I am honored to accept your votes of confidence as the new president of The Poetry Society of Virginia. As we mourned the loss of our president Jeff Hewitt in February, President Pro Tempore, Derek Kannemeyer took charge with amazing alacrity, fortitude, and inventiveness. Through his efforts, we now have a working website. The contests have been judged and awarded. The certificates and checks were mailed. At the same time, Derek maintained a presence on PSV’s Facebook page, offering word challenges and his own fresh poetry on a daily basis.

Derek’s swift actions filled the void with a firm foundation, giving me confidence to serve as president. His ability to network and follow through is exactly what we need in the Society and what I plan to emulate. I owe him a debt of gratitude.

In the past seven months, we have seen the genesis and pandemic spread of a deadly virus; businesses closed and bankruptcies were declared. We at PSV had to cancel numerous events, including our annual PSV Festival. But we write.

All of our festival presenters have agreed to slide their presentations into 2021. Regional VPs have conducted readings on Zoom and Facetime. Board members have met online. And numerous individual poets have taken the initiative to run challenges and promote discussions on social media.

Just as businesses in the US were poised to reopen, a Minneapolis police officer arrested and killed George Floyd, a black man. Protests ensued, followed by riots across the nation. So we write.

As a thunderstorm triggers new plant growth, so a tragic death can trigger cultural growth. The iconic equestrian statue of Confederate leader Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue in Richmond will most likely be moved. Other Southern municipalities will decide what to do with their Confederate monuments. Many police departments are being restructured. Officers are being re-trained. And we write.

Heraclitus said, “The only constant in life is change.” As protests spread around the world, we cannot help but change. We have all been impacted. Many who never cared about voting will vote this fall. Some are donating time and money to help rebuild torched businesses. Simultaneously, we continue to wear surgical or handmade masks in public, carrying hand sanitizer, as well. Individuals reluctant to learn video conferencing have been forced to adapt as they work from home. And we poets write.

Slowly, our cities reopen. We overcome daily obstacles as peculiar as toilet paper shortages and as disturbing as losing elderly loved ones we cannot hold in their final hours because their nursing home fears our contaminated entry.

We poets write of all these things. We have not gone quiet. We share our rage, loss, and frustration. Some of us write of isolation. Some turn to nature for solace. Some write of social justice. Our commonality is our urge to create.

As for my presidency, I borrow the words of Warren Bennis: “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”

My vision for the Poetry Society of Virginia is threefold. The first is organizational—to move forward by updating the bylaws; to tidy up protocols and procedures; to revamp the website by making it accessible and user-friendly, both for members and our chosen webmasters; to rethink our ever-growing list of contests; and to expand our book awards. The second is outreach—to expand our work in schools; to appoint VPs for our open slots in the Northwestern and Southwestern regions and help them to create events; and to begin planning for our centennial in 2023. The third is financial stability—to review our investments, our expenditures, and our donations and to plan for a protracted recession and possible depression as many of the businesses locked down by governors across the nation have closed forever.

Not all is chaos. Nature is in full bloom. Schools found inventive ways to commemorate graduations while maintaining social distance, and SpaceX, a private company, successfully launched two astronauts into orbit to connect to the International Space Station. While they work in orbit, we continue to write on Earth.

Write on!
Offering to the Spirits: A Profile of Luisa Igloria

by Bill Glose

Originally published in Coastal Virginia Magazine, June 2017

Framed by a nimbus of light filtered through the curtained window, Luisa Igloria relaxes in her Norfolk home on the living room sofa. She is the author of thirteen books of poetry and one chapbook, but none are exhibited here. Instead, novels pile up on the wooden coffee table along with compilations of IQ puzzles and various literary journals. Books also congregate in the room’s margins, stacked neatly on stools, on shelves, crammed into two wicker baskets beneath a round table displaying an ornamental Buddha and a dozen framed family photos. The children pictured here have grown up in a house of words, and one of them, Igloria’s youngest daughter, was practically born into the literary life.

“The night before I gave birth to her,” Igloria explains in her Filipino accent, “I was reading at an event in Virginia Beach. I was very pregnant, very breathless by the time I left at 7 p.m. I gave birth to her at 7 in the morning.”

Dressed in ripped jeans and sandals, dark hair cascading over her shoulders, Igloria’s manner is laid back and inviting. Her house is walking distance from Old Dominion University where she’s taught Creative Writing and English since 1998. She’s lived here long enough to consider Norfolk as home, but her poetry usually resonates with a different sense of place—Baguio City, the mountainous “summer capital” of the Philippines where she was born and raised.

“I think it’s an organic part of who we are to carry what we call heritage or culture with us wherever we go,” she says. “Eating or food or habits or anything that we do in a physical sense; but there are also less visible signs of those things that we carry with us, like the way we see the world. And all of that enters into the fabric of my writing.”

Her style of poetry is packed with mellifluous words that sing off the page. From poems tinged with magical realism—When my nose bled nearly every day / for a year, the elders broke an egg into water; / they cast rice grains to read upon its membrane, / then wove me a secret name—to those that ring with blessings—Let us praise, they said. And so we should: / Let us praise the wood that was saved / from the house, and the stones that we used / for the new kitchen floor. Let us praise / the walls which leaked with fury / of hurricanes yet kept us dry—to metaphysical questions about life itself—The ferryman came and whispered / in my ear, asking if I would like / to visit that town I might not ever / see again but in my dreams—the music of her early life infuses her stanzas and creates a seductive melody that all but hypnotizes readers.

“I come from a culture that in many ways has these animistic beliefs woven into it,” she says. “There’s very actively still entwined this sense of how nature is a breathing, living thing, the world animated with spirit. In our Ilocano language there’s a term called ‘atang ti kararua,’ which means ‘offering to the spirits.’ What we do, whenever there is a special occasion, we would set aside a little plate of whatever special food we were eating to mark the occasion and a little cup of drink for the spirits of our departed. We call for them to come and share in the joy of the moment with us.”

Igloria has always felt a deep connection with the environment. As a child, she was taught to ask plants for permission before trimming their leaves or cutting anything off, to pause a moment and let them know she meant no harm. So in 2015 when she heard about the inaugural Resurgence Poetry Prize, the world’s first major eco-poetry award, it only seemed natural that she would enter. Afterwards, as so often happens with busy people, she forgot about her submission while tackling the daily chores of being a professor, a mother and a homeowner. One day in late November, after waiting hours for a refrigerator repairman who failed to show during the designated time window, she snatched the phone from the receiver when it rang. Figuring it to be the company calling to reschedule, she yelled her terse greeting into the mouthpiece to make her displeasure known. Then she waited, stewing, for the excuse. What came over the line instead was a cultured, British voice informing her that she had won.

Recounting the episode, Igloria laughs and shakes her head. “It was thrilling,” she says. “Because the prize was substantial (£5,000), my husband and daughter wanted to come to London with me. I thought what the heck. It was an abundance that was not expected, so why not use it with the people that I love most?”

They spent a week in London, visiting galleries and museums, strolling Bond Street beneath a dazzling array of Christmas lights. And then, to cap it all off, they were feted at the Leighton House Museum where the former Poet Laureate of the UK, Sir Andrew Walsh, awarded Igloria the prestigious prize. For Igloria, having her family with her was almost as rewarding as the prize itself, a chance to show her daughter, a budding poet herself, some of the joys that are possible after years of hard work, especially when you have the support of your family.

“When I was five,” Igloria says, “my mother gave me a book by one of the leading short story writers in English in the Philippines, Estrella Alphon. It was a book called Magnificence, and she inscribed it to me on the cover. She wrote, ‘In hopes that you will become a good writer like this someday.’ I read those stories and I loved every single one of them. I still remember them to this day.”

She excuses herself to rummage about upstairs, then returns with the well-worn paperback, a jagged fissure splitting its cover. Even so, she sets it down delicately, presenting this treasure like crown jewels.

Perhaps only one thing in this room means more to her than this thin volume of stories. Of course, it is another book, the Rattle Young Poets Anthology. She picks it up with just as much care as the collection that nudged her onto her own path so many years ago. She flips open the cover and points to the table of contents. “There,” she says, beaming, her finger tracing the line for a poem titled, “Lessons.” “That’s my daughter.”

She may be a world-renowned eco-poet, but first and foremost, she is a proud mother.
Farewell Email from Mike Maggio

Former Northern VP
mikemaggio@mikemaggio.net

Hello everyone:

I hope you are all staying safe and sane during this surreal experience we are now living through. One can only hope that things will get better soon.

This will be my last email to you as Vice-President of the region. We will soon have elections to select a new VP as well as a new President for PSV. I hope you will all participate.

It has been my greatest pleasure serving for these last years. I have had the honor to meet and work with some very fine people and some very fine poets, relationships I believe will last way into the future.

I am not going far, however. I will remain on the executive committee in some capacity and will be lending my assistance to the new VP once elected.

In the meantime, should you wish to be added to my personal email list, just shoot me an email. And thank you all for being such a wonderful group of individuals.

Northern Virginia Report

Cathy Hailey, VP

Hello from Northern Virginia!

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as PSV’s Northern Region Vice President.

On behalf of the northern region, I’d like to thank Mike Maggio for his exceptional service as PSV’s Northern Region Vice President. Congratulations on a job well done, Mike! Mike will continue to participate on the PSV executive committee and help out with northern region events. Thank you, Mike!

I’d like to thank Dr. Barry Amis for his commitment to the PSV northern region poetry salons. He coordinated the salon for more than ten years, but once the pandemic kept poets from meeting in person, he decided it was time to pass the leadership on. In an email to northern region poets, he wrote, in part: “As I look back, I am struck by how the salon has grown. Ten years ago, we averaged about 7-8 attendees per salon. In recent years we have often reached 16-18 (far too many really) . . . . Time marches on. The salon will be fine. It is made up of exceptionally nice people who are also good poets. What will happen with the salon in July and going forward is a decision that will be made by others.

In the last newsletter, Derek and Mike both mentioned the April poetry prompts in the PSV Poem Sharing Group on Facebook. I’d like to remind everyone the prompts have continued as weekly prompts. My experience with this challenge has been exceptional. First, I’d never used one-word prompts on a daily basis, and it was so interesting to see how different poets approached the words. Often, I had several ideas initially, but since a poem draft was due each day, I only followed through with one, leaving others to consider in the future. Also, even though we were aware these drafts might be considered “published,” even in a small group on Facebook, the benefit of reading the work of others and seeing feedback on my work made any sacrifice well worth it. Revision might make them new poems anyway. I highly recommend others join in

Member Ongoing Collaborative Projects

Several PSV member poets have participated in Mike Maggio’s Covid-19 Project. Throughout June and July (and even into August), we will present, on www.mikemaggio.net, the work of poets and visual artists, all responding to this unprecedented crisis. At the same time, we will be fundraising for AFAC, the Arlington Food Assistance Center in Arlington, Virginia. Please visit us each day for a poem or a painting or a photograph, all by professionals from around the United States and, indeed, from around the world. And please consider donating to AFAC so that they can continue providing needed assistance to those who have been directly affected by the pandemic.

A number of PSV member poets were interviewed by Dennis Price on his Fairfax Public Radio show for Mike Maggio’s 30 for 30 Re-Envisioning Project in honor of National Poetry month in April. Several PSV member poets are being published in an Arlington anthology edited by Katherine E. Young, Arlington poet laureate emerita. Thirty-one of the poems have already appeared online and are currently available on the website: https://katherine-young-poet.com/ written-in-arlington/. Written in Arlington is expected to be available in October/November.
Upcoming (Virtual) Events

Spilled Ink East takes place the second Friday of each month, and Spilled Ink West takes place the fourth Friday of each month.

July 18-20, 1455 (previously Virginia Center for Literary Arts, or VCLA) is hosting its Summer Literary Festival virtually this year. The festival is a celebration of writers, readers, creativity, and community, over three days. Highlights of this year’s participants include Angie Kim, Louis Bayard, Karen E. Bender, Julia Phillips, Jeanne McCulloch, E. Ethelbert Miller, and John Lingan. More information is available on the 1455 website: https://1455litarts.org/1455s-summer-literary-festival/.

July 31-August 2 Virginia Writers Club Symposium – Registration is Open (and FREE for Members!)

Registration for the 10th Annual Navigating Your Writing Life Symposium is open. You can get the details about the schedule, workshop topics, and speakers, as well as register here.

This year the event will be online. If you’re unsure about participating in online events, we will be providing you with information on what you need and how to access the event prior to the event.

Mark Friday, July 31, at 7 pm when our keynote speaker Austin Camacho will be opening the festivities. Plus, we have a two-night giveaway to the Porches Writing Retreat for attendees of the keynote! I know you won’t want to miss it. Workshops will be held on Saturday, August 1st, 12 to 4 pm, and Sunday, August 2nd, also from 12 to 4 pm. Plus we have a ton of other great giveaways we’ll award throughout the event that include subscriptions to magazines. If you’re not a member, you can join for $15 for the first year, and then register for the event. To learn more and register, visit the Symposium page at VWC.

Do you know a high school senior or college freshman who needs $2,000 to study a writing-related subject in college? Submissions are currently being accepted for the $2,000 VWC Scholarship. The scholarship application deadline is June 30, 2020. For more information, get Scholarship details here or contact Charles Tabb, Chairperson of the VWC Scholarship Committee, by email at ctabb919@gmail.com.

Member Individual Achievements for Northern Region


Katherine M. Gotthardt has a new book coming out in June from Local Gems Press. Get Happy, Dammit is a mixed-genre book (articles, exercises and short poems) designed to help creatives, teachers, caregivers, and those who want better quality of life stay motivated and inspired. You can read more about it at www.GetHappyDammit.com.

Jacqueline Jules’ poem, “May the Force Be with You” was published in Balloons Lit’s Issue 11. Jackie says it “is not just for Star Wars fans; it is for all of us seeking hope in these troubled times.” Congratulations, Jackie!

Kathy Cable Smaltz’s first poetry collection, Pieces, was published by Piedmont Journal of Poetry and Fiction and is now available on Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Pieces-Kathy-Cable-Smalzt/dp/0578225336. Poems range from autobiographical narratives to nature lyrics. She writes, “Upstream these are the things I lost: a pair of navy blue shoes, the fingernail on my right pinkie, my way.”

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North Central Region Report

David Anthony Sam, VP

The members of the North Central Region will be meeting monthly via WebEx on the third Saturday at 2:00 p.m. The first meeting was May 16 during which members began planning for regional events and activities.

Member News for North Central Members

Beth Spraggins: Spring 2020 issue of Yellow Arrow Journal includes three of her tanka under the title “Journeys.” Also, three of her short poems (“Before Sunrise,” “Mounted on the Mist,” and “Somnolence”) appear in the June 5 edition of Page & Spine. The anthology Hibiscus: Poems that Heal and Empower includes her poems “First Light” and “At Dark.” The Bosphorus Review of Books has published her poem “Eclipse,” and Pandemic Diaries includes her prose piece “Meditations on the Mat.”

David Anthony Sam had a poem accepted for a collection on the pandemic called “Tales from Six Feet Apart” to be published by iō Literary Journal.

Eastern Region Report

Kathleen Decker, VP

A survey of PSV members was undertaken from May 20th to June 15th to see how poets have been coping with COVID-19. SurveyMonkey was used to create a sample from the general population to compare to PSV poets. The survey used an exclusion question to eliminate responses from poets or professional writers in the general population, and it excluded those aged under 35 years, as we had no poets under 35 who responded to the survey.

Poets (total 39) surveyed were from the following areas: Northern (Metro D.C.) 19%, Northern (Rural) 19%, Central (28%), Southeastern (33%), Southwestern (0%) Virginia. The general population was surveyed through SurveyMonkey: 96% were from states other than Virginia, with 1% from Metro D.C. and 2% from Southeastern Virginia.
(Eastern Region Report continued from page 4)

**Similarities:** There was no significant difference in hope for the future between poets and the general population. The types of things that were listed as generating hope were also quite similar among the groups. The most hopeful thing listed was staying busy, then "things said by family/friends," then "new information on vaccines and treatment." There was also no significant difference with respect to changes in appetite or weight.

**Differences:** The results show that significantly more poets surveyed felt less connected than the general population (69%, 59%) during the period of March 15 to May 15th. Poets utilized more Zoom/group meetings and did more writing during the pandemic than the general population (62%, 28%), as may be expected as poets and writers use writing to cope with emotions.

**Mood changes:** There were a number of differences among groups with respect to mood. More poets felt less calm, less safe, and more sad or depressed than did the general population. This may be due to the fact that the mean age of the poets who responded to the PSV survey was older than the general population. 79% of poets were over 54 vs. 26% of general population surveyed; therefore, more poets were in higher medical risk groups.

**Most importantly:** Double the number of poets endorsed that writing enhanced their self-esteem or self-efficacy compared to the general population during the pandemic (43%, 21%). The way the question was worded for the general population asked if any pursuit or hobby increased their self-esteem/self-efficacy during the pandemic. The reason that this finding is so important is that higher self-efficacy and self-esteem are considered protective factors during disasters. Thus, while PSV poets who responded to the survey felt less safe, they demonstrated resilience by using poetry and writing to cope with the pandemic.

So, in short, POETS ROCK! KEEP ON WRITING!

**Southeast Region Report**
Joanna Lee, VP

Greetings from the Southeast region! As things start to open up a bit, we are all being vigilant, so there are no scheduled events at this time. We are all doing our best to find community through Zoom and hope that you are taking some time to hunker down and write.

The Muse Writers Center has announced that its summer classes will be online. Find class information here: The-Muse.org. The Venue on 35th continues its Monday night open-mic online! Follow on social media @thevenueon35th for information on how to join the Zoom session Monday nights and share in the open mic experience from your own home.

The Hampton Roads Writers Conference for 2020 has been postponed until September 2021. Details on a one-day virtual gathering of writers is forthcoming. See website for more information: https://www.hamptonroadswriters.org/

Please consider submitting poems for a Jeff Hewitt anthology project. The submission email is wearevastanthology@gmail.com. Please include your name and contact information with your submission and let us know a bit about how Jeff inspired you. We hope to debut the anthology in time for National Poetry Month 2021.

**Central Region Report**
Joanna Lee, VP

Hello from the PSV's Central Region!

While we continue in a holding pattern regarding live poetry events, poets have striven to remain connected and productive during the pandemic.

A monthly Charlottesville-based virtual open mic hosted by Patsy Asuncion continues in June on the 24th; the May edition boasted 25 performances from both Virginia and Maryland poets. In Richmond, River City Poets held their second virtual Poetry & Jazz event June 4th. While most of RCP's open mics have no theme, this month the focus for the evening was on social justice, racial inequality, and work by Black poets. Fifteen poets tuned in, from as far away as Florida.

RCP is also continuing with their weekly online critiques. All are welcome to join the group, submit work, and share feedback. The group will continue through July, so please drop me an email if you are interested in joining!

We are still keeping our fingers crossed for the possibility of an in-person annual meeting late this summer or early fall. Please get in touch if you have thoughts or suggestions regarding themes or possibilities. Meanwhile, stay safe and keep writing!

**Northwestern Region Report**
open/no current VP

**South/Western Region Report**
open/no current VP
Symbol of Glory
by Edward W. Lull

We pledge allegiance to our flag
and fly it high across the land.
To withstand trials throughout the years,
it stands for something great and grand.

This banner born in troubled times
not quite a year from when brave men
stood firm together to proclaim
their freedom with a stroke of pen.

My country, 'tis of thee,
sweet land of liberty.

Red, white, and blue the colors were;
with red the strength and courage hue;
integrity and virtue: white;
stability and justice: blue.

Immortalized by brilliant stripes
those colonies that fought the war.
Each colony and then each state
that joined the Union earned a star.

Land where my fathers died,
land of the pilgrim’s pride.

From Valley Forge to Fort McHenry,
Fredericksburg to San Juan Hill,
Americans have fought and died,
their obligations to fulfill.

From Argonne Forest to Bastogne
and Suribachi to Inchon,
this flag of destiny gave strength
to urge the weary warriors on.

From every mountain side
let freedom be our guide.

The magic of this standard lives
within the hearts of countrymen
who understand that freedom’s cost
is high, and will be paid again.

So June fourteen we set aside
one day per year to recognize
our flag - and all for which it stands:
ideals this banner sanctifies.

Fourth of July Colors
by Mark Hudson

Red white and blue firecrackers explode,
in the sky from sea to shining sea.
Eating hamburgers and pie a la mode,
exercising our right to be free.
White walls of warmth of a humble abode,
blackened burgers and hot dogs for me.
Visiting family, I’ll be on the road,
Out on the green grass my family I’ll see.
In the grass I see a little green toad,
I come up close and he races to flee.
With all this great food my arteries corrode,
my spleen is green for the doctor to see.
On the fourth of July I overindulge,
and I lose the battle of the bulge.

Crystal Butterfly
by Nancy C. Allen

It was early summer.
Whispering gray clouds revealed a cobalt blue sky,
The silence was deep as I stood in view of the sun’s rise spilling across the
lofty trees.
Two robins flew past and disappeared in the branches of a cedar.
All was quiet,
just a crop of tulips in full bloom,
standing brave in one another’s shadow.

A brief summer breeze cooled me and gently ruffled the wings of a
butterfly resting on a tulip petal –
a lovely butterfly as beautiful as most significant things.
Perhaps awaiting the fullness of sunlight.
It was strangely satisfying to encounter a butterfly clinging
to the petal with a hint of joy that seemed to join us together like a sea surge,
sudden and unexpected.

The warmth of the sun began to touch down gracefully.
The butterfly ventured into the open sky, striding high,
spreading its crystal wings against the cobalt blue sky and I held the
moment of the butterfly joyfully like I held the summer days that followed.
Quilting Circle
by Kathleen P. Decker

quilting circle
morphed to a Zoom screen
a mosaic of faces on screen
creating in separate spaces
sharing images...not quilts
a mad scramble
to create uplifting
Personal Protective Equipment
with fabric scraps
from happier projects
furtive pickups in parking lots
feeling like a daylight drug dealer
drop-offs to lonely hospital personnel
who wave and return
to isolation

Sleepless in Williamsburg During COVID 19
by Norma Cofresi

Unpacking the past to make room for the now
seems as arduous as sleeping through the night,
The dark’s quiet is interrupted by discontent.
Voices harangue me for past- missed steps of
what might have, should have, could have been.

In your sleep, you smile and turn toward me.
Harsh voices dissipate as I focus on your
presence beside me, breathing in the moment.
The say-sos in my head subside once again,
I close my eyes, and without effort fall asleep.

I dream of us, still young, our hearts and lives entwined.
Not a choice that I’d change, not one that I regret.
Older now, still in love, we enjoy the life we make.
Paired tiger swallow-tailed butterflies pause mid-flight,
their wings flash jewels in a synchronous dance of thanks.

The Edge of Life
by Daly Hoffman

I believe that life is but a balance on a blade
A careful balance, at that
Lean too far to one side,
And you fall into the void
Lose your balance in the middle,
And you fall onto the very blade separating you
from the void
Like Atlas holding up the heavens
I struggle to complete my task
Sometimes I lose my balance
Catching myself and clinging onto the bevel
Cutting myself in order not to slip
And fall into the abyss of chaos
That chaos is oh, so tempting
For the edge digs into the soles of my feet
Causing the nerves to scream at my brain
Wanting relief from the stress
The pain could be ended quickly
If I were just to fall into the depths
Would it be better there in the deep?
Would the pain stop?
Would my suffering be ended?
Possibly says hope
Perhaps says human instinct
Maybe says desperation
How easy it would be to do this
To embrace the darkness below me
Every ounce of my being strains to tumble
Right into what could be relief
But I cannot do this
I cannot succumb to this feeling
I have too many things to do
People to help,
Goals to achieve,
These pull at my heart more
I have to keep my balance on the blade
I must be like Job and endure my suffering
What Blazes the Trail Is not Necessarily Pretty
A poem written with my granddaughter’s words
by Joan Ellen Casey

Zoe was sixteen when she joined EMS. She thinks Rescue Squad runs in her blood.
Considering her parents met “running squad,” and
both grandmothers and a slew of aunts and uncles trained in the medical profession
she’s probably right.
For Zoe, the volunteer rescue squad is family:
“You don’t dedicate at least twelve hours of your day
on the front lines and not develop a strong bond
with the people you share your worst and best experiences.”
Now that Zoe is eighteen and in charge of her own unit,
she can look back and say “I think I expected what everyone expects,
what you see on TV – medics taking care of very sick people.
In reality, most calls I run are not hectic, running around trying to save someone’s life.
Sometimes I simply help someone up and take their dog out for them.
But don’t get me wrong.
There is the controlled chaos of a cardiac arrest ...
a profuse bleed-out of a patient’s nose who is hooked up to a ventilator.”
These all are what Zoe calls “good calls” –
“ones that I walk away from knowing I made a difference and helped someone.”
What Zoe didn’t expect in running rescue was to cry for eighteen hours straight
after she responded to a mother’s call about her daughter.
Zoe recalled what the room looked like.
“The walls were painted blue.
The closet was on the right wall behind the door.
Her bed was to the left of the door.
There was a tall lamp by the closet.
I turned the lights on in her room.”
What blazes the trail is not necessarily pretty.
“She was lying on her back, almost propped up on her pillows.
She had a stuffed animal in her arms
and her phone lying to the right of her charging.
Her charger had one of those cute animal accessories
to protect it from breaking.
She was ashen gray.
There was vomit staining her mouth and chest and blankets.”
“She was fifteen and had committed suicide.
I connected that with my suicide attempt at fourteen
and her age was between the ages of my two sisters.”
For Zoe, this was a “bad call.”
When TOD (time of death) was announced,
she walked downstairs to get some air and recuperate
and overheard a police officer tell the mother,
“You need to stay down here right now.
The EMT’s and paramedics are doing their best to try and save your daughter.”
Back inside the ambulance for privacy, Zoe burst into tears.
For her, it was “gut wrenching knowing
that at the same moment the officer was telling the mother we were saving her life,
we had just declared her dead.”
Zoe’s first collected thought was, “this isn’t going to make me quit.
From that moment, I knew I was dedicated to EMS.”
What blazes the trail is not necessarily pretty.
But Zoe is.
She has soft brown eyes and a mass of curly hair.

Silent Estrangement
by Linda Kennedy Partee

Reluctantly, the vacant eyes met mine,
reflecting lack of interest for his job-assisting customers defined that point.
Ungainly presence, slouched, uncomfortable, his young, bespeckled, Ichabod Crane frame appeared reticent to present itself.
Our awkward eye contact seemed critical, compelling mister clerk’s approach toward me.
Without a sound, he edged nearby annoyed, unwilling to take the initiative, selective scorn surrendered courtesy.
Abrupt, curt smirk suggests we’ve reached a draw... so quick, the talking stick’s been passed along!
Impatient now, I break the verbal ice, declare my query’s been passed along!

The Last Train Out of Town
by Ken Sutton

A magic window in time opens twenty minutes after Jake twists the cap and takes the Night Train Express for a ride out of his recycled life.
Calm flows across Lafayette Park washing over winos, lovers, the children on the monkey bars about to run home for supper.
Calm enough to quiet the scent of a man whose last Salvation Army shower was nine days ago.
But not strong enough to unmake the sad truth that after the last drop, there is no other.

Morning Sun
by Ed von Geren

sunlight through bedroom window falls on timeworn family dresser faces of those long gone illuminated brought to life embarrassed smiles of the shy stern posturing of the self-important morning sun reestablishes all things anew
NEW BOARD MEMBERS

By Terry Cox-Joseph

Congratulations to all of our new board members for 2020 through summer 2021. I am the new president, and my first, grateful order of business is to heartily thank Derek Kannemeyer for his HARD work, his industriousness and fortitude on working on our website after the untimely death of former PSV president, Jeff Hewitt. Thank you, Derek! And congratulations, board members. I look forward to suggestions for filling the positions that still remain open.

President Terry Cox-Joseph
President Pro Tempore Derek Kannemeyer

Regional VPs
North Central David Sam
Northern Cathy Hailey
Northwestern open
Eastern Kathleen Decker
Central Joanna Lee
South/Western open
South Eastern Kindra McDonald

Message from Linda Nottingham:

It is with great sadness that I must let you know that my husband, Stuart Nottingham, died June 1, 2020, at age 89. He was at home under Hospice care with some of the family here, but in this time of COVID-19, not all could travel safely to be with us. As a result, no arrangements for a memorial service have been made now; however, we will be having one when it becomes safe for us to gather. Thoughts and prayers are welcome because, although expected, I am still devastated by the loss. The Poetry Society meant a great deal to Stuart, and that is how we met—in a poetry class. He always carried membership information with him, recruiting all he could.

Terry Cox-Joseph is pleased to have had her poem “Promise” accepted for publication in Trees in a Garden of Ashes, slated for Summer 2020. In April, she was a finalist in the Prometheus Unbound Contest for her poem “Independence Day,” which will be published in Prometheus Dreaming.

Anna Evas announces that her 252-line poem "Sisters by Chance: Notes from the Hospital" will appear in this month’s issue of Long Poem Magazine (London). Her "An Ancient Fantasy" was recently published in The Ekphrastic Review.


Linda Hoagland announces several poems published this spring: “My Prize,” “Widowhood,” “Linger in Sunshine,” and “Steve Peery – My Friend” appear in Star Poets; “The Cup” and “Growing Up and Growing Old” appear in Northern Stars; and “Ten Years Too Late” appears in Writers of Grace. Several of these poems also won awards.
Nancy C. Allen was educated in Virginia as an elementary school teacher. During her teaching career, poetry became the catalyst that taught her to take small steps and to hold on to the little things in life. Reading and writing poetry put her in touch with her own feelings. Her first poem, “Heritage,” was published by Scholastic Instructor Magazine.

Joan Ellen Casey, Ed.D., worked as an editor for New York publishers, authored many educational materials, and then turned to writing poetry. She won the Metrorail Public Art Project Award from the Poetry Society of Virginia and has been published in the last five volumes of The Poet’s Domain and two other anthologies, Distant Horizons and Captured Moments.

Norma Cofresi, PhD, was born in New York City, where she has lived on and off through the years. Her poems draw from her lived experiences in Puerto Rico, Cleveland, and now Williamsburg. She is married, has three adult children, and takes great joy in her two grandchildren. During COVID-19 sheltering, she spends many hours in her backyard conversing with trees, hummingbirds, and a rabbit that peeks in and out of the shrubs. She is a clinical psychologist and is currently in practice through Telehealth. You can reach her at Nuyorikanpoet@gmail.com to share poetry while drinking virtual coffee or iced tea.

Kathleen P. Decker is a physician, musician, and poet in Southeastern Virginia. She began writing poetry in college and continued intermittently since then. In the 1990s she wrote primarily haiku, tanka, haibun, and renku, many of which were translated into Japanese. She edited and published an online and print international haiku journal called Chiyo’s Corner for several years, and she edited two anthologies of haiku, My Neighbor’s Life and On Crimson Wings. Her haiku has been published in Geppo, Frogpond, Haiku Headlines, and Dasoku, and she served as an editor for the World Haiku Association. Kathleen has authored several books of poetry, including Russian Reverie, Whispers on Paper, and Essence of Woman.

Ed von Gehren is a writer of essays and poetry. Ed has published several books of his poetry: Shifting Patterns, Gathering Patterns, and Haiku – 2015 (a book of haiku written each day for a year). He also has a book of collected essays. He is currently president of the Williamsburg Poetry Guild and the Williamsburg Emerson Society. His love of the ocean and the river where he grew up is evident in much of his writing.

Bill Glose is an American journalist, poet, and fiction writer. According to Wikipedia, he is “best known for winning the 2001 F. Scott Fitzgerald Short Story Award and for writing Half a Man, a poetry collection about his Gulf War experience.” As a freelance writer, he has published hundreds of articles and essays for numerous magazines and journals, as well as several books of poetry. Bill currently resides in Gloucester and, as a staunch member and supporter of PSV, may be found at poetry meetings anywhere in the Commonwealth at just about any time.

Daly Hoffman is a student member of the Poetry Society of Virginia who is an English major and a rising junior at Regent University in Virginia Beach. After graduation, he plans to do his graduate work in library science; he aspires to write both fiction and poetry.


Eric Pankey of Fairfax is winner of the 2020 Snowbound Chapbook Award for his manuscript The Future Perfect: A Fugue. The winner receives a $1,000 cash prize, publication by Tupelo Press, and national distribution. Here’s a link to the full story: http://www.tupelopress.org/2020/06/07/tupelo-press-announces-the-winner-finalists-and-semifinalists-for-the-2020-snowbound-chapbook-award/
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**Mark Hudson** is a member of PSV. He is proud of the fact that he recently had a first-place award in the Utah annual contest. His poetry can be found at iliniospoets.org

**Edward W. Lull** was born in Pennsylvania and grew up in Upstate New York. After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1955, his first career was in the Navy, and he earned an M.S. from George Washington University in 1969. In his second career, he held management and executive positions in several small hi-tech firms in the Washington, D.C. area. Ed began writing poetry in retirement; he has published six books of poetry: *Cabin Boy to Captain: A Sea Story, Where Giants Walked, The Sailors: Birth of a Navy, Bits and Pieces: A Memoir, Creating Form Poetry: A Poet's Handbook,* and *The Reality and Fantasy of My World.* He is a Life Member of PSV and served four terms as its president. He led a poetry workshop for eleven years and an essay-writing group for ten years, and he planned and hosted annual poetry festivals in Williamsburg for fourteen years.

**Linda Kennedy Partee**, a native Californian and career educator, currently resides in Williamsburg; she is an active member of several writing groups and organizations: The Poetry Society of Virginia, The James City Poets, The Williamsburg Poetry Guild, Creative Critique, and the Chesapeake Bay Writers. As a poet, she is also a workshop instructor and a consultant to the James York Poets. With poetry inspired by everyday surroundings—nature, books, art, music, and life events—Linda's mind spins with ideas for creating poems using a variety of formats and techniques. Her work enhances power and emotion for her readers by matching form-to-subject; selections of her work have been published and recognized with awards.

**Ken Sutton** is not crazy. But he does have voices in his head: old men and children, friends and enemies, close relatives and people who waited with him at a bus stop in 1966. They have something to say, an act to justify, a sorrow to share, a moment of awe that overcame them in the event and still does in memory. Ken has two books out, *Manhattan to Machipongo* and *The Convenience of War.* He will be bringing *The Midrash of the Marginal* out soon, and *Water from a Bitter Well* is nearing completion. Letters of adoration may be sent to P.O. Box 81, Machipongo, VA 23405.

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**NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS:** Please send articles, announcements, and poetry to share with your fellow PSV members. Your work may be unpublished or previously published, but if necessary, don’t forget to include an acknowledgement. Remember to include a brief bio for the Contributors’ page, and keep work apolitical and family friendly. Please send to janhoffpoetry@gmail.com. The deadline for September newsletter (which will be the next newsletter) is August 15.
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