



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 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, *Corresponding Sec.*

Sandra Newbauer, *Regional VP*

# Thistle Down

This May is Election Month

Join us at our next meeting on May 11<sup>th</sup> as we will be welcoming nominations for new openings and celebrating those officers who choose to serve another term.

OUR PROGRAM THIS MONTH: SMPS will be featuring a special presentation of

*The Internet Poetic:  
How to get involved  
with the web's poetry  
community.*

Join us May 13<sup>th</sup> as Derek Liebertz, our own computer expert helps us get connected.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO SMPS  
MEMBER YVONNE KARSTEN**

**Yvonne is one of the three selected by the YWCA for the "Women of Distinction" award. She will be honored at the YWCA Dinner on Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. We are proud of your accomplishments, Yvonne!**

**JUNE PICNIC SET**

We will be having our annual Potluck Picnic on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Chamber's House in Good Thunder. We will be starting around noon and ending around three or four. Please bring poetry to share. **THIS WILL BE POTLUCK**

Check for your last name and please bring:

A-E	Salad
F-K	Dessert
L-P	Buns, breads
Q-Y	Vegetable

**SUE WILL PROVIDE THE MAIN MEAT**

Feel free to bring a guest or family member to enjoy the fun.



**Coffee Hag Reading**

SMPS Poetry readings continue at the Coffee Hag every 3rd Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m.. Our theme this month is "Mother or Father". After we have read on the theme, we will share poetry on any topics until 8:00 p.m. We could really use an

audience who will cheer us on. Join us there!

**✓ Mark Your Calendar Now!**

**LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA POETS  
PLAN SPRING MEETING IN  
MINNEAPOLIS**

Plan on joining us at the LOMP Spring Meeting at the Ramada Inn of Minneapolis on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. Friday night will feature Diane Glancy at the LOFT. Saturday will feature Sharon Chmielarz. There is still room in Sue's car, contact Sue at

[schambers@katolaw.com](mailto:schambers@katolaw.com)

if interested in carpooling.

She will be leaving at approximately 2:00 p.m. on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. She will return on Saturday evening. If you are coming, be sure and get a poem in for the critiquing seminar.

**NFSPS Poetry Convention**

Don't forget the NFSPS Convention. Call Sue Chambers for information on registration and hotel accommodations. The convention is in San Antonio, Texas; June 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup>. 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)

**Poetry Assignment for May the Ghazal:**

This month write 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.

Here is an Example of a ghazul, by Robert Bly:

*Some love to watch the sea bushes  
appearing at dawn,*

*To see night fall from the goose's wings,  
and to hear  
The conversations the night sea has with  
the dawn.*

*If we can't find Heaven, there are always  
bluejays.  
Now you know why I spent my twenties  
crying.  
Cries are required from those who wake  
disturbed at dawn.*

*Adam was called in to name the Red-  
Winged  
Blackbirds, the Diamond Rattlers, and  
the Ring-Tailed  
Raccoons washing God in the streams at  
dawn.*

*Centuries later, the Mesopotamian gods,  
All curls and ears, showed up; behind  
them the Generals  
With their blue-coated sons who will die  
at dawn.*

*Those grasshopper-eating hermits were  
so good  
To stay all day in the cave; but it is also*

*sweet*

*To see the fenceposts gradually appear  
at dawn.*

*People in love with the setting stars are  
right*

*To adore the baby who smells of the  
stable, but we know*

*That even the setting stars will disappear  
at dawn.*

### Spoken Art: Open Mic night

As we did earlier this year, we have been invited back to MSU to share poetry. Some of us will not be able to attend because we will be cheering Yvonne on at her dinner, but it would show our enthusiasm for poets if some members could attend.

Sue Chambers would like to hear if you are going.

Join with the Minnesota State University, Mankato students for a special poetry and spoken word event place this Thursday, April 27 from 8-10 pm in the Heritage Room of the Student Union on MSU's campus.

Refreshments will be provided.

## May's Member Salute!

*This month we would like to institute a new tradition of giving a special salute to one of our members. Each month we will feature one of our poets.*

This May the Southern Poet's Society would like to honor **Monica Haack**, of North Mankato.

Monica has served faithfully for many years as our corresponding secretary, making sure our members know we care and are thinking of them in times of grief and joy.

Her letters always bubble over with friendship and warmth. They are usually hand crafted gems incorporating pressed flowers and artwork. The time she is willing to devote to this is awe inspiring!

Monica is also one of this organization's the longest participating members; faithfully attending meetings since the 1970's.

Monica is the proud author of a book of her poetry that is full of her amazing metaphors and brimming over with love for family and friends.

Here is a sample of Monica's wonderful talent:

### Winter's Bride

Summer leaves our midst today.  
This gracious lady goes her way,  
throws us a kiss.

Now silver-touched, once-golden hair,  
Like frost-fringed breath of autumn air,  
flows gently with the wind.

Her leaf-print gown with burnished sheen,  
a mix of colors, fading green,  
blows with muted harmony.

Bold Wintertime admires Fall's charms,  
catches her in strong, cold arms,  
knows he needs her warmth.

He courts with diamonds and with lace  
till Springtime comes with charm and grace,  
shows him she also cares.

Her cheeks afire with rosy-blush,  
Spring melts his heart, his icy rush,  
glows, accepts his proposal,  
confidently whispers, "I do."

Monica T. Haack

# President's Message



It is hard to believe we are coming to the end of another poetry year at SMPS. This will be our last meeting at the RiverHills Mall until September. I think the new meeting place is working out well, but would appreciate any feedback before we commit to another year.

Next month we will enjoy a picnic, but it will not be held on the second Saturday because a number of SMPS members are heading out to San Antonio, Texas for the NFSPS annual convention. Instead, we will meet the following Saturday, June 17th. We will be holding it at my house, come enjoy the country and the woods.

The NFSPS convention should be extra special this year, as Doris Stengel, LOMP member from Brainerd (and a past program presenter for us) will become President. I am particularly excited about the keynote speaker, Naomi Shihab Nye. The Texans always put on an excellent convention with remarkable speakers when they host the convention.

We were last in Texas (in Dallas) in 1996. What a lot of changes SMPS has undergone since that time! While we sometimes experience the sadness of losing good members, we have also shared in the excitement of finding new members who believe in grassroots poetry organizations and have helped us grow and strengthen our group.

We are now extending our hand out to MSU and trying to reach the college audience. We are reading in the Coffee Houses, we are planning a wide range of programs to help us learn and grow in our poetry.

Speaking of programs—we will be planning our brochure for next year over the summer. Why don't you participate for next year? Send me the name and short biography of an individual that you think would make a great program. Let us know about additional places we can showcase our poetry. Attend our meeting (which will probably be held in early July) to put the new brochure in order.

I hope to see all of you at the LOMP Spring meeting. If this just wasn't possible, mark your calendar's now to join us in Duluth for the Fall LOMP Meeting on October 13th and 14th. The winners of the annual contest will be announced, and I expect to see all of our poets included!

My thanks to all my officers who have kept our organization strong and thriving. I hope you will take a minute to thank them for all their work. Thanks, too, to all our members who come to our meetings, who are willing to stand up and share their latest creations. It is a pleasure to meet with you each month!

SUE CHAMBERS