS State Convention. Please join us on Friday, April 27 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This event is free and open to all.

Chandra Bales and Kenneth Gurney are coordinating with Page One on the event,

and Kenneth will be the host for the evening. Albuquerque chapter members Hilda Wales and Jeanne Shannon are the featured poets.

Page One is providing a reception with wine and cheese, coffee, tea, and bottled water. Several NMSPS Albuquerque Chapter members have volunteered to bring other munchies and baked goods.

When: Friday, 27 April 2012

Sign Up and Reception: 6:00 p.m.

Open Mic and Featured Poets: 6:30–8:30 p.m.

Where: Page One Bookstore

11018 Montgomery Blvd NE, Albuquerque

SW corner of Juan Tabo and Montgomery Blvds

www.page1book.com

Chapter Meeting Times and Locations

All members of NMSPS are welcome to attend meetings of any chapter, and are encouraged to bring guests. Members at large are especially invited to drop in on meetings whenever they get the opportunity. Let's get to know each other better!

The ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month from September through May at 1 pm at the Manzano del Sol Good Samaritan Village, 5201 Roma Ave NE (one block south of Lomas and one block west of San Mateo.) Contact chair Elaine Schwartz at ABQchair@nmpoetry.com or (505) 255-1742.

The HIGH PRAIRIE POETS (Roswell) meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month September through May, at 2 pm at the Roswell Museum and Arts Center (11th and North Main) in Roswell. Email HPchair@nmpoetry.com.

The RIO ABAJO POETS (Socorro) meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm at the Old Bistro, 115 Abeyta on the north side of Socorro's Plaza. Contact chair Barbara DuBois at RAchair@nmpoetry.com or call (575) 835-3437.

RIO GRANDE VALENCIA POETS meet on 1st Saturdays at 1 pm at the Belen Public Library, 333 Becker Ave. Contact chair Bernadette Perez at (505) 991-1376 or RGVchair@nmpoetry.com

The SANTA FE POETRY TRAILS chapter meets on the first Monday of each month for open mic readings at the Lucky Bean Downtown Café, 500 Montezuma Ave (located at the old Borders in the Railyard section of Santa Fe), starting at 6 to 8 p.m. Contact chair Jim Raby at (505) 955-9067 SFchair@nmpoetry.com

BOSQUE POETS (Corrales/Rio Rancho area) Contact Susan Paquet, Chair BPchair@nmpoetry.com or call (817) 597-9539.

TURTLEBACK MOUNTAIN POETS (Truth or Consequences area) Contact Chair Carol Borsello for meeting times, TorChair@nmpoetry.com, or (615) 476-4977.

WALKING RAIN (Taos) Contact Chair Andrea Watson for meeting times at (303) 249-4731 or email TaosChair@nmpoetry.com.

Update your chapter info at NMSPSnewsletter@nmpoetry.com.

APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH!

Celebrate by attending your fellow poets' readings, along with other community events promoting the creation and appreciation of poetry.

Be a part of our first State Convention!

New Mexico State Poetry Society

P.O. Box 1352 Los Lunas, NM 87031

We're on the web! More news/photos at:

www.nmpoetry.org

NM State Poetry Society (NMSPS) is a member of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. (NFSPS), an educational and literary organization dedicated to the writing and appreciation of poetry in America. The NFSPS can be found at www.nfsps.org.