Executive Board 2025

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Parliamentarian

Jerry Lang jerry.lang61@comcast.net

Honorary Chancellor

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Poetry Society of Michigan



"Encouraging Poets Since 1935"

December 2025

President's Message

Hello Poetry Lovers!

I want to thank all the writers who attended our fall conference in Traverse City! It was a big success with Fleda Brown and Terry Wooten as presenters and Nicole **Birkett** as the winner of PSM's Traveling Trophy. The fall contest issue of *Peninsula Poets* is now available and beautiful, thanks to the diligent work of **Diana Hart** with help from **Robin Church** and **David Jibson**. I also want to send my heartfelt thanks to all of the judges who volunteered their time and talent for the PSM contest and to the donors for their continued generosity and support for poetry.

ELECTION TIME

I'm completing my second 2-year term as president, and it's time for new blood at the helm. Please consider stepping up to become president or vice-president. **Robin Church** and I will give you all the help you'll need. (Former presidents remain on the Executive Board in an advisory capacity for a year.) There are such great people in this organization; it practically runs itself! Email me if you have questions, recommendations, nominations or are considering either position.

SPRING CONFERENCE 2026
We're seeking a venue in Flint or
Saginaw for April 11, 2026. If you
live in those areas and have some
recommendations, please contact
me at jamesfam3@charter.net.
We'll send out a membership email
when we have the details
confirmed and are ready to open up
registration!

SPRING PENINSULA POETS
As of this writing, we're in need of an editor for the spring membership issue of Peninsula Poets. If you'd like to try your hand at editing a literary magazine, please contact me. We will help train you on the process; this experience can be very enlightening and satisfying!

5-YEAR ANTHOLOGY

One major project coming in 2026 is our Poetry Society of Michigan anthology. Once every five years, we undertake this publication. This year, the anthology will be very special since it's our ninetieth year as an organization, and **Melanie Dunbar** has agreed to be the editor! (Detailed information on deadlines and submission guidelines can be found on page 3.)

[Continued, p. 2]

President's Message, continued

POLITICAL POETRY

In these divisive political times, I've been wondering about the role of a poet, if there is one. Some poets express political ideas in their work so effortlessly—Carolyn Forche, Maya Angelou, Pablo Neruda, W.B. Yeats, Langston Hughes, and Walt Whitman among many others. These poets have the courage to write moving lyrics of empowerment, of resistance and protest, and of witness.

For most of my career, I've steered away from writing about politics, even though I want to write poems that speak to and explore our current situation. When I've tried, my poems come off as either too didactic or preachy, which may be why I admire those poets who can deal fluently with political issues.

I've heard it said that all poems are political. All poems engage a reader's ability to think and feel which, hopefully, may lead to personal change and enlightenment. That change may manifest itself in political action. However, even if poems do not impact our political situation, they certainly feed and nurture our human spirit, and *everyone* needs that.

May you bask in the holiday season and meet the New Year with open and creative hearts and minds.

Poetically yours, **David James**

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The editor would like to gratefully acknowledge the poets whose original work appears in this *Newsletter*. Copyright is retained by them. Permission to further reproduce or distribute these poems in any form, print or online, must be obtained from the authors.

READ ME!

October was PSM annual membership renewal month. **BUT IT'S NOT TOO LATE**.

Members who renew (or join) by the end of December 2025 will be included on the 2026 roster submitted to the National Federation of State Poetry Societies (NFSPS), which allows participation in and/or discounts on all the national contests. Membership dues are only \$35 per person per year and can be renewed online (poetrysocietyofmichigan.com). Or opt for Lifetime Membership at \$400 and never renew again.

In addition to membership in the NFSPS and quarterly copies of its *Strophes* Newsletter, PSM membership provides quarterly copies of our *PSM Newsletter*, as well as copies of our distinguished poetry journal *Peninsula Poets* printed twice a year. [See facing page for submission guidelines for Spring 2026 Member's Issue!]

That's quite a Bargain!

Not yet online? Mail your check for \$35 to the address below.

PSM 2026 Dues c/o PSM Treasurer Box 1035 Cadillac, MI 49601

Thank you in advance for helping us keep our roster up to date! Thank you.

Tasha Webber, Membership Coordinator membership.psm@gmail.com

OPPORTUNITIES for PSM MEMBERS

Call for Submissions #1

Peninsula Poets Spring 2026 (Members' Issue)

For consideration, please send *up to 3 unpublished poems* with your contact information in a single Word attachment (one poem per page) or in the body of an email to

psm.springissue@aol.com

[Note new address!]

Each poem should be no more than a maximum of 40 lines (including stanza breaks). We apologize that we are unable to accept mailed submissions at this time. Eligible contributors must be a member in good standing with your dues paid through 2026.

Please visit <u>poetrysocietyofmichigan.com</u> for full membership details. If you are unsure of your membership status, please email Tasha Webber at membership.psm@gmail.com.

Submissions accepted until February 1, 2026.

Questions? Please email <u>psm.springissue@aol.com</u>. We are looking forward to reading your work!

Snow

Precious winter gift Hills for sledding and skiing Snowmen standing proud

Mary Ann Bozenski

Call for Submissions #2 PSM Five-Year Anthology: Power of Place

The Poetry Society of Michigan is seeking poems for a five-year anthology to be published in 2026.

Current and former PSM members are known to be passionate about local environments both thriving and abandoned: lakes great and small; woods, streams, Karner's Blue butterflies and more. We have rich histories tied to Michigan that inform our daily lives. To that end, we are seeking poems that convey the **Power of Place**.

If you have been a dues-paying member in at least one of the past five years (2021 through 2025) we invite you to submit. Send your submission to PSM's Anthology Managing Editor **Melanie Dunbar** at editor.psm@gmail.com.

Submissions open: January 1, 2026 Deadline for submissions: March 15, 2026

GUIDELINES:

In the body of an email with the subject PSM ANTHOLOGY SUBMISSION include:

- ~Author name and contact information (address, phone and email)
- ~Three to five poems (within the body of the email—no attachments please).
- ~Acknowledgement for any submitted poems that were previously published.

(We prefer new work but previously published poems will be considered as long as the copyright is owned by the poet and the work is accompanied by information of when and where it was previously published.)

Note: While broad representation will be the editors' primary intent, the sheer number of submissions, page limits, and applicability to the theme dictate that acceptance will be selective. Membership alone does not guarantee inclusion.

The anthology will be launched at our Fall 2026 Conference in Lansing and will be distributed to libraries state-wide. Readings will be held in multiple cities throughout 2027 to celebrate over 90 years of the Poetry Society of Michigan. Contributors accepted will receive one copy of the anthology. Additional copies will be available for purchase at Amazon.com.

News from Cadillac

Dear PSM Friends,

As I write this, I can hardly believe we're approaching Thanksgiving week, and by the time this newsletter reaches you, we'll be welcoming December. But in the meantime, there is much to be thankful for. I'm thankful for the mild weather we've enjoyed, for the love and companionship of family and friends, and for the joy of seeing PSM celebrate its 90th year of encouraging poets and poetry throughout our beautiful state. What an exciting milestone!

Looking ahead, 2026 promises to be another extraordinary year. One highlight will be our upcoming 5-Year Anthology in honor of our 90th anniversary. The Anthology Team is doing everything they can to make the book something you'll want to be part of.

Our membership remains strong at 220 poets current through the end of this year. However, 125 memberships have yet to be renewed for 2026. We'll be sending reminders and sincerely hope everyone chooses to renew. We also encourage more new members. At only \$35, a membership would make a good gift for your poetryloving friends! Please don't hesitate to contact us at membership.psm@gmail.com if you have any questions about membership or your membership status. We will be happy to help.

An extra-big thank-you to our members who have embraced the new Lifetime Membership option. What a meaningful way to support PSM! As a reminder, PSM is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and your support is tax-deductible. Membership contributions and donations directly fuel our work—the newsletters, books, contests, conferences, and events. Our board is entirely volunteer-run, and PSM simply would not thrive without members. We truly appreciate each and every one of you.

As we wrap up 2025, we are pleased to share that our transition to accepting online payments—via PayPal, credit card, and Venmo—has been a great success. While our PO Box still receives some snail mail, the majority of payments now come in electronically. It has been nothing short of revolutionary!

With warmest wishes for a joyful holiday season,

Susan Herman

PSM Treasurer & Historian

Grand River Poetry Collective

The Grand River Poetry Collective (GRPC) is a volunteer-driven literary community devoted to making poetry more visible, more permanent, and easier to share in Grand Rapids. In 2025, the collective's publishing arm—Grand River Poetry Press—moved from concept to real infrastructure, launching several new titles by Grand Rapids poets and developing a low- or no-up-front-cost model that returns proceeds directly to poets and back into community publishing. The press now serves as a home for new local manuscripts as well as a place where authors can share existing books with readers at events and through our website.

Alongside publishing, GRPC has been building space for poets of all levels to gather, learn, and be heard. The collective hosted a 12-hour festival at the Wealthy Theatre Annex, participated in a publishing panel at the Grand Rapids Art Museum, and established The Lit, 61 Sheldon Blvd, (formerly the Ladies' Literary Club) as a home for its new reading series and open mic events. These gatherings bring together emerging poets, seasoned authors, educators, and families, creating an ecosystem where mentorship, audience, and publication all grow from the same communal space. Our next event at **The Lit** is on **December 11**, featuring **Christine Stephens-Krieger** (current Grand Rapids Poet Laureate), and **Scott Krieger**, with an open mic and book signing.

The collective is also shaping a digital future for West Michigan literature through **The River** (theriverlit.com), a living online publication that hosts new poems, features, reviews, and collaborative projects tied to the press and reading series. Grand Rapids poetry is flourishing across generations through print, performance, and shared public imagination—and we welcome poets from across Michigan to join us, read with us, and grow community together.

For detail and more info, visit grandriverpoetrycollective.com

Grit for the Knife Grinder's Daughters*

Ι

this is where our dad empties emery compound dropped from polishing and buffing wheels clay-colored mounds of velvety abrasive so fine and static-charged that it pulls to collect along our fuzz of leg hair under the shade of oak and hemlock a path of wintergreen and mushrooms an alcove where we crouch to pee behind our dad's shop

II

we ate from the grain bins with hands that became tacky from molasses residue oat dust and corn meal pilling into the lifelines of our palms abrading our cheeks and tongues on the sharpness of hulls while my dad milked the goats and we watered the horses

Ш

as adults my sister and I crave Good & Plenty the black licorice candy that clacks like ceramic against our teeth before the sugared shells push off to reveal a wheat germ richness that reminds me of the sticky feed we give to our old mare while we take turns running cold water along her arthritic legs

Nicole Birkett

*Winner of the Traveling Trophy, Fall 2025

News from Downriver Poets & Playwrights

Co-Leaders **Dennis White** and **George Wylie** announce the publication of *HOMEGROWN POETRY* an anthology of work by members and former participants of DP&P. Edited by George and Dennis, the book is dedicated to former PSM President, **Mono D'Angelo**. *HOMEGROWN POETRY* includes 85 poems by 35 poets, along with some historical background on the Downriver Poets & Playwrights group.

The Book is available on Amazon.

The DP&P is a group of writers who meet at 6 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of each month at Bacon Memorial Library in Wyandotte. In addition, **George Wylie** hosts the **Blue Water Poetry Zoom** (an Open Mic) on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month at 8 p.m.. Everyone is welcome. The Blue Water Poetry Zoom ID is 850-8444-3586 and the Pass code is bluewaterz.

Each month DP&P also produces a video cable show open mic with member participation, called **Poetry From The 'Dotte** and a panel discussion called **Behind The Poetry Lines**. Both shows air daily on local TV. And DP&P have their own YouTube channel called **Downriver Poets&Playwrights Michigan**, which can be viewed by anyone.

For more information about any DP&P activities email DownriverPoets@aol.com or contact **Dennis White** at 734-755-5988 or by email: dennis68white@aol.com

The Printed Word

Michigan State University Press will release **Jim Daniel**'s *Late Invocation for Magic* on January 1, 2026. It's now available for preorder from MSU (or Bookshop & other online retailers). "In poems selected from his long career," writes one reviewer, "Jim Daniels focuses on Detroit and other Rust Belt cities, where issues of class and race and justice play out in the streets, kitchens, backyards, and garages of regular folks trying to make a living there. Known for his courage, clarity, and accessibility, Daniels examines the tension between our idealized country and the messier cultural and economic divides, often focusing on those who can't afford or have access to 'magic.'"



Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle Monthly Poetry Workshop

On the **second Wednesday of the month**, the **Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle** holds a relaxed and informal poetry workshop. Anyone is welcome to participate. At a workshop you are encouraged to present a poem you are working on for positive and constructive comments by your peers. **These workshops are held online via Zoom.** Write us at cwpoetrycircle@gmail.com or use the "Event Registration" item at cwcircle.poetry.blog to receive the link a few days prior to a workshop. Please read and follow the event guidelines you will also find there. Other information about our circle is there, too. We look forward to hearing your work!

News from River Junction Poets

The combined **RJP November/December Meeting** and Christmas Celebration will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, **December 6**, at **Zauel Library**. New this year: Each poet is to bring a small gift (new or gently used, minimum cost) for exchange and *include with the gift a poem about the gift*. We will have a short business meeting after the festivities, for election of officers for 2026 and discussion of AI regarding high school and middle school poetry contests. Dues will be due (still only \$20).

Friends of Roethke will host a **Holiday Party** of their own on Sunday, **December 7**, from **2-4 p.m.** at the **Roethke House**. There will be hot mulled cider and cookies. For more information about the party or other activities sponsored by the Friends visit <u>friendsofroethke.org</u>.

Looking ahead to spring, the **River Junction Poets** have been invited to participate in the **Roethke Poetry Prize and Festival** in March 2026. RJP's event will be Saturday, **March 21**, **2026**, at the **Roethke House** (1805 Gratiot Ave., Saginaw) and are looking for volunteers to help organize and coordinate with the Festival Committee.

PSM members are encouraged to check out the **Friends of Roethke** website (<u>friendsofroethke.org</u>) for additional activities, workshops, readings, classes and other events, both locally (at the Roethke House) and online.

The River Junction Poets wish all our PSM Friends Joyful Holidays and a Poetic Winter!

& Other News

Our friend **Diane Baum** writes:

Grand Rapids has a lot of poetry events going on. There are at least 10 poetry open mics each month, as well as workshops, visiting poets, featured readings, and a poetry book discussion club.

Christine Stephens-Krieger, our new Grand Rapids Poet Laureate, has been organizing lots of special community poetry events and has created a poetry collective that is publishing and selling books of local poets that we want to sell around Michigan. [See Grand River Poetry Collective, p. 4]. You can find keep up with these events by joining the Facebook group called Poetry Events Grand Rapids:

www.facebook.com/groups/249228558420579

Listings are not limited to Grand Rapids; we also list open mic readings and poetry events from other places around West Michigan: Lakeshore communities from Muskegon to Petoskey, as well as Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Ionia, and as far east as Lansing. We especially cater to in-person poetry opportunities. If there is a West Michigan poetry event you would like us to list, please send it to the group. If you are not a Facebook person, we also have a monthly email list which you can sign up for by emailing me, **Diane Baum**: dianelawkessler@gmail.com

Upcoming Poetry Open Mics in Grand Rapids ~New Holland Brewing Company, first 3 Sundays in the month, 5:30 p.m.

- ~Orchard Books, December 7, 4 p.m.
- ~The Lit, December 11, 5:30 p.m. (followed by featured readers)
- ~Bates House, December 13, 7 p.m.
- ~106 Gallery, Crockpot Poetry, December 18, 7 p.m. (and they feed you from the Crockpot)
- ~Scorpion Hearts, Special Palestinian Poetry reading with open mic, December 20,
- ~Gaia Coffeehouse, December 23, 7 p.m.
- ~Scorpion Hearts, December 30 (gather at 5:30 p.m. reading starts at 6)

Other events:

- ~Black Dog Books, December 13, 5 p.m. Poetry reading and book signing
- ~Poet's Parlor: Poetry Book Club at Cellar Bird Books, Monday, December 8, 7 p.m.
- ~Poetry Workshop Scorpion Hearts, December 9, 5:30 p.m.

For more info and other events, check host websites or **Poetry Events West Michigan.**

###

& a Reminder from Traverse City:

POETS meet MUSICIANS

Open Mic

Last Monday of the Month, 7 p.m. (in case of holiday a week earlier)

at **Middle Coast** (brewery) 329 E. State St., Traverse City

We pay homage to the Beat Poets!
12 years running!

For more info or confirmation call or text

Tom

231 392-6121

traversemedia@yahoo.com

Journey of the Magi*

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)

'A cold coming we had of it, Just the worst time of the year For a journey, and such a long journey: The ways deep and the weather sharp, The very dead of winter.' And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory, Lying down in the melting snow. There were times we regretted The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces, And the silken girls bringing sherbet. Then the camel men cursing and grumbling And running away, and wanting their liquor and women, And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters, And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly And the villages dirty and charging high prices: A hard time we had of it. At the end we preferred to travel all night, Sleeping in snatches, With the voices singing in our ears, saying That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley, Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation; With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness, And three trees on the low sky, And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow. Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel, Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver, And feet kicking the empty wine-skins, But there was no information, and so we continued And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

^{*}This poem is in the public domain.

CALL for NOMINATIONS

It's that time again! Elections for two-year terms of PSM Executive Board Positions will be held at the **2026 Spring Conference**. Elected positions are: **President, Vice-President, Treasurer**, and **Recording Secretary**. The deadline for nominations is **January 15, 2026.**.

From the By-laws:

ARTICLE III: Officers and Elections

A. The Society shall be governed by an Executive Board consisting of (1) President, (2) Vice President, (3) Treasurer, (4) Recording Secretary, (5) Newsletter Editor, (6) Membership Coordinator, (7) Webmaster, (8) *Peninsula Poets* Editor, (9) Contest Chairperson, (10) Historian, and (11) Parliamentarian. A majority of the Members of this Board shall constitute a quorum to conduct the business of the Society. Each Officer will have a single vote in Board matters.

B. The Offices of President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary will be determined by general election of the Active Membership. The term of office for elected Officers shall be two years. President and Vice President shall hold office for no more than two consecutive terms.

C. The Offices of Newsletter Editor, Membership Coordinator, Webmaster, *Peninsula Poets* Editor, Contest Chairperson, Historian, and Parliamentarian shall be Appointed by the President under advisement of the Elected Officers of the Executive Board, based upon nominations from the general membership. **Members may self-nominate.** The terms of service for Appointed Officers are not limited but shall be reconfirmed during general elections.

NOTE: In particular the PSM seeks nominations this round for President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, *Peninsula Poets* Editor, and *Newsletter* Editor.

Parliamentarian **Jerry Lang** will be accepting nominations until **January 15, 2026**: email <u>jerry.lang61@comcast.net</u>.

A ballot will appear in the March 2026 *PSM Newsletter*.

One Speaks of Election*

I nominate the slight incline of the east pasture where snow

at certain times of the year becomes an underground stream that surfaces below

the fence line and muddies our single trail to the sugar maples

Peepers would vote in favor as would the coyote we've seen lapping up snowmelt

where the runoff puddles in the culvert Everything leads from there

as from the cleft of a shoulder upon which some lover has settled her damp hair

Phillip Sterling

*Reprinted from *And Then Snow* with permission. *And Then Snow* (2017) is available at a discount from mainstreetragbookstore.com.

POETRY SOCIETY OF MICHIGAN

Business Address:

PSM Treasurer PO Box 1035 Cadillac, MI 49601

Email: Treasurer.PSM@gmail.com

Website:
poetrysocietyofmichigan.com
& FACEBOOK

an affiliate of

The National Federation of State Poetry Societies www.nfsps.com

Downriver Poets & Playwrights meets regularly on the first Tuesday of the month at Bacon Memorial Library in **Wyandotte** at 6:00 p.m. Contact **Dennis White** at 734-755-5988 or dennis68white@aol.com for more information.

Crazy Wisdom Poetry Circle of Ann Arbor meets on 2nd & 4th Wednesdays of each month. All sessions are virtual and accessible through Zoom. Additional info: https://cwcircle.poetry.blog/. Email cwcircle@gmail.com for Zoom link.

Rochester Poets' Society meets at the Rochester Hills Public Library, in **Rochester**, from 1-3 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. For more info Contact **Nancy Stevens** 248-217-4034 or email writings80@yahoo.com.

Marquette Poets Circle meets on first Monday of the month in the Peter White Library Conference Room at 5:30 for workshop, 6:30 for Open Mic. For more info contact Marty Achatz at <u>machatz@pwpl.info</u> or 906-226-4322.

River Junction Poets of **Saginaw** meet regularly throughout the year. For dates and times and other info, visit their Facebook page or email **Christine Rohr** at docxrohr@aol.com

Women are welcome to join **Third Place Poets** the **second Sunday** of every month, **1:00-4:00 p.m., in the Dodge Room of the Commerce Township Public Library** (180 Commerce Road). Email thirdplacepoets@gmail.com for more info.

Literary Locals: Writers Welcome

Confirm with Organization before Attending!

The **Detroit Poetry Salon** is a bi-weekly ZOOM meeting of poets who have, according to liaison **Nancy Shattuck**, "bonded in Spring Fed [Arts] poetry classes." You do not need to be a Springfed or PSM member to join. Interested poets should contact Nancy for more info at shattucknj@gmail.com.

For information about the many activities and gatherings of **Friends of Poetry—Kalamazoo**, contact **Elizabeth Kerlikowske** (mme642@yahoo.com) or visit their Facebook page.

Ludington Writers meets every Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Judith Minty Room (second floor) of the **Ludington Area Center for the Arts**, 107 S. Harrison St., Ludington. All are welcome. Second and Fourth Tuesdays are critiques. For info visit <u>ludingtonwriters.org</u> or call **Nicole Birkett** (231) 742-8550.

The **Southeast Michigan Poetry Meet-up** hosts free workshops on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. at **Panera Bread**, 30955 Woodward Ave., in **Royal Oak**, MI. Bring hard copies of your poem to share. RSVP at meetup.com. For more information, call **Carla Dodd** at 248-961-3636.

The **Lansing Poetry Club** generally meets once a month at a different member's house. For more info or to confirm a meeting, visit Facebook or email LPC President **Ruelaine Stokes** (<u>ruestokes@gmail.com</u>) or Board member **Cheryl Caesar** (caesarc@msu.edu).