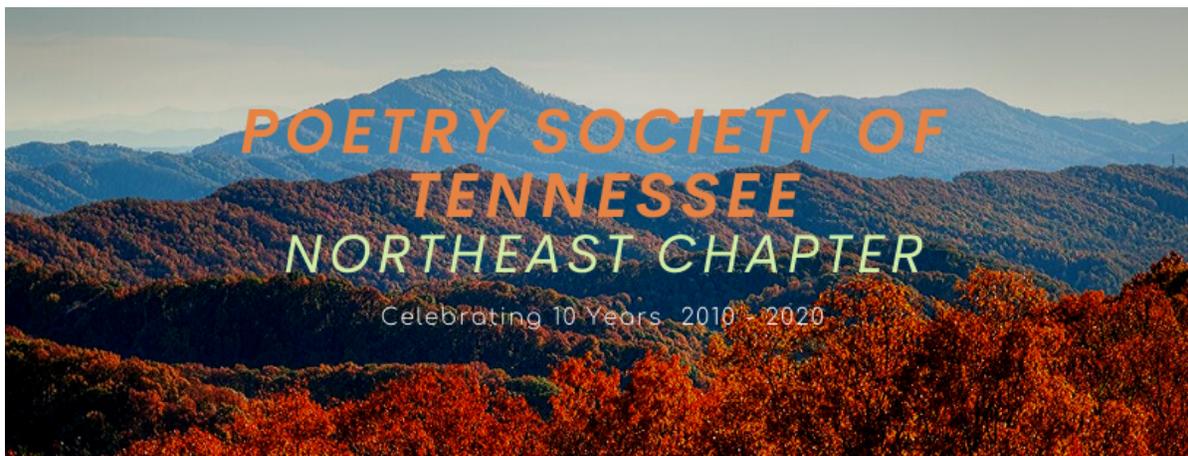


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# NEWSLETTER 2020

## MAY

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

### OUR PURPOSE

The Poetry Society of Tennessee-Northeast chapter represents a group of authors dedicated to excellence in poetry writing. We strive continually to perfect our craft and welcome all those who share our desire to develop as poets.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Poets,

The opening keyboard note I'll play for my first President's Message is a sound of support and encouragement for you during these difficult days, and for all our members, families, and friends. Now three months into this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, I hope you're safe and well.

As we nurture our society's group life this year, we'll take time to share personal joys and concerns, including how this COVID-19 invasion has impacted us. On that point, let me say Nancy and I are fine. Our concern is for our daughter, an occupational therapist with ICU patients, and our son, an ER physician.

#### **C is for Congratulations**

Next, I'll press middle C to congratulate our leadership team for 2020-21. Some are new members whom you may not know. You'll quickly see their gifts and strong commitment to serve our society. I'm excited to work with them: vice-presidents Jerry Buchanan (programs) and Lisa Kamolnick (communication); Lisa's

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Treasurer Howard Carman (also membership chair) and Secretary Margaret LOBUE, Carol Jackson (conferences) and Tamara Baxter and Janice Hornburg (publication) hold other key assignments.

### **E is for Epic Improvisation of PST-NE Programs**

Your leadership team is busy pivoting us to online venues because of the pandemic. You'll soon hear specifics about Zoom meetings, projected to begin June 27 on our regularly scheduled fourth Saturday of the month. Our first Zoom sessions with outside presenters will start July 25 with Heidi Ehle and Charles Jones, the Troubadours, who'll perform and discuss putting lyrical poetry to music. On August 22 highly acclaimed Larry Thacker, whose poetry appears in over 170 publications, will speak on "Finding the Elements of Writing." Remarkable interactive learning lies ahead.

### **G is for Getting to Know You**

As I move to a new note, I'd like to share a new newsletter feature: "Meet a Member" will allow us to get to know each other better. We'll start with your leadership team. First up is Jerry Buchanan, Vice President for Programs. You'll find it in this newsletter.

When your light shines with ours,  
the illumination upon pathways  
of promise will burn ... brighter for  
our living and writing these days.

### **C is for Contests**

I'll strike this note to amplify Rose's liaison work with our parent organization, PST. Watch for her contest notices: PST-NE full members may enter members-only contests, while other contests will be open to everyone. (If you've not renewed your membership, please do so. Here's the link for the application: [[http://pstne.weebly.com/uploads/6/6/2/5/6625744/pst-ne-membership\\_application.pdf](http://pstne.weebly.com/uploads/6/6/2/5/6625744/pst-ne-membership_application.pdf)].) Our group members have written prize-winning poetry. I invite you to try contests for the potential benefit. It doesn't matter if you're a beginning, mid-level, or advanced writer. Whether or not you enter contests, whatever critique you seek from others, follow your own inner compass. Stay true to yourself to grow as a student of poetry.

### **A Sustained Chord in the Key of C**

I'll now play a full chord in harmony with the first note and hold down a foot pedal to sustain it for months ahead. It's one you may have heard before. Our sister poet Alice Zhang has verified it. The phrase in Chinese for "crisis" is comprised of two characters—one means "danger," the other "opportunity." We're well aware of the gravitas of COVID-19 dangers. My hope is that even with these threats pressing in, we'll choose to summon our higher angels for light through this darkness, for clearer vision, renewed resolve, and contented peace.

Hold the candle high on your individual journey. Stand with us. When your light shines with ours, the illumination upon pathways of promise will burn twenty times brighter for our living and writing these days.

Onward and Upward,  
Calvin Ross

## **MEET A MEMBER**

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Jerry Buchanan recently assumed the role of Vice-President of the Poetry Society of Tennessee – Northeast Chapter (PST-NE) in which he will be organizing presentations for the upcoming membership year. This task is similar to a role he previously performed setting up seminars and presentations for interns, a task he found very enjoyable. Jerry is a relatively new member to the PST-NE and stated he was looking forward to meeting others in the group, hearing about their personal interests, and learning about their experiences writing poetry.

As Jerry assumed his new role, COVID-19 turned our communal experience of the world upside down and forced us into a stay-at-home mode. Jerry noted that the challenge of organizing presentations under the threats of COVID-19 has made the task very unusual, especially as PST-NE administrative staff moved to protect the members by cancelling meetings for March through May of this year. In the midst of these events, Jerry indicated appreciating new relationships he has begun working with the PST-NE administrative team; they are a good group of people with excellent skills.

In the midst of the changes thrust upon us by COVID-19, Jerry reports that he been learning how to adapt to the new limitations / challenges of communicating with others. He reported that this spring he took a class at ETSU with Dr. Jesse Graves in Advanced Poetry Writing, and around mid-term the class moved on-line as people searched to find ways to cope safely with the threat of the virus. The technology proved easier than he anticipated though there was a learning curve to the technology. For various reasons, some students were unable to continue. It surprised him how well the class interaction on-line developed as new relationships emerged and grew. Jerry said, “Thank goodness some of the people I know are more adept at making on-line meetings work and are willing to share their knowledge with me.” As PST-NE starts out on-line, he hopes the membership of PST-NE will enjoy the presentation line-up created for 2020-21 and ask for help if they encounter difficulties working with technology.

With the push to stay at home more and maintain social distance, Jerry indicated he realized how much he took for granted connections with others and the sense of community relationships provided. He indicated that the experience of dealing with COVID-19 has made him more aware of the importance of interpersonal relationships and communication with others. Jerry believes one of the most important things humans do is to form and maintain healthy relationships. He misses the sense of solidarity experienced having those to whom his is close physically present around him. With his relationships at home with his wife and daughter, he reported working on his own communication to be “quick to listen and slow to speak.” He laughingly said that has proved more difficult than imagined. With friends and family outside of home, he has been using the phone more frequently and exploring new technologies to stay connected.

Jerry has lived in Johnson City, TN since 1982. He previously worked in mental health providing training and supervision to young professionals; he retired two years ago and has enjoyed doing new things he previously did not have time to do. Relationships with former work colleagues has been more difficult to maintain as he now has less contact with those individuals. His wife, Teresa, is a fiber artist who does weaving and basket making. They have two grown children. His oldest daughter is living at home temporarily; she is preparing to leave in mid-May to do an apprenticeship in horse-management in

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Jerry grew up in Bakersville, NC where his father was a bi-vocational pastor serving small rural churches. Besides being a pastor, his father established and managed an apple orchard. Jerry reported he remembers many hours spend as a boy and teenager working in the orchard. His father is now deceased. Jerry and his younger sister, Patricia, who lives in Burnsville, NC, keep an eye on their 92 year old mom who is still living independently. With his spare time in retirement, Jerry enjoys several activities and hobbies: writing poetry, reading adventure and murder mystery novels, drinking a cup of hot tea, riding his mountain bike, going hiking in the Appalachian Mountains, exercising to stay in shape, working around the house, and serving as a teacher and deacon. Jerry reported he was also working part-time to keep up the old farm where he grew up – fighting back the encroachment of wild growth of saplings and weeds into the fields.

With respect to writing poetry, Jerry indicated that it has emerged as a primary focus of his life. While he has been writing poetry for a number of years, his efforts emerged in spurts. With more time available to write, poetry has become a central aim. Currently, he is taking classes, attending writing seminars, working in a supportive writing group, and learning to receive and give constructive feedback. Efforts to establish his own voice and sense of place motivate his writing poetry. Jerry also believes writing involves developing capacity for self-reflection and meaningful integration of life experiences. Writing creatively is a challenging process that is more social than solitary, and his small feedback group has played a meaningful role in his learning process.

Jerry reports he enjoys discovering other emerging writers' work and seeing how their work evolves and improves as their own voice develops. He loves learning how to use words creatively and powerfully. His states his own writing centers around honoring the past, addressing the challenges living in today's world, helping individuals develop self-reflectivity, addressing interpersonal relationships, improving a sense of community, confronting social / personal problems, and developing a stronger sense of spirituality and meaning. In his writing journey, he described meeting some very cool people with amazing talent and ability to engage readers effectively. He is looking forward to meeting more of the members of PST-NE and hearing about their writing interests.

## JUNE MEETING

Join us for our first virtual meeting on June 27! Check-in with our members, let us know what you've been up to since we last met, and, of course, feel free to share poetry with the group. Members will be sent an email invite soon.

## OPEN MIC NIGHT

Wednesday May 20

Johnson City Poetry Collective invites poets and lovers of poetry for their open mic night Zoom Poetry Hoot. Contribute your own work or enjoy listening to the poetry of others. 7-9PM



## UPCOMING EVENTS

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## PST-NE VITAL STATISTICS

### MEMBERSHIP

18

FULL  
MEMBERS

2

ASSOCIATE  
MEMBERS

0

STUDENT  
MEMBERS

### TREASURY

CURRENT BALANCE:	\$ 1,342.48
OUTSTANDING CHECKS:	351.82
OUTSTANDING DEPOSITS:	00
<b>EFFECTIVE BALANCE:</b>	<b>\$ 990.56</b>

### FACEBOOK



PAGE VIEWS:	66
PAGE PREVIEWS:	2
PAGE LIKES:	9
POST REACH:	92
POST ENGAGEMENTS:	89
PAGE FOLLOWERS:	9

REPORTED FOR MEMBERSHIP YEAR 2019-2020  
APRIL 2020



Join us in July to find out!

**KUDOS** to Linda Hoagland!!

#### Poetry

First Place. "The Noisemaker," *Star Poets*  
Second Place. "Ten Years Too Late," *Writers of Grace*

Honorable Mention. "My Prize," *Star Poets*  
"Widowhood," *Star Poets*

"Linger in Sunshine," *Star Poets*

"Steve Perry – My Friend," *Star Poets*

"Missing," *Star Poets*

"Reflections," *Star Poets*

"The Last Time," *Star Poets*

Honorable Mention. "The Cup," *Northern Stars*

"Growing Up and Growing Old," *Northern Stars*

"Instant Replay," *Northern Stars*

"Saved By a Minute," *Northern Stars*

#### Short Story

"That Was Close," *Bluestone Review*

#### CONTESTS

July -- "Of thee I sing..." , any form, 40 lines max

August -- Road Trip: my favorite vacation, any form, 40 lines max

Send all entries to the Monthly Contest

Chair: Ann Carolyn Cates, 7471 Greenbrook Pkwy, Southaven, MS 38671 by the 15th of the preceding month (6/15 and 7/15, respectively). Good luck!

#### SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Got a story, bio, or update to share? Deadlines for member information submissions are as follows:

- Newsletter: 10th of each month to [Matthew Gilbert](#).
- Web: 15th of each month to [J. Michael Ramey](#).



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