

New Mexico State Poetry Society, Inc. (NMSPS or the Society) was organized in Albuquerque, NM, on 19 March 1969. Its original Constitution was adopted in Albuquerque, NM, on 11 October 1969; the Society was incorporated in Santa Fe, NM, on 7 December 1976. The following major revision of the Constitution was adopted by unanimous statewide vote on 9 April 2011.

CONSTITUTION
of the
NEW MEXICO STATE POETRY SOCIETY, INC.

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the New Mexico State Poetry Society, Inc., referred to hereafter in this document as the NMSPS or the Society.

ARTICLE II: Description, Purposes, and Principles

Section 1. The NMSPS is a poetry organization within the State of New Mexico affiliated with the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, Inc. (NFSPS or National Federation) and any other organizations chosen by the members whose purposes are in agreement with those of the NMSPS.

Section 2. The NMSPS is a nonprofit society dedicated to the furtherance of poetry throughout the State and elsewhere. It recognizes the importance of poetry to cultural welfare and will assert this importance by its support. The purposes of the Society are exclusively literary and educational; therefore, in the event of the dissolution of the Society, in accordance with Article XI, its assets will be distributed for literary, historical, and educational purposes to such organizations as are tax exempt under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Section 3. The NMSPS is nonpolitical and nonpartisan; it will not participate in political campaigns or endorse partisan causes. The Society may, however, provide New Mexico governmental branches with information that bears directly on the Society's mission, such as funding for the arts or the as yet (in 2011) unrealized post of NM State Poet Laureate.

ARTICLE III: Membership

Section 1. Membership in the NMSPS is open to all residents of the State and others who wish to promote the purposes of the Society. All persons interested in advancing the cultural arts in New Mexico, irrespective of whether they call themselves poets, are welcome as members. Members are encouraged to join an existing chapter or establish one in their own locale, but when that is impractical, they are welcome as members-at-large. There shall be five categories of membership: (1) annual, (2) sustaining, (3) youth, (4) life, and (5) sponsoring.

Section 2. Annual members shall have the right to attend and vote at the State Convention held each May and at any other general membership meetings; vote at their home chapter meetings; hold office; be kept informed about actions taken by the Executive Board; and have access to newsletters, contests, and other activities promoted by either the NMSPS or the National Federation. They may attend meetings of the Board but will not have voting privileges.

Section 3. Sustaining members are persons who do not consider themselves poets but wish to support the activities and cultural objectives of the NMSPS on a regular basis. They shall have the same rights and responsibilities as annual members and shall pay the same dues.

Section 4. Youth members are persons under eighteen (18) years of age who evidence an interest in poetry or talent in creative writing. They become youth members upon payment of a youth membership fee after recommendation by a responsible adult sponsor. Youth members shall have all rights of annual members except that of holding elected office.

Section 5. Life members shall be those persons who have been elected an Honorary Chancellor or who, because of long and extraordinary service to the Society, are nominated by the Executive Board and elected life members at the next State Convention. Elected life members shall not be asked to pay dues.

Annual members may also choose to pay a lifetime membership fee of fifteen (15) times the annual dues pertaining at the time of purchase.

Anyone who has been a member for thirty (30) years or who has been a member for fifteen (15) years and reached the age of seventy-five (75) shall thereafter pay one-half the annual membership fee, or may instead elect to pay a one-time fee of fifty dollars (\$50) to become a life member.

Life members at the time this Constitution is adopted shall retain their status under the revised Constitution.

Section 6. Sponsoring members are those individuals, institutions, or organizations who make substantial gifts, grants, or gifts in kind to the Society to support its mission. Such sponsors shall receive the NMSPS newsletter for one year following receipt of the gift, shall be recognized in NMSPS publications or venues for their generosity, shall receive a certificate of appreciation from the Society, and shall be given a receipt for the donation that they can use for tax purposes. However, they shall have no say in determining Society policies, nor will they obtain the Society's endorsement of any political, religious, or partisan cause. If their purposes are the same as the Society's, then the NMSPS may affiliate with them at the discretion of the Executive Board, as noted in Article II, Section 1.

Any member of the Society who wishes to make a monetary gift or a gift in kind for the purpose of funding a scholarship, sponsoring a contest, or contributing significantly to some other NMSPS project, shall receive a letter and certificate of appreciation along with a receipt for tax purposes. Such philanthropies shall be honored publicly at the next State Convention.

Section 7. Any officer or member of the NMSPS may resign his/her membership by indicating his/her intention in writing to the President and the Board.

Any member may be dropped from membership, after reasonable deliberation, by a majority vote of the Executive Board. Any member whose dues have been delinquent for more than sixty (60) days may be dropped at the recommendation of the Board.

ARTICLE IV: Officers and Terms of Office

Section 1. The governance of the Society shall reside in an Executive Board formed by combining an Elected Board and an Appointed Board.

(A) The Elected Board shall be elected during odd-numbered years at the State Convention held in May. The officers on this board include the following, who shall take office upon their election:

- (1) *President*

- (2) *Vice President*
- (3) *Treasurer*
- (4) *Secretary*
- (5) *Chancellor* (usually the Immediate Past President)

The terms for officers listed above shall expire when a new slate of officers is elected at the State Convention of each odd-numbered year, but they may be elected to consecutive or subsequent terms. Should the presidency become vacant, the Vice President shall assume that office. Should any other Elected Board office become vacant, the President, with the approval of the Executive Board, shall appoint someone to fill the post for the remainder of the term.

(5) *Chapter Chairpersons* who have been duly elected by their local chapters are members of the Elected Board ex officio. They shall serve for the term of their chapter chairmanship.

(6) *Honorary Chancellors* are members of the Elected Board ex officio; their terms do not expire. They shall not be required to pay dues or function in any official capacity. They may, however, hold other offices in the NMSPS upon election with their own consent. They shall have voting privileges on the Executive Board.

(B) The Appointive Board includes the leaders of active project teams established by the Executive Board. Appointed Project Leaders are voting members of the Executive Board as long as the project team is active. They serve at the pleasure of the President, who may dissolve or reorganize the team and select another Project Leader at his/her personal discretion.

Section 2. All Past Presidents of the NMSPS are invited to serve as honorary advisers to the Executive Board. They are welcome to attend and speak at any Board meeting, but they will not cast a ballot except in the case of a tie vote.

Past Presidents may hold other offices in the NMSPS upon election or appointment with their own consent, and shall be granted voting privileges on the Board that pertain to the office.

ARTICLE V: Election of Officers

Section 1. By 15 January of each odd-numbered year, the President shall appoint a team to nominate the next slate of elected officers. The team shall consist of a Project Leader and two other members; the President shall endeavor to obtain representation on the team from as wide a variety of NMSPS chapters as possible.

Section 2. The Nominating Team shall present a slate of nominees to the general membership at least one month prior to the State Convention in May. Suggestions for selecting nominees can be found in the Policies and Procedures Supplement to this document. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the State Convention, with the nominee's consent.

Section 3. A majority of votes cast by a quorum of members during the State Convention shall constitute an election. If no quorum is assembled, the previous officers will remain in office until the earliest time that a membership quorum can meet to hold an election.

ARTICLE VI: Quorums

Section 1. One-fourth of all dues-paying members eligible to vote shall constitute a quorum for all membership meetings.

Section 2. Three members, plus as many members as shall equal one-third of the number of Chairpersons of active and properly organized chapters, shall constitute a quorum for routine Executive Board meetings or those called with two (2) weeks' notice.

ARTICLE VII: Meetings

Section 1. Meetings are defined as an assembly of members either physically present or communicating electronically in real time with other attendees.

Section 2. The NMSPS general membership shall meet at least once annually at a State Convention during the month of May. The time and place shall be determined by the Executive Board and announced to the membership at least one month prior to the Convention. The Board shall endeavor to rotate the Convention site among regions that have established chapters.

Section 3. The Executive Board shall meet at least twice a year, but preferably more often. At the writing of this Constitution in 2011, the Executive Board met quarterly. Interim business meetings of the Board may be called by the President or at least three (3) members of the Board at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. Emergency meetings may be called by the President or at least three (3) Board members at any time, provided a majority of the Board (and not just a quorum as defined in Article VI, Section 2) is given sufficient time to assemble.

Section 4. Special meetings of the general membership may be called by the Board at any time, providing the membership is given sufficient time to assemble a quorum.

Section 5. Chapters will determine their own meeting places and times.

ARTICLE VIII: Chapters

Section 1. Chapters of the New Mexico State Poetry Society may be formed by any group of five (5) or more persons who wish to further the purposes of the Society.

Section 2. Each chapter shall elect a Chairperson and any other officers it requires. A chapter may charge additional dues or fees to its members in order to carry out its own program of activity. If a chapter imposes fees on its members, then the chapter must submit a written financial statement at the State Convention. Voluntary donations by chapter members for social activities, refreshments, etc. do not require that a financial statement be submitted. Chapter activities will not be financed by the Society.

Section 3. All chapter members must maintain membership in the State Society.

Section 4. Each chapter shall submit a written report of its activities at the State Convention. This report is usually the responsibility of the Chapter Chairperson; new Chairpersons should seek help from their predecessors in compiling the report.

ARTICLE IX: Dues, Fees, and Assessments

Section 1. Members shall be expected to remit their dues by 1 November so that the Society can comply with NFSPS timetables to verify that State Societies' members who enter National Contests are entitled to do so at member rates.

The NMSPS shall prorate dues quarterly. Thus, should a person become a new member after the first quarter (currently 1 November-31 January) of the dues year, the amount of dues will be reduced by one-quarter for each three months lapsed since the beginning of the year.

Section 2. The Executive Board will set the rate for dues using the guidelines set forth in the Policies and Procedures Supplement of this Constitution. Dues shall not be modified

more than once in a 12-month period unless such action is approved by an absolute majority of members.

Section 3. Society annual dues shall include membership in the National Federation and receipt of NFSPS and NMSPS newsletters for the concurrent dues year. Members shall be asked to access the newsletters electronically, whenever possible, to minimize costs the Society incurs to print and mail paper copies.

Section 4. The Executive Board may make, but is not absolutely required to make, emergency assessments to the membership at any time when the Treasurer reports a cash balance of less than one-thousand dollars (\$1,000) . Such assessments shall not be for more than the annual dues in effect at the time the assessment is made. No member need pay the assessment against his/her will; but any member more than sixty (60) days in arrears paying an authorized assessment will not be allowed to hold office or to vote in the Society's elections for a period of one year from the date on which the assessment was levied, unless he/she pays it prior to voting or taking office.

ARTICLE X: Contests

Section 1. Memberships in the appropriate State and National Poetry Societies are often prerequisites for entering National Federation contests. Only dues-paying members may enter such contests. The same requirement shall prevail in State contests except those which specifically allow entrance by nonmember poets.

The Society may be asked to sponsor an annual NFSPS contest. For many years, the NMSPS has sponsored the national contest titled, Our American Indian Heritage Award.

Section 2. For purposes of this Article, life members and Honorary Chancellors shall be considered dues-paying members.

Section 3. For any State contests, the NMSPS shall seek contest judges who are not members of the Society. The Executive Board shall decide, prior to asking a person to be a judge, whether that person will be offered an honorarium and, if so, its amount. Guidelines are offered in the Policies and Procedures Supplement to this Constitution.

ARTICLE XI: Dissolution of the Society

Section 1. The President shall have the sole power to initiate the dissolution of the NMSPS at his/her personal discretion. If he/she so decides, he/she shall submit this decision in writing, together with reasons for reaching the decision, to the members of the Executive Board, at a meeting or by certified mail. Unless an absolute majority of the current Executive Board objects within 15 days of such notification, the President may then act to dissolve the Society and distribute the remaining assets in accordance with Article II and the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code as follows:

Upon dissolution of the Society, the President and the Executive Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the Society, dispose of all its assets so that they exclusively further the purposes of the Society. As the Board shall determine, the assets shall go to literary, historical, or educational program(s) or organization(s) that shall at that time qualify as exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law). Any such assets not so disposed of shall be dispersed by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such

organization(s) as said Court shall determine are dedicated to purposes congruent with those of the Society.

Under NM Administrative Code (NMAC) 12.3.3.8, the Society must also obtain from the NM Public Regulation Commission those forms related to dissolving nonprofit organizations. It shall comply with the requirements for dissolution provided in NM Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 1978 Sections 53-8-47 through 53-8-49 and must file Articles of Dissolution that comply with NMSA 1978 Section 53-8-51 and 53-8-52.

The Society may cancel voluntary dissolution proceedings as provided in NMSA 1978 Section 53-8-50. It may also go into Dormant Status by filing a statement that it is no longer actively engaged in business in New Mexico; it can revive its active status by complying with NMSA 1978 Section 5-8-88.1. It is recommended that, should the Society take any of these paths, it carefully check the pertinent State and IRS regulations then in force.

Section 2. If the Executive Board chooses to continue the NMSPS despite the President's recommendation for dissolution, it shall accept the President's resignation if offered, and the highest ranking active officer, in the order in which officers are enumerated in Article IV, Section 1, shall become President for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE XII: Amendments

This Constitution may be amended at any meeting of the NMSPS general membership by two-thirds vote of a quorum assembled, provided the amendment is presented to the membership at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting. Ratification may also be made by mailed ballots, in which case an absolute majority of current members must be obtained for amendment. This Constitution takes effect immediately upon ratification.

Date: 09 April 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a true and accurate copy of the current
Constitution of the New Mexico State Poetry Society, Inc.

The document was signed by:

Bonnie K. Rucobo, President NMSPS

Elaine G. Schwartz, Vice President, NMSPS

Shirley J. Blackwell, Chancellor, NMSPS and Chair of Constitutional Revision Committee