

**POEM IN YOUR POCKET DAY**  
ANNE SZUMIGALSKI LECTURES  
POETRY CITY  
JESSAMY STUBSBERG POETRY PRIZE  
POETS IN THE CANADA  
SCHOOLS POETRY  
#LCP50 TOURS  
RAYMOND SOUSTER AWARD  
READINGS IN PUBLIC PLACES  
NATIONAL POETRY MONTH  
GOLDEN BERET SPOKEN WORD AWARD  
PAT LOWTHER MEMORIAL AWARD  
GERALD LAMPERT MEMORIAL AWARD  
FEMINIST CAUCUS  
**THE LEAGUE OF CANADIAN POETS**

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2018 - 2019

**2018-2019 NATIONAL COUNCIL**

**Executive Committee**

President: Sarah De Leeuw

Vice-President-Nominating Committee Chair: Tracy Hamon

Treasurer: Michael Andrews

Past President: Ayesha Chatterjee

Secretary: Soraya Peerbaye

**2018-2019 Regional Representatives**

Atlantic: Miriam Dunn

Quebec-Nunavut: Fortner Anderson

Ontario: Claudia Coutu Radmore

Toronto: Kate Marshall Flaherty

Manitoba: Brenda Scibberas

Saskatchewan: Rita Bouvier

Alberta-NWT: Nasra Adem

British Columbia-Yukon: Veronica Gaylie

Associate Members Rep: Joan Conway

**2018-2019 STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Membership Committee:**

Anne Burke (Chair)

Print: Susan McMaster, Bernice Lever

Spoken Word: Ian Ferrier, Tanya Evanson

**2018-2019 Appointed to Outside Organizations**

Book and Periodical Council: Lesley Fletcher

Coalition for Cultural Diversity: Fortner Anderson

**OFFICE STAFF**

Executive Director: Lesley Fletcher

Administrative Director: Nicole Brewer

Administrative & Communications Coordinator: Madison Stoner

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT****Sarah De Leeuw**

This has been another busy and exciting year for the League of Canadian Poets, and it is wonderful that we are able to gather in St. John's for this year's AGM and Conference. The 2018-2019 year has been another successful one, thanks to the dedicated work of our National Council and staff. Our events, activities, and participation have grown yet again. We were proud to introduce the Very Small Verse Contest, the Poetry Pause Initiative, and the new LCP Chapbook Series. This year, we welcomed 144 new members, and the League's community now consists of 752 poets from across Canada.

**Equity and Diversity:** One very important initiative that we have begun is the creation of the Equity and Diversity Committee, committed to ensuring that the League takes action to serve the many diverse poets that are members, and those who have yet to become members. The National Council and staff have been working hard to ensure that we update our policies, and approach every project with an eye to equity and serving our communities.

**Finances:** The League's finances are healthy, and we are very happy with the progress that our Finance Committee has made this year. Our new Treasurer Michael Andrews is helping us to evolve our policies and financial literacy, and we've also retained a new book keeping service to help make our financial processes more efficient. Revenues for the organization are stable, and more varied than ever before. With the introduction of a Conservative government in Ontario, we do have some concerns about potential cuts to funding. To prepare for this situation, we've been careful to create prudent contingency plans and begin seeking diverse sources of revenue to strengthen our finances.

I was happy to be able to create the annual Broadsheet contest, which raises vital funds for the League, and creates amazing promotional opportunities for our annual winner.

**Moving Forward:** The League's board and staff have an endless bank of projects and ideas for the organization to take on. In the next few years, our challenge will be to plan wisely, and secure the funding necessary to support our ever-growing list of services, projects, and programs.

To ensure that there is more continuity and support in place for our staff and incoming National Council Members, I would like to establish a Committee of Past Presidents of the League of Canadian Poets. This working group will provide insight, context, history, wisdom, and planning support as the League continues to grow and develop.

After 2 years serving as the League's VP, and 2 years in the role of President, I am announcing that 2019-2020 will be my last year in this position for the board. We are currently seeking a member who may be in the position to take on this role, and help the League to continue the growth and development of the organization.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT****Lesley Fletcher**

It has been another amazing year of growth at the League of Canadian Poets. After (yet another) office move,

we're settled in on a 5-year lease at College and Yonge in Toronto. Our office space is small, but we are making it work!

In 2019, the League has continued all of its annual activities, while increasing our funding for these programs, and conducting initiatives to promote accessibility, diversity, and simplicity of our programs.

Outside of our regular programming, the League has also begun to branch out in the type and range of activities that we conduct and participate in. With our new Chapbook Series, Poetry Pause Program, Equity and Diversity Committee, and events like our Poetry in Union program, the League has truly begun to find more unique and effective ways to promote poetry, promote our members, and increase the audience for poetry in Canada. Over the next years, I hope to continue this growth, and to try new programs that will help the organization to do more, connect more, and inject more poetry into the daily lives of people outside of the poetry community. To make sure that the League is financially stable, flexible, and primed for growth, we'll be taking on a few new projects:

- Digital Strategic Planning: We've been lucky to access \$28,500 from the Canada Council Digital Strategy Fund to conduct digital strategic planning for the League. This will help us to be more prepared to take on new challenges, to expand into different areas of Canada, and to find new ways to support poets more efficiently.
- Strategic Planning: Along with our Digital Strategic Plan, we hope to engage in a session of strategic planning to help sharpen our organizational strategy
- Review of our Feminist Caucus: To ensure that the vital work of the Feminist Caucus is done effectively, and that equity and diversity are built into every part of our organization, we'll be conducting a review of our Feminist Caucus in 2019-2020
- ArtsVest Sponsorship Program: We've just discovered that the ArtsVest sponsorship matching program is open for applications, and plan to apply. This could be a great opportunity to connect with businesses for financial support (for programs like Poetry Pause, Poetry in Union, and our Blog in particular)
- Expanding Partnerships: We have been working more closely with publishers, poets, businesses, and libraries across Canada, and have been working more closely with essential organizations like Access Copyright, The Writers' Union of Canada, the Academy of American Poets, and Poetry in Voice

We also have a few exciting things to look forward to in the 2019-2020 year!

- Pavlick Poetry Award: Thanks to a generous donation, the League will be running two iterations of a poetry prize worth \$10,000. Stay tuned for a detailed announcement in Fall 2019
- Poetry in Union: The League will be partnering with Union Station, Toronto to provide live-written poetry to citizens as they commute, and investigating ways to take this project across Canada
- Lyrikline: The League will be continuing our project to add Canadian Poets to the website Lyrikline, an opportunity for National exposure in the leadup to Frankfurt 2020
- AGM 2020: In May 2020, the League will be co-presenting our AGM and Annual Conference in partnership with The Writers' Union of Canada. Dates are tentatively set for May 28 to 30, 2020. The conference will take place at McGill University in Montreal, QC.
- Online Promotions: The League will be looking for more ways to bring Canadian Poetry into the daily lives of people around the globe through Poetry Pause, Instagram takeovers and curated blog content, and will continue to develop partnership opportunities as they arise. We also hope to offer more webinars and online learning opportunities for poets throughout the year.

Since I rejoined the League in 2016 as ED, the organization and our offerings have made incredible leaps in growth, and this is a credit to the amazing National Council and office staff, who are never afraid to work hard, try new things, and take risks to help poetry to grow. The landscape for the arts, for charities, and for poetry has changed, and I want to truly thank everyone who has been willing to help the organization to continue to evolve.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Nicole Brewer**

The 2018-2019 year was an exciting time for administrative development at the League. With the improved use of systems new and old, the League's record-keeping is well on its way to being thorough, navigable, and strategic: our financial and administrative interactions with poets, other organizations, event hosts, and donors are recorded in ways that allow our network of contacts to grow and be effectively maintained.

Some of the exciting administrative developments from the past year include a switch to online bookkeeping; the introduction of online forms for funding program applications and invoices; a membership with HR Downloads, a software that will assist the League in strategic planning, policy development, and training for staff and volunteers; and laying the groundwork for more effective submissions management for prizes, awards, and applications.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

We closed our 1819 year with just under 750 active members, and new member applications continued to roll in at a steady rate throughout the year. We have increased our personal outreach to members before suspending their memberships, and these personalized phone calls have helped us keep our membership strong and our relationships with members strong as well. We have felt a lovely increase in communication between members and the office, which we feel contributes to our high membership retention rate.

In the 2018-2019 year, we welcomed 144 new and returning lapsed members, up from 80 in the previous year.

- Full: 70
- Associate: 40
- Supporting: 1
- Student: 1
- Returning lapsed members: 32
- Ontario: 79
- BC: 29
- Alberta: 14
- Quebec: 8
- Manitoba: 2
- New Brunswick: 3
- Saskatchewan: 2
- Nova Scotia: 2
- PEI: 1

- Yukon: 1

The 2018-2019 year saw only 67 resigned or suspended memberships. Our Wild Apricot membership software has continued to strengthen our relationships with members, and more members—particularly new members—are actively logging in to manage their profiles, check the member forum, and stay engaged with the League. During April and May 2019, member renewals were processed at a better rate than ever before, with more than 500 members renewing and paying their membership fees within the first two months of the membership year.

## **BOOK AWARDS**

Book award submissions were generally consistent with last year (with 158 total titles submitted), as the Canadian poetry landscape continues to recover from a turbulent time. We announced longlists for the second time, which were again met with a great deal of excitement—we love the opportunity to spotlight more great Canadian books of poetry with our awards each year.

- Pat Lowther Memorial Award, for books by women: 87 submissions (99 last year)
- Gerald Lampert Memorial Award, for debut books of poetry: 61 submissions (55 last year)
- Raymond Souster Award, for books by members: 85 submissions (82 last year)

## **JESSAMY STURSBURG PRIZE**

We adjusted the timeline of this young poets' prize so that it would be open during National Poetry Month, and during the majority of the school year, instead of only from September to December – as a result, submissions in both categories more than doubled, with more than 300 submissions coming in during the 2018-2019 submission period. Winners will be announced in mid-June, just before the end of the school year.

## **FUNDING PROGRAMS**

### *CANADA POETRY TOURS*

- Amount paid: \$72,872.47, a 32% increase from last year; \$45,788.60 honoraria/\$27,083.87
- Number of poets funded: 154 (2017-2018: 124)
- Full readings funded: 109 (2017-2018: 85)
- Half readings funded: 147 (2017-2018: 119)
- Provincial breakdown
  - AB: 20
  - BC: 49
  - NS: 14
  - ON: 116
  - QC: 22
  - SK: 11
  - MB: 4
  - NB: 14
  - PEI: 1

- NL: 5
- Number of hosts: 128
- Number of cities in which funded events took place: 69

#### *NATIONAL POETRY MONTH*

- Amount paid: \$10,272.84, a 7% increase from last year
- Number of poets funded: 87 (2017-2018: 77)
- Provincial breakdown
  - ON: 33
  - AB: 17
  - BC: 19
  - MB: 3
  - NL: 1
  - NS: 2
  - QC: 8
  - NB: 4
- Number of hosts: 31
- Number of cities in which funded events took place: 24

#### *POETS IN THE SCHOOLS*

- Amount paid: \$19,497, a 9% increase from last year; \$15,385 honoraria/\$4,112 travel
- Number of poets funded: 31 (2017-2018: 24)
- Total number of funded visits: 76 (2017-2018: 69)
- Full visits funded: 32
- Half visits funded: 44
- Specially funded visits (NPM): 21
- Specially funded Northern/remote visits: 6
- Specially funded visits (other): 25
- Number of schools: 51

#### *READINGS IN PUBLIC PLACES*

- Amount paid: \$4,407.88, a 10% increase from last year
- Number of events funded: 44 (2017-2018: 40)
- Number of poets funded: 32 (2017-2018: 31)
- Number of hosts: 26

### **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

**Madison Stoner**

## SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Our social media following continues to grow at a steady rate:

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Between the Lines (public newsletter)
<b>April 2018</b>	2287 likes	Not yet launched	4913 followers	990 subscribers,
<b>April 2019</b>	2746 likes	2588 followers	5816 followers	1058 subscribers
<b>Growth</b>	+ 459 likes	2588 followers in less than one year! Launched May 2018	+ 903 followers	+ 68 subscribers

## POETRY PAUSE

2018-2019 saw the introduction of one of the League's most successful communications/outreach projects in our history: Poetry Pause! Poetry Pause was inspired by The Academy of American Poets' Poem-a-Day program – the original daily poetry series publishing new work by poets. The Poetry Pause project is intended to augment the presence of Canadian poetry and to provide an opportunity to Canadian poets – seasoned and emerging alike – to have their poetry read by many. Poetry Pause delivers more than a poem; it delivers the chance for folks to pause for poetry – to spare a few minutes each day for words that heal, inspire, and sustain.

Poetry Pause launched on November 1, 2018 with Catherine Graham's poem "Domestic" and has since delivered over 150 poems. We built our subscription list from scratch – meaning that we did not automatically subscribe anyone from our established contact lists to Poetry Pause – and currently have 750 subscribers. We have received 211 poems through submissions to Poetry Pause and have been receiving submissions consistently since the launch of the program. We've received lots of positive feedback from our subscribers:

- "I have been reading the daily Poetry Pause with so much delight and discovery"
- "I receive your daily poems and very happy with all that I've read"
- "I really am enjoying the poetry - - I have always written poetry myself and I sometimes wonder if I could ever get my few poems out there!"
- "I can't tell you how much the daily poem that arrives by email in my inbox delights me. No matter what I'm doing, I indeed pause, and allow another impression to enter. Thank you for these"

In 2019-2020, Poetry Pause will continue to expand its scope and potential, always centering Canadian poetry and painting a vivid image of the publication opportunities available to Canadian poets. One way we hope to do this is through spotlighting Canadian literary magazines. In the 2019-2020 year, Poetry Pause will feature weeks of poetry selected by the folks at *subTerrain*, *The Capilano Review*, *EVENT Magazine*, *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Vallum*, *FEELS*, *carte blanche*, *CV2*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Prairie Fire*, and more. Moving forward, we'd like to find a way to also feature spoken word poetry in Poetry Pause.

## NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

See separate National Poetry Month 2018 report at the end of this package for a breakdown of stats, strategies, engagement, and promotion for April 2018!



The theme of National Poetry Month 2019 was Nature, which coincided very well with a major 1819 project, *Heartwood: Poems for the Love of Trees*. Poetry Pause delivered a daily poem from *Heartwood* every day of April in celebration. We had some incredible Canadian poets contribute guest posts to our blog for NPM, including 2019 Trillium Book Award-nominated poet Gwen Benaway and our very own Saskatchewan Rep, Rita Bouvier! For National Poetry Month, I created a fundraising campaign called #PoetryMeans where folks were encouraged to share their responses to the hashtag prompt on social media. We received many responses from notable Canadian poets – some through our 2018 Membership Survey and some through social media – and I created campaign graphics to share their meaningful and touching responses. Over NPM, we raised \$940 through this campaign, and the testimonials we received will be valuable resources for donation campaigns in the future/evergreen content for our general donations page.

Poem in Your Pocket Day 2019 was also a huge success. We mailed one postcard (poem selected at random) to each of our members and saw many of them sharing photos on social media. For 2019, the League created our first entirely Canadian PIYP Day booklet with designer Megan Fildes and we were very happy with the result. Canadian poetry was still featured in The Academy of American Poets' booklet, however because they have strict guidelines for the content they share (must be appropriate for all ages, including younger children), some of the poems that were selected for inclusion in our booklet were rejected from the Poets.org iteration. We are happy to differentiate ourselves in this way and create space for poetry that speaks to a more mature audience, though we will continue to ask that poems selected for this project do not use inappropriate language or explicitly mature subjects.

### **BOOK AWARDS PROMOTION**

2018 Book Awards Winners:

- Gerald Lampert Memorial: *Otolith* by Emily Nilsen (Goose Lane Editions)
- Pat Lowther Memorial: *Indianland* by Lesley Belleau (ARP Books)
- Raymond Souster: *Cloud Physics* by Karen Enns (University of Regina Press)

For the first time ever, we released longlists for our 3 Book Awards, which honoured 12 titles each and which gained much attention on social media. At the time of our shortlist announcement, we had even more great news to share: thanks to increased funding from the Canada Council, we were able to DOUBLE our cash prizes to \$2000! Our 2018 shortlist announcement was picked up by several media outlets, including Open Book, CBC Books, Quill and Quire, and the Times Colonist. To promote the poets shortlisted for our 2018 Book Awards, I came up with a few strategies, all of which were executed beginning May 1, 2018 until the winner announcement (June 16, 2018):

- Excerpts from the Shortlist: A poem from each collection was published on the website.
- Ask a Shortlister: an interview series in which I posed questions to the shortlisters and compiled their responses on the blog, grouped by question.
- The Shortlist in Conversation: Some poets opted to interview/converse with each other for the blog! Pairings were Phoebe Wang (*Admission Requirements*, McClelland & Stewart) and Puneet Dutt (*The Better Monsters*, Mansfield Press), Susan Elmslie (*Museum of Kindness*, Brick Books) and Beth Goobie (*Breathing at Dusk*, Coteau Books), and Cornelia Hoogland (*Trailer Park Elegy*, Harbour Publishing) and Julie Paul (*The Rules of the Kingdom*, McGill-Queen's University Press)

- Instagram Takeovers: Interested shortlisters were given the opportunity to participate in an Instagram takeover, in which they sent in photos and captions to be shared on our Instagram account for an entire day, exploring their writing lives. Participants were Puneet Dutt, Julie Paul, Ian Keteku, and Jack Davis (*Faunics*, Pedlar Press).

Sneak peak at 2019: The Toronto Star called our Book Awards “Canada’s top poetry prizes” in the article they wrote about our shortlists on April 23, 2019, with a focus on Klara du Plessis whose collection *Ekke* (Palimpsest Press) was shortlisted for both the 2019 Gerald Lampert & Pat Lowther Memorial Awards. Promotional efforts from 2018 were effective, so they are being continued and built upon. This year, Poetry Pause is featuring a poem-a-day from the shortlist, Ask a Shortlister continues, as does The Shortlist in Conversation, plus we introduced Reviewing the Shortlist – a series in which shortlisters were given the (paid) opportunity to review each others’ collections for the League’s review page on our website.

### LCP CHAPBOOK SERIES

In February 2019, we launched the LCP Chapbook Series – a quarterly chapbook publication program with the express intent to center diverse voices and rising poetic talents in Canada. The LCP Chapbook series will publish fresh and exceptional Canadian poetry guided by various themes and forms to increase visibility and recognition for the various identities held by folks contributing and belonging to the vibrant Canadian poetry community. Chapbooks limited edition, made to order, and hand-sewn by our incredible Administrative Director/words((on))pages founder Nicole Brewer.

Submissions to the LCP Chapbook Series are open to members of the League of Canadian Poets. With this project, the League aims to create space and facilitate representation for marginalized poets and we recognize that folks holding marginalized identities may face barriers to access in gaining membership to the League. We are committed to working with those folks facing barriers, specifically financial barriers, who have an interest in participating in LCP Chapbook Series projects. We aim to be transparent about this on our website and social media, and encourage those facing barriers to email [info@poets.ca](mailto:info@poets.ca) if the cost of membership is a barrier to participation in the League so that we can consider waiving fees for those poets selected for inclusion by our editors.

*Collected Haiku*, the first edition of the LCP Chapbook Series, was published on March 12, 2019 and features 22 haiku by 16 different poets, selected by Claudia Coutu Radmore, Terry Ann Carter, and Naomi Beth Wakan from submissions to the League’s 2018 Haiku Contest. We’ve sold 48 copies online though there hasn’t been much engagement with this project on our social media platforms.

*Thirteen: New Collected Poems from LGBTQI2S Writers in Canada* was published on April 29, 2019 and features 13 poems by 13 poets, edited and with an introduction by Ali Blythe. This chapbook received a lot of attention on social media and we saw folks posting about having purchased a copy on social media. So far, we have sold 21 copies online and received 1 request for a review copy.

### MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Things at the League are rapidly changing, and it is important to us that information on how to make the most of our communications opportunities is made clear! On the Wild Apricot Info Portal, members can find “A guide to using the League’s communications channels” to refer to for deadlines and processes for inclusion in ST@NZA (and our brand-new interview series, 6 Pieces on Poetry), website Member News, social media, and how they can

contribute content to our website and blog. More members have been using the Member Forum to communicate news and opportunities to each other.

## SASKATCHEWAN REPORT

**Rita Bouvier**

I begin with a highlight, recognizing Bruce Rice as Saskatchewan's Poet Laureate, effective April 1. He will serve in this capacity for a two-year term. Bruce is an award-winning poet, "who writes about community, reclaiming the voices of those who live on the margins, and how we are transformed by landscape even as we leave our footprints on it." Bruce's vision as Poet Laureate is "making more room at the table" for both writers and audiences. We look forward to the role he will play as ambassador and champion of the literary arts in our province and beyond.

Other accomplishments of Saskatchewan League members in the past year follows:

- **Chelsey Coupal's** *Sedley* (Coteau Books, 2018) was shortlisted for three Sask Book Awards: the Poetry Award, the First Book Award and the Regina Book Award.
- **Robert Currie's** *One-Way Ticket* (Coteau Books, 2018) was short-listed for the Poetry Award at the 2019 Sask Book Awards. Two poems were published in the Spring 2019 edition of Grain Magazine.
- **Dave Margoshes' A Calendar of Reckoning** (Coteau Books, 2018) was shortlisted for the 2019 Sask Book Awards poetry prize.
- **Lynda Monahan** along with Saskatchewan poet, Rod Thompson, have co-written a collection, *A Beautiful Stone: Poems and Ululations* to be released by Radiant Press in the fall of 2019. Lynda facilitates a writing group for the Canadian Mental Health Association – Prince Albert Branch and is compiling an anthology of the group's work to be released this spring.
- Utilizing the resources of the Regina Public Library's Digital Studio, **Bruce Rice** has started *The Poet and The Poem* interviews and voice recordings for NPN. A new collection, based on street photographer Vivian Maier, will be released in 2020 by Radiant Press. Bruce serves as Saskatchewan rep on the TWUC National Council.
- **gillian harding-russell's** poetry collection IN ANOTHER AIR (Radiant Press, 2018) was shortlisted for a Saskatchewan Book Award. An excerpt from the sequence "Making Sense" is published in the latest issue of *ELQ/Exile* vol42, no1. The sequence won first place in *Exile's* Gwendolyn MacEwen poetry competition in 2016.
- It has been a busy year for **Glen Sorestad**. His poems appeared in four separate anthologies published during the past year: *The League's Heartwood*, edited by Lesley Strutt; *Saskatchewan Hockey*, selected and edited by Allan Safarik; *Beyond Forgetting*, celebrating Al Purdy; and, *Tamaracks: Canadian Poetry for the 21st Century*, selected and edited by James Deahl. In 2018, ten poems appeared in English and Italian translations in *The Journal of Italian Translation* in New York, while another five poems by the same translator appeared in English and Italian translation in *Il Foglio Letterario* in Italy. Another seventeen poems appeared in both print magazines - *Grain* and *Amarillo Bay*, and online journals or websites in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom.
- **Bernadette Wagner** received the 2018 Hyland Volunteer Award for outstanding leadership in the Saskatchewan writing community. She edited a redesigned *Spring Volume II: Emerging Saskatchewan Writers*. Her my second collection, *The Dry Valley* (Radiant Press), will be out this fall.

- **Jeanette Lynes'** *The Small Things That End The World* (Coteau Books, 2018) won the Muslims for Peace and Justice Fiction Award at the 2019 Sask Book Awards.
- **Randy Lundy's** *Blackbird Song* (University of Regina Press, 2017) won the Saskatchewan Arts Board Poetry Award and the Saskatoon Public Library Indigenous Peoples' Publishing Award.
- My poetry, previously published and new, were included in two publications dedicated to Indigenous writers, *ndn country* (Prairie FireCV2, 2018) and *kisiskâciwan*, edited by Jesse Archibald-Barber (University of Regina Press, 2018).

We successfully launched *Heartwood: For the Love of Trees* in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on November 21, 2018. In attendance were Jeanette Lyons, Dave Margoshes, dee Hobsbawn-Smith, Glen Sorestad and me. We were joined by the University of Saskatchewan MFA-Writing Programme Students & Faculty, who read for poets unable to attend. Thank you to the following poets who supported the launch of *Heartwood*: **Taidgh Lynch**, a poet from Ireland in his 2nd year in the programme; **Sheri Benning**, award winning poet and faculty member in the programme; **Susie Hammond**, a student in the programme, whose poetry has been featured at *It's About Time*, Seattle's longest running poetry reading series committed to social justice; and, **Jameson Lawson**, student from the Bruce Peninsula of Southwestern Ontario.

This year, Saskatchewan achieved a milestone: Alasdair Rees is Saskatchewan's *first* Youth Poet Laureate.

As I noted last year and which bears repeating, in addition to the launching of new books, many opportunities are provided for showcasing poets: the annual *Festival of Words* in the summer; *Word on the Street* in the fall; Saskatchewan Writer's Guild (SWG) *Writing North* and *Talking Fresh* in winter; open mic events held by the Saskatoon Writers' Collective, and the Indigenous Poets Society (focusing on spoken word); *River Volta* hosted by students enrolled in the University of Saskatchewan's Creative Writing Program; *Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Community Stage*; the biennial *Ânskohk Festival* of the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Writers Circle Inc; and finally through the events created and hosted by the *Poet Laureate*. Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on perspective, I am limited to Facebook as the main medium of spreading the word about poetry. I also make every effort to attend as many of the events spotlighting LCP members. That said, I am sometimes challenged by time and the wide array of literary community events and readings. Indigenous literary arts community events often run parallel to events sponsored by established organizations, as a result I am often stretched as I run from one event to the next.

Seventeen Saskatchewan poets are members of the League. Again, I am look forward to connecting with Saskatchewan members attending the Writers' Summit, renewing friendship I made last year with LCP representatives from across the country and meeting new regional reps.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA – YUKON REPORT

**Veronica Gaylie**

This is my second year in the role of regional representative (BC and Yukon) for the League of Canadian Poets. Over the past two years, the folks in my region have been quietly working away to support poetry and poetic living: by writing poems, by organizing/attending launches, and by reading *Heartwood: Poems for the Love of Trees*!

The biggest news for 2018 was the publication of the eagerly awaited *Heartwood* anthology, a charitable project for the League. Our chapter in the anthology represents a cross-section of poets, and the anthology as a whole is an amazing and unique publication. I am so grateful to past council member and ongoing editor, Lesley Strutt, for taking on this labour of love, which resulted in a lasting record of poetic Canadian trees, and tree-poets of Canada. Book launches of the anthology in our large region took place in the past year, in both formal and informal venues. Special mention goes to the Heartwood launch held at Planet Earth Poetry, Friday December 7th, in Vancouver, organized by League member, Daniel Scott. Daniel open-heartedly welcomed “the whole country” by asking that participating poets read from different sections of the anthology to get a larger Canadian perspective, including and beyond, BC/Yukon.

In the past year, also, it must be mentioned that some longstanding members from our region passed away. I know their passing brings much grief and sadness. Their mentorship and friendship was in our grateful midst for so long, and will be missed.

After a two year term, as the outgoing representative for BC and Yukon, I thank everyone for their membership, contributions, and poems, and for their help in making Canadian poetry great. May our work as poets always inspire, dignify, elevate, truth-tell, and bring new life. I leave the last words, to Carl Leggo, dear friend and Vancouver-Newfoundland poet, who left us too soon.

growing up on Lynch’s Lane  
 my brother and I always loved  
 fall when apples sparkled  
 on Old Viv Drover’s tree  
 and we slipped over the fence  
 from Cec’s backyard to stuff  
 our pockets full of apples like  
 sour stones after a season  
 too short for anything but  
 potatoes carrots turnips  
 but we still stole the apples  
 because they hung on a tree free

## **TORONTO REPORT**

**Kate Marshall Flaherty**

This has been a wonderful year for poetry in Toronto, the most diverse and multicultural city in the world. Toronto now has 187 League of Canadian Poets members, as we added 36 new members this year. I think this is due to the amazing job that Madison Stoner, Nicole Brewer and Lesley Fletcher are doing to promote poetry, share it on social media, initiate new and exciting events, awards, and initiatives as well as to strive for diversity and social inclusion for emerging and established poets, on the page and in performance and spoken word. After a wonderful AGM here in Toronto last June, our fair city now boasts many Poetry Reading Series that celebrate diverse voices and strive for excellence and outreach. Many of these series are constantly thinking of new ways

to celebrate poetry to a wider community, welcome all in a spirit of equality and inclusion, make spaces accessible and continue to re-craft welcome and land acknowledgments.

In September, LCP launched “Heartwood: For the Love of Trees” at the High Park Nature Centre to a full house, where 17 Toronto poets, Allan Briesmaster, Jacquie Buncel, Brenda Clews, Caroline Di Giovanni, Suparna Ghosh, Catherine Graham, Jessica Heimstra, Doyali Islam, Donna Langevin, Lois Lorimer, Merle Nudelman, Gianna Patriarca,, Giovanna Riccio, Maureen Scott Harris, Sheila Stewart, Bānoo Zan and I each read our poem from the book; the audience was moved by the film, “Call of the Forest: The Forgotten Wisdom of Trees” by Diana Beresford-Kroeger, that was the impetus for Lesley Strutt to spearhead this amazing project and anthology.

In October I went to Vancouver and Victoria to collaborate with Victoria’s Poet Laureate, Yvonne Blomer, to read poems about Memory and Loss for a fundraiser for the Alzheimer’s Society of Canada. We raised several hundred dollars, and Yvonne Blomer, Jane Munro, Tina Biello, Sydney Bending and I read poems about dementia; Wendy Morton was an enthusiastic supporter, as was Daniel Scott. What a great collaboration of east and west for a good cause.

November is a month to remember, and we recall the many diverse reading series across Toronto that celebrate poetry with their weekly and monthly events. Maria Meindl and Joshua Png of Toronto have gone to great lengths with reading series organizers to create a list-serve, LitNetTO, which is a network of organizers of literary reading series and poetry slams within the Greater Toronto Area, who gather to share information and support. They are working together to foster a rich, active, equitable and inclusive literary community in the city. These concerns include: sharing information and resources, fostering a culture of inclusion, creating a unified voice for advocacy, helping to support new series and slams and supporting audience development and awareness.

January and February culminated in Toronto’s inaugural “Poetry in Union: Railway Lines and Valentines” in Union Station. Inspired by past New York Poet Laureate Marie Howe’s “The Poet is IN” in Grand Central Station, and our own Ronna Bloom’s “Poet is In” at Mount Sinai Hospital, our team took two years to make this event a reality in partnership with Alexa Polenz of Union Station. Marie Howe, Molly Peacock and Ronna Bloom were wonderful supporters, guides and ambassadors of this successful event, which took place on February 13<sup>th</sup>, in time for Valentine’s Day. Toronto Poet Laureate Anne Michaels kicked off the event with a wonderful talk about the history of the place and the poetry in Union’s history, and read moving poems about trains, words, lines, language and connections. Spoken word poets, Lara Bozabalian and Spin El Poeta moved us with their performance poetry between sessions, the player piano soothed at the breaks, and courageous poets Dominique Bernier-Cormier, Ronna Bloom, Michael Fraser, Suparna Ghosh, Jessica Hiemstra, Rajinderpal S. Pal and I spent 5 minutes with each traveller asking questions that would stir the imagination and heart to create images that we wove into a personal poem to read to, and hand over to, each traveller. There were tears, hugs, moments of laughter and suspended silence as poets and travellers shared this intimate moment of on-the-spot poetry creation. It was such a success that we are gearing up to do it again in an expanded way, and hopefully make it an annual Toronto event.

April marked a wonderful National Poetry month, not only with the all-inclusive theme of “Nature,” but with daily Poetry Pause poems chosen from our new national treasure, “Heartwood: For the Love of Trees.” I kicked off NPM with an interview on AMI Media on April Fool’s day, (you can hear the interview at Poets.ca) and of course April 18<sup>th</sup> marked “Poem in Your Pocket” Day here in Toronto with many readings, events and individuals sharing

poems in creative ways: as a tip for a waitress, at a bus stop, in a TTC fare box, in the schools and libraries, to read to a person in a waiting room, to commence a meeting ... Every year this exciting initiative gets more traction and spreads in more imaginative ways. I spent the day sharing poems at the Michael Garron Hospital and at Notre Dame High School, with a grade 10 Indigenous Studies English class in their birch tree lined “Indigenous Wisdom Corner” of the library. Later in April, I was one of the guests (in for Ellen Jaffe) with Valentino Assenza on HOWL CIUT 89.5FM, along with Kent Bowman and Clara Blackwood reading from James Deahl’s creative collection of Canadian Poetry in the new anthology “Tamaracks.”

As I write this on the last day of National Poetry Month, we have thanked Ann Michaels for her gentle and powerful presence as crafter of words and supporter of language, poetry and this city. During her term as Toronto Poet Laureate Michaels championed the idea of Toronto as a city of languages. It was a pleasure to have her read and share at the Heliconoan Arts and Letter Club in 2018 when I was Writer in Residence, to see her at Shab e She’er, Toronto’s most diverse reading series, and to connect with her intimately at our first Poetry in Union.

And now, we have recently welcomed in astounding Al Moritz as the new Toronto Poet Laureate. Described as a “master of metaphor,” Al has 20 books of poetry and **won** the 2009 Griffin Poetry Prize for 'The Sentinel.' He is currently the Blake C. Goldring Professor of the Arts and Society at the University of Toronto. He has been quoted as calling Toronto a “little Athens, a country within a country.” In the Toronto Star, Moritz said as Poet Laureate he will celebrate Toronto and its successes but also reflect its poverty, injustice and tragedies. Poetry can give people solace but, he said, as a writer he can’t see himself as a “comforter of the whole city.” Al was also one of my first poetry teachers at U of T and had an incredible impact on my writing life and my poetry. It will be an honour to have him present at the second annual Poetry in Union event in February of 2020, among many other things!

Of course I can’t name all the terrific Toronto LCP members who have done such wonderful things this year, but I did collect their highlights and accomplishments you can find in Members’ News on Poets.ca.

After four years of learning and loving this league and how it grows, I will be stepping down as Toronto Rep. this. It has been an honour and a joy to work with the amazingly gifted and supportive national council, under Dymphny, Ayesha and Sarah, and it has been a sheer joy to be inspired by the boundless energy and creativity of Lesley, Nicole and Madison. I will miss a lot about being on council, but will stay an advocate for poetry, the League and the new annual Poetry in Union event and “The Poet is In” workshops, initiated here in Toronto by the intrepid Ronna Bloom.

Thanks so much for everything! Gratefully, Katie

## **ONTARIO REPORT**

**Claudia Coutu Radmore**

All I can say is that the League members in Ontario go above and beyond for poetry. I began by making a chart that tabled all the varieties of things that have happened in the last year, but the table would have needed about twenty more columns. I was stunned by the energy and enthusiasm put into poetry-related activities.

New books and chapbooks coming out (80); trade and small publishers presenting new publications (100); poems published in journals (60); translations (2); residencies (2); Awards, commissions, grants (10) 1 nomination for a Pushcart, 2 in Best Canadian Poetry 2019; Readings, weekly/monthly groups, coffee houses, and anthology promotions (101); participation in/organized open mics/ spoken word events/ celebrated anniversaries (11); workshops and Heartwood readings (27, of which poetry event happened in a workplace); Library and Poetry Month events, (7); Organizers/hosts of Reading series, launches, salons, regional and high school slams (34); members who judged contests, sat on juries, and on literary boards (18); those who gave readings/workshops in high schools (5); blogs, blog posts, online teaching sites, wrote reviews and essays (27); poets who presented or read on radio and television, or produced whole seasons of poetry-related broadcasts (roughly 50 shows); presentations of poetry with other arts, art and poetry, music and poetry, photography and poetry (16); haiku groups (1, with 4 meetings a year).

Members wrote of being guest readers at poetry series, salons and festivals. Ottawa's VERSeFEST 2019 had readings/panel presentations by 81 authors, with 40% of the program featuring French poets.

In all, many of these were with League funding; it seems to have been a stellar year for poetry in this province.

## **QUEBEC REPORT**

**Fortner Anderson**

Dear fellow poets and members of the League of Canadian Poets,

This June, I will have completed at least 3 two-year terms as the Quebec representative on the board of directors of the League of Canadian Poets. As my term limit has been reached, I must step down. I'll take this opportunity to provide an overview of some of the issues that I considered to be important for Quebec and Canadian poets during my tenure.

The most important effort was to try and push the League into concerted lobbying to increase funding for poets in Canada. It is a disgrace, I feel, that the poets of Canada are supported so pitifully, especially compared to the sums invested by the Canada Council for the Arts in other artistic genres. The funding of a single media arts project can rival the funds invested for a whole nation of poets!

In late 2017, this concern led to a letter writing campaign organized by me and Sheri-D Wilson, which encouraged the Canada Council to increase the funding of the League's Canada Poetry Tours program. Many of you supported that effort. Thank-you!

That campaign, done in consultation with the League, was successful and the amounts given to the League by the Council have increased substantially and most of this new money has been re-directed to poets. Over the past four years the amount of money transferred yearly by the League to Canadian poets has grown from \$128,000 to \$166,000.

Overall however, I believe there is still a great deal of work to be done by the League to increase direct funding to poets and to finance poetical activities in Canada. The League must be at the forefront of efforts to quantify and



analyze the lamentable economic situation of Canadian poets. Such research, combined with concerted lobbying efforts, could be a great boon for poets across Canada.

The League is our privileged interlocutor with the Canada Council for the Arts. If it does not exercise its role as the representative of poets in Canada, I fear little will change.

Secondly, I worked to try to reduce the annual dues to the League, which I consider to be too high. I was unsuccessful in lowering dues, but I hope that my harping on the issue, and the letters of protest from Quebec members prevented or limited some annual increases.

A third effort was to insist that the League remunerate poets for its own activities, these include its chapbooks, its broadsheets, its compilations, its contests and the like. This work was successful, and I now believe it is standard practice to provide some (admittedly small) payment to poets for their participation in League projects.

One area which was neglected during my terms was the creation of community amongst Quebec poets. I hope the next representative will be more active in creating events and occasions for Quebec poets to meet and discuss the issues which concern us.

### *League Dues*

Quebec members have in the past expressed their discontentment with the high annual membership fees. Here again, are a sampling of letters from League members asking for a change.

*“thank you for also bringing up the issue with membership dues. I do think these fees are quite high, especially if you are not currently in the touring mode with the League. No poet has \$195 to throw around! I would suggest a reduced fee relating to various levels of income that would better reflect where poets are at in their careers and what level of payment they are able to make. If this is not possible, then by all means, an overall reduced fee would be necessary.”*

*“... I do support your attempt to convince the League to reduce the dues. Based on my general impression of things, the Quebec Writers Federation offers just as much in terms of community events, programs, prizes, services, etc., for a drastically lower price. Perhaps they have access to more grants than does the League? Or are more successful in obtaining them? In any case, were it not for my stable income and the fact that I claim the League dues as a tax-deductible expense, I would no longer be a member.”*

*“For what it's worth, I concur with you that the dues are a tad difficult to meet. They are a great bunch, at the League, and it's true I don't know how their budget works, there may well be reasons why the amount has to be what it is, but if there were any way to mitigate the cost, maybe for members at a distance?--who cannot avail themselves of much that is so well publicized by the League?”*

*“I agree that the dues are too much, considering the QWF only charges 35\$ for the same or similar services. Every year I have to consider whether I will continue my membership and*

*whether I can afford to attend the conference. This year I renewed my membership but cannot afford to also pay for the transportation to attend even the AGM never mind pay the almost \$200 for the entire conference. I need three or four half readings to cover the cost of both and rarely get that many each year. It is a pity as I enjoy meeting the other poets. So I support your idea that membership is too much. Thanks for your advocacy.”*

*“And a hearty YES to reducing the League’s annual dues. I frankly struggle to pay them. And often wonder if it is really worth it, or if I should just go local and take out the much cheaper Quebec Writers’ Federation membership. Hope you can convince the League to lower the cost.”*

As Quebec representative to the League, I ask that this question again be addressed by the Annual General Assembly.

#### *French documentation*

Francophone members in Quebec ask that essential documents of the League be translated into French.

#### *Poem in Your Pocket*

Again this year, Quebec poets Jonathan Lamy and Rachel McCrum continued the the “Poem in Your Pocket” initiative. In French the project is known as “La Journée du poème à porter”.

[For more info on this year's events see their website: https://lapoesiepartout.com/poeme-a-porter/](https://lapoesiepartout.com/poeme-a-porter/)

## **ATLANTIC REPORT**

### **Miriam Dunn MacDonald**

What a busy and creative year we have had here in beautiful Atlantic Canada. I am so pleased that our membership has grown this past year with now over 40 members in our four beautiful provinces. Creating a sense of community has been my foremost objective as the Atlantic representative. As our membership area is so large geographically, I try to keep us informed of one another’s’ successes through a brief newsletter for which I have received appreciative feedback.

We had many notable events to share, from announcements of new publications to European reading tours, but one, in particular that stands out was the Poetry Reading held in Halifax for League Members. This was hosted and organized by member **Annick MacAskill** and sponsored by the Writers’ Federation of Nova Scotia. It was an opportunity for some members to meet in person for the first time. I was so thrilled to take part and to be able to get to know the other members whose work I admire so much: Margo Wheaton, Anne Simpson, Karin Cope, Annick, and Brian Bartlett. I thank Annick for her initiative.

We had several winners of wonderful contests including **Eleonore Schönmaier** and **Phillip Crymble**. Eleonore was the winner of the third annual National Broadsheet Contest for her stunning work *it didn't happen here* .

Runner-up honor went to Phillip for *The Country East of Rossville, Indiana*.

Congratulations also goes out to **Karin Cope** whose work was recently published in the newly released LCP chapbook *Thirteen*. Also congratulations are in order for Newfoundland poet **Mary Dalton** who became the Poet Laureate for St. John's, Newfoundland. We are very excited for her and proud.

With limited space it is impossible to mention everyone and their contributions to poetry and Canadian literature but we know we will continue to be well-represented by our amazing poets in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

## MANITOBA REPORT

### Brenda Sciberras

This past year I attended numerous exciting poetry events here in Winnipeg, starting with the launch of *Heartwood: Poems for the Love of Trees* on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Our wonderful independent bookstore McNally Robinson provided the venue, and with some financial assistance from member David G. Williamson, we managed to serve tea and cookies for our guests. Ten contributors read their poems and each, along with those who purchased a copy of the book, received a white spruce seedling with a gift tag thanking them for supporting the League of Canadian Poets.

The International Writers Festival was once again a huge success. I managed to win a CTV prize package filled with writerly bling: two Thin Air coffee mugs, about ten books (half of which were poetry) from authors presenting at the festival and a dozen tickets to attend events! I couldn't use all the tickets, so I shared them with several League members to attend the Poetry Bash. I made sure to spread the word about the League and its benefits, placing LCP pamphlets at the event entrance. A few of our Manitoba League members, Di Brandt and Lori Cayer, also had the honour of reading their poetry on stage at a Thin Air event.

In mid-September Lori also launched her fourth poetry collection, *Mrs. Romanov*, and has been busy doing readings around town at various events. She recently had cause for celebration as her book made the longlist for two awards: the 2019 Pat Lowther Memorial Award and the Raymond Souster Award. Congratulations Lori!

In October, member Sally Ito launched *The Emperor's Orphans*, a creative non-fiction personal myth exploring her Japanese cultural identity.

Winnipeg poet Laureate Di Brandt launched *Glitter and Fall* in October, a wonderful collection described as an unusual combination of literary re-translation and a creative expression of Laozi's Dao De Jing, set in the Canadian prairies and highlighting the Divine Feminine, paying homage to Chinese tradition and spiritual practice. Di has also been busy leading poetry workshops in McNally Robinson's Community Classroom; "Contemporary Poetries 2" and "Poetry Manuscript-in-Progress." *World Poetry Day: Poetry in many Languages* hosted by Winnipeg's Poet Laureate Di Brandt and the Winnipeg Arts Council, was held on March 19<sup>th</sup> at McNally, where a packed audience was treated to a multi-cultural high school choir who sang

two songs in Swahili and Portuguese. This was followed by poetry readings in English, Cree, Ukrainian, Tamil, Japanese, Afrikaans, Arabic, Polish, Yoruba, Russian, French and German. A Fabulous evening!

In November member Carmelo Militano launched a collection of short stories titled, *Lost Aria* and he also continues to broadcast the P.I. New Poetry show on CKUW on Sunday afternoons.

Associate member David G. Williamson had the privilege of reading his work in March at the University College of the North. The Boreal Writers Group: An evening of Poetry, was a League sponsored event. This past year David also had his poetry published in the New Quarterly (edition 149) and Prairie Fire Magazine's December issue.

Lauren Carter pulled off a fabulous live-streamed book launch of *Following Sea*, her second collection of poetry, on February 21st at McNally Robinson Book Sellers.

In March, member Karen Clavelle along with illustrator Bob Haverluck launched her first novel, *The Mother Goose Letters*.

Winnipeg Free Press once again showcased a lovely Poetry spread for National Poetry month. Submissions were edited and compiled by John Toews and Ariel Gordon and followed the League's "nature" theme. Titled, *Sowing Seeds*, it featured League members Jonathan Ball, Lauren Carter, Sarah Klassen and Angeline Schellenberg along with other Winnipeg poets.

Member Angeline Schellenberg continues to get a lot of exposure as she is featured in an interview with Sharon Caseburg in the Summer 2018 issue of CV2. Also, just this April, Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review ran a segment, Lost and Found: Author Spotlight on Angeline.

In April Catherine Hunter launched *St. Boniface Elegies*, her fourth poetry collection.

Life member Dennis Cooley has two forthcoming poetry collections. *Cold Press Moon* and *Bestiary* which will be launched late spring.

Speaking Crow, Winnipeg's longest-running open mic continues to inspire poets on the first Tuesday of every month, held in the Carol Shields auditorium at the Millennium Library. Several of our League members have been featured readers over the past year, including myself, Di Brandt, Angeline Schellenberg, Joanne Epp, Charles Leblanc, Ted Landrum and Loren Carter. (I apologize if I've missed any members!)

I recently had the honour of being a VIP guest at the "Poetry in Voice" national finals held in Winnipeg for the first time. The Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG) hosted the evening of Canada-wide students reciting poetry to a panel of judges and a crowded house of poetry fans. Nine high school students competed for almost \$25,000 in prize money for their school libraries. What a great charitable organization this is that encourages the love of poetry and ensures that this love continues for future generations.

Prairie Fire Magazine Presents Writing Animals! Celebrating National Poetry Month (Apr. 30<sup>th</sup>) an event sponsored by the League and featured members Lauren Carter, Joanne Epp and Di Brandt among other poets.

The Manitoba Book Awards were held Friday May 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Muriel Richardson Auditorium in the WAG.

## **ASSOCIATE MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

### **Joan Conway**

This is my first report as the Associate members representative of the League. As I attend board meetings and gain knowledge of the many ways in which the council members and staff support poets, I am struck with the level of dedication and passion to ensure that poetry not only continues to grow but also that our mandate reflects the current culture of poets in our vast nation.

I have had excellent mentorship by former representative Lesley Strutt in learning how best to support emerging poets. I send out bi-monthly broadcasts highlighting and encouraging members to take advantage of all opportunities. I understand the sense of isolation that occurs in the search to find a stronger foothold in poetic communities and so ongoing communication is essential.

I have continued with *Fresh Voices*, which publishes the poetry of the Associate members on the League's website. Blaine Marchand's generous support as Full Member mentor is a real benefit to associate members and as a result, we've continued to have long-time members as well as new members see their poems very well represented. I'm also thankful to head office – Lesley Fletcher, Nicole Brewer, and Madison Stone – for finding ways to increase the readership of this publication through our social media. Their support has made it so *Fresh Voices* remains a success and continues seamlessly.

Associate members are a vital community with a rich voice from many cultures across our country. I am very pleased and honoured to represent them.

## **CDC ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Fortner Anderson**

The League is a member of the Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity. The Coalition, founded in 1998 brings together 30 Canadian cultural organizations working together to protect and promote Canadian cultural sovereignty.

#### The CCD mission

*"The Coalition for Cultural Diversity is the cultural milieu's main voice in debates on culture and trade, notably on the national front, as well as to support the government's will to assert its right to apply policies that promote the diversity of cultural expressions."*

The Canadian Coalition has been key in the effort to create and support an international network of national coalitions. These came together in 2007 as the International Federation For Cultural Diversity. There are over 40 current member coalitions of the Federation.

As of May 2015, 137 countries as well as the European Union have ratified the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Canada was one of the first signatory countries.

This was due in large part to the strong support for the effort from cultural associations across Canada.

#### About the CCD

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

Collectively these organizations represent more than 200,000 professionals and 2,000 companies in the book, film, television, new media, performing arts and visual arts sectors. Regular members of the CCD include : ACTRA, SOCAN, Association of Canadian Publishers, Canadian Actors' Equity Association, Canadian Federation of musicians, Canadian Media Production Association, Magazines Canada and the Writers Guild of Canada.

#### The Coalition in 2018-2019

As I reported last year, in 2017 the Coalition underwent an important rupture.

After a period of disruption in 2016 to 2017, a new coordinator of the CCD, Nathalie Guay took over her duties as General Coordinator in late 2017.

As was feared, the United States did re-open negotiations on the NAFTA treaty. The CCD worked closely with Canadian government negotiators to assure that Canadian cultural protections would not be subject to changes.

This work was successful, and the Canadian cultural sector protections remain in place.

#### The United States

The United States continues to exercise its influence to undermine and overturn the protections that the UN Convention provides.

The work of the Canadian Coalition and the Federation is especially important to prepare the groundwork for resistance to future efforts to "liberalize" trade. The United States continues to pursue bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements that seek to liberalize trade in its favour.

Such liberalizations can have devastating effects on national cultural subsidy programs, which are seen, from the perspective of the United States 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 United States continues to exercise tremendous pressure on Canada so that Canadian cultural products, like books, magazines, television and film production would be considered the same as other manufactured goods. This would effectively prevent Canada from promoting and protecting these and other cultural industries through regulation and direct government aid. The United States holds that Canadian investments, regulations and direct aid to these industries pose an unfair competitive advantage for U.S. firms, which do not have access to them.

The CDC's main recommendations for future policy

- Online programming services should contribute to the promotion and funding of Canadian content.
- Telecommunications service providers must also contribute to the funding of Canadian content.
- The number of exceptions to the Copyright Act must be reduced and remaining exceptions must be compensated.
- The CRTC must have the power to sanction companies that do not comply with its regulations.
- Canada should maintain its approach of excluding culture from trade negotiations, including digital trade, through a comprehensive cultural exemption.

The 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.”*

I recommend that the League re-affirm its support of the mandate of the Coalition and renew its membership to it.

For more information on the Coalition, see the following website:

HYPERLINK "<http://www.cdc-ccd.org>" [www.cdc-ccd.org](http://www.cdc-ccd.org) Canadian Coalition for Cultural Diversity;

## **MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**Anne Burke**

As I write (May 30) the Membership Committee has approved 65 Full and 43 Associate new Members. An alphabetical list of new Full and Associate Members (and by region) is available on request. This compares with June 2018, when we had reviewed and accepted 56 Full and 25 Associate Members. At the same time in

2017, we had reviewed and accepted 46 Full and 26 Associate Members. This compares with 42 new Full and 11 Associate, in 2016. There were 27 new Full and 12 Associate accepted in 2014-2015.

1. On Nov. 20, 2018, the Membership Numbers for 2018-2019 were: **Category: Membership Overview, Number of Members:** Full 577, Associate 114, Other: (Life, Honourary, Student, etc.) 48 (Total: 739). [Note: In 2017-2018, there were an estimated 716 Members in the League, of which about 100 were Associate Members. By way of comparison, in September 2016, the League had 475 Full, 103 Associate, 12 Student, with Supporting (2), Life (19), and Honourary (26).]
2. As a Budget Item: Membership Revenues: for **2018-2019**, Year to Date Revenues were: \$94,556, while the Membership Goal was: \$95,500. The **2017- 2018** Membership Total was \$94,353, with Year to date: \$90,759, and **2016-2017** Membership Total: \$86,758.
3. **The Regional Membership: Region, Regional Rep, Number of Members:** Atlantic: Miriam Dunn (33), Québec-Nunavik: Fortner Anderson (30), Ontario: Claudia Radmore (158), Toronto: Julie Cameron Grey/ Kate Marshall-Flaherty (148), Manitoba: Brenda Sciberras (22), Saskatchewan: Rita Bouvier (16); Alberta-NWT: Nasra Adem (43), British Columbia-Yukon: Veronica Gaylie (129), Associate Members Rep National: Joan Conway (115).

Thank you to our hard-working and tireless Membership Committee: **Bernice Lever** and **Susan McMaster** (Print); **Tanya Evanson** and **Ian Ferrier** (Spoken Word). They will all be allowing their names to stand for election, except for Bernice. We give thanks for her years of experience and wisdom! I will be serving the second year of my two-year term.

*Bios sourced from the internet:*

**Ian Ferrier** is one of the core poet/performers in the N. A. performance literature scene. Rooted in poetry, his live performances are a haunting blend: some pieces are performed with acoustic guitar, others with choir; some are whispered and others wail to the trancelike music of a band called Pharmakon. He appears across Canada, in N.Y. and in Europe, and his signature is the quiet voice at the centre of every poem. Planète Rebelle Press released his first CD & poetry book-Exploding Head Man-to national acclaim. *The National Post* called it "a musical-score lament for a movie that never was; a movie starring a new breed of fearless poet/magicians doing their best version of Kerouac's rediscovered yelp: EE-Yah!" Ian Ferrier's trademark is a blend of whispered and spoken word and electric guitar. He has performed in over 500 shows in Canada, the United States and Europe. He has released two CDs and five books, the most recent of which are **A Child Sees Winter Coming and a Bear Dreams** (*Wired on Words 2018*) and **Quel est ce lieu** (*Maison Noroît 2017*). He is currently collecting 20 years of his poetry & music show recordings for the online university archive **SpokenWeb**.

**Tanya Evanson** is an Antiguan-Canadian poet, performer, producer and arts educator from Tiohtià:ke /Montreal. She is also director of The Banff Centre Spoken Word Program. With a history of 20 years in spoken word performance, she received the Golden Beret Award for her contribution to the genre and was Poet of Honour at the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word in 2013. Alongside features in documentaries, videopoems, tv and radio, notable live performances include Vancouver Writers Festival, Edmonton Poetry Festival, Bowery Poetry (US), Story-Fest (Australia), Ubud Writers Festival (Indonesia), Poetry Africa (South Africa), Edinburgh Book Festival and Glastonbury Festival.



Her fourth studio album and band project ZENSHIP (2016), received critical acclaim for pushing boundaries between poetry and live music. And following six artist books, "Bothism" (Ekstasis Editions 2017) is her first published poetry collection and "Nouveau Griot" (2018) is fresh from Frontenac House. Other recent print publications includes *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *WSQ-Feminist Press*, *Making Room* (Caitlin Press), and *Resist Much/Obey Little* (Dispatches Editions). She moonlights as a whirling dervish and is at work on her first novella. [http://www.mothertonguemedia.com/info\\_bio.html](http://www.mothertonguemedia.com/info_bio.html)

Of **Susan McMaster**, "Her purview is the world entire, with all its mystery, heartbreak and magic" (Carolyn Smart, editor McGill-Queen's). Her poetry has been described as "muscular, candid, intimate yet universal... with an open, seemingly effortless control of her craft" (Heather Spears, GG award winner). A Past President of the League of Canadian Poets, she is author or editor of 30+ poetry books, recordings, and anthologies. Her midlife memoir, *The Gargoyle's Left Ear*, recounts founding *Branching Out*, the first Canadian feminist/arts magazine <<https://riseupfeministarchive.ca/publications/branching-out/>>; performing with First Draft, SugarBeat, and Geode Music & Poetry across Canada and on shows such as Morningside, As It Happens, WordBeat, Richardson's Roundup, and GO!; editing such collections as *Pith & Wry: Canadian Poetry* and *Silence: Poets on Women, Violence and Silence*; and organizing projects like "Convergence: Poems for Peace", which brought art-wrapped poetry from more than 100 contributors from across the country to all MPs and Senators in the millennial year. She worked for two decades as a senior book editor at the National Gallery of Canada, founding *Vernissage* magazine and including ekphrastic poetry from some two dozen poets, and editing some three dozen art catalogues, including two with poetry inserts. She is now a full-time writer. Languages and translation. Published in Italy in bilingual English/Italian book edited and with an introduction by Ada Donati, *La Deriva del Pianeta* (Schifanoia Editore, 2003), and in several Italian literary magazines. Some of her work includes French elements.

#### FRANCOPHONE MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Committee hopes to include one paragraph per month in LCPM's members' news with a volunteer editor/connector who is a French speaking member now. \* A new volunteer "job" or gift of time once a month to share French-language poet news.

#### SINGER/SONGWRITER MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Committee feels Associate membership is currently the most fitting membership category for applicants whose work is secondarily poetry. We would like to discuss this issue of singer/songwriter poets at the next AGM. We might take the position that singer/poets could be recognized as Associates, since their work is not directly within the poetry genre, even of performance poetry.

#### NEW MEMBER READING

**Join the League of Canadian Poets at The Joseph Sherman New Members Memorial Reading**, in celebrating some of our New Members from the past year, on Sunday, 9 June at 12:30 p.m, in St. John's, Newfoundland. Bios sourced from the internet:

**David Miller** is a poet living in northern British Columbia. He was born in Toronto in 1952 and came to British Columbia in 1971. He has worked a variety of occupations from logging, commercial fishing, to working with

those suffering mental illness and addictions. His poetry reflects a hidden edge of masculinity that bubbles beneath the surface from the dark alleys to the forest and sea.

**Matthew Gwathmey** was born in Richmond, Virginia and studied creative writing at the University of Virginia. His poems have appeared in Grain Magazine, Crazyhorse, Prairie Fire, The Iowa Review, and other literary magazines. He became a Canadian citizen in 2013 and lives with his wife and children in Fredericton, New Brunswick, where he is a PhD student at UNB. He also works at The Learning Bar on the Confident Learners Program, a literacy program created with First Nations schools across Canada.

**Shazia Hafiz Ramji** received the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry for Port of Being, forthcoming with Invisible Publishing in fall 2018. Her poetry is forthcoming in Best Canadian Poetry 2018 and her fiction has appeared in The Humber Literary Review. Her essays and criticism have recently appeared or are forthcoming in The Chicago Review of Books, Quill & Quire, Canadian Literature, and The Hamilton Review of Books. In April 2018, she founded the Intersections Reading Group, a series dedicated to discussing race, gender, class, and other intersections in writing and in life.

**Jim Nason** graduated from McGill University with an MA in English Literature. He also holds degrees from Ryerson and York Universities. His award winning poems, essays, and stories have been published in literary journals and anthologies across the United States and Canada, including The Best Canadian Poetry in English 2008, 2010 & 2012. He has published six collections of poetry, three novels, and a collection of short stories. He has been a finalist for the CBC Literary Award in both the fiction and poetry categories.

## FEMINIST CAUCUS REPORT

### Anne Burke

Founded in 1982, the Feminist Caucus is a Standing Policy Committee of the League of Canadian Poets. Membership is open to any League member who shares the goals and objectives of the Caucus; many members are self-identified. League members may participate in the annual business meeting as well as the annual open reading.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE EVENTS

**On Saturday, June 8**, please plan to join us for the League AGM (9:00am to 12:00 pm) and lunch (Narrows Restaurant), after which we will celebrate together at:

2:30 pm – **Poetry, Resistance, and Democracy panel**, with **Klara Du Plessis, Shazia Hafiz Ramji, and Andrea Thompson (Port Room)**. This panel will critically examine an often-disingenuous history of democracy and equality in poetry and the arts in Canada. Panelists will examine the political nature of poetry and the systems that have decided who may or may not achieve success and stability in poetry, questioning the nature of democracy (who benefits, who doesn't) and how that's reflected in and/or reinforced by artists and arts organizations.

*Panelists' bios sourced from the internet:*

**Klara du Plessis** is a South African-Canadian poet, who writes in both English and Afrikaans. Her debut poetry collection *Ekke* was shortlisted for both the Gerald Lampert Award and the Pat Lowther Award, in 2019. A poet and critic originally from Bloemfontein, South Africa, Klara's chapbook *Wax Lyrical* was shortlisted for the bpNichol Chapbook Award. Poems, essays, and reviews have appeared in print and online. Klara curates the monthly Resonance Reading Series. She lives in Montreal, where she was born. A graduate student at Montreal's Concordia University, she also is editor of the Quebec Writers' Federation's online literary journal *Carte Blanche*.

**Shazia Hafiz Ramji** received the Robert Kroetsch Award for Innovative Poetry for *Port of Being*, forthcoming with Invisible Publishing in fall 2018. Her poetry is forthcoming in *Best Canadian Poetry 2018* and her fiction has appeared in *The Humber Literary Review*. Her essays and criticism have recently appeared, or are forthcoming, in *The Chicago Review of Books*, *Quill & Quire*, *Canadian Literature*, and *The Hamilton Review of Books*. In April 2018, she founded the Intersections Reading Group, a series dedicated to discussing race, gender, class, and other intersections in writing and in life. She is an editor for Metatron Press, Canadian Women in the Literary Arts, and continues to work as a developmental editor and consultant for various publishing houses across Canada. She has been the poetry editor for *Prism international*, book reviews editor for *subTerrain magazine*, and a guest editor for *Poetry is Dead*.

Shazia is also an independent scholar who focuses on postcolonial literature and theory. She recently presented a talk on researching her first book of poems at the Canadian Writers Summit / CCWWP, and she will be appearing at the 2018 Vancouver Writers Festival and the 2018 Surrey International Writers Conference, as well as the MLA conference and AWP, in 2019. Her first chapbook is *Prosopopoeia* (Anstruther Press, 2017). She is at work on a novel and a second book of poems. Shazia has a BA in English and History from Simon Fraser University and is an MFA candidate in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. She is a graduate of The Writer's Studio at SFU.

**Andrea Thompson** is a writer, teacher, activist and mentor, who has been a mainstay on the Canadian spoken word scene for the past twenty years. Thompson's poetry collection, *Eating the Seed* (Ekstasis Editions, 2000), has been featured on the reading list at the University of Toronto, and at the Ontario College of Art and Design. She is also the co-editor of *Other Tongues: Mixed-Race Women Speak Out*, an anthology released by Inanna Publications in the fall of 2010. In 2012, Thompson received a Masters of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph, with a full-length fiction manuscript for her thesis. Her debut novel, *Over Our Heads* was published by Inanna Publications in the fall of 2014.

Working in a variety of forms, Thompson's poetry has been featured in the film *Slam Nation*, on Bravo TV's *Planet Poetry*, TVO's *Imprint*, Carolyn Weaver's *BioLibrary* and on a variety of CBC radio programs. A popular performer at venues and festivals across North America, Thompson's work has been featured on film, radio, and television; and included in magazines, literary journals and anthologies across Canada. Thompson's poetry is hybridist and unique - blending elements of jazz, blues, spoken word and traditional literary verse into a style all her own. In 2009 she was awarded the Canadian Festival of Spoken Word's Poet of Honour for Outstanding Achievement, and in 2005 her CD *One* was nominated for a Canadian Urban Music Award.

In 2008, Thompson wrote and performed her one-woman show, "Mating Rituals of the Urban Cougar", which she toured across the country as part of the Canadian Fringe Festival series. In 2009 her essay on the history of Spoken Word in Canada was published by Edition Malestrom (Brussels) as the prologue to the book *Le Making of d'un Homme* by Dwayne Morgan. She is currently teaching Spoken Word and Poetry through the Ontario College of Art and Design University's Continuing Studies Department, and is a member of the WordSpell collective.

4:45pm – **Feminist Caucus business meeting**: help the League plan feminist equity and diversity programming and initiatives for the 2019-2020 year! (Port Room)

6:30pm – 9 pm **Awards Ceremony and Dinner**, announcing the winners of our annual book awards and the Sheri-D Wilson Golden Beret Award for Spoken Word (Port Room)

**We received eighty seven submissions from forty publishers for the Pat Lowther Memorial Award this year.** There were eighty titles by forty-nine publishers entered for the 2017 Pat Lowther Memorial Award. This compares with eighty-four titles in the previous year 2016. The Award is for a book of poetry by a Canadian woman and is in memory of the late Pat Lowther, whose career was cut short by her brutal murder in 1975. The award carries a \$2,000 prize. **The winner will be announced at the Sat. June 8 Awards Gala and Dinner.**

2019 PAT LOWTHER MEMORIAL AWARD SHORTLIST:

*Listen Before Transmit* by Dani Couture (Wolsak & Wynn)

*Ekke* by Klara du Plessis (Palimpsest Press)

*Body Work* by Emilia Nielsen (Signature Editions)

*East and West* by Laura Ritland (Véhicule Press)

*Reunion* by Deanna Young (Brick Books)

*The Missing Field* by Jennifer Zilm (Guernica Editions)

You can find author photos, bios, and comments from the jurors for the 2019 Pat Lowther Memorial Award short-listed poets and their works on the League website. Congratulations to the finalists and thank you to the stalwart publishers of poetry across Canada! **Thank you to the 2019 Jury: Robert Colman, Brenda Leifso, and Shane Neilson.**

*Jurors' bios sourced from the internet:*

**Robert Colman** is a writer and editor based in Newmarket, Ontario. His poetry has appeared in literary magazines across Canada. His first book of poetry, *The Delicate Line*, was published with Exile Editions in 2008. It was longlisted for the ReLit Award. The title poem received a Highly Commended Award in the Petra Kenney Poetry Competition (U.K.). His second full-length collection, *Little Empires*, was published by Quattro Books in 2012. His most recent publication, *Factory*, (Frog Hollow Press, 2015) is a selection of 15 poems inspired by Canada's manufacturing industry.

**Brenda Leifso** is a writer living in Kingston, ON. Her first poetry collection, *Daughters of Men*, was published by Brick Books, and her second, *Barren the Fury*, was published by Pedlar Press. Her third collection, *Wild Madder*, was published by Brick Books in 2019. Her poetry has appeared in journals across the country, and her work has won the Bliss Carman Award and been short- and long-listed for the CBC Poetry prize. She has been a managing editor for *PRISM international* and for *Arc Poetry Magazine*, with whom she also served on the board. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from UBC and an MA in English from UVic, and continues to write and to work as a freelance editor and yoga teacher.

**Shane Neilson** is the author of five trade books of poetry: *Meniscus* (Biblioasis, 2009); *Complete Physical* (Porcupine's Quill, 2010); *On Shaving Off His Face* (Porcupine's Quill, 2015); *Dysphoria* (PQL, 2017); and *New Brunswick* (Biblioasis, 2019). He won the Walrus Poetry Prize in 2017, the Hamilton Arts Council Literary Award for Poetry in 2018, and SSHRC's \$50,000 "Talent" award also in 2018. An editor for Frog Hollow Press, Gordon Hill Press, and Hamilton Arts & Letters, Shane completed his PhD in the representations of pain in Canadian Literature in 2018. He is also an assistant clinical professor of medicine at McMaster's Waterloo campus. He practices family medicine in Guelph.

#### LIVING ARCHIVES SERIES

Each year, the Feminist Caucus publishes a collection of writing from the previous Feminist Caucus panel. 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 series is the object of study for **Women and Words: Canadian Feminist Literary Collectives 1980-2000**.

The League administers the sale of certain publications, referred to as Living Archives. Cumulative revenues and expenses since the beginning of the year ended March 31, 1997 are as follows:

	2018	2017
Total revenues (1997-2018)	<b>\$7,635</b>	\$7,545
Total expenses (1997-2018)	<b>(2,661)</b>	(2,661)
<b>Balance (1997-2018)</b>	<b>\$4,974</b>	\$4,884

#### NATIONAL POETRY MONTH 2018

**Madison Stoner**

#### #NPM18 NATIONAL REACH

We know of 111 Canadian cities that joined us in celebrating National Poetry Month this year! The League funded events or provided promotional materials to independent bookstores, schools, and libraries in Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon Territories.

#### NPM WITH THE LEAGUE

- In the week leading up to April 1<sup>st</sup>, the start of National Poetry Month, I did a countdown on social media which helped create excitement/awareness about National Poetry Month and used this as an opportunity to provide resources for folks looking for ways to celebrate. This included sharing links for teachers/parents to help their students/kids participate in National Poetry Month.
- #NPM18 daily blog series: we shared a new blog post each day, all month long. Most were written by me, though we had some exciting guest posts by League members and notable Canadian poets; 8 to be exact! Our most popular guest posts (based on Twitter and Facebook engagements) were rob mclennan's ["A List of Twenty Current Chapbook Presses"](#) and Chelene Knight's ["16 Indigenous Writers and Artists to Learn From."](#) The most popular posts by me (again, based on Twitter and Facebook engagements) were ["20 League-Funded National Poetry Events"](#) and ["All About Poets Laureate"](#). Office favourite posts include guest post ["20 Poetry Prompts for the League"](#) by Robin Richardson, guest post ["12 Canadian Nature Poetry Books"](#) by Terrence Abrahams – a list which rejects the problematic settler-colonial romanticism found in Canadian nature poetry from the past, and ["10 Ways to Support your Favourite Poets,"](#) which was re-Tweeted by many of our members.
- Another exciting highlight from this year's National Poetry Month is that we reached out to establish a relationship with Montréal non-profit [La poésie partout](#) (translated as Poetry Everywhere)! La poésie partout is a French language initiative which aims to create, support, spread, and link poetic activity across Quebec and beyond with the goal of bringing poetry to different audiences through the placement of poetry in unexpected, everyday locations. We had founder Jonathan Lamy write a guest blog post about the organization, which we posted in both [French](#) and [English](#)! This is an important step for the League in increasing our offerings and resources for French language poets and members.
- I tried a few initiatives to get our social media followers participating in #NPM18 online and engaging with us. Shortly before and throughout the month, I asked our followers what they'd be/been reading for National Poetry Month, offering the incentive that their selections might be featured on our blog. We only received one response, and thus there wasn't enough content with which to make a post about our followers' NPM reading lists. CBC Books did something similar with their article/call ["Help us build the ultimate list of must-read Canadian poetry books"](#) which also did not appear to receive many responses – though we responded, and our suggestions were featured in the [results article](#). I also created a poetry challenge, ["20 Words for 20 Years of National Poetry Month,"](#) that, although the Tweet made 499 impressions, only one follower participated in. I will use these experiences to inform the way I try to encourage participation from our followers next NPM. It is worth noting that neither of these initiatives offered a substantial reward – the only reward for both was being published on our website. Next year, I will plan to have prizes such as books, notebooks, pens, etc. and hope that this will increase participation rates.
- We welcomed 9 new members to the League in April! We extended an invitation to the poets longlisted for our 2018 Book Awards and already, some of them have taken us up on this offer.
- This year, we did ad swaps with the Writer's Guild of Alberta, Grain Magazine, and All Lit Up.
- We mailed out 4000 promotional posters to our members, libraries, schools, independent bookstores, and other literary organizations. We found that advertising the opportunity for free posters on social media generated a lot of interest, as well as contacting provincial library associations. Notably, the Ontario Library Association included the opportunity in their member newsletter and we received many requests from Ontario librarians as a result.

- Our events calendar was overpopulated with poetry-happenings all around Canada! Boasting at least one event on every single day, a quick glance at the [Events for April 2018](#) could show any skeptic that poetry is thriving!

## AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENTS

As has become tradition, we announced our three book awards shortlists (Gerald Lampert & Pat Lowther Memorial and Raymond Souster) plus the finalists for the Sheri-D Wilson Golden Beret Award during National Poetry Month. This year we had a very exciting piece of news to announce along with the shortlists: thanks to increased funding from the Canada Council, we were able to *DOUBLE* our cash prizes to \$2000! The League has been wanting to increase the cash prize for our book awards for some time so this was a big accomplishment for us. 21 poets were shortlisted for these four accolades, and you can view the full shortlist announcement here: <http://poets.ca/2018/04/30/2018-book-awards-shortlist-announcements/>. The shortlists, plus news of the increased prize amount, were picked up by several media outlets:

- Open Book: <http://open-book.ca/News/League-of-Canadian-Poets-Announces-2018-Shortlists-with-Doubled-Prize-Money>
- CBC Books: <http://www.cbc.ca/books/billy-ray-belcourt-cansia-lubrin-phoebe-wang-shortlisted-for-2018-league-of-canadian-poets-prizes-1.4641643>
- Quill and Quire: <https://quillandquire.com/omni/the-league-of-canadian-poets-announces-shortlists/>
- Times Colonist: <http://www.timescolonist.com/victoria-writers-up-for-national-poetry-award-1.23286329>

The award winners were announced on Saturday, June 16 at our annual awards ceremony, held this year in Toronto as part of the Canadian Writers' Summit ([read about it here](#)). We distributed a press release on Monday, June 18, which was picked up by the following media outlets:

- CBC Books: <https://www.cbc.ca/books/marilyn-dumont-emily-nilsen-among-winners-of-2018-the-league-of-canadian-poets-prizes-1.4710648>
- Open Book: <http://open-book.ca/News/Nilsen-Enns-Belleau-Morgan-Capture-2018-League-of-Canadian-Poets-Awards>
- Quill and Quire: <https://quillandquire.com/omni/the-league-of-canadian-poets-announces-winners-of-the-2018-annual-poetry-awards/>
- Mountain Culture Magazine: <http://mountainculturegroup.com/kootenay-writer-wins-prestigious-poetry-award/>
- University of Regina Press via Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UofRPress/status/1009123684693479424>

## POEM IN YOUR POCKET DAY

The League celebrated Poem in Your Pocket Day with the Academy of American Poets for the third year, selecting 20 new poems – including Broadsheet, Haiku, and Jessamy Stursberg winners for the 2018 booklet. New this year we had Megan Fildes from Invisible Publishing design a unique postcard for each poem which we printed and sent one (at random) to our members in celebration of PIYP. Many of our members shared the postcards they received on social media. We plan to print more sets of postcards to sell in the future. We were absolutely thrilled to find that the [Toronto Public Library created a quiz](#) which matched participants with one of the 20 Canadian poems from the 2018 PIYP booklet for them to carry for the occasion. Participants were also linked to the search results for books by the poem's author in the TPL catalogue, which was an

incredible opportunity for these poets to gain exposure! The office staff completed the quiz and shared our results by photographing the match-made poems in our pockets for social media.

And because they were so fun last year, we commissioned more poet illustrations! This year, [Jen Woodall drew](#) Dennis Lee, Gwendolyn MacEwen, Lee Maracle, and M. NourbeSe Philip!

In Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, it seems the entire community participated in PIYP Day! CBC reporter Elizabeth Chiu contacted us to ask some questions about PIYP Day and we were delighted afterwards to read her story about the ways Sherbrooke residents carried poetry with them. Read it here: [“Everyone’s a poet, even if they didn’t know it, in Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, today”](#)

## **POETRY CITY**

35 communities from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, PEI, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia accepted the 2018 Poetry City challenge.

## **POETRY PAUSE (FORMERLY POEM-A-DAY)**

We took the opportunity of heightened visibility during National Poetry Month to open our new pilot project Poem-A-Day to public submissions, which we have since rebranded to be named [Poetry Pause](#). Inspired by the Academy of American Poets’ poem-a-day project, we plan to share one poem Monday-Friday all year long. So far, we’ve received 70 submissions from members and 26 from non-members. Our most popular tweet during National Poetry Month was our announcement for the call for submissions for this exciting new project, which made 6292 impressions and had an engagement rate of 3.5%!

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media engagement during NPM18 was phenomenal, with a lot of distinctly Canadian content taking up the hashtag #NPM18 and being shared widely among poets, publications, and literary organizations. The League-generated content received engagement consistent with and greater than in 2017, and we were thrilled with the amount of content being created by other individuals and organizations.

April saw high levels of engagement on our Facebook and Twitter posts alike, though, as is consistent with previous years and our weekly social media tracking data, our Twitter followers are comparatively more active than those on our Facebook. During National Poetry Month 2017, we made 85,800 impressions on Twitter compared to 174,000 impressions this NPM 18 – a 103% increase. Social media was talking about the League more this year, as evidenced by a 23% increase in monthly mentions from NPM 17 – NPM18 (with a total of 514 mentions this year). Our Facebook posts had a total reach of 17,166, an increase of 5% from last year. Our top tweet in April had a reach of 5386 – compared to NPM 17’s top tweet with a reach of 3500 while all of our top 10 most popular tweets reaching at least 3184 users.

This year we chose to make our awards shortlist announcement on April 30<sup>th</sup> to close out National Poetry Month 2018. Our announcement tweet had a reach of 5165 with 72 link clicks, 25 likes, and 15 retweets.



We chose to pay to promote two Facebook posts during NPM 18 and this yielded positive results and were very affordable: we spent a total of \$12 on social media advertising and from that, reached 2355 people!

Poem in Your Pocket Day was also very successful on Twitter. Our Tweet linking to our website where the 2018 PIYP Day poems are hosted had a reach of 3185 and many League members who were either featured poets in the 2018 PIYP Day poems/postcards tweeted photos of their postcards, as did League members not featured but who received a postcard in the mail.

### **GOOGLE ANALYTICS FOR POETS.CA**

New this year we enabled Google Analytics so that we could monitor the traffic on our website, which was especially relevant because of our daily blog post initiative and the efforts and time that went into making this happen. Website statistics are an insightful tool for us as they can tell us if folks are clicking the links we share on social media and visiting and spending time on our website or simply liking or retweeting our social media posts advertising our website content. It is notable that our user loyalty rate was 70% higher in April than it was in March!

### **PRESS REPORT – FROM PUBLICIST HAZEL MILLAR**

There was a lot of renewed excitement for National Poetry Month this year. Not only was it exciting to celebrate 20 years of NPM in Canada but I believe the League's decision to not select a particular NPM theme this year provided individuals and organizations more freedom in how to celebrate all things poetry. The introduction of longlists for the annual poetry awards was very positively received. There are so many deserving poetry titles published in Canada each year, and while of course only a few are selected as award-winners, it was wonderful to fete more titles than ever through the introduction of the longlists. Possibly the best news of all though was the League's surprise announcement that the prize money for each of the four book awards will double from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

The press releases issued this year received a lot of social media engagement from poets and writing and publishing organizations across the country. Ample media coverage was provided by CBC Books and *Quill and Quire*. Open Book and 49th Shelf continued their ongoing support of NPM as well as the longlists and shortlists announcements. Coverage was also provided by various regional news sites and blogs.

### **BEYOND THE LEAGUE**

- [All Lit Up](#) celebrated NPM with [Poetry Cure](#), a blog series dedicated to poetry as a mode of healing. It was featured on their website and offered in the form of a newsletter which delivered a poem to your inbox everyday in April. The series featured interviews/poems from a different poet each day and included 2018 League shortlisters Lesley Belleau and Susan Elmslie.
- [The Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist was announced](#), featuring League member and 2018 shortlister Billy-Ray Belcourt! Congratulations to the Canadian shortlist: Billy-Ray Belcourt, Aisha Sasha John, and Donato Mancini!
- Open Book's Writer-in-Residence for the month was poet Emma Healey.

- Indigo Books & Music created a list on their website, “Top 10 Canadian Poets to Celebrate National Poetry Month,” in which their 10 bestselling Canadian poetry offerings were rounded up - and many were discounted (ranging from 8-36% off). Poets included Rupi Kaur, Najwa Zebian, and Emma Healey.
- CBC Books could not get enough poetry this NPM! During April, they posted a staggering 33 poetry-related articles, including [14 Canadian Poets to Watch in 2018](#) which included League members Billy-Ray Belcourt, Dani Couture, Adam Dickinson, Canisia Lubrin, Robin Richardson, Laura Ritland, and Phoebe Wang (in other words, half the list!).
- The ever-popular [CBC Poetry Prize](#) opened on April 1<sup>st</sup>, to start NPM off with a bang, and will accept submissions until May 31, 2018. The prize this year is again \$6000 plus a 10-day writing residency at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and publication on CBC Books.
- The new Parliamentary Poet Laureate Georgette LeBlanc was officially installed on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Ontario Rep. Claudia Radmore attended the installation on behalf of the League and [wrote a lovely blog about her experience](#), which we shared with our followers during National Poetry Month. Parliament was kind enough to share the poem which Georgette read at the ceremony with us, in both English and French, which we [published on our website](#).
- 49th Shelf kindly offered us a spot on their blog, for which Nicole, Hazel, and I collaborated on [“20 Celebrating 20 Years of National Poetry Month”](#) – a retrospective of some winners of our book awards from the past 20 years and, in the spirit of anniversaries and moving forward, some stellar anthologies from longstanding Canadian literary journals.
- [Verse Fest](#) in Ottawa happened just a few days before National Poetry Month (March 20-25), which primed people to be thinking and talking about poetry as we entered into April!

And because there was so much going on this National Poetry Month – the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of celebrating NPM in Canada – I created a weekly round-up of our blog content along with the content our friends at Open Book, All Lit Up, 49<sup>th</sup> Shelf, and CBC Books - plus any NPM related news that caught my eye – posted each week. For an in-depth look at Canadian literary organizations’ National Poetry Month 2018 output, browse through our #NPM18 Weekly Round-Ups!