

Mississippi Poetry Society Newsletter ***February 2015***

Notes from the President:

Spring Contest: This is your reminder that our contest coordinator, Sheila Grieco, is accepting contest entries from now until the **March 16th** deadline. Poems received after that date will not be eligible for judging. Sheila's address is: 105 Linnett Dr., Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

Pre-festival Party: Martin and Brenda Finnegan have graciously opened their lovely beach front home "The Last Resort" to us for our Friday night pre-festival party on April 17th beginning at 6 p.m. Snacks and drinks will be provided and we will share humorous poetry (36 lines or less), so write those poems that will make us laugh! Their address is: 5713 Belle Fontaine Dr., Ocean Springs, MS, phone: 228-875-4350. Maps will be available at the Gulf Hills Hotel desk. Please RSVP and include whether or not you will attend the pre-festival party when you pre-register for the festival. I will be receiving the pre-festival registrations. The fee for Spring Festival will be: \$40.00 until Apr. 1st and \$45.00 if received after that. Those with spouses attending need pay only \$25.00 for the spouse's dinner and fee for those attending one day only without dinner will be \$20.00.

Spring Festival: As South Branch nears completion of its plans for this year's Spring Festival, I hope all of you who can attend will call Gulf Hills Inn and Conference Center prior to March 15th to reserve your room at the reduced rate of \$89.00 per night. In order to receive the reduced rate you cannot make your reservations on line and the reduced rate may not be available after March 15th. You should phone the 228-875-4211 number to make reservations and mention the Mississippi Poetry Society to get the special rate.

Our weekend will include awards, honoring our 2015 Poet of the Year, a workshop by our guest speaker, Jim Barton, poetry reading, food, fun and fellowship. Our Poet of the Year will be signing her chapbook and others having books to sell are welcome to bring them. This year, thanks to the suggestion of Ann Carolyn Cates, we will also have a free book table. If you have a poetry book in good condition that you no longer need, you're welcome to bring it to our free table and pick up a book or two from there that you'd like to read.

Jim's Saturday morning workshop will be *Word Count vs. Words That Count*, and that evening following our banquet Jim will once again take to the podium with *Writing for Today's Poetry Market: For Better or Verse*. In order to participate in the morning workshop, Jim asks that you mail in a poem in free verse that you've been working on that has not yet been a winner or published. Please mail your poems to me at *Judy Davies, 1418 Louis Alexis Trail, Gautier, MS 39553* so I receive them by March 30th and I will package them to send to Jim. He will discuss as many as time allows that Saturday morning. Please bring a copy of your poem with you.

Down to Business: As I promised in my previous newsletter, we want to address your concerns. Because we are required to notify the members at least 30 days in advance before a vote that affects us as a group, I am asking each of you to read this newsletter in its entirety and

then email our secretary, Dorothy Wiman, at louistjie.21mos@gmail.com, or me at judydavies@cableone.net to let us know that you have read the items to be discussed and voted on. For those members who do not have email: branch secretaries, please mail those members a copy of the newsletter and ask that they drop a note or card in the mail to either Dorothy or me. Dorothy's address is 503 Holmes St., Belzoni, MS 39038 and my address appears in the paragraph above this one. Here is a list of items to be discussed:

1. Our current entry for NFSPS is a triolet for a prize total of \$60.00, which is the minimum allowed. We have had the triolet for a couple of years. Would we like to change it for 2016? Do we want to increase the money to \$75.00 or to some other amount or should it remain at the minimum? \$75.00=\$35.00, \$25.00, \$15.00. \$60.00=\$25.00, \$20.00, \$15.00.

2. I would suggest that each branch have two members on their bank account. You never know when the treasurer might be ill or out of town, so having a backup person would be a good idea. The state officers for MPS have followed this policy for the last several years. This suggestion is, of course, open to discussion.

3. We should discuss putting a policy in place regarding admitting unsavory persons such as felons, registered sex offenders or plagiarists to membership in MPS. This would need to be an addendum to our by-laws. Because we market to and intend to include students in our contests and welcome them to our meetings, we especially need to be careful of who is admitted to membership in order to protect our youth as well as ourselves.

4. We will discuss some possible changes to the Poet of the Year competition, perhaps making it a one-time only award. I want to make it clear that this is in no way intended to reflect unfavorably on this year's POY. We will also discuss the possibility of using an independent judge for judging only the poetry with the poetry committee judging the sections on service to the community and honors and awards. Some judges have felt uncomfortable judging the entire packet.

5. Expansion of our website. Expansion, inclusion on Facebook, pictures, etc., has been suggested by a member. It is important that members understand that it does cost money and time to do all the necessary internal coding for a successful site. The merits of changes to the site and funds required to accomplish that will be open for discussion. Unless the members agree, our site is not intended to be a blog. For those members who have their own websites, we will be happy to provide a link at no charge to your site on our resource page.

Share Your Talents: We need one or two people who like scrapbooking and would like to put ours in order and update them so our older books can be sent to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for permanent housing. Please share your talents with us.

Accomplishments: If you have released a new book or won a special award, we want to applaud your accomplishment by adding you to our spotlight section! Email me with your information and our webmaster will add you to our spotlight.

*Judy Davies,
President*

*"The things you are passionate about are not random,
they are your calling."...Fabienne Fredrickson*