

**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

Look for SMPS Poetry readings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at the Coffee Hag on Riverfront Drive beginning this month!

# Thistle Down

WELCOME BACK Southern Minnesota Poets!!!

*Join John Rezmerski at The Neighbors for the Fall Kickoff Meeting of SMPS*

The September 11 meeting will be held at our new location:

*The Neighbor's Restaurant*, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, Minnesota. (Take the Highway 169 exit for Riverfront Drive, turn right.)

Come early and join others for lunch (Dutch treat) at 12:00 noon. Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm.

John Rezmerski, recently retired Poet in Residence at Gustavus Adolphus, and author of numerous books, will kick off our season with a talk on "Too much, Too Little."

All visitors are welcome! No fees to attend.



**Poetry Challenge for September 11, 2004.**

This month's assignment is The Villanelle ( 6 stanzas, 5 tercets, 1 quatrain: lines one and three repeat in subsequent stanzas: AbA, abA, abA, abA, abAA. )

Assignments are designed to help poets expand their poetic voices, they are not mandatory.

**CHARLOTTE NIETZEL SEWARD  
First SMPS President Celebrates  
93 years of Living and Writing**

Charlotte was quite sure the Farmer's Market had a sale the day of her birthday on July 15, because her house was filled with flower bouquets. It is not surprising as she has written many beautiful poems about nature and flowers.

Charlotte was the first president of the Southern Minnesota Poetry Society when it started in 1976. Encouraged by Norman Boe, Charlotte and Cecelia Weaver put an ad in the *Mankato Home Magazine* calling all poets. "So began SMPS." Charlotte is proud and pleased that SMPS continues to thrive. She still feels strongly that local poets need a forum and support from each other to write and appreciate poetry.

Charlotte has been writing since she can remember. As a little girl, her aunt read poetry to her and she began writing in earnest during her high school years. She became a teacher and inspired the creativity of her students in a one room country school house with writing and plays. "They loved Fridays because we would have art," she recalled.

Poetry is not Charlotte's only writing passion. She has written five books of genealogy for relatives and two children's books. She won the Pillsbury Bakeoff on November 16, 1956 that landed her a trip to Minneapolis and New York City.

Charlotte has won numerous prizes and awards for her work and has placed in NFSPS contests. Her poetry has been featured in Church and University publications. She was published in the *Mark Twain Quarterly*, *Detroit News*, *Farmer's Magazine*, and *Boston Post* among others. Back in the early

1950's, she won a case of tuna fish as well as two nights at the Hastings Hotel in the twin cities for winning radio contests. She won First Prize in the Jesse Poet Contest on WCCO in 1995.

Her work has been published in numerous anthologies including *A Poem and Autobiography* by John Frost. Charlotte declared she can't write much anymore. Her eyesight isn't so good, but she is still inspired by poetry, opera and all things creative. Along with volumes of her poetry, she keeps dear the poems others have written. One such poem, written about her by Patricia Johnson, another former SMPS President, describes her so well, "...*lady like, refined delicately and ethereal; but then... made of stronger things determined depths and words with wings and substance...*"

**Poems by Charlotte Nietzel Seward:**

**Leaf Cry**

Tattered  
Scattered  
into heaps;  
all torn;  
forlorn;  
crispy weeps.

**I Dream to Sing**

I doubt I'll ever meet with royalty  
And other great I yearn so much to see  
My role seems insignificant in life,  
For all I am is: Just a housewife.

And what God has in his own mind for  
me

Is often more than I can guess or see.  
But when I clean the house or plan a  
meal.

I have my little tasks; how good I feel.

*Special thanks to Monica Toohey Haack,  
SMPS Historian, for her contributions to  
this article.*

## WOODTICK RETREAT Relaxing and Rewarding

Numerous poets from LOMP descended on the Stevens-Chambers cabin on Horsehoe Lake in Northern Minnesota for an inspiring weekend of poetry sharing, work shopping, beautiful surroundings and darn good food! Represented were poets from Northern Minnesota, Minneapolis and Southern Minnesota.

Poets wrote about images during a meditation on the beach, listened to poetry from the science fiction realm, learned about a Conceit Poem, watched *The Language of Life* video featuring Linda McCarrison and Sandra McPherson and listened to a tape by Will Pollard on the proper use of metaphor and simile. Poets had an opportunity to direct a workshop, share their poetry and provide critique and constructive criticism for each other.

The next Poetry Retreat will be The Blizzard Writer's Retreat on January 21-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 at Sue Chamber's home in Good Thunder. Don't miss it!

### ✓ Mark Your Calendar

#### Van Trip to Geraldine R. Dodge

SMPS poets will drive to the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival at the end of the month. The festival is expected to draw 25,000 participants from around the world. This year the festival will be held at the historic Duke Farms in New Jersey. Nationally renowned poets and writers will be featured throughout the day and night to include Rita Dove, Billy Collins, C.K. Williams, Sandra Cisneros, Joyce Carol Oates, Stephen Dunn, Sharon Olds and Lucille Clifton among others!

The festival has been featured in four PBS television series with Bill Moyers, *The Language of Life*. The festival will be held from September 28 - October 3, 2005. It is not too late to reserve your seat on the van. Contact Sue Chambers at 507-278-4200 or Email her at [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

#### LOMP Fall Meeting in Little Falls

The League of Minnesota fall meeting will be held in Little Falls, Minnesota on Saturday, October 16, 2004. Registration material will be available at the September SMPS meeting. Anyone interested in carpooling please call Sue Chambers.

#### Coffee House Readings

SMPS and The Coffee Hag at 329 Riverfront Drive, will co-sponsor poetry readings. SMPS poets can read poems based on a theme (reader's interpretation.) Poems will be read in subsequent rounds, until all theme poems are exhausted. The audience will be invited to comment. A final round features an open mike. Poets who want to join SMPS that night, can read and receive a discounted membership.

Did we mention great coffee, tea and treats, not to mention the ambiance? Hope to see you all there! The first reading is Monday, September 20 at 7:00 pm. The September theme is *What I Never Said Before*.

#### Good Thunder Reading Series

Nancy Eimers and William Olsen will read at Ostrander Auditorium at 7:00 pm at Mankato State University on September 23, 2004. Contact the department at 507-389-2117 for more information.

## President's Message

Fall is fast approaching and with it comes some significant poetry events. First and foremost, SMPS has a new location. We hope that going back to a luncheon format will give our members more time to network in a pleasant setting. Second, several SMPS members will be joining the LOMP van out to the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival at the end of the month. The van makes the trip very affordable. There is still a couple of seats, so if you want to enjoy the company of some of the finest poets in the country, contact me and I will get you all of the information you need.

The League of Minnesota Poets Fall meeting is in Little Falls on the weekend of October 15, 2004. This is always an

exciting event with contest results from the annual LOMP contest announced. Winners who are present get to read their poems. I would like to see a good turnout of SMPS members at this meeting as SMPS will be hosting the LOMP Spring meeting.

We are working hard on making this year of SMPS one of the very best. My goal is to attract new members and keep current members inspired. There is a change in our meeting place, format and new opportunities to share your poetry. What has not changed is our focus: SMPS is a place to enjoy poetry. Invite a friend to see why SMPS is a great organization!

Yours in Poetry,

Sue Chambers

## Subtle Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001

**September's Featured Poet:**  
Charlotte Luella Nietzel Seward

**September's Featured Website:** The  
Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival.  
<http://www.grdodge.org/poetry>.

**September's Featured Reading:** *Fooling With Words: A Celebration of Poets and Their Craft*  
by Bill Moyers, William Morrow & Co., New York, 1999.



Seneca carving

Meredith Cook (M04)  
427 No Gorman  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

Dates gone to  
Dodge Festival  
SEPT 28-Oct 4  
leave sue's at 8AM  
SEPT 28

# Southern Minnesota Poets Society 2004-2005

## OTHER UPCOMING POETRY EVENTS

September 28 through October 4th. It is not too late to join fellow LOMP members on a 15-passenger van trip to the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival in New Jersey.

SMPS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (w) \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues are: \$15.00 for adults, 7.50 for students

Mail application and check to Treasurer:  
Elaine Anderson, 463 200<sup>th</sup> Street  
Trimont, Minn. 56176

### SMPS OFFICERS:

President *Sue Chambers*  
Vice President *Ike Sarma*  
Treasurer *Elaine Anderson*  
Recording Sec *Faye Mattison*  
Thisitledown Editor *Sandy Newbauer*  
LOMP Regional V President *Sandy Newbauer*

October 16th  
League of Minnesota Poets  
Fall Meeting in Little Falls  
Want to carpool?  
Call Sue Chambers 278-4200

NFSPS CONVENTION  
June 16-20, 2005  
SMPS/LOMP sends delegates to the National Federation of State Poetry Societies' meeting. This year it will be in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

**BLIZZARD WRITER'S RETREAT**  
Jan. 21st - 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005  
at Sue Chambers  
57310 166th Lane,  
Good Thunder. 56037  
Rules—bring a program of ½ hour at least, and something to eat! Contact [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com) for directions

SMPS participates in the Woodtick Writing Retreat (in the Brainerd area) July 15-18, 2005. Contact Sue Chambers 507-278-4200 for details.

*For all who love poetry and/ or write poetry*

At The Neighbor's Restaurant  
*(a smoke free restaurant)*  
1812 south Riverfront Drive,  
Mankato

*(take Hwy 169 exit for Riverfront Drive, turn right)*

**12:00 noon: Dutch-treat lunch, 1:00 p.m. programs start unless otherwise noted.**

**ALL VISITORS GLADLY WELCOMED!  
NO FEE TO ATTEND!**

SMPS is a chapter  
..... of the League of Minnesota Poets.  
..... LOMP is affiliated with the National  
..... Federation of State Poetry Societies.

Member John Reznemski, recently retired Poet in Residence from Gustavus Adolphus, and author of a number of books, will kick off our season.

Assignment: The Villanelle (6 stanzas, 5 tercets, 1 quatrain: lines one and third repeat in subsequent stanzas: AbA, abA, abA, abA, abAA.)

**(Our assignments are never mandatory)**

**October 9<sup>th</sup> "Talking Poetry"** Anna

Larson host of KMSU radio "Weekly Reader" will talk about the radio program, poets she has interviewed and discuss how she selects writers so you can get your poetry heard by a larger audience.

Assignment: The Cinquain Sequence (5 lines, 22 syllables 2, 4, 6, 8, 2 unrhymed) No more than seven stanzas, 35 lines.

**November 13<sup>th</sup> "Title"** Candace Black,

MSU Professor and author, recently featured by Garrison Keillor.

Assignment: A Vignette, any form, 28 line limit (A sketch that depicts a lovely picture.)

**December 11<sup>th</sup> "Enjoying Christmas"**

Bring a favorite Christmas poem or song. Assignment: Winter or Christmas Poem.

**January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005 "The Sounds of Poetry"**

Member Ed Brekke-Kramer leads us in a Writing Workshop. Bring your pens! Assignment: Subject poem: Rain, any form 30 line limit.

Ramona Czer, Prof. of Communications, creative writing instructor at Bethany, combines folk harp and romantic, works of the bards for a Valentine celebration.

Assignment: Dorsimbra ; 12 lines. 4 lines iambic pentameter rhymed abab, 4 lines free verse, 4 lines iambic pentameter blank verse. Last line repeats first line.

**March 12<sup>th</sup> "Meditation and Poetry"**

Mona Cenicerros, yoga instructor and owner of Sun Moon Yoga Studios will explore the links between yoga and poetry. She asks poets to bring poems about your body to share, for a poetry connection discussion.

Assignment: Subject poem: travel, real or imaginary. 40 line limit.

**April 9<sup>th</sup> "Words You Possess"** Sherry

Quan Lee, Author and Instructor, Twin Cities, will read from her book and present a writing workshop.

Assignment: Short and serious-any form 12 line limit.

**APRIL 23 SMPS hosts the LOMP Spring Meeting: Country Inn and Suites, Hwy 14 and 22, Mankato.**

**"Media Ecology-Impact on Poets"** Steve Reagles, Communications Professor at Bethany Lutheran College

**May 14<sup>th</sup> "Poetry Forms—Try something new!"** The Mississippi Valley Poets Panel. Members of the Minneapolis LOMP chapter join us for the day.

Assignment: The Tanka (extension of haiku-31 syllables 5, 7, 5, 7, 7—free verse.)

Sue Chambers house (map and directions will be provided in newsletter.)

**SMPS Presents:**  
**COFFEE HOUSE POETRY**  
**READINGS**

**The Third Monday at 7:00 p.m.**  
**THE COFFEE HAG**  
329 Riverfront Drive  
Mankato, Minnesota  
387-5533

*Come and read once a month in a Coffee House setting. You must be a SMPS member to read, but we will discount SMPS membership if you join for the 1<sup>st</sup> time during the readings.*

*Evenings will be centered on a theme—the reader's interpretation. Any poem that fits the theme can be shared. Poets will read one poem, a second in a subsequent round, until all theme poems are exhausted. At the end of each round, the audience will be invited to comment. The last round will not be on the theme, but open mike.*

**THEMES:**

September 20	What I Never Said Before
October 18	My Best Friend
November 15	Transportation
December 20	Turn Out The Lights
January 17	And The Winner is...
February 21	Many Splendor Things
March 21	Mad As A Hatter
April 18	Body Language
May 16	Lessons



October 2004

Volume 25, Issue 2

# Thistle-Down

## Southern Minnesota Poets Society

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Neubauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Sneubauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Sneubauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

Look for **SMPS Poetry Readings** every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at the Coffee Hag on Riverfront Drive beginning this month!

Join us for *Talking Poetry* with **Anna Larson**, host of KMSU radio show *Weekly Reader*. She will talk about the poets she has interviewed and how she selects writers to learn how you can get your poetry heard by a larger audience.

*Where: The Neighbors Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

*When: Saturday, October 9, 2004*

Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm.

All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.



**Poetry Challenge for October 18, 2004.**

This month's assignment is The Cinquain Sequence, unrhymed. (5 lines, 22 syllables 2,4,6,8,2 ... unrhymed) with no more than seven stanzas, 35 lines.

**GERALDINE DODGE  
POETRY FESTIVAL  
Twelve LOMP Poets  
Survive Reality Trip**

The long white van, with two signs in its back window reading *MN Poetry Society* and *G. Dodge Poetry Festival or Bust*, filled to capacity, arrived on the first day to the beauty of the Duke Farms, 5000 students and, rain and this line up: Mark Doty, Jane Hirschfield, Khaled Mattawa, Cecilia Vicuna, Sharon Olds, Lucille Clifton, Edward Hirsch, Adonis, Benjamin Bagby, Yusef Komunyakaa, Philip Levine, Sandra Cisneros, Venus Khoury-Ghata, Paul Muldoon, Aharon Shabtai (with Peter Cole), Franz Wright, C.K. Williams, Marilyn Chin, Galway Kinnell, Marilyn Hacker, Coleman Barks, , Donald Hall, Joyce Carol Oates and Stephen Dunn among others. Former Poet Laureates Rita Dove and Billy Collins were also featured during the festival.

There is such a thing as poetry heaven. As well as main stage events that included poetry readings and music, participants were able to attend break out sessions with individual or panels of poets through out the day. Panel topics included conversations about *Going Public with Private Feelings*, *Poetry as Disruptive Seed*, and *Poetry as Centering Force* among others.

There were morning Rumi readings with Coleman Barks and musicians to include David Darling, Steve Gorn and Glen Velez. *Poets Among Us* sessions featured readings by poets attending the conference as well as storytelling sessions.

Although the Minnesota delegation joked about voting members off until there was just one poet left (the people with the biggest suitcases most at risk), the reality was ecstatic with 26 renowned poet-performers graciously reciting their work, imparting their knowledge and wisdom, signing books and thousands of poets and poetry lovers along for the journey and the time of their life!

Did I mention the van had to be towed out of the mud the first night in order to get back to the hotel? Just a little mud that remained on participant shoes and will no doubt be inspiration for many a future poem. Look for more Festival highlights in future issues and at our meetings!

**John Rezmerski  
Featured at SMPS Meeting and  
MPR Radio Show**

The first meeting of the 2004-2005 calendar year featured John Rezmerski, seasoned poet recently retired from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. John read examples of poems that were overworked or lost their reader along the route as well as poems that needed to say more or complete the image to claim their power. Then, of course, there were the "just right" poems, his own among them.

John, a member of SMPS, was also featured on the radio show *Whad'Ya Know?* from Wisconsin Public Radio, Public Radio International on Saturday, September 18, 2004. The show was hosted at the Civic Center in Mankato. John read a sampling of his poems that were met with applause and enthusiasm. Host, Michael Feldman referred to



Rezmerski as "the people's poet" and commented that he "saw a little William Carlos Williams in him." We have no argument with that.

He also encouraged readers to read John's newest book *What Do I Know* published by Holy Cow! Press.

The two hour show can be heard over the internet by visiting the Wisconsin Public Radio web site and searching the show's archives.



### Coffee Hag Reading

The first ever poetry reading found numerous SMPS poets taking the "mike" to read their poetry. Initial rounds were poems with the theme "What I never Said Before."

Students and other patrons lingered to hear poetry and offer their support. The next open reading will be held on Monday, October 18, 2004 at 7:00 pm. Take the stage! The theme will be *My Best Friend*. Bring a friend along with you for great poetry, great food and coffee, ambience and perhaps a sampling of readings from the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival.

### ✓ Mark Your Calendar

#### LOMP Fall Meeting in Little Falls October 15 and 16

Several SMPS members will attend The League of Minnesota Poets fall meeting in Little Falls, Minnesota starting Friday, evening October 15<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, October 16, 2004. The Keynote speaker will be Bruce Eastman, English Department, Central Lakes College. Annual contest awards will be

featured. The conference fee is \$20. Please contact Suz Anne Wipperling at (218) 828-1796 for registration information.

### Good Thunder Reading Series

Robert Hedin will be the keynote speaker at the Robert C. Wright Minnesota Writer's Conference at MSU on Friday October 15, 2004. Hedin is a Minnesota poet, translator and editor from Red Wing, Minnesota. The cost of lunch and the program is \$20. The program is free starting at 12:15 pm.

Nonfiction writer Judy Blunt will be the featured writer and perform on Thursday, November 4, 2004. For more information on the series, contact the English department at 507-389-2117.

### From the Festival

#### *Thoughts to Write By*

Mark Doty reminded poets that "surprise" or "discovery" for the reader is necessary. He advises poets to write good lines down and don't stop. "Allow yourself to push, dig...make a mess...stay in uncertainty for a longer duration...investigate, screw up." He says "poetry is an extraordinary source of power in a slippery way... Poetry shifts the world because it is made by one person, not a committee... It is an individual reality, not manufactured. It stands witness. Doty strongly recommends exercises (challenges) that surprise and trigger the imagination.

*Mark Doty is the only American poet to win Britain's T.S. Eliot Prize as well as the Guggenheim Fellowship. He has published six books of poetry that have won numerous distinguished awards.*

## President's Message

Our first meeting at The Neighbors brought at least 15 SMPS poets together for lunch, poetry and a good time. Hope to see you all again Saturday, October 9. There is a lot to share with you from the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival. We all had a great time and the time we spent with poets and each other has inspired countless poems!

We are already making plans for the festival in 2006! Our dream is to have enough people attending to be able to rent a bus. We would also like SMPS to sponsor a scholarship for some one who cannot afford to go.

We missed those of you who could not attend the Coffee Hag poetry readings.

It is a wonderful opportunity to get behind a microphone and read your work! It is an experience that will serve you well. Join us the third Monday night of this month, October 18 at 7:00 pm!

The 2004 edition of the Moccasin is at the printer. This publication includes submissions from members of the League of Minnesota Poets and is published annually by LOMP.

Yours in Poetry,

Sue Chambers

Editor Note: Our special thanks to Sue Chambers for all she did to make this event happen for SMPS poets!

---

## Thistle Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001

**October's Featured Poet:**  
John Cavlin Rezmerski

**October's Featured Website:** The Duke Farms, [www.dukefarms.org](http://www.dukefarms.org)

**October's Featured Reading:** *What Do I Know? New and Selected Poems, Holy Cow Press, Duluth, MN., 2000*, by John Calvin Rezmerski. Check out *Held for Questioning* and *An American Gallery* as well as his chapbooks and his poems in edited collections.



**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

Look for **SMPS Poetry Readings** every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at the Coffee Hag on Riverfront Drive beginning this month!

November 2004

Volume 25, Issue 3

# Thistle-Down

Candice Black, MSU professor and author, was recently featured by Garrison Keillor on Minnesota Public Radio. She has won numerous awards for her work including a McKnight Award and Jerome Fellowship. She has also been a featured poet with the Good Thunder Reading Series. She will join SMPS poets to talk about "*The Write Stuff*" and read from her works.

**Where:** *The Neighbors Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

**When:** *Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2004*

Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm.

All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.

## Happy Thanksgiving!!!

**Poetry Challenge for October 18, 2004.**

This month's assignment is a Vignette, any form, 28 line limit (a sketch that depicts a lovely picture.)

**The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue of the Moccasin is available. Contact Meredith Cook, Editor, at 507-526-2653 for details.**

**NORTHERN EXPOSURE with  
BRUCE EASTMAN**

**Fall LOMP Meeting Success**

Little Falls was the poet's place to be on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> for the annual fall *League of Minnesota Poets* meeting. Reports, contest awards, the Board Meeting and open readings brought LOMP poets throughout the state together. Poet Bruce Eastman inspired the crowd with his keynote address, "Developing the Inner Critic." Eastman talked about repetition, surprise and visceral imagery as a poem's way to relate ideas and keep an audience grounded in the picture.

Lunch and the seminar concluded the meeting. Announcements included the spring meeting in Mankato on April 23, and the next fall meeting in Rochester. State wide chapters were encouraged to get schools involved in the Manningham Competition.

**Anna Larson Shares Experience as  
Host of *The Weekly Reader* on the  
Maverick's KSMU Radio 89.7**

An accomplished poet in her own right, Anna Larson shared with SMPS members her passion for interviewing writers when she hosted *The Weekly Reader*. According to Anna, it is "good plain fun." After all, radio is truly a medium for spoken word, and poetry was originally a spoken word art. "The practice of reading aloud tunes your ear to flaws in the writing and can challenge the emerging voice in your work," Anna advises.

She also asks poets not to "hide their works in a closet." She recommends writer's groups like

SMPS, open mic's (*Coffee Hag*), as well as radio shows. Why be on the radio? Anna emphasized it is the old fashioned way to publish your work and make it public.

As a guest, Anna recommends you provide a brief biography, a list of significant publications and a short synopsis of writing that will be the focus of the show. Submit questions you would like to be asked and be prepared to make clarifications. The more information your host has ahead of time, the better the interview will go.

Typical questions you can expect to be asked include the source of your inspiration, how you got started, your process, what influences your work and your favorite authors.

Anna warned that "glitches" can occur, even with the best preparation. It is important to talk into the microphone and not be afraid of it. Ask for a copy of the session for publishers and professional contacts. The current host of *The Weekly Reader* is Melody Gersonde and KSMU's general manager is Jim Gullickson. The radio station can be reached at 507-389-5678.



**Coffee Hag Reading**

Ready to "groom" for your future radio show interview? SMPS poets continue reciting poems at the open "mic" readings every third Monday at the Coffee Hag. Please come, bring friends, enjoy tea or coffee and share your poems. The theme for November 15 is *Transportation*.

## ✓ Mark Your Calendar

LOMP Spring Meeting in Mankato and hosted by SMPS on April 23. President Sue Chambers will provide ongoing details at monthly meetings.

Blizzard Retreat at Sue Chamber's on January 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>.

NFSPS Annual National Poetry Convention in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>.

## From the Festival

### Thoughts to Write By

"When you write, you write the wholeness of being human." Lucille Clifton offered poets a treasured glimpse into her life and poetry at Geraldine Dodge. "I write to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Her poetry embraces the passion and compassion of a life committed to her immediate family as well as the human family.

She described the current house of poetry as being a large one with many rooms. Up until now, Clifton believes there was only one room where the definition of poetry was limited. "Now," she says, "Lots of people are moving in." She attributes this to the power of the human spirit.

Her own spirit emphasizes the power of poetry. Clifton believes in both/and rather than either/or. "It is wrong to be in a room where someone is crying and not hold them," she says. Her poetry holds you, your attention and your heart. Check out her new book, *Mercy*.

## 👍 Achievement Reports

### SMPS Poets Make a Difference

Roger Breznia, guest on The Weekly Reader, KSMU Radio Show on 10/7/04.

Sue Chambers, 1st and 2nd place and honorable mention in Grand Prize Category, So. Dakota State Poetry Society Contest; judged contest for Brainerd Writer's Alliance.

Meredith Cook, 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Word Lover's Award category, Massachusetts State Poetry Society Contest.

Lorraine Schwanke Mueller, 1<sup>st</sup> place and first honorable mentions in two categories in the Indiana State Federation of Poetry Clubs contest.

John Rezmerski, guest on Wad 'Ya Know Radio show on NPR on 9/18/04.

Congratulations to all poets who placed in the League of Minnesota Poets Fall Contest for 2004. A full list of winners from Minnesota and other states is listed in the most current issue of *The Lomplighter*. It will also be available at the regular meeting.

SMPS winners are:

Jeanette Hinds, 1<sup>st</sup> Place in Lilian Osborn Memorial Grand Prize Award category for *Saddam: Man of Contradiction*, Merit Award in Magnificent Minnesota Award category, Merit Award in the Sonnet Award category.

Susan Stevens Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the Woodtick Poets Award for *Full Cold Moon Nights*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place in Magnificent Minnesota Award for *Migration Home*, Merit Award in Stevens Family Award.

Meredith Cook, Merit Award for *Writ in Water* Award.

Shirley Ensrud, Merit Award in the Magnificent Minnesota Award.

Lorraine Schwanke Mueller, Merit Award in the Woodtick Poets category.

## President's Message

As always, the 2004 issue of the Moccasin reflects the scope and talent of Minnesota poets. Thank you Meredith Cook for all of your hard work as editor. I was especially glad to see SMPS members included. The Moccasin includes submissions from members of LOMP.

SMPS offers advantages for a wide range of poets. As well as a chance to publish your poems in the Moccasin, you have the opportunity to read them at our meetings and the open "mic" time at the Coffee Hag. You can bring new material, poems you have had published, or read selections from your favorite poets.

Our goal as an organization to help you grow as a poet. Hopefully your experience reading poems out loud and sharing them with other SMPS members will encourage

you to submit them to the various contests both LOMP and NFSPS have to offer.

Don't forget The Blizzard Retreat on the weekend of January 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> at my home in Good Thunder.

I am excited to have SMPS host the LOMP spring meeting. More details will be available at our regular meetings and in upcoming newsletters.

I hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving that will inspire the spirit of giving, family and poetry!

Hope to see you and hear your poetry this coming Saturday!

Yours in Poetry,

Sue Chambers

## Thistle-Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001

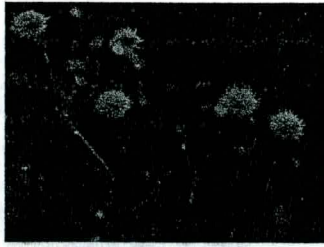
**November's Featured Poets:**  
League of Minnesota Poet  
Contest Winners, Fall Poetry Contest 2004.

**November's Featured Website:**  
Rain Taxi, sponsor of the Twin Cities Book  
Festival at [www.raintaxi.com](http://www.raintaxi.com)

**November's Featured Reading:**  
*The Moccasin, Volume No. LXVII, 2004,*  
*League of Minnesota Poets.*

Meredith Cook (M04)  
427 No Gorman  
Blue Earth, MN 56013





**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

Look for **SMPS Poetry Readings** every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at the Coffee Hag on Riverfront Drive beginning this month!

December 2004

Volume 25, Issue 3 A

# Thistle-Down

*Announcing the SMPS Annual*

## Holiday Party

*Where: The Neighbors Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

*When: Saturday, December 11, 2004*

*The Party begins with a Dutch treat lunch at noon. Poetry and business at 1:00 pm.*

Participants are invited to bring an inexpensive wrapped gift to exchange. Write a poem about your gift without naming it. The fun begins once someone guesses what it is! Did we ever find out if the lucky lottery tickets paid out last year? This party is too much fun to miss!

All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.



### Poetry Challenge for December.

This month's assignment is *Enjoying Christmas*. Write a poem (any form) about winter or Christmas. Bring a favorite Christmas poem or song to share.

## **Author Candace Black Guest for November Meeting of SMPS**

Candace Black inspired SMPS participants with her poetry and engaging personality. She shared the poems by Cornelius Eady from *Brutal Imagination (G. P. Putman's Sons, 2001)* as well as her own poetry from *The Volunteer (New River's Press, 2003.)*

Candace focused on writing Persona Poems where a poet assumes the voice of someone else. Persona in Greek means "mask." The poet puts on the mask of another person, historical figure, animal or even an inanimate object and writes from their point of view. Candace believes that assuming another voice is freeing because it gives her permission to say things she wouldn't ordinarily think of saying. A writer can be free to write about emotions, feelings, and events from a less restricted or vulnerable perspective.

Candace derives ideas for her Persona Poems from photographs and images that inspire her. In *Wedding Portrait, Mother of the Bride* (see *Volunteers*) she wrote after a photograph by John Cohen. The poem assumes the voice of the bride's mother on the day of her wedding. According to Candace, "Someone else's voice can be invigorating!"

Candace Black teaches full time at Mankato State University. She previously taught at Gustavus Adolphus College as well. She recommended SMPS members try an exercise she does with her

students from time to time. She will bring in a batch of postcards with interesting pictures and have students pick one out of a bag and write from the perspective of the picture. Sounds like a Blizzard Retreat writing exercise!

SMPS believes that Candace's poetic voice is as captivating as the voices she gives to others. We look forward to a new book or two of hers coming out in the near future!



### **Coffee Hag Reading**

There is plenty of activity at the Coffee Hag and SMPS Monday Night Poetry Readings are no exception. Ten SMPS members read on November 18, 2004. There were several guests including new members! Transportation poems included poems about a trip to Japan, time, spiritual journeys, Northern Lights and those champions of walking trips – feet! June Emanuel delighted participants with a song as well!

Join SMPS poets Monday, December 20, 2004 at 7:00 pm to warm your hands and your hearts with some great poetry. The theme is "Turn Out the Lights." The Coffee Hag is located at 3329 Riverfront Drive in Mankato! Great food!

### **Monica's Cards**

Monica Tooy Haack incorporates her poetry into cards for every occasion. If you know of any SMPS member we should be remembering please let her know at the meeting and she will send one of her cards!



## ✓ Mark Your Calendar

**Blizzard Retreat** at Sue Chamber's on January 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>. LOMP poets from all corners of Minnesota blow in with the Northern winds for this annual retreat. It is inspirational and fun! Don't worry about the weather; there is lots of warm food, laughter and poetry around the fireplace! Bring poetry, a 30 minute writing exercise, and a food dish!

**LOMP Spring Meeting in Mankato** and hosted by SMPS on April 23. President Sue Chambers will provide ongoing details at monthly meetings.

**NFSPS Annual National Poetry Convention** in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>. More information at the retreat.

### From the Festival *Thoughts to Write By*

Robert Hall was one of the featured poets at the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival in September. He brought with him an impressive list of achievements including 15 published books of poetry not to mention numerous other books to his credit. He is considered one of the most distinguished men of American letters. He has won numerous awards and was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

He moved festival participants with readings from his current book *Without: Poetry*, as well as selections from the works of his late wife, poet Jane Kenyon. His book *The Painted Bed* examines the loss of his wife. Not only is Hall a poet and prolific writer, he is a teacher. He spoke with passion about writing and stated that all poems need to be written

and rewritten to be complete. He emphasized the need to pay attention to sound and the speed and choice of words in order to cultivate a respectable poem.

His advice... "Revise, revise, revise." He reminded writers that if you want to write a poem, you are not going to record momentary feelings and expect them to stand on their own merit. A poem requires work and many revisions. "Let it go," was his comment about attachments to original inspirations. "Write until it feels right." Hall reminded poets that poetry embraces *countersense*. It brings together contradiction all of the time which is not a trick but rather an art.

### Writer's Series on Radio

Robert Hall and Robert Bly will be the first featured writers on Garrison Keillor's new series *Literary Friendships* to air on Tuesday January 18, 2005 at The Fitzgerald Theatre in St. Paul, MN. Pairs of writer-friends will talk about their writing and friendship in front of a live audience. Hall and Bly have been friends for 50 years with 3000 letters between them. Tickets are still available.

---

### KEYC TV Visits SMPS Meeting

SMPS members were surprised by a visit from KEYC TV during our November meeting. Bright lights and a few words ended up on the 10 pm news. The interview highlighted our guest speakers, meeting times and special events members take part in such as the LOMP meeting in Mankato this April and the trip to Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival in September of this year. Thank you KEYC for an early Christmas present!

## President's Message

I hope to see all of you at the SMPS Holiday Party on December 11<sup>th</sup>. After that, we won't be together until 2005! In the New Year we will continue to strive to make SMPS an organization that promotes poetry and benefits its members. Please let me know what will help you to participate more fully in membership and contest opportunities!

Don't forget about the Blizzard Retreat. In one full weekend you will gain knowledge and confidence by taking part in a variety of challenging and fun writing exercises.

Thank all of you for your cooperation with KEYC TV. We are grateful for the publicity they provided.

## Thistle Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane, Mankato, MN 56001

### *Song of the Bells*

by June Rolland Emanuel

*Christmas bells are ringing  
Around the world they're singing.  
The place to be for you and me  
Is home for Christmas Day.*

*Christmas bells keep ringing  
Around the world they're singing.  
Ding, Dong, Ding, Dong, they seem to say-  
Come home for Christmas Day.*

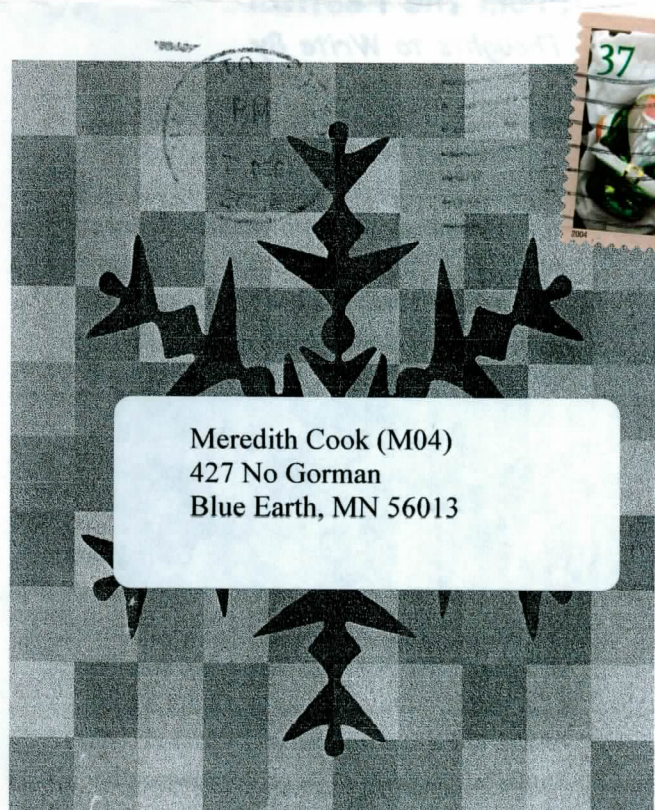
*Guys and gals who've wandered,  
For many days have pondered  
Over what the bells try to convey.  
Christmas bells are ringing,  
Around the world they're singing.*

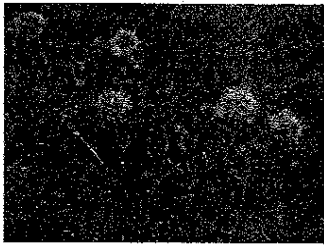
*Come home, come home,  
Come home and stay for Christmas Day.*

I wish you and yours a very happy holiday season! Take time to rejoice...and write!

Sue Chambers

December is a holy month for a number of different religious faiths. May it be a month of joy and wonder for all of you!!! Love is universal and meant to be shared!!! Poetry is one expression of that faith and love.





**Southern Minnesota  
Poets Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.

from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

Look for **SMPS Poetry Readings** every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at the Coffee Hag on Riverfront Drive beginning this month!

# Thistle Down

## Happy New Year

*Start the year out right with "The Sounds of Poetry" led by Ed Brekke-Kramer. Bring your pens for this writing workshop.*

*When: Saturday, January 8, 2005*

*Where: The Neighbor's Restaurant at 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

*The meeting begins with a Dutch treat lunch at noon. Poetry and business at 1:00 pm.*

*All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.*

### Poetry Challenge for January.

This month's assignment is *Rain*. Write a poem (any form) about rain. Don't forget to bring your most recent poetry to share.

## President's Message

2005 is promising to be an exciting year for SMPS:

- The **Blizzard Retreat** will be at the Chambers' house on January 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>. It is a fun filled weekend of poetry, poetry writing exercises and a chance to get together with other LOMP poets. (Contact me for directions.)
- **LOMP Spring Meeting in Mankato** and hosted by SMPS on April 23. Keynote address will be *Media Ecology-Impact on Poets* by Steve Reagles, Communications Professor at Bethany Lutheran College.

- **NFSPS Annual National Poetry Convention** in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>. More information at the retreat.
- **Coffee House Readings** will continue at the Coffee Hag at 329 Riverfront Drive, Mankato. January's theme is *And the Winner is...*
- **Annual Picnic** on June 11 at 11:00 at at Sue Chamber's house.
- **SMPS Meetings** the second Saturday of every month through June with an exciting line up of guest speakers.

See you all there!

Sue Chambers

---

## New Year's Resolutions

- Sharpen ten pencils, buy 10 new pens, carry paper in car, truck, purse, pocket.
- Write *before* having the first cup of coffee in the morning.
- Write a poem about getting out of bed when it's still dark outside, any form.
- Write a vignette about sleeping in.
- Take a walk when it's 20 below zero and write a poem about it. Compare a walk up hill in 98 above zero and write about it. Contemplate being a novelist.
- Journal about how time flies.
- Write a list poem about everything you will do by the end of the day. The month. The year.
- Write a Cinquain sequence about work, dreams or retirement. Make that a ballad.
- Write about how slowly time creeps along.
- Start your Dorsimbria assignment for the February meeting.
- Meditate on *Mad as a Hatter*. Write a poem about it and read it at March's open mic at the Coffee Hag

**6th ANNUAL  
BLIZZARD WRITER'S POETRY RETREAT**

**WHEN:** 4<sup>th</sup> weekend of January. Come Thursday, January 20<sup>th</sup> afternoon or night through Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005. (Or who knows how long if we get snowed in!)

**WHERE:** At the home of Sue Chambers, located in the country on 10 lovely wooded acres next to the Big Cobb River, 10 miles south of Mankato, Minnesota. There are dormitory style rooms available in living quarters attached to the garage, as well as many bedrooms in the main house. There are fireplaces to curl up in front of, a full library so we can consult the authorities, and good places to hike, ski or skate.

**Directions:** 10 miles south of Mankato on Highway 22. Turn west(right) on County Road 16. (Or 2 miles north of Beauford, if coming from the south, and turn left (west) on County Road 16). Follow Co. 16 and turn left on the 2<sup>nd</sup> gravel road on the left (approximately 2 miles). Follow gravel road to first right (Don't turn into farmhouse driveway!) (approximately one--half mile), turn right. House is on the right, is milk chocolate in color. Look for the dogs! (Friendly)

**WHAT IS REQUIRED:** Bring a poetry program that is at least half an hour in length and some food to share. The program can be anything that tickles your fancy--a writing workshop, a favorite author, a new form, a lecture, a special taped program that you want to lead a discussion on...the possibilities are endless. Joint programs are also permissible. Not required, but you might also want to bring hiking boots, cross-country skis, skates, a sled. Please notify Sue Chambers at least 3 weeks in advance so that food selections can be coordinated.

**Want to Come?**

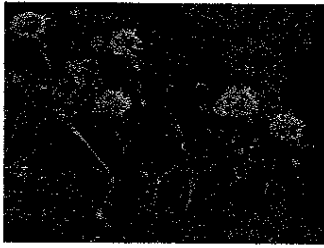
Contact Sue Chambers:

57310 166<sup>th</sup> Lane, Good Thunder, Minnesota 56037

Home phone: (507)278-4200, Work phone: (507)625-3000

Fax: (507) 625-2002

E-mail: [PoetSue@Aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@Aol.com)



**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

Look for SMPS Poetry Readings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday evening at the Coffee Hag on Riverfront Drive beginning this month!

February 2005

Volume 25, Issue 5

# Thistle Down

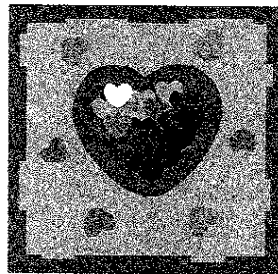
## Bardic Love Poetry

*Ramona Czer, Professor of Communications and Creative Writing Instructor, Bethany College, combines folk harp and the romantic writings of bards for an enchanting SMPS Valentine special. Imagine yourself a troubadour, sonneteer, rhymester, scop, skald, balladmonger, minstrel or harper and join the fun!*

*Where: The Neighbors Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

*When: Saturday, February 12, 2005*

Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm. All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.



## Happy Valentine's Day

Poetry Challenge for February 12, 2005.

Dorsimbra; 12 lines. 4 lines iambic pentameter rhymed abab, 4 lines free verse, 4 lines iambic pentameter blank verse. Last line repeats first line.

## **Blizzard Retreat Big Success A Poetry Squall**

True to its name, the Blizzard Retreat occurred on the weekend of seasonally inclement weather. Cars in ditches, icy roads, winds and snow didn't keep LOMP poets from participating in the annual Blizzard Retreat at the Chambers' residence in Good Thunder. Poetry was as plentiful as the snow.

Once again, good company, food and stimulating writing exercises resulted in "some stunning poetry" in the words of SMPS President, Sue Chambers. Sue commented that although they were a small group this year, they made up for it in hard work and rewarding poems. Poets got down to business and tried their hand at a variety of poetry styles

### ***The Sounds of Poetry***

presentation at the monthly SMPS meeting in January was magic to the ears. Ed Brekke-Kramer brought numerous tapes of well noted poets reading their works. Participants simply had to listen to the likes of Robert Frost and Langston Hughes to appreciate why poetry is meant to be read and to be heard. It is another reminder of how important it is for SMPS members to take advantage of the Coffee Hag Poetry readings. Thank you Ed!

### **✓ Mark Your Calendar**

**LOMP Spring Gathering on Good Counsel Hill.** SMPS will host the Spring Conference of the League of Minnesota Poets on April 23, 2005 at Theresa Hall Conference Center at

the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Mankato. Guest speaker, Professor Steven Reagles from Bethany Lutheran College, will talk about *Media Ecology-Impact on Poets*.



## **Coffee Hag Reading**

Join SMPS poets on Monday, February 21, 2005. The February theme is *Many Splendor Things*. Many splendid poems should be inspired by Ramona Czer and her harp at the regular SMPS meeting as well as Valentine's Day. We hope to hear creative works from the Blizzard Retreat as well! Don't miss another Monday night at the Coffee Hag. They have great soup, tea and coffee. Bring a friend!

**Interested Delegates to NFSPS Annual National Poetry Convention** should contact Sue Chambers. Don't miss this opportunity to participate in a national forum of dedicated poets from all over the United States. The convention will be held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>. Reservations need to be made soon.

**Good Thunder Reading Series** will present accomplished Poet Tony Hoagland on Thursday, February 10, 2005. He will Talk on Craft at 3:00 pm in CSU Ostrander Auditorium at Mankato State University and do a reading of his works at 7:00 pm. He has published 3 collections of poetry and has received numerous awards including 3 Pushcart Prizes.

👍 **Achievement Reports**  
*SMPS Poets Make a Difference*

Congratulations Sue Chambers, the newly appointed Editor of *The Lomplighter*. We look forward to the next issue and thank Sue for so generously offering her talent in yet another Poetry endeavor!

### **Valentine Trivia**

#### *Did you Know?*

A total of three saints were known as St. Valentine and recorded in history as martyrs. The popular customs associated with St. Valentine's Day have their origins in the widely accepted belief of the Middle Ages that halfway through the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the year, February 14<sup>th</sup>, birds begin to pair. Chaucer refers to this in his *Parliament of Foules*:

*"For this was sent on Seynt  
Valentyne's day  
whan every foul cometh ther to  
choose his mate."*

Couples were known to refer to each other as Valentines during this period. A custom developed where couples wrote each other letters of intention or commitment, often in the form of an invitation.

*Source: The New Advent*

Have you sent your Valentines?



### **From the Festival** *Thoughts to Write By*

Sound is the essence of poetry. It is as subtle as the hiss of a snake and as vibrant as the beating of drums. Poet Cecilia Vicuna brought poetry to a whole new level with the sounds of birds and insects as well as visual dramatics. She moved through the audience with ease, using instruments, chants and ancient vocalizations to bring new meaning and dynamic to her poetry.

A Chilean poet, visual artist, and filmmaker, Vicuna is committed to exploring connections between the modern and the ancient. She brought tears to the eyes of Geraldine Dodge participants with her poem about a young South American immigrant buried alive while he worked on a street crew in Manhattan. She was awarded a Human Rights Award and has published 14 books of poetry. She started "*The Seed Project*" at the bequest of the Minister of Education of Chile in 2000. Her beautiful poems and insight about seeds can be viewed at <http://www.inquiry.uiuc.edu/seeds/contact.htm>. Ms. Vicuna was a guest poet at the Geraldine Dodge Poetry Festival this past fall,

### **\$\$\$ Count Yourself In \$\$\$**

#### *Don't Forget Your Dues*

Remember to send your dues of \$15 for 2005 SMPS membership to Elaine Anderson, 463 200<sup>th</sup> Street, Trimont, Minnesota.

LOMP dues for 2005 are \$20 and payable to Jim Elberling, 1766 Karis Way, Eagan, MN 55122-2671.



## President's Message

I wish all LOMP members could have been at the Blizzard Retreat! We had a great time despite the real blizzard blowing all around us outside. Some stunning poetry resulted and hopefully poets will share what they wrote as time goes on.

We are proud to be the hosts of the Spring League of Minnesota Poets (LOMP) Conference in April. We look forward to holding the meeting at the School Sisters of Notre Dame. I am sure Sisters Margaret Mary and Justin (SMPS Poets) will help us navigate their beautiful campus.

Delegates are still needed to attend the NFSPS Conference in Pennsylvania in June.

The Pennsylvania Poetry Society will be sponsoring the conference. They are creating a diverse program with the theme "A State of Independence." Presenters include Barbara DeCesare, Ann Gasser, Sy Swann, DeAnna Spurlock, Jennifer Hill-Kaucher and Dan Maguire. They are also sponsoring a *Convention Madness Poetry Contest*. Come to the SMPS meeting or check the last issue of *Strophes* for more information. It is a wonderful opportunity for our members to meet with poets from all over the United States and have a lot of fun.

I wish you all a very happy Valentine's Day!

Yours in Poetry,

Sue Chambers

## Roll-Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001

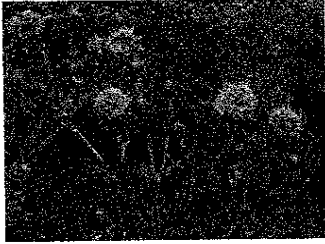
February's Featured Poet  
*Cecilia Vicuna*, Brazilian Poet, Artist and  
Filmmaker

February's Featured Website:  
[www.geocities.com/nfsp2005convention/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/nfsp2005convention/index.html)

November's Featured Reading:  
*500 Years of Latin American Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* edited by Cecilia Vicuna and Livon Grosman. Hardcover edition to be released in July 2005.



21Meredith Cook (M04)  
427 No Gorman  
Blue Earth, MN 56013



March 2005

Volume 25, Issue 6

**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

*Look for SMPS Poetry Readings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7 pm at the Coffee Hag!*

# Thistle-Down

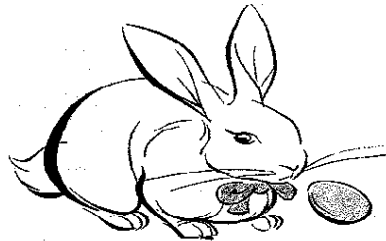
## *March meeting features Meditation & Poetry*

*Mona Cenicerros is a Yoga instructor and the owner of Sun Moon Yoga Studios in Mankato. She is our March guest speaker and will explore the links between yoga and poetry. She asks that you bring poems about your body to share, for a poetry connection discussion.*

*Where: The Neighbors Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

*When: Saturday, March 12, 2005*

*Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm. All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.*



**Poetry Challenge for February 12, 2005. Subject poem: travel, real or imaginary, 40 line limit.**



**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 -- 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

*Look for SMPS Poetry Readings every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 7 pm at the Coffee Hag!*

*LOMP Spring Meeting in Mankato on April 23!*

April 2005

Volume 25, Issue 7

# Thistle-Down

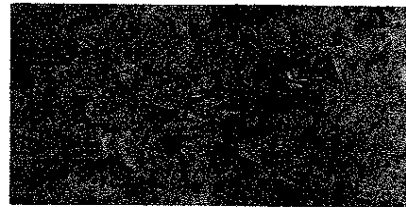
## *March meeting features Finding Your Identity with Poetry*

*Sherry Quan Lee will workshop with SMPS members on Poetry and Identity. Ms. Quan Lee works with the Split Rock Arts Program at The University of Minnesota and teaches writing at Metropolitan State University. She has been active with SASE and The Loft in the metro area. She is a published author and member of Cave Canem..*

*Sherry has explored diversity and identity in her own poetry and is passionate about working with her students to help them discover and use their identity to enrich their own writing. Sherry will talk about how writing embraces and changes her identity, will read poetry and poetic prose, and will lead the group in some exercises using what Richard Hugo calls the "triggering subject" to discover the aha's of who you are!*

*Where: The Neighbors Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN.*

*When: Saturday, April 9, 2005* Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm. All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.



**Poetry Challenge for April 2005.** *Short and serious, any form, 12 line limit.* Bring other poems you want to share, too.

**Minds & Bodies Connected at  
March Meeting  
Yoga and Writing**

Mona Ceniseros, owner and operator of Sun Moon Yoga Studios in Mankato, delighted SMPS members with her Yoga perspective on writing at the March meeting. Mona started the presentation by having all poets stand up and do a few gentle yoga stretches. She reminded us that our bodies need to be nurtured, if they are, they will nurture our minds.

She shared some "body" poems – from some famous poets (for example, Anne Sexton). Their poems were about a body part and explored it in great detail. She had a couple of her own body poems, as well, and then asked our members to share any body poems they had. There was a wide variety in the poems shared.

Mona is an enthused speaker, and made us all aware of the connection between our bodies and our creativity.



**Coffee Hag Reading**

SMPS Poetry readings continue at the Coffee Hag every third Monday of the month. Join us for the next reading on Monday, April 18, 2005. The theme will be *Body Language*.

We greatly appreciate the hospitality of Coffee Hag staff and their patrons. They have embraced our readings and offer us the opportunity to share our poetry and interact with the public in a very special way. Remember, we are

their guests so please show respect and courtesy on behalf of SMPS. Thank you all!

**Editor's Note:**

I stopped by the Coffee Hag Saturday morning for a cup of coffee and a lemon scone. A few moments after I sat down the waitress who had taken my order, stopped at my table to apologize. "I'm sorry I was on the phone," she explained. "Don't worry," I responded. She was so efficient in getting my order I didn't even notice. "I would never be on the phone when I'm taking care of a customer," she continued, "But that was my husband and he's in Baghdad and we don't get a chance to talk very often. I just couldn't hang up." Nor would I expect her to. In fact, the pride and love in her voice was inspiration for a poem! Our best to you Glinda, and may your husband return home soon and safely!

✓ **Mark Your Calendar**

**Poets on the Hill, April 23, 2005 !**

**SMPS May Meeting**

Please note that the monthly meeting of SMPS on May 14<sup>th</sup> will be held at a different location to be announced in our May newsletter. The Mississippi Valley Poets will present a panel on forms. All other meetings will continue to be at The Neighbors.

**Delegates to NFSPS**

**Annual National Poetry Convention**

Don't forget the national poetry forum. Call Sue Chambers for information on hotel accommodations and registration. The convention is in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on June 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>. Reservations need to be made soon.

## Achievement Reports

### *SMPS Poets Make a Difference*

Sue Chambers was featured in an article about SMPS, poetry and The SMPS Coffee Hag poetry readings in the *Mankato Free Press* on Monday, March 21, 2005.

Kathryn Doty's book *A Long Year of Silence* is a finalist for the Minnesota Book Awards in the young adult category. Good luck Kathy! She is currently working on a second novel to be published.

John Rezmerski was the featured poet in the publication *Static* in their March issue.

## Poets on the Hill

### The LOMP Spring Gathering

SMPS is pleased to host the Spring Conference of the League of Minnesota Poets on April 23, 2005 at Theresa Hall Conference Center at the School Sisters of Notre Dame on Good Counsel Hill in Mankato.

Guest speaker, Professor Steven Reagles from Bethany Lutheran College, will talk about *Media Ecology-Impact on Poets*. Reagles teaches Rhetoric and related content. He will be an inspiration to all!

The afternoon writing seminar will be lead by Susan Chambers and Christina Flaughter.

Registration is \$25.00 payable to SMPS. Mail the registration form to Faye Mattison at 521 E. Main, #B,

Mankato, MN 56001 ASAP (deadline April 8, 2005 or hand it in at the SMPS monthly meeting.)

The meeting agenda is as follows:

8:30 *Registration, Poetry sharing*

9:00 *Critique Session*

10:00 *Break*

10:30 *Critique Session continued*

Noon Luncheon

1:00 *Keynote Speaker:*

*Professor Stephen Reagles*

2:00 *Business Meeting*

3:30 *Wrap up*

## Poetry Critique

LOMP members are able to submit a poem and hear detailed analyses of the strength and weakness of the poem under the protection of anonymity. It is a regular feature of state meetings to provide poets input on a poem they want critiqued.

Seminar leaders receive copies of each poem with no identification attached. It is a wonderful learning experience for all involved! Susan Stevens Chambers and Christina Flaughter will conduct the seminar. Susan has been the winner of two first place Grand Prizes in NFSPS competitions and Christina was the recipient of the NFSPS college scholarship in 2003. The deadline for poetry submissions was April 1, 2005. Further questions can be directed to Faye Mattison or Sue Chambers.

---

## President's Message

As we near the Spring LOMP meeting let us all remember to the hosts with the most! *Poets on the Hill* is a great theme, it will be fun to try and decorate with that in mind. A sign up sheet went around at the last meeting so everyone could find a way to volunteer, I will bring that sheet again.

Please come to this meeting, ready to roll up your elbows and help us. If you have an idea, bring your

---

materials with us to share with the group. If you have never been to a LOMP meeting, this is the perfect opportunity to find out what you have been missing. These meetings are always exciting for the great speakers and excellent networking opportunities. I look forward to seeing all our members there!

Yours in Poetry,

Sue Chambers

---

## Subtle Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001

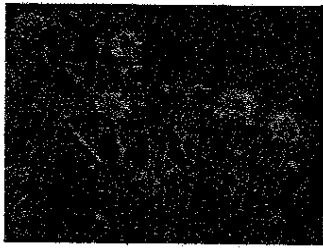
Don't miss:

**Poets on the Hill**  
**Spring Conference of the League**  
**of Minnesota Poets**  
April 23, 2005  
Theresa Hall Conference Center  
170 Good Counsel Drive  
Mankato, MN 56001

Registration inside!!!

Meredith Cook (M04)  
427 No Gorman  
Blue Earth, MN 56013





**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds open meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

**SMPS Officers:**

Sue Chambers, *Pres.*  
Ike Sarma, *VP.*  
Faye Mattison, *Sec.*  
Monica Haack,  
*Correspondence Sec.*  
Sandra Newbauer,  
*Regional VP*

May 2005

Volume 25, Issue 8

# Thistle-Down

## May brings Mississippi Valley Poets Panel Poetry Forms – Try Something New!

*Members of the Mississippi Valley Poets will spend Saturday, May 14, 2005 with SMPS Members to introduce, share and discuss different forms of poetry. They will present with a panel and Mississippi Valley Poets President Val Bump assures us it will be fun as well as informative! You will want to write poems in many new ways.*

**Where:** THE GREAT WALL RESTAURANT,  
1802 Commerce Drive, North Mankato, MN.

**NOTE:** This is a new location.

To get there from Hwy 169 (North or South); take Hwy 14 West onto Commerce Drive. Go about 1 ½ blocks. The Great Wall will be in a mini mall on your right. RSVP with Faye Mattison at 507-345-1174 if you plan to attend. This will be our last scheduled meeting until September 2005.

See Page 3 for information on the Annual June Picnic in June and the Wood Tick Retreat in July.

**When:** Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005 Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm. All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.

### Poetry Challenge for May 2005.

*The Tanka (extension of haiku - 31 syllables  
5,7,5,7,7 - free verse.)*

**Identity as a Writer**  
*with Poet Sherry Quan Lee*

Poet Sherry Quan Lee challenged SMPS members to think of who they are as writers and to write with those images as their "triggering subjects." She shared her own experiences as well as her journey as a poet which proved to be a significant example of how we change throughout our lives.

Sherry read from her book *Chinese Blackbird* which is a memoir in poetry that shares both her pain and joy growing up bi-racial in Minneapolis. She explores with candor and depth race, class, gender and sexual identity. Ms. Quan Lee is a community faculty member in the writing department of Metropolitan State University and the Administrative Specialist for the Split Rock Arts Program at the University of Minnesota.



**Coffee Hag Reading**

SMPS Poetry readings continue at the Coffee Hag every third Monday of the month. Join us for the next reading on Monday, May 16, 2005. The theme will be *Lessons*.

Hopefully all SMPS members can be there for our last open mic until September to share the stage and have some great tea and coffee.

See you there!!!

✓ **Mark Your Calendar**

**NFSPS Poetry Convention**

Don't forget the annual national poetry forum. Call Sue Chambers for information on registration and hotel accommodations. The convention is in Harrisburg, PA on June 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>. Reservations need to be made ASAP!

**The Annual SMPS Picnic**

Don't miss this special group picnic at the Stevens-Chambers residence in Good Thunder, MN on June 11, 2005. *Directions: 10 mi south of Mkt on Hwy 22. Turn right (W) on Cty Rd 16 (or turn left 2 mi N of Beauford if coming from the south), and turn left on the 2<sup>nd</sup> gravel road on the left (approx 2 mi.) Follow gravel road to first right approx ½ mile (don't turn into the farm house driveway!!!) It is a milk chocolate colored house with friendly dogs!* The address is 57310 166<sup>th</sup> Lane, Good Thunder, MN.

**The Wood Tick Writing Retreat**

This annual retreat will be held at the Stevens Chambers cabin on Horsehoe Lake in the Brainerd area on July 15 - 18, 2005. It is a workshopping session worth the drive and the time. Please contact Sue Chambers or Email her for more information.

**LOMP Fall Meeting**

October 14 -15, 2005 at the Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester, MN at 20 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue SW.



## Poets on the Hill: A Perfect View The LOMP Spring Gathering

SMPS hosted the Spring Meeting of the League of Minnesota Poets on April 23, 2005 at the School Sisters of Notre Dame on Good Counsel Hill in Mankato. As participants can attest, there is no greater hill in Mankato!

A board meeting, poetry sharing and a Critique Session filled the morning. Lunch and a tour of the premises which included the wood working studio of Mary Ann Osborne delighted poets.

Guest speaker, Professor Steven Reagles from Bethany Lutheran College, started the afternoon with his talk on "*Media Ecology - Impact on Poets.*" Professor Reagles challenged poets to think about the inter-relationships of technology with human thoughts and behaviors. He noted that the average American child currently owns 2 TV sets, 3 tape recorders, 3 radios, 2 cassettes, 2 CD players and 1 video game.

Participants were asked to think about the price that will be paid for our current media obsessions and the sacrifice of face to face encounters. (Did you know people who retain oral cultures have better memories?)

Professor Reagles noted that there has been a cause and effect relationship for all media. The telegraph freed communication from the constraints of geography. The telephone, radio and television altered written communication.

Computers have re-introduced writing in a different way.

The impact of *media ecology* on poetry has been significant. Genres have developed to include Rap or Cowboy poetry. Visual poetry takes advantage of typography and word lay out. But literacy has declined 28% in the youngest age groups and only 12% of adults read poetry.

Nevertheless, Professor Reagles tells us to take heart. He quoted Dana Gioia who said, "*Poetry is an art that preceded writing and it will survive television and video games. How? Mostly by being itself - concise, immediate, emotive, memorable and musical, the qualities most prized in the new oral culture, which are also the virtues traditionally associate with the art.*"

Professor Reagles ended his session with a stimulating discussion on generational responses to media ecology and more implications for the future. Poets will be there!

---

### 2005 LOMP Officers:

President - Char Donovan, Brainerd  
Vice President - Claire van Brceman Downes, Rochester  
Secretary - Marlys Tennyson Binger, Minnetonka  
Treasurer - Jim Elberling, Mpls.

**Special thanks** to Sue Stevens-Chambers and Christina Flaughter for critiquing poems submitted by LOMP members. Poets benefited from thoughtful and insightful recommendations. Hopefully revised poems will be submitted to the LOMP 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Poets Contest 2005. Deadline is July 31, 2005.

## President's Message

A special thanks to all who made the LOMP Spring Meeting here in Mankato extra special! Sister Justin and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, LOMP members and officers, SMPS members and last but not least our guest speaker, Professor Steve Reagles from Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato. We have gained a wonderful new perspective *on taking flight* with our words and our imaginations.

Another year of monthly meetings has come to an end with our annual June picnic. I hope you can all come. Our May meeting at the Great Wall will be our last until September 10, 2005. If you get a chance, join us for our annual

---

*Wood Tick Retreat* on Horseshoe Lake outside of Brainerd the week end of July 15<sup>th</sup>. It will be a summer cabin get-away to write and workshop poetry. Prepare those poems to submit to the LOMP Annual Contest!

I will look for new ways to promote SMPS and I always appreciate hearing from you. If you know of a publication or event where we might promote SMPS let me know.

I look forward to your poetry, old, new and re-worked. Have a wonderful summer.

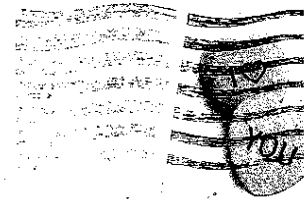
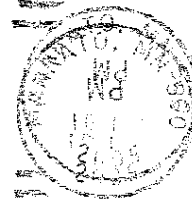
Yours in poetry,

Sue Chambers

---

## Rolls Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001



**read poetry**

Meredith Cook (M04)  
427 No Gorman  
Blue Earth, MN 56013

Write Poetry

Speak Poetry

**SHARE POETRY**



**Southern  
Minnesota Poets  
Society**

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the Neighbor's Restaurant, 1812 South Riverfront Drive, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Sandra Newbauer, Editor* at 507-344-0147 or e-mail [Snewbauer0147@charter.net](mailto:Snewbauer0147@charter.net), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

# Tristis Down

## SUMMER SCHEDULE 2005

### SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS SOCIETY

**June 11 11:00 a.m Annual picnic at Sue Chambers (directions on page 3)**

Picnic is Potluck. Sue will provide meat, all plates, utensils and drinks.

Poets whose last name begins with **A-H** please bring a salad.

Poets whose last name begins with **I-P** please bring dessert.

Poets whose last name begins **Q-Z** please bring appetizers, munchies or bread.

*If it is nice, we will be out on the deck, so bring any bug spray, sun block that you might need*

**Join Sue on Thursday June 30 at 4:00 pm**

**2005-2006 Program Planning Session**

**Meet at 75 Teton Lane in Mankato**

**SUMMER COFFEE HOUSE  
POETRY READINGS**



***The Second Monday  
7:00 p.m.***

**!!!NOTE THE CHANGE TO  
SECOND MONDAY!!!**

**THE COFFEE HAG  
329 Riverfront Drive  
Mankato, Minnesota  
387-5533**

*You must be a SMPS member to read, we discount 1<sup>st</sup> time membership if you join at the poetry reading. Evening readings are centered on a theme – reader's interpretation. Any poem that fits the theme can be shared. Poets will read one poem, a second in a subsequent round.*

*The last round will not be on the theme, but open mic.*



***THEMES for POEMS  
Open Mic at the Coffee Hag***

**Monday June 13**

***Long Days, Short nights***

**Monday July 11**

***Independence***

**Monday August 8**

***Dreams***

***IN ADDITION: We have been invited to do special Coffee Hag readings (featuring one or two poets) on a weekend (Friday or Saturday) evening in June, July and August.***

***Contact Sue if you are interested in reading.***

***Bring a friend! The Coffee Hag serves delicious coffees, teas and summer drinks as well as soups, sandwiches and plenty for the sweet tooth!!!***

## WOODTICKS RETREAT

The annual *Woodticks Retreat* will be July 15-18 at the Stevens cabin on Horseshoe Lake north of Brainerd. This is an annual summer event to compliment the annual *Blizzard Retreat* in January and is open to all LOMP poets. The extended and diverse poetry workshops provide a valuable opportunity for poets to get constructive feedback and learn different forms of poetry. More information will be in the June newsletter. Directions to The Woodtick Retreat (From Brainerd, Minnesota.) If you have come from Little Falls, follow Highway 371 in, taking the "Barrows" loop. Go through town (north) until you see an old fashioned water tower on

your right (intersection for Hwy 210.) Turn right (east) and take Hwy 210 until you come to the intersection at Hwy 25. There will be a mall on your left. Turn left (north) on Hwy 25, follow this road approximately 8 miles to Merrifield. Go through Merrifield, where the road changes to Co. Rd. 3 for approximately 7 miles (through Ossippe Corners.) Right after "Jim's Campers" on the right side of the highway, turn right onto Mission Park Drive (blacktop road.) If you pass *The Mission Township Hall* or *Cheeks Saloon* you have gone too far. Follow Mission Park Drive to Oak Spur, turn left. Follow Oak Spur to the stop sign, make a sharp right on Horseshoe Lake Drive. The Stevens Cabin is the first left driveway after the turn. There is a MURRAY & BARBARA STEVENS sign out front. Welcome!

## Rolls Down

Southern Minnesota Poetry Society  
c/o Sandra Newbauer, Editor  
59 Camelot Lane  
Mankato, MN 56001

### 2005 SMPS Officers:

Sue Chambers, *President*

Ike Sarmas, *Vice President*

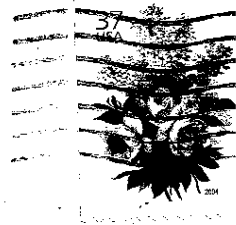
Faye Mattison, *Secretary*

Elaine Anderson, *Treasurer*

Monica Haack, *Correspondence Secretary*

Sandee Newbauer, *Regional Vice President*

Meredith Cook (M04)  
427 No Gorman  
Blue Earth, MN 56013





Southern  
Minnesota  
Poets Society

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds opens meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the RiverHills Mall, Mankato, MN. from 12:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Bethany Berry, Editor* at [bethany.berry@mnsu.edu](mailto:bethany.berry@mnsu.edu) or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

**SMPS Officers:**

Sue Chambers, *Pres.*  
Ike Sarma, *VP.*  
Faye Mattison, *Sec.*  
Dorla Wachter, *Treas.*  
Monica Haack,  
*Correspondence Sec.*  
Sandra Newbauer,  
*Regional VP*

October 2005

Volume 25, Issue 11

# Thistle-Down

*Jim and Ronda Redmond Poetry: a Family Affair.* Imagine two poets working on the MSU literary magazine. Imagine them becoming co-editors of that magazine. Imagine how they stopped speaking to each other once they became co-editors, the following year.

Two years later, they were married, and now tag-team parent, as their work schedules dictate, and try to carve out a few hours of writing time for each other every week.

They both got their MFAs from MSU. Jim is a two-time winner of the Mentor Series and a nominee for a Pushcart. Hear what life is like in a 2-poet household.

*Where: THE RIVERHILLS MALL COMMUNITY ROOM, Mankato, MN 1850 Adams Street, on the intersection of Hwy 14 and County Road 22.*

*NOTE: This is a new location.*

*Pick up your meal from the food court and come join us. The Community Room is next to JC Penny, just off of the food court.*

*When: Saturday, October 8, 2005* Come at noon to join others for lunch (Dutch treat) Meeting time will be at 1:00 pm. All visitors are welcome! No fee to attend.

Poetry Challenge for  
October 2005.

*Theme: Relationships. Any form, 40 line limit. This  
will be a new category in next year's LOMP contest.*



### Coffee Hag Reading

SMPS Poetry readings continue at the Coffee Hag every third Monday of the month. Join us for the next reading on Monday, October 17, 2005. The theme will be *Finding Magic*.

Hopefully all SMPS members can be there and bring a friend. We need an audience if you don't want to share the stage. For all it is a time for good poetry and a chance to have some great tea and coffee.

See you there!!!

### ✓ Mark Your Calendar

October 14- 15, 2005  
**LOMP Fall Meeting**

Kahler Hotel, Rochester.

**Keynote speaker: Emilio  
DeGrazia**

**It is not too late to register.  
Rooms are still available, and if  
you do 4 to a room, the rate is  
very reasonable. Need more  
information? Want to  
carpool (we will be leaving  
around 4:00 p.m.)?**

**Call Sue Chambers 278-4200(h)  
625-3000(w)**

### SPECIAL EVENT

**SMPS is a member of the Twin  
Rivers Arts Council, who is  
holding a "Showcase of the Arts"  
for all it's member organization.  
We will be reading poetry  
between music, theater  
presentations and dance. Please  
come and join us! Friday  
October 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Bethany Lutheran College,  
Yvliaker Theater  
Mankato, Mn.**

**7:00 p.m.**

### SPECIAL THANKS

**A standing ovation to our past  
newsletter editor Sandra  
Newbauer, for all her hard work  
on the Thistledown. WE  
appreciate all the time and  
effort she gave us. Thank you  
so much, Sandy!**

**Welcome to our new editor,  
Bethany Berry, who with the  
assistance of Christina  
Flaughter have agreed to start  
on the newsletter for our  
November meeting.**

## SOUTHERN MINNESOTA POETS SOCIETY ASSIGNMENTS 2005-2006

*Our assignments are never mandatory. They are a tool to help expand our poetry background, and to encourage the creation of new poems. Often the assignment will follow current forms or subjects from various competitions, where you might want to submit a finished poem.*

October Subject: Relationships Any form, 40 line limit

November "Pirouette" Form 10 line free verse poem with a turn around, a sharp reversal of thought in the middle. Each line contains 6 syllables, lines 5 and 6, which contain the turn around are identical: line 5 is married in thought to the first half of the poem and ends with a period; line 6 is married to the second half.

December Subject: Christmas, solstice or winter Poem

2006

January "Haiku" traditional or modern English

February "The Gloss Form". An expansion of a well-know poet's quatrain in iambic pentameter or tetrameter. This quatrain, the texte, must be given as an epigraph under the title of your poem, along with the author and title of poem. Following the epigraph are four sextet stanzas, 24 lines. Each stanza beginning with a line from the texte with four original lines added in the rhyme scheme of one's choosing and closing with the same line of the text.

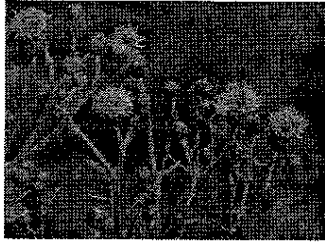
March Subject: Storms, Any form, 30 to 40 line limit

April Subject: American History, Any form, 40 line limit

May Form: The Ghazal: an ancient Persian form. A traditional Ghazal consists of five to fifteen couplets, typically seven. A refrain (a repeated word or phrase) appears at the end of both lines of the first couplet and at the end of the second line in each succeeding couplet. In addition, one or more words before the refrain are rhymes or partial rhymes. Robert Bly writes a more modern, less strict form, without the repeated word. In competitions, you will want to know whether Modern vs. Traditional Ghazals are required.

The lines should be of approximately the same length and meter. Each couplet should be a poem in itself, like a pearl in a necklace. There should not be continuous development of a subject from one couplet to the next through the poem. The refrain provides a link among the couplets, but they should be detachable, quotable, grammatical units. There should be an epigrammatic terseness, yet each couplet should be lyric and evocative.





## Southern Minnesota Poets Society

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds open meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the River Hills Mall, Mankato, MN. from 12:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing. For further information contact *Bethany Berry* Editor at [bethany.berry@mnsu.edu](mailto:bethany.berry@mnsu.edu), or *Sue Chambers, President*, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

### **SMPS Officers:**

Sue Chambers, *Pres.*      Ike Sarma, *VP.*  
Faye Mattison, *Sec.* Dorla Wachter, *Treas.*  
Monica Haack, *Correspondence Sec.*  
Sandra Newbauer, *Regional VP*

November 2005

Volume 25  
Issue 12

# Thistle Down

## November's Meeting Will Feature Brainerd Poet Doris Stengel!

*Doris's workshop will be on Learning to Critique poems. Doris is a past LOMP President and is currently serving as President-elect for the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. Join us in this amazing learning opportunity.*

## October was a busy month for SMPS members:

Our speaker for the October meeting was Ronda Redmond. She read from her own work and that of her husband Jim. She spoke of living in a two poet household and how they met saying "When we met he was writer and I was a writer and we were just friends" the Redmond's make their home in St. Peter where they live busy lives writing and raising two sons, Sam and Charlie. Ronda spoke about how her poetry comes from the simple things in life and the poems she read reflect this covering everything from birds and dandelions to babies and jobs. The pitfall of having two writers in the house comes when it is time to publish and you suddenly discover that your husband is your competition. In the end, though, she says she would rather see Jim win if she doesn't "at least that way it stays in the family."

## Rochester Fall LOMP Meeting A Success!

Friday evening opened with the announcement of the LOMP 21<sup>st</sup> Annual contest winners. There were a staggering number of entries to the contest and many of our own SMPS members won awards.

Saturday included a board meeting and general business meeting. The rest of the day was dedicated to hearing the keynote speaker, Emilio DeGrazia. DeGrazia is a well-known poet and professor from Winona State University. He is the author of two books, *Enemy Country* and *Billy Brazil*. He has also co-edited with his wife Monica an anthology of 33 Minnesota poets. DeGrazia topic was "What is a Poet? Challenge of the Century." In which he explored what makes a poet and what makes a poem. About the quality of poets he said, "the poet seeks integrity...for the poet all experience, no matter how past, is present." About what makes a good poem he told us, "a good poem casts a quiet vote for what is sacred and good." He went on to challenge us to see the difference between technique and craft; asking if the poet is like politicians and crooks, manipulators of words and minds. Telling us, "either you control language or language controls you." Using examples of form poetry from Longfellow, he said, "form is cage. Prefabricated to contain our canary words...form trumps content." Then he contrasted form poetry with that of free verse. "Free verse is a child, flying down hill on a sled," he said, giving us examples from Hartcrane, Hilda Dolittle, E.E. Cummings, Charles Olson and Henry Reed. DeGrazia wrapped up his speech by challenging the listeners. "I dare you to write a poem that simply says, love

is good...obvious truths are hard to communicate."

After lunch, DeGrazia critiqued poems submitted by LOMP members. It was an enriching experience, where many members benefited from suggestions on how to improve their own work. "Does your poem know what it is about?" he asked, "or are we just circling the subject?"

The meeting concluded door prizes, and the tired poets made their way home.



## Coffee Hag Reading

SMPS Poetry readings continue at the Coffee Hag every third Monday of the month. Join us for the next reading on Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2005. The theme will be *School*.

Hopefully all SMPS members can be there to share the stage and have some great tea and coffee.

See you there!!!

## ✓ Mark Your Calendar

### NFSPS Poetry Convention

Don't forget the annual national poetry forum. Call Sue Chambers for information on registration and hotel accommodations. The convention is in San Antonio, Texas on June 8<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup>. LOMP member Doris Stengel will be inducted as NFSPS president at the convention. In order to facilitate as many LOMP members going as possible LOMP is providing a subsidy of \$1000.00 to get our members there on a group bus. For more information or if you are interested in attending contact Susan Chambers at 507-278-4200 or e-mail her at poetsue@aol.com

## November's Assignment is a "Pirouette".

A pirouette form consists of 10 lines of free verse poem, with a turn around, a sharp reversal of thought in the middle. Each line contains 6 syllables, lines 5 and 6, which contain the turn around are identical: line 5 is married in thought to the first half of the poem and ends with a period. Line 6 is married to the second half.

### Example:

Twin Tree

Her nearby kitchen voice

is sun astir in leaves;

the shades of her routine

cool my contented days—

my love is like a tree.

My love is like a tree

spread sightless underground

where dark emotions grow

through bleak and sudden rage

and hidden roots erupt.

*Jeanette Hinds*  
*Rochester, Minnesota*

**Congratulations to SMPS Winner's in the LOMP 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Contest. A full winners list will appear in the next issue of *The Lomplighter*. Please bring your winning poems to share at the November meeting!**

**Susan Stevens Chambers:** merit award in #17, #15, #14, #1, honorable mention #4, 1<sup>st</sup> place #5.

**Meredith Cook:** merit award in #12, 3<sup>rd</sup> place #3.

**Berneal D. Schindle:** 3<sup>rd</sup> place #18

**John C. Rezmerski:** merit award in #7, 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> place #12

**Sister M. Justin Wirth:** merit award in #15, 2<sup>nd</sup> place #16

**Bonnie Ann Wolle:** honorable mention #18

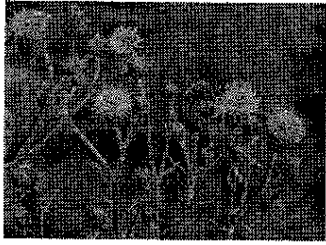
## President's Message

We are off to a great start of our poetry year! There are plenty of poetry opportunities—reading at the Coffee Hag or Morgan Creek Winery, attending our monthly meetings, sharing the Manningham competition for school children with someone you know should enter.

Most of us know someone who appreciates poetry. Our group grows each time we talk about what poetry means to us. Bring a friend to meeting! Our meetings are open for everyone, those who write poetry and those who love poetry.

We are privileged to have the next National Federation of State Poetry Societies President coming to our November meeting. Doris Stengel is a wonderful poet as well as a great leader, and her workshop will help get your poetic juices flowing.

The new meeting space is working out very well. If you haven't made it to the RiverHills Mall Community Room, it is a friendly space where you can eat with friends and enjoy the poetry, so make a special effort to come to this meeting!



# Thistle Down

December 2005 Volume 25,  
Issue 13

## Southern Minnesota Poets Society

The SMPS is a regional chapter of the League of Minnesota Poets, holds open meetings on the second Saturday of the month from September through May at the River Hills Mall, Mankato, MN. from 1:00 – 3:30 p.m. Meetings and memberships are open to all who love poetry and writing.

For further information contact

Bethany Berry, Editor at [Bethany.berry@mnsu.edu](mailto:Bethany.berry@mnsu.edu),

or Sue Chambers, President, at 507-278-4200 or e-mail [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com).

### **SMPS Officers:**

Sue Chambers, *Pres.*

Ike Sarma, *VP.*

Faye Mattison, *Sec.*

Dorla Wachter, *Treas.*

Monica Haack, *Correspondence Sec.*

Sandra Newbauer, *Regional VP*

## December's Meeting Location Different

Christmas Program

December 10, 2005

The Great Wall Restaurant

1802 Commerce Drive

North Mankato, Minnesota

625-5999

Noon

### WELCOME TO ALL

Come and join your fellow poets for a day of poetry, and an opportunity to share your Holiday Spirits! Note that we are meeting in a restaurant, not the RiverHills Mall, for a Dutch treat lunch. We will enjoy fun and poetry.

Each person is asked to bring a small gift to exchange, somewhere between \$5.00 and \$10.00. But this is just the beginning of the fun! Please wrap the gift, and attach a poem to it. The poem should be about the gift, but not describe it (for ex. If your gift was a toy car, the poem should not be titled "car") or totally give it away. The poem can be from any poet—masters, friends, or your own. We will read the poems and try and guess what the package contains.

**The Assignment for December is a  
*Christmas, Solstice or Winter Poem***

**Remember, these assignments are to encourage us to try writing new poems. Don't just dust off the old ones (although we like to hear those, as well), bring us your latest attempts.**

*So bring your poems and enjoy a bit  
of holiday cheer!*

**January Features: A Poetry Panel  
Discussion:**

*SMPS members Ed Brekke-Kramer, Sue Chambers, Colin Chambers and Christina Flaughter discuss their Irish Writing Adventure with pictures and poetry.*

*At the beginning of September four members of our group traveled to the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry, Ireland. Join us on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006 for a discussion of why a writing experience was unique. See pictures from the trip and hear about this special two week writing retreat on the Green Isle.*

**January's Assignment is to write a  
"Haiku" Traditional or modern  
English.**



**Coffee Hag Reading**

SMPS Poetry readings continue at the Coffee Hag every third Monday of the month.

If you haven't tried this before, you should, it is great fun. The Hag is located at 329 North Riverfront Drive in Mankato. Our audiences have slowly been growing, and we have gained some new members through this outreach.

Join us for the next reading on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup> 2005.

The theme will be *Candles & Warmth*. If you have no theme poems, there is an opportunity to read any poems after the theme poems are read. Or, you do not have to read a poem, come and hear other poets read—bring a friend!

Hopefully all SMPS members can be there for our last open mic until 2006 to share the stage and have some great tea and coffee.

See you there!!!

## November Featured Speaker:

### Doris Stengel

November's meeting featured Brainerd poet Doris Stengel who spoke at the River Hills Mall about critiquing other's poetry. Doris asked, *why critique each other's work?* The answer: *"if you write poetry you want to write the best poetry possible."* Doris then went on to outline current poet laureate Ted Kooser's guidelines for critiquing.

In order to critique effectively one should follow these guidelines:

1. Encourage each other
2. Make specific constructive criticism. General criticism such as "I like this poem" is not helpful.
3. Don't take yourself too seriously, have fun.
4. Avoid using words like bad or good. Instead ask yourself: does this poem seem clear to you?

Stengel expanded upon Kooser's guidelines with some rules of her own. Suggestions that she offered were to be kind and be helpful.

She cautions that these two rules are not good or helpful if used by themselves. "Pairing off is often most helpful in critiquing." She told us, "Have the other person read the poem aloud, cold and listen for awkward wording or for punctuation that sounds as though it's out of place or shouldn't be there at all. Then have the author read their own poem and note the differences between the two readings."

Stengel, rather than giving guidelines for critiquing, gave questions to ask yourself when looking at another's work:

1. Does the poem have clarity?
2. Are there good concrete images? (Look for sounds that are not supporting the tone of the poem)

3. Are there clichés that need weeding out?
4. Are the 1<sup>st</sup> and last lines strong? (The 1<sup>st</sup> line should be a zinger that grabs the reader. The last line needs to be an epiphany, revelation, moment of truth or puzzlement that intrigues.)
5. Does the last line repeat the first line or title? (If it does, it shouldn't. Instead it should satisfy or tantalize. Look through the poem and make sure that the 1<sup>st</sup> line is in the proper place.)
6. Does the poem move me? (A good poem will move the reader. The poem should draw you into the experience and make you feel it, not just tell you about it.)
7. Does the poem sound the way it should? (Look at the use of literary devices, alliteration, rhyme, too many adjectives, adverbs, look for weak verbs.)
8. Is the title effective? (We care about our poems, title them! The title is a commitment we can't let it give things away, it is not a punch line. Don't give things away and if it doesn't feel right keep working with it.)
9. Does the poem sing? (Every poem sings the song of the author is this poem doing a good job of that?)

By asking these questions Stengel assured the group that critiquing sessions will be helpful to all members.

## ✓ Mark Your Calendar

**NFSPS Poetry Convention** Don't forget the annual national poetry forum. Call Sue Chambers for information on registration and hotel accommodations. The convention is in San Antonio, Texas on June 8<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup>. In order to facilitate as many LOMP members going as possible LOMP is providing a subsidy of \$1,000.00 to get our members there on a group bus. For more information or if you are interested in attending contact Susan Chambers at 507-278-4200 or e-mail her at [PoetSue@aol.com](mailto:PoetSue@aol.com)

**The Blizzard Writing Retreat** This annual retreat will be held at the Susan Chambers home in the rural Mankato area on January 26-29<sup>th</sup>, 2006. It is a workshopping session worth the drive and the time. Please contact Sue Chambers or Email her for more information: [poetsue@aol.com](mailto:poetsue@aol.com)

Rules-bring a program of  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour at least and something to eat!

## SMPS INVADES MSU!

*On Tuesday November 28<sup>th</sup> SMPS found its way to the Minnesota State University Mankato campus. In an evening that started at 7pm members of SMPS joined students from the university in an evening of poetry and goodies. The evening lasted for about two hours, time well spent in making contact with many younger poets. We handed out information on SMPS and shared our work with students. We hope to continue this event next semester and hope that more of our members will be able to make it. Contact Susan Chambers or Christina Flaughter at 507-278-4200 for more information on how you can be a part of this event!*

## President's Message

Holiday Greetings to one and all! In the wonderful flurry of getting ready for family and special days I hope you take some quiet time and have an opportunity to enjoy poetry. Perhaps you read your old family favorites, perhaps you write that special poem for your holiday notes. Poetry is perfect for the season!

We had a great turnout of MSU students for our first joint session up at the University. It was nice to have an audience to read to! It was such a success we are already planning another round for one of the first weeks in March. Watch for details and plan to attend.

I hope to see more of you at the Coffee Hag on Monday the 19<sup>th</sup>. Even if you do not have a poem to share, bring a family member or friend who likes poetry so they can listen. The theme, "Candles and Warmth" lends itself to the holiday this month, although it does not limit what can be read.

Think about giving a SMPS membership gift to a friend or family member this year—not only will it give pleasure to the recipient, but also make sure we continue to grow and thrive as an organization.

I hope to see all of you at the Great Wall on Saturday the 10<sup>th</sup>.