



President's Corner

By Barbara Barry-Nishanian

As summer fades and the busy days of autumn begin to take their place in our beloved state, it is my honor and delight to connect with you once again. The past few months have been vibrant with ideas and plans for GPS's growth and development, meant to establish a foundation for poetic growth, creative discovery, and an expanding sense of community among our members.

This month, I would like to share our vision for the future of GPS and highlight the exciting new developments, events, and programs on the horizon.



It's very important to me that our members feel welcome at both online and community events.

Moving forward, I want to ensure we provide appropriate support and encouragement to members as they explore the world of poetry and the many opportunities for skill development and publication available throughout the state and beyond.

With that goal in mind, we were pleased to launch our redesigned newsletter last month as a first step toward major member support. Under the direction of our new Editor, Kimberly Wright, the monthly newsletter will provide a growing supply of information to help members develop their writing skills and explore publication opportunities, as well as discover personal and event connections around the state.

In this same focus on members, Marion Owens, our IT professional, has been diligent in strengthening our digital presence. The GPS website maintains up-to-date information about events and opportunities, along with information and links to statewide and national poetry-related events that benefit our members. You'll find a calendar of events on our website, as well as the all-important link to membership opportunities.

In addition to the website, GPS is strengthening our presence on social media through Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. You can watch previous episodes of GPS Open Mic [here](#).

I'm excited to announce the next GPS membership meeting to be held on Saturday, Sept. 27, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It's my hope that a Saturday meeting will give most members an opportunity to attend.

During the meeting, we'll discuss the future of GPS, a new poetry contest, and our next publication of the GPS anthology, *The Reach of Song*. I look forward to introducing our board of directors to the membership and hosting a Q&A session, where members can share their thoughts and ideas on the continued development of our society.

As 2026 approaches, we are busy making plans for a full year ahead. With member involvement, we hope to develop a full calendar of community events throughout Georgia, workshops and lectures to assist your development as poets, and opportunities for publication in-state and nationally.

I hope you are ready to become an active member of GPS, ready to help us grow as we do all we can to help you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[President's Corner](#)

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

[GPS Events](#)

[Poetry Contest](#)

[Next Open Mic](#)

[Quarterly Meeting](#)

[Meet and Greet](#)

[Did you know?](#)

[GPS Has Online Professional
Development Courses](#)

[Poets for Peace](#)

[More NFSPS Notes](#)

[Board Positions Open to Membership](#)

[Available Positions:](#)

[Now Accepting Submissions for The Reach of
Song](#)

[Submission Requirements:](#)

[Poetry Challenge](#)

[Duplex](#)

[This Month's Poetry Prompt](#)

[Suggested Reading](#)

[Upcoming Ga. Literary Events](#)

[20th Anniversary Decatur Book Festival](#)

[Storytellers Open Mic Night](#)

[Open Mic Night](#)

[Atlanta Writers Conference](#)

[Johns Creek Literary Fair](#)

[Spotlight On Kathryn Schmeiser](#)

[Want to Be the Next Person We Feature
on Spotlight On?](#)

[What's In a Name?](#)

[CONTACTS](#)



GPS Events

Poetry Contest

There's just enough time to have a members-only poetry contest before the year ends!

Please send us a single entry on any theme and in any style. Include the poem's title along with your name and contact information in the body of an email to: VP@georgiapoetrysociety.org. Include your poem as an attachment to the email.

Entries will be accepted until end-of-day Oct. 31. First, second and third place winners will be announced in our November newsletter and invited to read their poems at the Nov. 20 Open Mic.

Prizes are: First Place, \$25; Second Place, \$15; Third Place, \$10.

Next Open Mic

- [Sept. 18, 7 p.m.](#), online via Zoom.
[Register here.](#)

Quarterly Meeting

- **Sept. 27, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m., Zoom**

It's time for a membership meeting, and everyone is invited!

You'll receive a Zoom invitation ahead of time.

This is an important meeting, and we hope everyone will be able to attend.

The Georgia Poetry Society is strengthening its presence in the state by reenergizing our vision and purpose, our goals, and especially our methods of supporting members. At this meeting, we will discuss our evolving vision and how it is expected to support our growing membership.

We'll talk about what we expect GPS to be doing in the new year and where we hope to see it in the years to come. We'll introduce a new poetry contest, plans for more, and a member chapbook we hope to publish in the upcoming year. We will also share how you can participate in the next edition of our anthology, *The Reach of Song*. There will also be a brief introduction of our board of directors, followed by a Q&A session where we invite your input and ideas about what we have discussed. It promises to be a full and informative meeting, and we look forward to seeing you there!

Meet and Greet

- **Oct. 11, 11 a.m.**
- **Nov. 8, 11 a.m.**

Do you want a little no-pressure chat or to reach out to GPS members? The Georgia Poetry Society regularly holds meet and greets, and you are welcome to Zoom on by, bring (or meet!) a friend and introduce yourself. This is an informal meeting that we'll use to take feedback and questions.

Did you know?

GPS Has Online Professional Development Courses

Did you know we have courses available to strengthen your skills as a poet and marketer of your own work?

Check out the [courses section](#) of the GPS website to tap into this education. It includes a [free email course on marketing](#).

Other courses include [Poetry Online: Build Your First Blog or Website](#) and [Take Your Poetry Marketing to the Next Level](#), which was newly unveiled in June. This intermediate-level course includes 8+ hours of content, 38 in-depth lessons and seven lessons completely free to explore.

Take advantage of these resources to improve the business side of your poetry life.

Poets for Peace

By Barbara Barry-Nishanian

It's hard to believe that this time last year, we were remembering the NFSPS (National Federation of State Poetry Societies) convention held in Roswell, Georgia, which we co-hosted. As your president, I was privileged to speak at the convention and share the stage with fellow board members Kimberly Wright, Alice Johnson, and Elizabeth John.

Each of us had the opportunity to read a few of our poems. My poem, "If This Was the Last Poetry Contest," tied for second place in the "You Be the Judge" contest.

At the convention, featured speaker Ihor Pavlyuk, the People's Poet of Ukraine, gave a moving presentation that made a lasting impact on those in attendance. Pavlyuk, whose works express emotional honesty and blend personal history with Ukraine's cultural and historical narrative, has received several international awards and was nominated this year for the Nobel Prize in Literature. A writer, playwright, monographer, and poet, he so inspired this gathering that the project, *Sunflowers Rising: Poems for Peace*, was conceived.

This international anthology features the work of more than 170 poets who recognize the importance of peace and the transformative power of words to influence thought and action. We are proud to recognize several Georgia poets who contributed to this anthology, among them, three members of the Georgia Poetry Society:

- Kathy Ellis – "Trees with Missing Limbs"
- Ryan Evans – "The Rhythm of War"
- Louis Correa-Diaz – "Drones"
- Steven Croft – "O Peace"
- Jennifer Susan Smith – "A Songbook for Midnight"
- Katheryn (Kit) Schmeiser, GPS – "Little One"
- Gurpreet Khalsa, GPS – "Young Soldier Sent to Fight Her Neighbor"
- Barbara Barry-Nishanian, GPS – "Be Peaceable With All Men"

You can watch the GPS members read their poems on the Aug. 21, 2025, episode of the GPS YouTube channel, which will be available at a later date.

Poets for Peace — Sunflowers Rising: Poems For Peace Anthology was co-edited by Pavlyuk, who also wrote the foreword. An orphan himself, Pavlyuk is an advocate for Ukrainian orphans, for whom all proceeds raised from this publication will be used to support. You can read more about *Sunflowers Rising* and purchase a copy [here](#).

More NFSPS Notes

In addition, the NFSPS is conducting the 2025 Barbara Stevens Manuscript Competition with a deadline of Oct. 16. If you have a manuscript ready to be published, why not [check out the NFSPS contest page on Submittable](#) for more details? This contest could be the game-changer you've been looking for.

The National Federation of State Poetry Society has its own newsletter, [Strophes](#), that includes information about contests, including previous winners, as well as an assortment of other happenings at the national level.

Board Positions Open to Membership

The Georgia Poetry Society is getting in shape and preparing to offer our members a variety of opportunities and resources to support their growth as poets in Georgia. Currently, we have a few positions open on our board of directors, and we'd like to fill those roles with qualified members of our poetry community. If you're interested in any of the positions listed below, please email Michelle Alderman at VP@georgiapoetrysociety.org. Include 'GPS Board' in the subject line, and attach your resume or CV, or a brief explanation of relevant qualifications. A strong desire to do the work can matter more than a lack of skills if you are willing to learn as you go.

Please note that all of these board positions are voluntary and unpaid. Board members meet regularly through Zoom.

Available Positions:

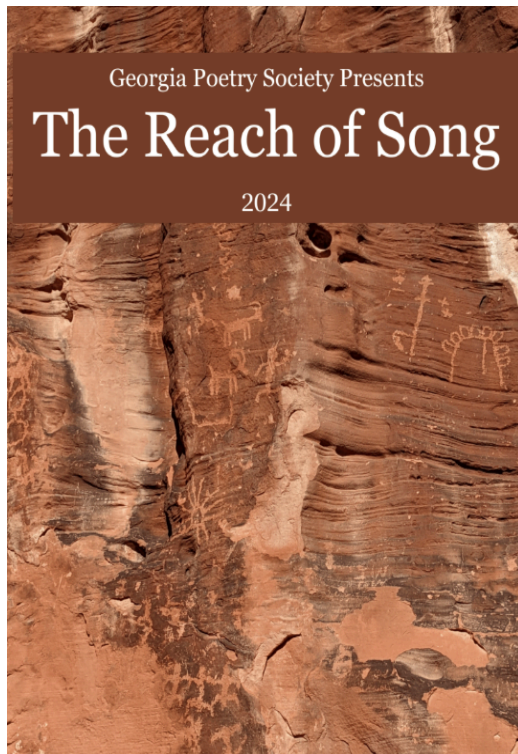
- **Treasurer** – monitor, maintain, and advise on GPS finances. Relevant experience required. This is an Executive Committee position.
- **Legal Counsel** – advisory position
- **Events Chairman** – plan and coordinate programs and events in and throughout Georgia

- **Contest Manager** – plan and coordinate of poetry contests in and throughout Georgia
- **Historian** – maintain and continue historical record of the organization in its various forms
- **Bookstore and Promotional Products Manager** – monitor the receipt, sales, and distribution of member publications and GPS products.
- **Managing Editor, Reach of Song Anthology** – plan and coordinate overall publication process
- **Volunteers** - board members live in different locations across Georgia. This necessitates volunteers in various locations to assist board members with preparing and following through on multiple projects or to take on projects themselves to support GPS goals in Georgia.

This position can be short-term, long-term, temporary, or event-based, as the volunteer determines.



(Image by Phuong Luu from Pixabay)



Now Accepting Submissions for *The Reach of Song*

The Georgia Poetry Society is now accepting submissions from members for the next Reach of Song Anthology, to be published later this year.

Members are encouraged to submit up to three poems each for consideration.

Members who have shared poems at any GPS Open Mic on our YouTube channel since October 2023 are especially encouraged to submit those works.

Submission Requirements:

Submit up to three poems by email. Combine your entries into a single document and attach it to an email addressed to gpsreachofsong@gmail.com.

Please include your contact information in the email body:

- your name and/or pen name,
- address,
- phone number,
- email address,
- the titles of your submissions.

Poems that include foul language will not be considered for publication. Every member who submits their work will be guaranteed publication of at least one poem.

Poetry Challenge

Each month during Open Mic, a member is asked to suggest a poetry form for everyone to try for the next Open Mic.

Members can choose whether to accept the challenge or not, but those who do are given the first opportunity to read their poem at the event. We hope you will accept this challenge!

This month the form is:

Duplex

This bluesy, modern form is described as a mashup of different forms and is the invention of Jericho Brown, who teaches poetry at Emory University. He earned the Pulitzer Prize for poetry for his collection [*The Tradition*](#) in 2020.

The Academy of American Poets describes the form as a gutted [sonnet](#)—that is, part [ghazal](#), part [blues poem](#).

The duplex is fourteen lines arranged in couplets. Each line is between nine and eleven syllables. The second line of the first couplet is echoed in the first line of the second couplet, and this pattern continues. And the first line of the poem is also its last.

Brown explains how to write a duplex in a [YouTube video](#).

A couple examples of the form:

- [“Duplex”](#) by Jericho Brown
- [“Duplex: Black Mamas Praying”](#) by Antoinette Brim-Bell

Join us at the next Open Mic, Sept. 18, 7 p.m., online via Zoom.

A purple poster for an Open Mic event. At the top, it says "GPS PRESENTS" in white. Below that, "OPEN MIC" is written in large, bold, white letters. Underneath, it says "HOSTED ON ZOOM VISIT TO REGISTER" and provides a URL: "HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/42D94DVK". The date and time are "SEPT 18TH @ 7:00 P.M. ONLINE WITH ZOOM". It lists the host as "BARBARA BARRY-NISHANIAN, MACON, GA, PRESIDENT, GPS". There is a circular photo of Barbara Barry-Nishanian. At the bottom, it says "JOIN US WITH YOUR POEMS AND SPOKEN WORD!" and provides the website "WWW.GEORGIAPOETRYSOCIETY.ORG". A small logo for the Georgia Poetry Society is in the bottom right corner.

GPS PRESENTS

OPEN MIC

HOSTED ON ZOOM VISIT TO REGISTER
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/42D94DVK](https://tinyurl.com/42D94DVK)

SEPT 18TH @ 7:00 P.M.
ONLINE WITH ZOOM

HOSTED BY
BARBARA BARRY-NISHANIAN
MACON, GA
PRESIDENT, GPS

JOIN US WITH YOUR POEMS AND SPOKEN WORD!

WWW.GEORGIAPOETRYSOCIETY.ORG

Georgia Poetry Society

This Month's Poetry Prompt

Each month, GPS offers a poetry prompt to help our members explore new ideas for writing or possibly break a dry spell.

Inspired by Jack Myers' prompt "The Fill-In-The-Blanks or Definition Poem," p. 141 in [The Practice of Poetry](#), edited by Robin Behn & Chase Twitchell, find an ordinary object and make up a list of functions for that object, choosing functions that imbue the object with a symbolic meaning or quality. Then create a poem that begins with the object and follows with the series of functions, with an eye toward some larger insight or theme. Make your final list highly imaginative or selective.

Suggested Reading

Singing School: Learning to Write (and Read) Poetry by Studying with the Masters, edited by former U.S. poet laureate Robert Pinsky.

This anthology includes works by several master poets, such as William Blake, Lewis Carroll, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, Allen Ginsberg, Marianne Moore, Sylvia Plath, and many others. The Academy of American Poets says the book is filled with Pinsky's favorite poems organized in four sections: Freedom, Listening, Form, and Dreaming Things Up, each featuring a brief introduction by Pinsky. Available [here](#) or wherever good books are sold or lent.

Upcoming Ga. Literary Events

A brief snapshot of events in Georgia coming up this fall:

20th Anniversary Decatur Book Festival

- Oct. 3 - 4, free

Event locations include First Baptist Church of Decatur, Marriott Hotel and Decatur Library.

Speakers include Saeed Jones and Angie Thomas.

Storytellers Open Mic Night

- Tuesday, Oct. 7, 7 p.m.
- West Cobb Public Library

Open Mic Night for authors of poetry and fiction will take place the first Tuesday of every month.

Participants must register. Each participant will have three minutes to read their work aloud. Readings can be poetry or fiction—original works only. Listeners are welcome!

Open Mic Night

- Oct. 14, 6 - 7:30 p.m.
- Alpharetta branch, Fulton County Public Library

All artists will have 7-10 minutes to perform. Poets, musicians, comedians, puppeteers and everyone else are welcome to showcase their talent. For more information, visit

fulcolibrary.org or email vandiver.glenn@fultoncountyga.gov.

Atlanta Writers Conference

- Oct. 24-25
- Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel

Registration required.

Price varies, see [pricing](#) for details.

Johns Creek Literary Fair

- Nov. 15, 12 to 5 p.m., free
- City Hall, 11360 Lakefield Dr, Johns Creek

Speakers include Karen White and former Gov. Nathan Deal.

Know of a poetry or literary event we should feature? Submit your news by the 8th of the month for publication in that month's newsletter. Items received after the 8th will go in the next month's newsletter.



Spotlight On Kathryn Schmeiser

Kathryn Schmeiser, better known as Kit, is a longtime member of the Georgia Poetry Society. Though she currently lives in North Carolina, geography hasn't prevented her from continuing to be active in the society.

Get to know Kit a bit better in this month's Spotlight On.

Q: Tell me a bit about your background. How were you introduced to poetry, and how long have you been writing poems?

A: Now We Are Six and When We Were Very Young – Those A.A. Milne books were my first

introduction to poetry, when my mother and aunt read the poems aloud to me. And, yes, I have those precious childhood books. During high school, a friend and I wrote and shared our poems with each other. A few years ago, I received a surprise from her. She had saved ALL my poems and sent them to me! Sixty years later, we continue to share our poetry via emails, letters and postcards.

Q: How long have you been involved with the Georgia Poetry Society, and what are some of the main benefits you see in your involvement with the organization?

In the late 1980s, I took writing and English classes at DeKalb College and Oglethorpe University. That's when I learned about and joined the Georgia Poetry Society. One summer, I took an environmental education course. In talking with a professor, he asked about my interests, and I told him that I belonged to the GA Poetry Society. He immediately asked about the poultry species that I was raising!

Although I now live in North Carolina, I am still a GPS member.

A wonderful benefit to being involved with GPS is the opportunity to have a poem published in The Reach of Song anthology. I submitted my first entry to The ROS in 1993 and then for subsequent editions. This anthology is a perfect way to read the works of fellow GPS poets and contest winners. Another way to share poems is at Open Mic nights via Zoom, which gives poets a chance to practice reading poems aloud before an "audience."

Q: Tell me a little bit about your writing process. What forms do you favor? Do you

have a time set aside for writing, or is it more whenever you can find the time?

A: My favorite poetry form is free verse, followed by haiku. But I'm willing to experiment with new ones – sestina, sonnet, trimeric, villanelle.



(Image by Jill Wellington from Pixabay)

I don't have a set time for writing. Sometimes I wake up with a poem knocking in my head until I open the door to let it out, sit at my computer, and start typing. Other times, I am driving my car and a poem decides NOW is the time to make an appearance. I'll repeat the words in my head or aloud until I can pull off the road and send the poem to myself as a text or email. The month that I decided to write a poem-a-day, I set aside time first thing in the morning – before breakfast – to write.

Q: Which poets have influenced you the most?

A: Mary Oliver, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, and Naomi Shihab Nye.

I am drawn to nature poems, ones with words that roll off the tongue and have vivid imagery that makes me feel I am standing beside the poet. Poems with a message that go directly to the heart.

Q: What advice would you give to young poets?

A: Do not be daunted by “the empty page!” Look around you, listen, breathe in.

Write to the senses. Look for little things other poets might not notice. Be creative and avoid clichés. Show, don't tell (still being drilled into my head). Be open to discovering poem ideas where you least expect them – words on a business truck, from a book you're reading, quotations. Look to artwork and write an ekphrastic poem in response to a piece that captures your attention, grabs your pen and won't leave you alone until you have finished!

Kit's work has appeared in numerous anthologies and online publications, including Cadence, CA State Poetry Society's Poetry Letter, Message in a Bottle, Of Poets & Poetry, Sunflowers Rising: Poems for Peace Anthology, and the upcoming Agates anthology of League of Minnesota Poets. She was a submissions review reader for the Poets for Peace (NFSPS) anthology.

Want to Be the Next Person We Feature on Spotlight On?

Do you have a new book coming out or a new publication in literary journals? Did you just win a contest? Are you taking part in a book fair or

have another neat achievement you'd like to crow about?

This newsletter is the space for you! Please reach out to newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org.



What's In a Name?

The Georgia Poetry Society newsletter is a vital resource for members seeking inspiration, writing tools, informative articles, updates on poetry events across the state, and fellowship with fellow Georgia poets. Therefore, we aim to give our newsletter a name that reflects the essence of who we are as a community of poets in Georgia.

Please put on your creative thinking caps and share your ideas for a newsletter name that embodies the Georgia roots and poetic ambitions of GPS. Below is a short list to spark your imagination. Select your favorites or suggest something different. Send your newsletter name ideas to vp@georgiapoetrysociety.org with 'Newsletter Name' in the subject line. A

committee will select three to five favorites to include for a membership vote. We look forward to your suggestions.

Newsletter name suggestions:

- Georgia Verse
- Kudzu Chronicle
- The Georgia Stanza
- The Georgia Sonnet
- Peach State Poetics

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BOARD MEMBERS

- Elizabeth John – Member Outreach Chair
- VACANT – Education Chair
- VACANT – Reach of Song Editor
- Sharon Schroeder – CSRA Affiliate
- Lucinda Clark – Past President and NSFPS Liaison
- Jill Jennings – Member-at-Large

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Find the Georgia Poetry Society on the web at www.georgiapoetrysociety.org, on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).



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