

Supplement: Policies and Procedures

This Supplement is to be viewed as a working document separate from the New Mexico State Poetry Society Constitution and therefore does not require a constitutional amendment to be changed. Items in this Supplement may be expanded, deleted, or modified as needed by a simple majority vote of those assembled for an Executive Board meeting.

1. Mission

The New Mexico State Poetry Society, Inc. (NMSPS, or Society) seeks to affirm the value of poetry both in the public life of New Mexico and the personal life of its citizens. The Society's mission is to promote the creation and appreciation of poetry throughout the State. To that end, we shall strive to foster excellence in the writing of poetry and engender support and camaraderie among poets. To enable poets throughout the State to be full participants in the Society, we shall employ technologies and organizational models that provide accessibility for all members and encourage the growth of the Society.

The NMSPS is open to all residents of the State of New Mexico and others who wish to forward the purposes of the Society, no matter where they reside. Any members who cannot travel to Society events are encouraged to utilize communications technology to participate in Society meetings, hold elected office, or serve on project teams. Technologies currently exist which allow for such participation, and future technological developments offer even more possibilities. It is incumbent upon the NMSPS Board to pursue this ideal of inclusiveness for all members.

2. Elected Officers: Duties and qualifications

Note: To have a vote on the Executive Board (hereafter, the Board), all officers, both elected and appointed, must be current with their membership dues.

President

Duties: The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society and of the Board; shall call special meetings at his/her discretion; shall fill vacancies in office with the approval of the Board; shall prepare, with the assistance of the Board, an agenda for meetings; shall present an annual report at the State Convention in May; shall deal in all administrative and official ways on behalf of the Society and as conditions may require; and shall act in general to promote the purposes of the Society. The President shall strive to keep the Vice President fully apprised of all business of the Society and work closely with him/her so that the Vice President, at any time, would be prepared to assume the responsibilities of the presidency.

The President shall create project teams as needed. In order for all parties to be clear about the requirements of a position, the President, assisted by the Vice President if appropriate, shall confer with a prospective Project Leader to compose a written "contract" that describes the responsibilities and objectives of the project team and the expected period of time that the project will take. It is recommended that the appropriate officers and Project Leader formally agree on the project description before the project is initiated.

The President shall inform members about significant issues, policies, and Board decisions in a timely manner, through such means as regular messages in the newsletter or on the NMSPS Website or whatever technology becomes the norm in the future.

Qualifications: The President shall be able to use and have access to the Internet or whatever communications technology may succeed the Internet. A talent for inspiring cooperative endeavor (as well as skills in persuasion and organization) would be a plus.

Vice President

Duties: In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall perform all the duties of that office as listed in previous paragraphs. The Vice President shall work in close partnership with the President to ensure that the Society's goals are met; he/she occasionally may be asked to chair a project team.

The Vice President shall keep a current list of active project teams, to include the project descriptions and time frames for the project and the members serving on the teams. At the end of his/her term, the Vice President shall deliver this list to the Secretary for preservation or, if appropriate, archive it electronically.

Qualifications: Same as for the President.

Treasurer

Duties: The Treasurer shall be responsible for receiving and disbursing all monies having to do with the NMSPS. Typically, banks require checks written on the Society's funds to bear the signature of **either** the President or the Treasurer. All payments must be approved by the Board, with the following exceptions: 1) payment of National Federation assessments; 2) payment for copies of approved publications sent to members; 3) reimbursement for postage, bank charges, contest costs, and other necessary routine business of the Society.

The Treasurer shall make reports to the Board at each regularly scheduled meeting and an annual financial report to the membership during the State Convention. The Treasurer shall deliver the annual financial report to the Secretary for preservation in electronic format and in hard copy. It is recommended that electronic records be regularly backed up or stored on at least two different devices.

The Treasurer shall leave his/her successor any necessary instructions or information to ensure records are consistently maintained. He/she shall arrange for the transfer of electronic or computer files regarding NMSPS monies to the successor Treasurer.

Each year, by the first week in January, the Treasurer shall send to the NFSPS the portion of State membership dues assessed for membership in the National Federation. By 1 March, the Treasurer shall file a supplemental report of any members who have joined during January or February so that they are registered with the NFSPS as members before the National Contests close on 15 March.

Each year the Treasurer shall file the following two forms by the dates indicated:

(1) before 1 September, IRS form 990N to the federal Internal Revenue Service or its successor and (2) before 1 October, a Nonprofit Corporation Report to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission/Corporation Bureau or its successor organization.

Qualifications: The Treasurer need not be a computer expert, but he/she must be able, or willing to learn how, to do simple bookkeeping tasks on computer-based systems. He/she needs basic skills in using the Internet in order to: file the forms listed above, which are submitted via government websites; transfer information electronically to other NMSPS officers; and receive e-mail messages and inquiries from members. Moreover, a knowledgeable Treasurer can help the Society further its aim of inclusiveness by staying apprised of technology that may someday permit the Treasurer and President, the two officers authorized to write NMSPS checks, to sign "electronically," thereby negating any residency requirements for either officer.

Secretary

Duties: The Secretary shall maintain and preserve records of the NMSPS, including the minutes of conventions, general membership meetings, and Board meetings. The Secretary shall work closely with the Treasurer to maintain an accurate roster of current members. Unless the Treasurer has already submitted a list of paid-up members to the NFSPS, the Secretary shall send the Federation Contest Chair such a list in January of each year, to meet NFSPS Contest requirements. If so directed by the Board, the Secretary shall send out annual dues notices; notify members of meetings; notify officers, if elected in absentia; and send letters of congratulation, sympathy, etc.

Each state society is entitled to send four delegates to the annual NFSPS National Convention, and each needs a letter authorizing him/her to represent the State Society at the plenary session held during the Convention. The Secretary shall prepare letters for the President's signature that identify the delegate as an NMSPS member in good standing and an authorized delegate.

Qualifications: Because the Secretary must often transmit membership lists and other information electronically, it is imperative that the Secretary be able to communicate with the general membership and other officers via the Internet or any system that replaces it. Therefore a basic knowledge of how to use computers and access to the Internet are essential.

Chancellor

Duties: The Chancellor shall act as guardian of the Society's principles and mission and ensure that the Society's activities follow the guidelines set forth in this Constitution. He/she shall advise the President and the Board when called upon to do so. He/she shall serve as ombudsman for the Society.

Qualifications: It is recommended that the Chancellor be the Immediate Past President of the NMSPS, or, if that person is unable or unwilling to serve, that the Chancellor be chosen from other Past Presidents or veteran members of the Society. The Chancellor should understand or become familiar with the processes by which the NMSPS interacts with the National Federation and what responsibilities the NMSPS has as an affiliate of the NFSPS. The Chancellor should have a good grasp of the Society's Constitution, policies, and procedures.

Honorary Chancellors

Duties: Honorary Chancellors shall have no official responsibilities. They may, however, hold other offices in the NMSPS upon election or appointment, with their own consent.

Qualifications: Honorary Chancellors shall be chosen because of their experience and insight, not simply for their longevity in the Society or their poetic ability, although those attributes are assets. Honorary Chancellors are keepers of the Society's historical memory, and their attainments add luster to the Society and to its purposes.

Chapter Chairpersons

Duties: Chapter Chairpersons shall represent their chapter members at Board meetings. They shall report on chapter activities at each Board meeting and, conversely, keep their members apprised of significant Board actions or decisions. At the State Convention, they shall present a written report of chapter activities for the previous year and ensure that a written annual financial report (if warranted by guidelines in Article VIII, Section 2 of the Constitution) is also submitted.

Qualifications: Chapter Chairpersons must be duly elected by members of their own chapters. Their term of office on the Board coincides with the term of their chapter chairmanship.

3. Nominating Process for Elected and Appointed Officers

It is recommended that the Society inventory the leadership skills and interests of its members so that the Board and nominating teams have better information when seeking to fill vacancies in office. It is recommended that an optional checklist of skills and interests be attached to the annual dues form or available year-round on the Website.

It is recommended that position descriptions/qualifications for both elected and appointed posts be made available to all members by February to encourage them to volunteer for any posts that interest them.

4. Dues, Fees, and Assessments

The Board will set the amount of annual dues based on projected needs of the Society to maintain its obligations to members and as an affiliate of the National Federation. It is recommended that youth membership fees be kept low--never more than half the annual dues.

When the amount for dues is changed, the new rates shall become effective the following November. Members shall be asked to pay their dues by 1 November and informed that this date is tied to the NFSPS National Contests requirements; the National Contests Chairperson must receive proof of membership in time for NMSPS members to take advantage of drastically discounted entry fees.

If a member has access electronically to *Strophes* and other Society or NFSPS publications, but asks to receive paper copies, the Board may, at its discretion, charge a fee for printing and postage.

Provisions for special assessments are spelled out in Article IX of the Constitution.

5. Contests

Contests provide members valuable experience in getting work published, they encourage healthy competition with their peers resulting in more production for individual authors, and they are a potential source of revenue for the Society.

Many State Societies hold small monthly contests plus a large annual contest; this procedure is recommended for New Mexico. It is recommended that entry fees be kept low and contests be held more frequently. Members and others may be invited to contribute small amounts toward contest prizes.

Contest judges should not be members of the NMSPS. Ideally, they will be knowledgeable about all forms of poetry. Judges may be selected from academia, from literary societies, or perhaps from published poets. Experienced contest judges may also be recruited from among State Poetry Societies affiliated with the NFSPS.

At the direction of the Board, the contest judge may be offered an honorarium, although many NFSPS judges do not expect payment. Some State Societies offering honorariums make the amount equal to the First Prize award; this seems a prudent measure for the NMSPS.

Judges shall be informed about themes, poetic forms, line lengths, and other criteria regarding the contest. It is recommended that they be given exact copies of rules as stated in the call for submissions to the contest.

Many contest entrants hope that contest sponsors will publish the prizewinning poems, either in anthologies or in poetry broadsheets the prizewinners receive *gratis*. The NMSPS should consider how to grant winners public recognition and whether publication presents revenue-generating opportunities.

There are some entrants who, if allowed to do so, submit poems that have won prizes elsewhere. This practice does not reflect the ethic of most members of the NFSPS and should not be condoned in State contests. Therefore, it is recommended that NMSPS contests not allow poems that have won cash prizes elsewhere.

6. The Appointed Board

The President shall appoint leaders to project teams as need arises. The President, with the assistance and approval of the Board, and in agreement with the prospective Project Leader, will provide the team a written description of the responsibilities and objectives of the team and the expected period of time it will function. While teams are active, the Project Leader shall be a voting member of the Board.

Some teams need to function continuously, for example: Newsletter, Membership, Education, and Website. It is recommended that such teams be assigned a term of one year to allow for annual review before reactivation.

Other teams may need to function only for a single event or for a short time, for example, Nominating, Contest, Anthology, Recruitment, Programs, and for events such as conventions, festivals, and fundraisers.

As noted above in the Vice President's duties, he/she will maintain a current list of active project teams, to include the project descriptions and time frames and the members serving on the teams. It is recommended that the Vice President also keep an archive of past project descriptions, to aid in reactivating similar ones in the future.

Each Project Leader shall have the prerogative of appointing his/her own team, subject to the President's approval, although he/she may ask the President or Board to help find team members.

7. Sample Project Teams

Contests

Duties: The Contest Project Leader should read the guidance on contests in Section 5, above, before starting the project.

The Project Leader must correspond with the editor of *Strophes*, the NFSPS newsletter, to place the contest announcement in *Strophes* sufficiently in advance of the contest deadline. Since *Strophes* is printed only quarterly, ensuring the NMSPS contest announcement is included in the appropriate issue of the publication may require long lead times and vigilant follow-up.

The team must find a judge, provide an address to which submissions can be mailed, and be available to receive those submissions. When the submissions arrive, the team must verify that submission rules have been met, separate attributed poems (those with contact information included with the poem) from their unattributed (blind) duplicates, create a computer-based log for entrants' names and addresses, and keep accurate records of entry fees received. The fees must be remitted to the NMSPS Treasurer for deposit.

The team must deliver the blind copies of the poems to the judge as soon as possible after the contest deadline, along with the contest announcement and rules as printed in *Strophes*. It is imperative that the judge know the parameters of the contest as expressed to entrants.

After the contest results are announced, the team must mail the prizes to the winners as soon as possible. The team must also send a letter to every entrant listing the prizewinners. If the entrant failed to include an SASE and the team still accepted the entry, then the team must provide a return envelope and postage.

At the conclusion of all contest activities, the Project Leader will submit a financial summary of the contest to the Board.

Should an individual member choose to sponsor a contest, he/she may choose any judge he/she pleases, choose the contest coordinator, and set the rules. Contest sponsors will bear all contest costs. Sponsors may ask for assistance from an active Contest Project Team, but if the Project Leader declines the request, the sponsor will provide his/her own contest coordinator.

Sponsors may set the themes for the contest, but the Board will decide on a case-by-case basis whether a contest theme might violate the Society's principles of neutrality on political, religious, and social issues. The Board may refuse offers of contest sponsorship on the grounds just enumerated or for other prudent reasons.

Term: The time period for activation of this team depends on how many contests the NMSPS sponsors during the year and whether the same person is willing to head all the contests. If only an annual contest is held, the time period is a few months.

Newsletter

Duties: The Newsletter Project Leader (Editor) often does this job alone, but is encouraged to seek help with some of the mechanical tasks involved, such as bundling and mailing paper copies. The newsletter is published quarterly, in January, April,

August, and October to correspond with publication dates for the NFSPS newsletter, *Strophes*.

The Editor needs to be a regular attendee at Board meetings, where the Board often suggests topics for articles and provides information about activities of the Society. The Editor solicits articles, poetry, and news of chapter and individual activities.

The newsletter team does the layout of the newsletter using publishing software that can be converted into a format which can be transmitted to the Website manager for publication online. Because everything associated with the newsletter occurs via computer, the team must include someone who is computer capable and has access to the necessary publishing software.

Once the newsletter is composed, it is copied onto a portable disk and taken to a facility for photocopying. The newsletter may be collated and stapled at the facility if the budget allows; otherwise, the team performs those tasks by hand. Each newsletter is then paired with a copy of the National Federation's quarterly, *Strophes*. The conjoined publications are folded and fastened according to US Postal Service specifications. Postage is affixed, as are address labels, which are generated by the team for each mailing. Care must be taken to ensure all current members are included on the mailing label list. The newsletters are then taken to a post office for mailing.

A copy should also be sent to the NFSPS for archival and review. The NFSPS sometimes gives awards for superior newsletters, and it is recommended that the project team arrange for at least two qualified editors/proofreaders to review the newsletter before publication to ensure the high editorial quality that would make us eligible for such an award. An error-free publication also reaffirms the credibility of the NMSPS as a literary and literate society.

As of this writing, paper copies of *Strophes* (one per dues-paying member) were still being shipped to the newsletter editors of each State affiliate of the NFSPS, and the State societies were responsible for any further postage needed to distribute it to members. To save money, the NMSPS has traditionally bundled the two newsletters into one mailing, but this requires that the *Strophes* arrive in time for simultaneous distribution, which has not always happened. Most NMSPS members are able to read the State newsletter and *Strophes* on the respective NMSPS and NFSPS websites, but other members still require paper copies.

It is recommended that the Society strongly encourage electronic dissemination and limit the mailing of physical copies as a way to keep postage costs down and ensure prompt delivery of the State newsletter independent of when *Strophes* arrives. We cannot deny these publications to members who cannot receive them electronically, of course, but we should explore every avenue to reduce the labor intensive and expensive process of bulk mailing.

It is recommended that the form accompanying payment of dues invite members to choose between two amounts: the annual dues as set by the Board or an amount sufficiently higher to cover postage for members who have electronic access but ask for paper copies in addition. Members would not be required to pay the higher assessment in order to receive mailed copies; but they might do so voluntarily.

Any excess copies of *Strophes* and the State newsletter should be reserved as recruitment aids, to show prospective members what publications they would receive as NMSPS members.

Term: One year, renewed immediately following annual review and approval by the President.

Membership

Duties: It is vital that the Membership Project Leader work in concert with the Secretary and Treasurer to keep an accurate and current roster of the membership. When the Society receives dues from a new member, the team should send the new member a copy of the NMSPS Constitution and a message of welcome to the Society.

The membership project team, which may consist of only one person, could serve, but is not required to serve, as the communications hub for the Society. A member of the team could be the designated contact point for members who wish to share information with the whole Society about poetry events occurring in the community at large, seminars, workshops, publishing opportunities, honors earned by Society members, and other events affecting our Society, such as the death of a member (in short, the miscellany of life that we embrace as a fellowship of poets).

The Project Leader shall communicate with members primarily via the Internet by relaying messages contributed by individual members, announcements from the Board, etc., but is also encouraged to work with Chapter Chairpersons to set up telephone trees to contact and inform members who don't have e-mail access. The team shall be responsible for relaying information to members-at-large. If the team is unsure whether an item from an individual member is relevant to the purposes of the Society and meets its criteria of nonpartisanship, the team will check with the President and/or Board before relaying it electronically. The team may likewise seek advice about whether an item warrants activating a telephone tree.

To facilitate communication among members but also protect their privacy and guard their identity information, the team may provide limited contact data, but only in the following way: If member A asks the team for member B's contact information, the team will first verify that member B has authorized the release of the information.

Under no circumstances will persons on the team release complete or partial rosters (more than five [5] persons) of the NMSPS membership to individual members without first checking with the President and the Board, who will decide whether such release is advisable. If approved by the Board, the information shall be disseminated by the Secretary and properly recorded.

It is recommended that the form accompanying payment of dues contain boxes that must be checked which either authorize or deny permission for the NMSPS to reveal contact information. Boxes should also be provided to allow members to specify what information (e-mail address, telephone number, residence address) is included in the authorization/refusal.

The Membership Project Team Leader will also serve as the advocate for members-at-large, who have no chapter representative to bring forth their ideas to the President and Board.

Ideal candidates for this position would be persons who are adept at rerouting e-mails in formats that all members can access, who have a computer they check regularly, who are comfortable speaking on the telephone with strangers, and who have telephone plans that allow unlimited calling. Should the person not already have such a

calling plan, the Board might consider funding an upgrade. The membership job could be done by someone in a remote area or who is housebound.

Term: One year, renewed immediately following annual review and approval.

Recruitment

Duties: The Recruitment Project Leader's job is to help the Society grow statewide by encouraging the formation of new chapters and expanding existing chapter membership. Since success in this endeavor usually requires good publicity, the team must either work closely with an existing publicity team or take on publicity duties themselves. This job may entail travel to other towns to hold public readings or meet with local poets or educators. To keep travel to a minimum, it is recommended that the team include members from various parts of the State who can act in their respective locales. Members-at-large should be encouraged to serve on this team.

The team is encouraged to develop strategies that utilize local media, identify poetry gatherings that have no national affiliation, target towns that have thriving arts communities and/or universities, or offer towns that are culturally poor a literary oasis amid the desert of indifference.

Every member of NMSPS should be encouraged to consider himself/herself a recruiter for the NMSPS. This goal will be accomplished best if every member feels he/she is part of a worthy and exciting organization.

Term: At the discretion of the President. Recruitment drives may be short-lived. Conversely, the team may devote itself to long-term endeavors.

Education

Duties: Traditionally, this job focuses on working with youth. This Project Team should explore a wide range of opportunities to foster the creation and appreciation of poetry among New Mexican youth and bring them to the attention of the Board. This might entail sponsoring poetry contests for youth, supporting the middle and high school annual Slam Poetry Festival run by another Albuquerque area poetry organization, serving as coaches for student poetry competitions, or holding a youth poetry festival of our own. A current initiative is the New Mexico Children's Poetry Project, which trains NMSPS members to give poetry presentations and workshops in middle and high school classrooms.

Term: One year, renewed immediately following annual review and approval.

Website - This project description needs the input of those who got the Website up and running.

Program - This project would look at resources such as speakers, seminars, etc. for chapter meetings, as well as readings, festivals, and other events sponsored by the whole membership. This project could also be invaluable in planning State Conventions.

Conventions - The NMSPS should consider a one- or two-day State Convention each year that might include speakers, workshops, readings, a business meeting, awards, contests, and luncheon. Such a mini-Convention would give the Society practice for a

larger endeavor, should it follow up on its resolution to consider hosting the National Convention in 2015 (or later).

State Poet Laureate Research - At the discretion of the Board, the Society may undertake to promote the creation of the post of State Poet Laureate. If the initiative should be taken by others to name a State Poet Laureate, the NMSPS should seek to be an integral partner in the process.

History - The Historian should be someone who realizes that history is what we make everyday, not only what occurred long ago. Therefore, the oldest member of an organization is not necessarily the best choice for this post, most experts opine. Using modern means to preserve the past and present the continuing story of the Society should be the focus of this Project Team. It is recommended that the Society explore possibilities for finding a permanent repository for NMSPS archives.