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**Jennifer Dotson**  
Newsletter Editor

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**Kathy Cotton**

Champaign - Central  
**Jim O'Brien**  
Darien – W. Suburban  
**Caroline Johnson**

Haiku chapter (meets in  
Northbrook)  
**Tom Chockley**

Lisle – SW Suburban  
**Wilda Morris**

Northbrook – N. Suburban  
**Mary Beth Bretzlauf**

Pontiac - N. Central  
**Kathleen Murphy**

# President's Message



There have been several creative events lately in the ISPS news.

- Neth Hass won Best Book of the Year award sponsored by ISPS for the first time. Kate Hutchinson was the runner up. [See *announcement on page 4.*]
- The first student contest has received poems from all over the state and is an exciting addition to our expanding society offerings.
- On February 18, Expressions: Art & Verse 2023 took place at the Addison Center for the Arts. Thirty-eight members participated with their poetry. The responses to artists' pieces at this third opportunity explored the deeper sharing that different genres of art can invoke. There is a creative energy exuded when poets' work is displayed alongside that of artists.
- A different productive possibility will be offered by Wesley Frazier-Keys and his spoken word workshop on April 1. The Zoom will usher in Poetry Month and promises to be an excellent program. [See *announcement on page 2.*]
- We also celebrate poetry with the latest edition of *Distilled Lives Volume 6* filled with sixty-two members' poems. Copies can be purchased through Amazon.

Lately, there have been green signs of spring with the arrival of crocus inching their way through thawed soil. They stir imagination and hope, the beginning of more growth and beauty, a celebration of spring here in the Midwest. It doesn't take much to stir poetic thoughts on a sunny day when light extends into early evening and awakens possibility of new ideas and a rebuttal to winter's chill and darkness. We can look to e.e. cummings for his poetic musings in the poem "In Just" with his description of spring as "when the world is mudlucious" and "puddle-wonderful."

Happy writing,

Susan T. Moss

# MEET SPOKEN WORD

- Hear an award-winning poet present Spoken Word: poetry intended to be performed that may also be suitable for publication and silent reading.
- Learn the difference between SPOKEN WORD and SLAM CONTEST poetry.
- Practice writing tips for creating your own Spoken Word poems.
- Improve your open-mic reading skills.

# MEET WESLEY

## Chicago Poet Wesley Frazier-Keys

- First-place winner, 2022 NFSPS BlackberryPeach Spoken Word National Competition
- Finalist in the 2022 NFSPS National Slam Competition
- Named a 2022 Chicago Esteemed Artist
- Chicago Grand Slam Champion
- Two-time finalist in the Southern Fried Poetry Slam
- Flowers for the Living 2022 Teaching Artist
- Lethal Poetry Slam coach
- Black Arts Matter finalist
- Afterschool Matters Teaching Artist
- Facilitated both creative writing and performance workshops in Chicago and in North Carolina

## National Poetry Month Spoken Word Workshop

**FREE ZOOM**

**RSVP by March 29**

**to receive the Zoom link:**

**[isps.manningham@gmail.com](mailto:isps.manningham@gmail.com)**

**2:00—3:00 p.m., SATURDAY, APRIL 1**

**Sponsored by the Illinois State Poetry Society**

# ISPS Chapter News

**ISPS West Suburban (Darien) Chapter** - The ISPS Darien chapter will meet in person **Saturday, March 4**, from **1 to 4 p.m.** at the **Indian Prairie Library**, 401 Plainfield Rd., Darien, 60561. Please bring 8 - 10 copies of up to 2 poems, a food item to share and a drink for yourself. We will be meeting as usual on the 2nd floor, Board Room. Masks are not required, but feel free to wear one if you feel more comfortable. Contact Caroline Johnson at [carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com](mailto:carolinejohnson.author@gmail.com) if you have questions.

**ISPS-Haiku Society of America Haiku Chapter** - The ISPS-HSA Haiku Chapter held its bimonthly Zoom chapter meeting on Sunday, February 19, 2023. Those who attended were Tom Chockley, Jeanne Cook, Susan Farner, Lee Gurga, Margie Gustafson, William Lederer, Wilda Morris, and Jennifer Thiermann. The early part of the meeting was taken up by planning details; however, we were each able to workshop a draft haiku. Lee Gurga contributed a number of excellent references during the meeting and placed them in the Zoom chat space. Hence, all participants received a copy of his references.

**Our next Haiku Chapter Zoom Meeting: Sunday, April 16, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. CDT.** The deadline for RSVPs to attend will be Tuesday, April 11. Contact Wilda Morris ([wem@ameritech.net](mailto:wem@ameritech.net)) to attend the Zoom meeting and to receive further information.

**ISPS Northern Chapter** and **ISPS Champaign – Central Chapter (Champaign)** will hold a joint meeting via Zoom will meet on **Sunday, March 12th at 1 p.m.** on Zoom. Chapter meetings are open to all ISPS members. If you'd like to join our meeting, please send a poem for critique to Mary Beth Bretzlauf at [isps.manningham@gmail.com](mailto:isps.manningham@gmail.com).

**ISPS North Central Chapter (Pontiac)** will meet on **Saturday, April 8, 2023 at 10:00 am** via Zoom. Contact Kathleen Murphy, Facilitator, [kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenzmurphy@gmail.com) for information on how to participate.

**ISPS Southern Chapter** will meet at Carbondale Library at **1:30 p.m., Sunday, March 12, 2023** at the Carbondale Library. The Chapter plans an April display of member poetry and books at the library for Poetry Month. The Meeting is held at the Carbondale Library, 405 West Main, Carbondale, IL 62901. [<https://www.carbondale.lib.il.us>]. Kathy Cotton, Facilitator, [sipoets7@gmail.com](mailto:sipoets7@gmail.com). Please bring 10-12 copies of your poem for critiquing. Driving directions can be obtained on [MapQuest.com](https://www.mapquest.com), or by calling the library at (618) 457-0354.

**ISPS Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)** next meets on **Sunday, April 2, 2023, 1 p.m. via Zoom.** You may submit up to three poems (or three pages) for critique to wildamorris[at]ameritech[dot]net. Please, if possible put your poems in one document, with each poem beginning on a separate page, with your name in the upper right-hand corner of each page. Poems should be submitted by Friday, March 31.



# ILLINOIS STATE POETRY SOCIETY

## Book of the Year 2022

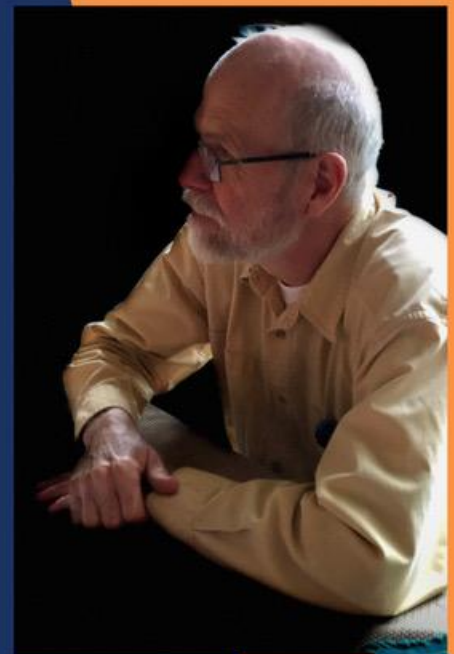
**WINNER:** *Genica*, Neth Hass, Anna, IL

Everything about this book is original, starting with the title—a word the author reports having heard in a dream and which, because it combines a familiar root and a common suffix, is immediately understandable as meaning “products of creativity.” The title is apt.

The carpenter-poet who made this book knows words as well as wood, poetic technique as well as hammers and nails. He knows how to wield language to great effect, notably in memorable narratives and engaging meditative monologues. And besides the poetry itself, he has made—that is, designed—a book that is physically pleasurable to read—comfortable in the hand, easy on the eyes.

Excerpts from Judge, Eleanor Berry

Past President of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies



**RUNNER-UP:** *A Matter of Dark Matter*  
Kate Hutchinson, Palatine, IL

As the title suggests, the poetry in this book has a wide perspective—social, environmental, even cosmic. But its strength derives from its being rooted in the personal, in an individual woman’s experience in and of her body. It draws the reader into that experience.

Excerpts from Judge, Eleanor Berry


# Chicago Public Library National Poetry Month Events

## **Poetry Month Events:**

Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> Poetry Month Kick-Off **Poet Showcase** with Avery R. Young, Tarnynon Onumonu, Mariah Scott, Mashavu Wilson, & Viola Lee - Location TBD  
Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup> **Black Out Poetry for Youth** at 3pm - Greater Grand Crossing Library  
Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> **Write of Passage Literacy Program for Youth** at 5pm - Douglass Library  
Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> **Poetry of Praise (Odes)** with Susanna Lang at 6pm - Virtual  
Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> **Poetry & Memory Workshop** with David Masciotra at 1pm-Beverly Library  
Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup> **Dramatic Monologue** with Allan Johnston at 6pm- Portage Cragin Library  
Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> **The Practice of Poetry** with Beatriz Badikian Gartler at 6pm-Richard J. Daley Library  
Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> **Upcycled Poetry Workshop for Teens** at 3:30pm- Lozano Library  
Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup> **Ekphrastic Poetry** with Janine Harrison at 1pm - Vodak-East Side Library  
Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup> **Pressed Flower Poetry** at 2pm - Lozano Library  
Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> **Do You Haiku?** with Regina Harris at 6pm Virtual  
Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> **A Poetic Examination of Chicago & America** with Peter Kahn at 5:30pm - Logan Square Library  
Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> **The Poet's Corner Writing Workshop** at 11:30am - Garfield Ridge  
Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> **Secrets of Longevity** with Willa Moore at 1pm - Sulzer Regional Library  
Monday, April 24<sup>th</sup> **Poetry Workshop and Open Mic** with Audacious Don at 4:00pm- Legler Library  
Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> **Live Poets Night** at 6:30pm- Chicago Lawn Library  
Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup> **Sampling the Greats** with Chirskira Caillouet at 5pm - Sherman Park Library  
Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup> **Hidden Talents Open Mic** at 6pm - Richard M. Daley Branch  
Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup> **Deaf Jam Poetry Movie Screening** at 6pm- Harold Washington Library

## **Poetry Fest Events**

Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup> - Harold Washington Library  
9:30am - **Poetry Vendors** Set up  
10am - **Poems While You Wait** (Lobby Activity)  
10am - **Haiku Fest** with Regina Harris  
10am - **Song of Myself Poetry Display**  
11am - **Business of Poetry Panel** with Mariah Scott, Eros The Prince of Poetry & Jennifer Brown-Banks  
11am - **Writing the Everyday** with Mina Kahn  
11:30 - **Poetry Book Tasting** with Jeff  
12pm - **Gwendolyn Brooks' "Blacks" Workshop** with Tara Betts  
12pm - **After Hours Press Reading**  
1pm - **Poetry and Social Justice Panel** with David Masciotra, avery r. young, H. Melt & Janine Harrison  
1pm - **40 Love Poems Workshop**  
1pm - **Rengay Poetry Workshop** with Poets and Patrons  
2pm - **Chicago Poet Laureate Keynote Address**  
3pm - **24<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Fest Open Mic** with Caroline Watson



**ISPS will have a table at Poetry Fest; opportunity for members to sell books. Look for info via email.**



## Welcome New Members



**Amelia Cotter** is an author, storyteller, and award-winning poet. Her books include the poetry collection *apparitions*, from Highland Park Poetry Press. Her poetry has appeared in journals like *Frogpond*, *Modern Haiku*, *The Heron's Nest*, *tinywords*, and many others. Amelia is a member of the Society of Midland Authors. Visit her official website at [www.ameliacotter.com](http://www.ameliacotter.com). Amelia is a new member of the ISPS Haiku Chapter. Amelia's latest book was published last summer by Highland Park Poetry Press. *apparitions* explores the cycles of anxiety and depression, from the isolation of trauma and despair to the hope found in

shrunken tumors . . .  
the sun-painted walls  
of my childhood  
room  
~ Amelia Cotter

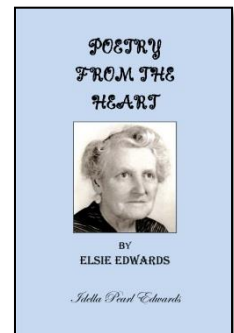
connection, reconciliation, redemption, and resiliency. Poet and storyteller Amelia Cotter invites readers to walk the liminal spaces between alienation and belonging, darkness and light, and the earthly and otherworldly in this lovingly curated collection of micro- and prose poetry, including haiku and haibun. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/0578343312>

## ISPS Member News

**Lennart Lundt** was interviewed for GAS: Poetry, Art and Music. You can read the interview at <https://gaspoertyartandmusic.blogspot.com/2023/02/gas-members-interview-lennart-lundh.html?fbclid=IwAR2Rh3NF3C30q5a67FPRPcWhzr4wfhYYPjaVYPJ-oSILtdyZT82PqvFxUuco>.

**Cynthia Gallaher** will give a reading on Thursday, April 20 at 6 p.m. at Independence Library in Chicago along with five other poets to read our poems from the new Chicago poetry anthology *Wherever I'm At* (After Hours Press, 2022). <https://www.facebook.com/events/431815282429624/?ref=newsfeed>

ISPS extends its deepest sympathies to **Idella Pearl Edwards**, whose husband of 62 years passed away in January. Idella's newest book, *Poetry From The Heart*, contains devotionals, poetry and much more from the life of her mother-in-law, Elsie Edwards. Idella says, "My goal in compiling this book is to leave a legacy for our twelve grandchildren and the great-grands and to help them realize what a privilege it is for them to be a part of this great heritage."



**Jennifer Dotson** has two poems, "Why I Don't Analyze My Dreams" and "Late Night Talk Show Fantasy," included in the anthology, *Poems from Lines Online: The Henry Miller Library's Virtual Poetry Series* edited by Laura Schulkind & Peter Serchuk.

**Charlotte Digregorio** of Winnetka recently celebrated her Ninth Anniversary as the creator/editor of The Daily Haiku, [www.charlottedigregorio.wordpress.com](http://www.charlottedigregorio.wordpress.com), that features poets from 61 countries. ISPS members are welcome to submit one haiku for possible publication. Check out Charlotte's book, "Haiku and Senryu: A Simple Guide for All," before you submit. Send submissions to [c-books@hotmail.com](mailto:c-books@hotmail.com). In other news, Charlotte was honored to be the Featured Poet for the World Haiku Series (16) in February, <https://akitahaiku.com/category/world-haiku-series/>.

New member **Amelia Cotter** has an upcoming author appearance at the Haunted America Conference at Lewis and Clark College in Alton, Illinois, June 23-24, 2023.

# ISPS Member News

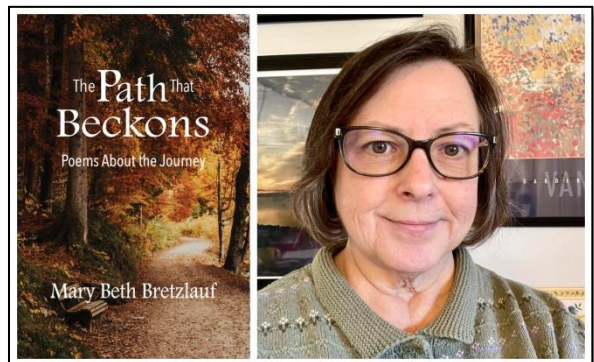
**ISPS** and **Brewed Awakening** are proud to feature the winners of the ISPS 2022 Book of the Year awards for the March “Last Sunday” poetry reading. Join us on Sunday, March 26, 12:30-2:00 PM Central Time, prepared, if you wish, to participate in **open mic**. First place winner of the Book of the Year Award, **Neth Hass**, will read on Zoom from Southern Illinois. Runner-Up, **Kate Hutchinson**, will appear in person. You may participate by going to Brewed Awakening (19 W Quincy Street, Westmont, Illinois; just off Cass Avenue). There is a \$12 cover charge, which entitles you to a beverage and snack. Or you may listen to the featured poets and participate in the open mic via Zoom. Zoom tickets can be purchased for \$5 from a link that will be posted on the ISPS Website ([www.illinoispoets.org](http://www.illinoispoets.org)) early in March.

**Neth Hass** is a retired carpenter living in rural southern Illinois. His first published work is a book of poems titled *Genica*, which won the 2022 Book of the Year award from the Illinois State Poetry Society.

**Kate Hutchinson** recently retired from a 34-year career of teaching high school English in Chicago's northwest suburbs. Her poetry and personal essays have appeared in dozens of publications and won numerous awards, both regional and national, as well as three Pushcart Prize nominations. Her latest collection of poems, *A Matter of Dark Matter*, was released in 2022 by Kelsay Books; two previous books include *Map Making: Poems of Land and Identity* (THEAQ Press, 2015) and *The Gray Limbo of Perhaps* (Finishing Line Press, 2012). Kate is active with several local poetry organizations, including currently serving as president of Chicagoland Poets & Patrons and as associate editor for the literary arts journal *East on Central* in Highland Park. To find more of her work and information about her new book, visit: <https://poetkatehutchinson.wordpress.com/>

Watch for further announcements of the Last Sunday Reading on April 30. One of the featured poets will be six-time Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominee Jennifer Hambrick. Hambrick is author of the poetry collections *In the High Weeds*, winner of the Stevens Prize; *Joyride* (Red Moon Press), winner of the Marianne Bluger Book Award; and *Unscathed* (NightBallet Press). A classical musician, radio broadcaster, multimedia producer, and cultural journalist, Jennifer Hambrick lives in Columbus, Ohio. [jenniferhambrick.com](http://jenniferhambrick.com). The other featured poet for April is yet to be announced. Watch the ISPS website for information. The “Last Sunday” event is the longest running regularly-scheduled poetry reading sponsored by the Illinois State Poetry Society.

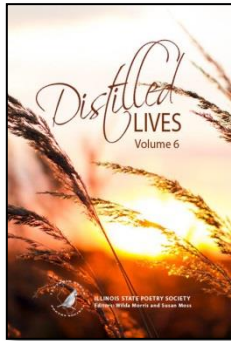
**Mary Beth Bretzlauf** has published her first book of poetry! *The Path that Beckons: Poems About the Journey* takes readers on the paths we all find ourselves on in our life at some time or another. Come hear her read selections on Saturday, March 11 at 4:15 PM the Laughlin Gallery, 1900 Sheridan Road in Highland Park. You can purchase a copy and have her sign it.



**Marie Asner**, in January, 2023, presented a workshop on "The Art of Reviewing" to the Rockford Writers Club via Zoom. She has three poems published in the fall 2022 edition of "Grist" and two poems published in the recent edition of "Distilled Lives, Volume 6." Marie's poem, "Day Before Spring" will be on the March 2023 calendar page of the Highland Park Poetry Group. Marie Asner was a First and Second Place winner in the Illinois State Poetry Contest for 2022, and read her poems via Zoom for the online Poetry Reading. Marie's poem "Choir Rehearsal" was part of the February 2023 Expressions: Art & Verse Festival by the Addison Center for the Arts.

## More ISPS Member News

Enjoy poems by 62 ISPS poets in the new *Distilled Lives Volume 6*. This edition of the Illinois State Poetry Society's biennial anthology offers a rich and diversified chorus of voices captured in verse. The featured poets explore a variety of terrains and tableaux, from the Ganges River in India to quaint cafés in Europe, from boisterous bistros in Chicago to the fertile farmlands of Illinois. Its language is as expansive as space and as intimate as a heartbeat. The compendium of work ranges from sonnets to haiku to free verse—a combination of forms distilling the creative essence of modern poetry. Preordered books were shipped in early February. Copies are also available on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



**Mary Jo Balistreri** has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize by two members of the Pushcart Prize Committee. She has been nominated previously this is the furthest she has ever gotten. Our fingers are crossed this leads to well-deserved recognition.

**Patty Dickson Pieczka's** new book, *Gathering Sunlight*, is a collaboration with Silvia Scheibli published by Bitter Oleander Press. Look for Michael Escoubas' review in the April 1 edition of *Quill & Parchment*.

**Highland Park Poetry** hosts poetry readings and open-mics at Laughlin Gallery, 1900 Sheridan Road. All events are on Saturdays and doors open to poetry at 4PM. Poets may read up to 3 poems in the open-mic. Upcoming dates are **March 11** (*Mary Beth Bretzlauf* and *Paul Buchheit* are featured) and **April 8**. Visit [www.HighlandParkPoetry.org](http://www.HighlandParkPoetry.org) for details.

### Procedure for Posting ISPS Member Poems on Website

ISPS members may submit one poem and/or one haiga for posting on our website ([illinoispoets.org](http://illinoispoets.org)). Poets whose last initial is N - Z may submit from March 1 - 7, and poets whose last initial is A - D may submit from April 1 - 7. For submission guidelines, please go to "Submitting Poems" ([illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm](http://illinoispoets.org/submitting.htm)) in our site.

If you have bio updates to share, send to [oasis@alharris.com](mailto:oasis@alharris.com). For possible member news or Welcome New Member (*brief bio, photo and two short poems*), send to ISPS newsletter editor Jennifer Dotson, [Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org](mailto:Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org) (be sure to include "ISPS News" in the subject line of your email).

## Chapter Contacts

While Covid-19 gathering restrictions are in flux statewide, please contact the chapter facilitator for more info on possible meetings online and how to access them.

All ISPS members are welcome at any monthly meeting (space permitting) after first contacting the facilitator.

### Southern Chapter (Carbondale)

Contact Kathy Cotton, facilitator  
[kacotton7@frontier.com](mailto:kacotton7@frontier.com)

### Central Chapter (Champaign)

Jim O'Brien, facilitator  
[journaljim@gmail.com](mailto:journaljim@gmail.com)

### West Suburban Chapter (Darien)

Contact Caroline Johnson, facilitator  
[twinkscat@aol.com](mailto:twinkscat@aol.com)

### Haiku Chapter

Contact Tom Chockley, co-facilitator  
[tomzhaiku@outlook.com](mailto:tomzhaiku@outlook.com)

### Southwest Suburban Chapter (Lisle)

For the Zoom link, contact  
Wilda Morris  
[wem@americtech.net](mailto:wem@americtech.net)

### North Suburban Chapter (Northbrook)

Contact  
Mary Beth Bretzlauf, facilitator  
[mbbretzlauf@comcast.net](mailto:mbbretzlauf@comcast.net)

### North Central Chapter (Pontiac)

Contact  
Kathleen Murphy, facilitator  
[kathleenmurphy@mail.com](mailto:kathleenmurphy@mail.com)



