

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2015 - 2016

## **2016-2016 NATIONAL COUNCIL**

### **Executive Committee**

President: Ayesha Chatterjee

Vice-President-Nominating Committee Chair: Sarah de Leeuw

Treasurer: Ray Mitchell

Past President: Dymphny Dronyk

Secretary: Lori Cayer

### **2015-2016 Regional Representatives**

Atlantic: Sean Wiebe

Quebec-Nunavut: Fortner Anderson

Ontario: Anna Yin

Toronto: Kate Marshall Flaherty

Manitoba: Kelly-Anne Riess

Saskatchewan: Tracy Hamon

Alberta-NWT: Kimmy Beach

British Columbia-Yukon: Kayla Czaga

Associate Members Rep: Lesley Strutt

### **2015-2016 STANDING COMMITTEES**

#### **Membership Committee:**

Anne Burke (Chair)

Print: Concetta Principe, Magie Dominic

Spoken Word: Ian Ferrier, Tanya Evanson

Nominating Committee:

Sarah de Leeuw (Chair)

Feminist Caucus: Anne Burke (Chair)

### **2015-2016 Appointed to Outside Organizations**

Book and Periodical Council: Joanna Poblocka

Public Lending Right: Beatriz Hausner

Access Copyright: Kelly-Anne Riess

Coalition for Cultural Diversity: Fortner Anderson

### **OFFICE STAFF**

Executive Director: Lesley Fletcher

Administrative Director: Arzu Abbasova

Administrative & Communications Coordinator: Nicole Brewer

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT****Ayesha Chatterjee**

This past year, my first as President of National Council, has been one of transition, I might even call it a sea-change, for the League of Canadian Poets. After thirteen years of heading the League office as Executive Director, Joanna Poblocka stepped down in order to follow her dream of becoming a full-time yoga and pilates instructor. She is regarded with great affection by everyone who knows her (and they are many!) in the literary industry as well as by all of us in the League and will be sorely missed. On behalf of National Council, I'd like to thank Joanna for all her hard work through the years and to wish her the very best for the future.

December 2015 through April 2016 have therefore been focussed, among other things, on finding a successor for Joanna. And in Lesley Fletcher, who accepted the position of Executive Director in late April, I believe we have found a strong, organized, practical young leader with a clear vision for her role and a great deal of drive.

The transition has meant that some of our objectives for the past year, including fundraising and strategic planning, have had to be pushed back to fiscal year 2016-17 and that there have been additional expenses that were not planned for in the budget. We are already looking at ways to fund-raise, however, and hope to have a couple of pilot projects in place this year.

Meanwhile, our two other staff members, Arzu Abbasova and Nicole Brewer, are also new and have brought with them new ideas for streamlining administrative processes and updating our web presence, as I am sure many of you have already noticed. They have created an Instagram account, cleaned up our website and actively promoted the League and our members through social media, which in turn has increased the League's visibility.

I would like to thank our membership committee, chaired by Anne Burke, for their continued hard work. We welcomed over 60 new members this year which means the committee read the equivalent of at least a book a week.

On the cusp of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are thrilled to be launching, in partnership with University of Regina Press, the Anne Szumigalski lecture series anthology *Measures of Astonishment: Poets on Poetry* at the Canadian Writers' Summit. This is a deeply important collection of essays written by some of Canada's most revered contemporary poets. Past President Dymphny Dronyk worked tenaciously to bring this project to fruition.

This spring, for the first time, we collaborated with the Academy of American Poets on their Poem in Your Pocket Day initiative and published a brochure that included some marvellous poems by fifteen League members and the fifteen Trustees of the Academy. It was featured during National Poetry Month on the websites of both organisations and was a wonderful opportunity to introduce Canadian poetry to American audiences and vice versa. The turnaround time for this project was almost impossibly short and quite frankly, a major reason we met the deadlines was because of the efforts of one of our new members, Jacob McArthur Mooney, who responded to my request for help without hesitation and was instrumental in making it happen.

I am fortunate to part of a National Council that is engaged, knowledgeable, thoughtful and enthusiastic. They are great ambassadors for the League and for poetry, as you will see from their reports. A big thank you to all of them for the time and effort they have put into Council matters this year, particularly over the past few months. Most of Council is staying on which means much-needed continuity in times of renewal.

Thank you also to our jurors this year who once read over a hundred books in total and chose their shortlists and winners painstakingly.

And last but certainly not least, my gratitude goes to our funders and donors without whom the League would not be here.

It has been an eventful year and there is now much to look forward to.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Lesley Fletcher**

In the past year, the League has undergone a huge amount of organizational change, and we are beginning our 50<sup>th</sup> year with a new team. It has been a busy time for each of us in the office as we prepared for the Canadian Writers' Summit, and learned more about our new roles.

The major changes that the League faced in the past year had an impact on our budget, and on our staff resources in the office. In 2016 and 2017, we will all be focused on finding new ways to share and support Canadian poets, creating new projects that help us support poets and poetry, growing our membership across Canada, and improving our office processes. We also hope to expand our circle of poetry supporters, and do more to engage with librarians, bookstores, and poetry-lovers.

The League is in the perfect position to grow our membership, our capabilities and our reach in the next few years. Our staff are incredibly talented, hard-working, and dedicated to doing great things for poetry in Canada, and our National Council is hugely supportive and creative. I have no doubts that together, we will all be able to do great things through the League.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Arzu Abbasova**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

New memberships in 1516: Full - 47, Associate - 10

By residence: ON - 30, BC - 13, AB - 7, QC - 2, MB - 2, NS - 1, Hong Kong - 1, California - 2

A thorough review of membership database (Membree) has revealed that we had many individuals listed as active members have not paid in several years. Those members were notified of their suspensions in writing. Clean-up of database will continue. Though membership numbers have dropped this does not indicate a pattern. Actual fluctuation of membership numbers is likely less drastic year to year.

**BOOK AWARDS**

Submissions: Lowther – 85, Souster – 64, Lampert – 45. Though number of submissions were slightly down from last year, there is a trend of slight fluctuation from year to year. No alarming changes. With our boosted communications approach we will likely see more submissions this year. Will maintain an online list of submissions as books come in.

As initiative to boost new membership applications with each receipt for award submission sent to publisher or a non-member poet we will include a pamphlet on League membership.

**JESSAMY STURSBURG**

Submissions were mainly from Ontario and BC. Will work with Communications Coordinator on a plan to promote contest to school and library networks across Canada. Will include a JS bookmark/flyer with each Poets in the Schools funding confirmation mailed to schools.

**FUNDING PROGRAMS*****Canada Poetry Tours*** (Nationwide)

Reading Fees - \$31,250

Travel Funding - \$24,657.77

74 full readings, 99 half readings, 106 poets

Province breakdown: AB – 16, BC – 42, MB – 8, NB – 4, NL – 1, NS – 4, ON – 63, QC – 24, SK – 11

***National Poetry Month***

Reading Fees - \$9,500

76 readings, 71 poets

Province breakdown: AB – 4, BC – 16, NS – 3, ON – 50, QC – 3

Due to amount of funding starting this year we are limiting NPM readings to 1 per poet per year and will focus on better distribution of funded readings across the provinces and territories.

***Readings in Public Places*** (Toronto)

Reading Fees - \$4,500, 45 readings, 22 poets

***Poets in the Schools*** (Ontario)

Reading Fees and Travel - \$17,170

76 school visits (41 half and 35 full day), 27 poets

**GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

Developed new fillable forms – New Memberships, Membership Renewal, Member Info Update, Reading Funding forms, Award Submission Forms, Internal forms – Standardized Receipts, Installment Sheet, Credit Card payment forms.

**GOING FORWARD**

My goal is to streamline all administrative and financial processes, standardize League forms and documents, set up filing systems and office organization procedures for consistency, ease of use, access, record keeping and preparation for audit. The key aim is to maximize efficiency, preserve institutional memory and organize/track/analyze data. Over the next few months I will work on composing detailed staff manuals for administrative and financial processes.

**Some of the examples of changes to administrative processes:**

- Accepting submissions/applications electronically with fillable PDFs which include option for credit card payment and CASL consent for electronic communication
- Standardizing all formal documents of the League (PDFs, fillable, visual consistency, branded with logo)
- Establishing procedure for all membership changes: renewals/suspensions/resignations, book tour reservations, award submission extension requests
- Developing process for accurate recording of all payments (Membee and QB)
- Automatic issuing of receipts for all payments to the League to eliminate answering individual inquiries/complaints throughout the year
- Issue e-receipts when possible to cut down on mailing costs
- Use the new reading booking database to maintaining book tour reservations and guaranteed readings
- Membership Directory – create special notations for deceased members, to ensure they don't appear as active members and aren't included in member count
- Create notations for *all* status changes in Membee. We are now maintaining electronic records of all membership changes (temporary suspensions, resignations, etc.)

**ADMINISTRATIVE & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR'S REPORT****Nicole Brewer**

Our communications plans have been in ongoing development, and only continue to improve. Below is a summary of the League's development since November 2015.

**Facebook** (started tracking stats on November 27, 2015)

- **55% increase** in Facebook likes (grown from 926 likes to 1431 likes as of June 10)
- Average weekly Facebook reach increased from 300-500 to approximately 3,000, with engagements (likes, comments, clicks, and shares) up from under 100 per week to between 200 and 400 per week
- Posting twice daily about poetry and literary news in Canada

**Twitter** (Started tracking followers on November 27, 2015; started tracking impressions January 8, 2016)

- **23% increase** in Twitter followers (grown from 2521 to 3098 as of June 10)
- Average weekly Twitter impressions (reach) up from 5000-6000 in January to approximately 15,000
- Tweeting at least twice daily about poetry and literary news in Canada, plus retweets during the week to help other organizations, writers, etc. spread their news

**Website and blog**

Over the last six months, the website has undergone many renovations as we have revised and updated all web content and pages to be aesthetically similar and easily accessible to members and the public (including an updated menu/navigation bar). Notable revisions and updates include a central programs page, an updated resources page, a comprehensive funding programs hub, an interactive events calendar, and more. We are also restructuring our NPM and Awards pages to accommodate archives

and history. On the blog, we have introduced regular blog programming to continue throughout the year, in addition to daily content during NPM.

### **NATIONAL POETRY MONTH 2016: ONLINE REACH**

During NPM on Facebook, we reached approximately 21,300 people (in all of April), had approximately 1,700 engagements, and gained 131 likes. On Twitter, our monthly reach was 76,000 impressions (in all of April, compared to 50,100 monthly impressions in March) and we gained 153 followers. On our website during NPM, we got approximately 600-800 views per day, compared to 200-400 views per day in March.

On Facebook, our awards shortlist announcement was shared 25 times and reached 5,858 people. On Twitter, the shortlist announcement reached 2,705 users and had 220 engagements (clicks, likes, or retweets). On Monday, April 4 (the day of the announcement), we had 3,229 views to our website, and 1,724 views on Tuesday, April 5.

### **Looking Forward**

My main goals for our existing online platforms are to build upon the framework we've established and draw a wider audience to all of our platforms. On the blog, I hope to have weekly blog content, monthly reviews, and a regular series that takes readers "behind the scenes" of the poet lifestyle. By the end of 2016, I would like to have doubled our Twitter and Facebook followers and likes from the end of 2015. By creating a comprehensive social media strategy that balances League promotion and outreach as well as sharing and promoting other organizations' initiatives, we will be able to create and maintain online relationships and create a wider audience for League online platforms.

By continuing to streamline and update our website, we will create a central location for members, publishers, poets, booksellers, librarians, and the public to find information about poetry in Canada and the resources we have (and are developing) to assist them in researching, sharing, or promoting poetry in their own spheres. A key element of our growth will be to actively participate in high profile, non-poetry online events by putting a poetry spin on them; for instance, celebrating occasions like Black History Month, International Women's Day, National Aboriginal History Month, etc.

### **TORONTO REPORT**

#### **Kate Marshall Flaherty**

Lots has happened since last year's AGM in Saskatoon. We held a wonderful LCP New Members' Reading in November at the Centre for Social Innovation on Bathurst in November. Toronto Poet Laureate at the time George Elliott Clarke was to kick off the event, but an emergency prevented him from attending, so he texted a lovely poem to begin the reading. New president Ayesha Chatterjee and I welcomed new members: Jimmy McInnis, Isabella Colalillo Katz, Keith Inman, Aaron Tucker, Ralph Lucas. Merle Amodeo and Liz Ross each gave a diverse and memorable 10-minute reading and got a chance to connect. Many new members who could not attend expressed such a great interest that we will be having a second New members' Reading 7pm Tuesday July 19, 2016 upstairs at the Victory Café, 581 Markham Street, Toronto.

I also connected with Toronto Library Poet-in-Residence Brian Brett at the start of his term in February and we organized a reading at the Toronto Reference Library with diverse poets Banoo Zan (new member), Dwayne

Morgan (spoken word), Ayesha Chatterjee (LCP president), Brian Brett (Toronto Library Poet-in-Residence) and myself (LCP Toronto rep.) We had a panel discussion about the state of poetry in Toronto at present, and it too was a lovely example of the power and variety in poetry.

I was honoured to be among poets, including Anna Yin, at the launch of a Canadian Heritage Anthology, edited by Cheryl Anteo-Xavier. Many new Canadian voices were heard at this event.

I had the privilege of travelling to the National Archives in Ottawa, where with the help of Joanna Poblocka (former LCP Executive Director) and Lorna Chisolme (Canada National Archives Department) I got a chance to go through dozens of boxes of archival materials from the earliest beginnings of the League. There were the first Poet-in-the-School posters, regional reading lists, AGM and executive notes, poems printed at AGMs on napkins, and newspaper clippings that really gave a sense of the roots and heart of those early years ... and how much we have grown and how far we have come!

I also had the privilege of being at a lovely farewell party for Joanna Poblocka, who left us after 15 years of service, support and special connections with so many, many poets, writers and arts support groups across Canada. Her affirming and kind presence, and dedication to the League will be greatly missed. It was also a blessing to see Ingel Madrus, who stepped in as Interim ED so helpfully with her expertise, experience and enthusiasm in the search for a new ED. We are grateful and excited to welcome energetic Lesley Fletcher to the League as the new ED; it was a pleasure to meet her in my first of many animated meetings.

I also have had the gift of meeting with first League of Canadian Poets' Executive Director, Arlene Lampert, who had many wonderful stories and memories to share of those early years of the League, now that we are celebrating LCPs 50 Anniversary.

Ayesha and I also met with new Toronto Poet Laureate Anne Michaels, who is as excited as we are about planning a joint event in the fall, to celebrate the 50th anniversary.

I organized several poetry, music and open mic nights at Toronto cafes as fundraisers to support Syrian refugees. We raised over \$600 with donations and a chance for unknown local talent to get up and read.

We also are planning to host a poetry reading Robbie Burns night at The Central Pub on Kingston Road on January 23rd. Stay tuned!

I was proud as well to be one of the poets reading at the International Festival of Authors' Battle of the Bards at Toronto's Harbourfront, hosted by NOW Magazine's Susan Cole. Many new and past members read: Ashley-Elizabeth Best, Lara Bozabalian, Chris Chambers, Warren Clements, Michael Fraser, Marty Gervais, Susan Glickman, Maureen Hynes, James Lindsay, Shannon Maguire, Sarah Pinder, Ruth Roach Pierson, Vanessa Shields, Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes, Blair Trewartha, Daniel Scott Tysdale, Katerina Fretwell Andy Weaver and Banoo Zan.

peace



Finally, Toronto will see the end of several wonderful, longtime poetry reading series this June, after decades of bringing Canadian poets together from both the “page poetry” and “spoken word” genres. Toronto’s Art Bar, Canada’s longest running weekly poetry-only reading series, will end its epic and memorable run this June. As well, Toronto’s Plastecine Poets Series, founded in 2006, debuted as an open mic feature series for diverse poets, novelists and spoken word artists, will have its final reading evening this June. But Toronto now boasts the most diverse reading series, in the world’s most multi-cultural city, the monthly Shab-e She’er Reading Series, which will soon be looking for a new home as historic Mervish Village gets re-vamped.

I am sure there have been many more events, readings and other things to celebrate in Toronto’s diverse poetic communities, but let this be a brief overview of a few highlights.

## ONTARIO REPORT

### Anna Yin

1. I have continued attending many events by other groups and members to support them and to promote poetry, such as our members’ book launch, readings for Culture Days in Barrie and Great Toronto Area, reading at High Park Reading Festival, readings in Windsor, readings at 2016 Edmonton Poetry Festival etc.
2. I have organized several dynamic educational events including 2015 Chinese and Canadian Poets reading at Riverdale Library in Toronto, Poetry Book Launch and Reading for Cancer Care (2015) in Mississauga, Chinese and Canadian Poets reading at 2016 Chinese RBC Lantern Festival in Toronto and 2016 National Poetry Month event and haiku workshop in Mississauga. All drew wide participation and broad media attention.
3. I have continued promoting Poets in Schools and Youth Poetry contests and have written to several school boards. I was glad to host Poetry Alive workshops and received good feedback from schools in Mississauga, Toronto and Edmonton.
4. I have resumed translating Canadian poets’ works into Chinese and some were published in USA. I also contacted poets and universities in USA and China for more projects of exchange.
5. As Mississauga’s Poet Laureate, I planned an ongoing civic Haiku Walking Tour/Postcard Project to encourage students/residents to walk and observe Nature and to build a healthy lifestyle and write about them. I also wrote new poems and attended civic events in Mississauga for Canada Day, Remembrance Day, Para-Pan Am Torch Relay and Mayor’s New Year Levee and Rebel Week for youth etc.

Other important events and messages from members:

- 2015 Poetry-at-the-Manor in Windsor featured Poets Laureate & Special Guests: Marty Gervais (Windsor), John B. Lee (Brantford), Anna Yin (Mississauga), Debbie Okun Hill (Sarnia), Roger Nash (Sudbury), Terry Burns (Owen Sound) and Vanessa Shields. It drew an overflow crowd, MPP Percy Hatfield attended it and reported this great event at Queen’s Park the following week.
- Accents Celebrated at Shakespeare Reading on the Hill (first time) read by Diana Manole, George Elliott Clarke, Monty Reid, Amanda Earl and rob mclennan was a great success.
- Honey Novick thanks the League for its support for her Poet in the Schools in Cobalt, Haileybury, New Liskeard and Temiskaming as well as Scarborough and in the Toronto Public Library, and for LITERARTI and WOMANVOICE as well.

- As you can see from the league's website, across Ontario, there were many other great events that our members participated in, together we have promoted poetry.

I hope all these efforts advanced literature and the arts, revived poetry, and brought a wider interest in poetry in general. In summary, I am happy that poetry is going well in our region, I was very impressed by Windsor's people and their love and support, especially their poet laureate Marty Gervais' commitment, I also admired Edmonton's many great creative poetry events. I hope new members and returning members will enjoy their time with us. I will be happy to continue to work with others to further the interests of the League in the community and wish all members great success in their endeavors in the future.

## AB REPORT

### Kimmy Beach

It has been my privilege to serve as Alberta Representative for the LCP through the 2015-2016 reporting period.

I regret that I am unable to take on another term as AB Rep, as I have a new book coming out in March of 2017, and I am well aware of the commitments that will entail in the way of travel, launches, festivals, conferences and other opportunities. I fear that I would not be able to fill my duties with the LCP as well as attend to the needs of a new book. I will be happy, however, to assist in the process of finding the right person as my replacement.

**MEMBERSHIP:** During the reporting period, we acquired five new Alberta full members. During that time, we lost three who (for various reasons) decided not to renew their membership. Three of the six Alberta members to whom I reached out regarding past dues still owing did not respond to my email. It seems to me that while membership has increased countrywide, the number of new Alberta members wasn't what I'd hoped. I realize there is a number of factors at work, not the least of which is likely the economic downturn in Alberta. My hope is that some members who have dropped out will choose to join again.

### ALBERTA MEMBER NEWS:

**JALAL BARZANJI's** poetry collection, *Trying Again to Stop Time* (UAP, 2015) continues to receive wide recognition, as does *Small Things We Leave Behind* (UAP, 2015) by **ELLA ZELTSERMAN**.

The University of Alberta Press will publish **KIMMY BEACH's** sixth book, *Nuala: A Fable*, in March of 2017.

**LESLEY BATTLER'S** new Bookthug collection, *Endangered Hydrocarbons*, launched last fall along with **STEVEN ROSS SMITH'S** collection, *Emanations: fluttertongue 6*.

New member, **BLAINE GREENWOOD** has just launched his first collection, *Black Cat in the Shadows* (Ekstasis, 2015).

In 2015, Wolsak & Wynn released two books by League members: *A Profession of Hope: Farming at the Edge of the Grizzly Trail* by **JENNA BUTLER** and *Unquiet Bones* by **PETER MIDGLEY**. Peter's book was shortlisted for the Robert Kroetsch City of Edmonton Book Prize in 2016.

**DYMPHNY DRONYK** has recently taken on the position of Coordinator - Engagement and Events at the University of Calgary. Along with her colleagues in the Calgary arts scene, she continues to be an active member and coordinator of events at Calgary's new hot spot, Loft 112.

**NORA GOULD**'s second poetry collection is forthcoming from Brick Books.

**ALICE MAJOR**'s 2015 UAP collection, *Standard Candles*, continues to receive positive notice, and her quiet, unwavering support contributed to yet another successful Edmonton Poetry Festival in April.

**MICHELINE MAYLOR** has just been appointed Calgary's Poet Laureate 2016-2018. She also has a forthcoming collection with The University of Alberta Press in 2017.

Several Alberta LCP members took part in the Edmonton Poetry Festival including: **PIERRETTE REQUIER, KIMMY BEACH, MARILYN DUMONT, JANNIE EDWARDS, WENDY MCGRATH,** and **PETER MIDGLEY.**

**FUNDRAISING:** In November of 2015, I held a fundraiser for the LCP in Red Deer, featuring League members **PETER MIDGLEY, JENNA BUTLER,** and **JEANETTE LYNES (SK).** Wolsak&Wynn kindly donated books to raffle off with proceeds going to the League.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** The Alberta LCP private Facebook page now has 40 members, some of whom are not current members of the LCP. There, we share news of upcoming launches, conferences, etc., and I'll be making a big push there this month to ask members to register for the Summit Conference.

## **SK REPORT**

**Tracy Hamon**

My second year as Saskatchewan Representative for the LCP was almost as exciting as the first year! In 2015, poetry was sitting on nearly every bar stool in our large province. While there were many poetry launches, events and readings, and occasions of poetry (and often ideas for new occasions developing from these gatherings), here's a brief summary of events and member announcements.

### **Saskatoon Public Library WIR**

Saskatoon was again fortunate to have a poet in attendance. This 2015-2016 year saw dee Hobsbawn-Smith work hard at the library, helping people with their writing, as well as organizing various events and workshops for the library. As WIR, dee also took part in *Writing North*, a two day festival of writing that took place in January at the University of Saskatchewan.

### **Festivals**

LCP members were prominent guest at The Word on the Street festival. Bruce Rice, Rita Bouvier, Robert Currie, Sheri-D Wilson and I were on hand to talk and read poetry. The Cathedral Village Arts Festival (under the chair of LCP member Bernadette Wagner) showcased numerous authors throughout the week, including youth, spoken word, and the other literary events.

### Poet Laureate

Judith Krause finished off her two-year term as Poet Laureate by holding an emerging writers reading at the Regina Art Gallery. Poets Cassidy McFadzean, Shelley Banks, dee Hobsbawn-Smith and Jim McLean joined Judith for a lovely evening of poetry at the Regina Art Gallery. Gerald Hill was named the new Poet Laureate of Saskatchewan at his inauguration occurred in January, 2016 at Regina's Government House. With a new PL comes a new event. Poetry and a Pint, hosted by Gerry Hill in May 2106 saw Shelley Banks, Courtney Bates-Hardy, Eric Greenway, Brenda Niskala and Coby Stephenson read poetry at Bushwakker BrewPub.

### Mayor's Poetry City Challenge

In Saskatoon, dee Hobsbawn-Smith read to Saskatoon City Council as part of the Mayor's Poetry City Challenge, March 2016 and in Regina on April 25, I had the pleasure of reading a poem into City Council minutes.

### Saskatchewan Book Awards

LCP members Jeanette Lynes won the Saskatchewan Arts Board Award for Poetry for *Bedlam Cowslip* (Wolsak and Wynn) and Rita Bouvier won the Rasmussen, Rasmussen and Charowsky Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award for her poetry book *nakamowin'sa for the seasons* (Thistledown Press).

### Poetry Month

The Saskatchewan Writers' Guild's Poetry Month Soiree with Poet Laureate Gerald Hill was at Government House and welcomed Alberta writer Alice Major and Katherine Lawrence. Nearly 125 people were on hand to revel in the evening of poetry.

Along with attending the Poetry Month Soiree, **Katherine Lawrence** published *Never Mind* (Turnstone Press), had a YA novel accepted by Coteau, began an MFA, won the SWG's John V. Hicks Long Manuscript Award, worked as a mentor for emerging writer Karen Nye, and still found time to serve on the Access Copyright board and chair the AC Foundation.

**Lynda Monahan's** third poetry collection *Verge* (Guernica Editions) was published in the spring of 2015 with launches in Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Regina. She was a presenter at the Envoi Poetry Festival in Winnipeg in June of 2015. Monahan recently completed a year-long residency as writer-on-the-wards at the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert, Sask.

**Bruce Rice** will receive the LCP's 2016 Colleen Thibaudeau Award for his outstanding work with the Mayor's Poetry City Challenge.

**Glen Sorestad** (last year's winner of the Colleen Thibaudeau Award) spent parts of October and November in the American Southwest giving readings from his most recent book of poetry, *Hazards of Eden* (Lamar U. Press, 2015). In the past year he had over 30 poems appear in literary publications, in print and online, in various countries, including in the translation into Italian of his chapbook, *Along Okema Road* (Rubicon Press, 2011).

**gillian harding-russell** was awarded second prize for a sequence of poems on Elizabeth Brewster in the Great Blue Heron contest. She was shortlisted for the Gwendolyn MacEwen chapbook competition for *Proud Men Do*

*Not Listen* (excerpts to be published in the summer issue of *Exile*) and her poems have appeared in *The Dalhousie Review*, *Between the Lines*, *The Antigonish Review*, *Transition* and *The Society* and will be coming out in *Prairie Fire*.

Along with being the 35<sup>th</sup> Writer in Residence at the Saskatoon Public Library, **dee Hobsbawn-Smith** participated in Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation “Look Closer” social justice poetry campaign in February-March 2016, read at The Word on the Street Saskatoon, September 2015. For National Poetry Month, she initiated “Where does poetry take you?”, a call to Canadian poets; responses posted on Saskatoon Public Library website twice weekly during April 2016. dee visited various high schools and *Freefall* magazine published “14 ways of looking at a lake.”

## **QC REPORT**

### **Fortner Anderson**

At a benefit reading, held in May at the Casa del Popolo in Montreal, Quebec members of the League came together to read their works and to support of the League. In addition to the successful reading, the occasion provided members an opportunity to informally voice concerns about their membership in the League. Chief amongst these were high annual membership dues and low reading fees.

Several members indicated that the most important reason they were members of the League was that membership allowed them access to the League's reading fee program. Several poets noted that reading fees were low and that they had remained unchanged for several years.

Because these poets saw little other material benefit in League membership other than access to the reading fees and travel benefits, these members made a calculation each year. Would possible reading fees offset the high member dues? If they found that their reading possibilities were limited that year, the high annual membership fee was a strong disincentive to their renewal as League members.

This informal discussion may not indicate a general perception within the membership, but the renewal statistics provided for the AGM, indicate a serious problem. This year 95 Full members were suspended for non-payment of dues. This represents almost 20% of our membership. If such a trend develops, the consequences for the League will be dire.

One response to this problem would be to increase reading fees, another would be to reduce membership fees for poets who do not benefit from the reading program. A third response would be a campaign to convince poets of the material benefits of League membership.

## **ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

### **Lesley Strutt**

The League welcomed ten new Associate members into its ranks this year, spread across the country from BC to Nova Scotia. The best thing that can happen to an Associate member is that they become Full members with a collection of poems or a substantial body of work. Part of the process of growing as a poet includes

participating in events, reading at open mics, developing and publishing chapbooks (self-published, or through a publisher), and sending poems out for publication. Part of my role as Associate members representative is to facilitate this in whatever way I can.

This year, in honour of National Poetry month, I organized a meeting of Associate members in the Ottawa valley region. We shared poems, stories, and questions about the publishing of poetry, and best of all got to know each other as fellow travellers on the road to getting a full collection together. It was a great meeting and I'd like to organize a virtual gathering of Associate members in the coming year, if it's feasible.

Since I live close to Ottawa, I was able to attend the Ontario Arts Council meeting that was held in Ottawa to consult with the arts community about our needs as artists. The meeting was encouraging. I felt that I was able to introduce the League of Canadian Poets as an important organization representing writers who are often overlooked. I met with Marie-Elisabeth Brunet (Board member, Ottawa). I also met with Rita Davies, the new Chair of the OAC. They both seemed surprised and pleased to meet a member of the League of Canadian Poets. We talked about funding for poets, poets in the schools and the role played by the League. We talked about how bringing the public into events was important to them. They asked me what kinds of events poets organize so I named a few of our activities – poetry events in parks, festivals, the Poet's Pathway in Ottawa, poetry on buses, and poet laureates. They asked if all these events were funded by the OAC, which of course they are not, but their attention was nevertheless caught by the breadth of our activities.

The League of Canadian Poets meets as an actual entity once a year at the annual conference/AGM and Feminist Caucus. The gathering is a celebration of being a poet in Canada and meeting other poets who are with us on this journey. I encourage our Associate members to attend, to refresh your poetry experience and to feel the amazing energy of poets who care about being poets. There are many opportunities during the gather for seeking advice and gaining confidence in ourselves as poets. I continue to find this essential as an early career poet.

This year I assisted the head office in a careful reviewing of the League's benefits for Associate members on the web site. As an Associate member of the League of Canadian Poets you can organize events any time, and please let us know if you do so your news can be included in the newsletter. During National Poetry month you can receive reading fees if you're a featured reader. Also, Associate members of the LCP are eligible for payback from Access Copyright for published poems.

You are an important member of the League, and it's my pleasure to represent you at National Council.

## **THE FEMINIST CAUCUS OF THE LEAGUE OF CANADIAN POETS REPORT**

**Anne Burke**

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the League, it has been a busy and productive year for The Feminist Caucus and the Living Archives Series of Chapbooks. There were monthly reports sent to the members with the League newsletter and posted on the League website (under programs) of "News from the Feminist Caucus"; with member news, reviews, and regular updates on various on-going initiatives. Regular reports are submitted by Anne Burke and are available at [poets.ca/feministcaucus/](http://poets.ca/feministcaucus/)

We have three titles to launch during the Writers Summit in Toronto and hope you can join us. We also hold our Business Meeting (Caucus AGM during the Writers Summit, but it is free and you do not need to register.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 7:45 a.m. to 9 a.m. come and help plan next year's programs**

Feminist Caucus breakfast business meeting and open reading. Free for League members. The Feminist Caucus will launch the anthology *Women & Multimedia, Poetry Collaboration/Elaborations*, edited by Penn Kemp, with authors Di Brandt, Terry Ann Carter, Penn Kemp, Moe Clark, Jude Neale, and Cathy Petch, in our Living Archives Series. This event is free to members of the League, and may be attended without registering for the Summit.

**Saturday, June 18, 2016, Performing Women: Playwrights and Performance Poets**

Miss Lou's Room, Harbourfront Centre, 235 Queens Quay W, Toronto, 4:00pm-5:00 pm held jointly with the Playwrights Guild.

Six women writers who are playwrights/performers/poets (several are all three), will present their experience and ideas on performance. During the panel, we will also launch an anthology with essays by the panellists, published in the League of Canadian Poets' Feminist Caucus Archive series ([poets.ca/feministcaucus](http://poets.ca/feministcaucus)), edited by Penn Kemp. It will be available in print from the League of Canadian Poets and online through [playwrightsguild.ca](http://playwrightsguild.ca).

Participants: Kelley Jo Burke, Cornelia Hoogland, Penn Kemp (Moderator and contributor), Catherine Kidd, Susan McMaster, and Moe Clark. Miss Lou's Room is located on the second floor of the Bill Boyle Artport. [www.harbourfrontcentre.com/venues/misslousroom/](http://www.harbourfrontcentre.com/venues/misslousroom/)  
<https://pennkemp.wordpress.com/2016/05/25/at-the-canadian-writerssummit/>

**THE LIVING ARCHIVES SERIES**

The Living Archives Series documents the presentations of the panels sponsored yearly by the Caucus since its founding within the League in 1982; and includes various texts, correspondences, and other works significant to its history and the discussion of women and language in poetry

The Living Archives Series: some recent titles 2015: *Women Mentors: Mentoring Women* (launching June 2016) contains original contributions from Di Brandt, Sally Ito, Liz Howard, the 2015 panel was organized by Sonja Greckol, and chaired by Kerry Ryan.

2014: *Cautionary Tales: Giving Voice to the Elders*

2013: *Dialogues, Exchanges, Conversations: Women Poets and their Male Mentors*

The printing for the Living Archives Series has been donated in kind over the years. See below for financial statements from 2014 and 2015

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$6520	\$6330
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$2661	\$2661
	<b>\$3895</b>	<b>\$3669</b>

**CCD ANNUAL REPORT****Fortner Anderson**

The League is a member of the Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity, and is represented by Fortner Anderson. The Coalition, founded in 1998 brings together 33 Canadian cultural associations working together to protect and promote Canadian cultural sovereignty.

**About the CCD**

The Canadian Coalition for Cultural diversity is the only Canadian association bringing together the main trade organizations and associations of professionals in the cultural sectors of publishing, audiovisual and new media, music, performing arts and visual arts.

In total, the Coalition's members, including the League of Canadian Poets, represent no less than 180,000 creators and 2,200 companies and non profit organizations from all parts of Canada.

Regular members of the CCD include : ACTRA, Association of Canadian Publishers, Canadian Actors' Equity Association, Canadian Federation of musicians, Canadian Media Production Association, Magazines Canada and the Writers Guild of Canada.

**Changes at the CCD**

This year the CCD has initiated a process of consultation and reflection amongst its members concerning its ongoing mandate. One great concern of CCD members is the deleterious effect new digital technologies and distribution systems have on the capacity for national governments to introduce regulations to protect cultural sovereignty. The organization is asking itself whether it needs to refocus its activities on this growing threat to the livelihood of Canadian artists.

**The past mandate**

In the past the CCD focused its work on the development of a strong Canadian civil society voice supporting the implementation of the UN Convention on Cultural Diversity. In addition to its work in Canada, the CCD worked to create and support an international network of national coalitions across the globe. These came together in 2007 as the International Federation For Cultural Diversity.

The United States has still not signed the Convention and likely never will. Though the United States continues to exercise its influence to undermine and overturn the protections that the Convention provides, the Convention is now a legal foundation, which assures that signatory countries retain the basic legal protections within international law necessary to protect and promote their respective cultures.

Since the signature and coming into force of the Convention in 2007, work has continued under the auspices of UNESCO to consider how it will be implemented.

After the ratification of the UN Instrument on Cultural Diversity the work of the Canadian Coalition began to refocus on more general trade issues, providing the groundwork for research and sometimes resistance to future efforts to "liberalize" trade.



These trade agreements have a significant effect on the Canadian cultural industries. The United States continues to aggressively pursue bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements that seek to liberalize trade in the form of the Pan-Pacific Trade Agreement and Free Trade agreements with the European Union, and elsewhere.

Such liberalizations can have devastating effects on national cultural subsidy programs, which are seen, from the perspective of the United States, for example, as unfair trade subsidies. The removal of such subsidies in the name of “free trade” can quickly destroy fragile under-funded programs that national protect culture.

In previous negotiations for the North American Free Trade Agreement and in the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade, Canada was able, by and large, to protect its cultural industries from the pressure to liberalize trade rules. However, the GATT agreement was used to end Canadian practices that protected the Canadian magazine publishing industry. This significantly damaged Canadian publishing interests.

**The current mandate of the Coalition is:**

*“The members of the Coalition affirm that cultural diversity is a fundamental human right and that countries and governments be entirely free to adopt the policies necessary to support the diversity of cultural expression and the viability of enterprises that produce and disseminate this expression. Consequently, the Coalition defends the following principle: Cultural policy must not be subject to the constraints of international trade agreements.”*

As the Coalition seeks to refocus its activities to address the threats of digital technologies and distribution systems to the regulatory framework which upholds Canadian cultural sovereignty. This reflection will continue throughout the summer and fall of 2016. It will culminate with the departure of the current executive director of the CCD. At that point, it is hoped that the CCD will determine the changes necessary for it to continue with a renewed mandate and executive.

This is a crucial juncture for the CCD. It is an important unique forum for Canadian artists, one in which I believe that the League should be present.

I recommend that the League re-affirm its support of the Coalition during this time of reflection and that it renew its membership within it.

For more information on the Coalition, see [www.cdc-ccd.org](http://www.cdc-ccd.org)

**NEWS FROM MANITOBA AND THE ATLANTIC REGIONS**

We are currently looking to fill our Council positions for Atlantic Representative and Manitoba Representative, and have a few candidates for each position. Let us know if you’re interested in the position – and stay tuned for more updates from the League!