

Georgia Poetry Society



Congratulations GPS Contest Winners!

David Hutto

Lynn Farmer

Kit Schmeiser

Randy Mazie

(see page 3 for details)

Congratulations New Officers!

**President-elect
Julia Caroline Knowlton**

**Vice President-elect
Lucinda Clark**

**Board Members
George Hess
Kathy Ellis**

(see pages 4 and 5 for more information)



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2021 Officers

Steven Shields, President
Alyson Shields, V. President
Ann Gillespie, Secretary
Donna Rose Mulcahy, Treasurer

2021 Board

John Ottley, Jr.
Ann Willis
Ashley Rainge
Angela Washington



From the President:

As you know, we are anticipating a return to face-to-face quarterly meetings in October. The Board and I thought a few words about what to expect might be in order. As of the time of this writing (early October) the pandemic has not completely subsided and people may be wondering what is best to do.

1. **This is an open-air venue.** We have the use of a covered pavilion that seats about 40 or so folks, picnic-table style, from roughly 10:00am to approximately 2:00pm. The Parks Department is supposed to have signage up before we arrive. Parking is free. If you are more comfortable in your own portable chair, please bring it.
2. **The mask police have the day off,** but I won't be surprised (or bothered) if, in your best judgment, a mask is a good idea for you. Several of our members suffer from a variety of maladies, and a mask for them is important. I would hope we would all respect that choice and not try to interfere with it or discourage members from choosing it, should they so desire.
3. **We do not need to see your vaccine card if you have one.**
4. **We will not be serving food at this event,** even though there are kitchen facilities available. You're free to bring a lunch from home or to have lunch at any of the many restaurants nearby the meeting place.
5. **We hope to bring enough copies of our *The Reach of Song 2021* in case you'd like to purchase one.** We have quite a back stock to unload, too. We will make these volumes available for the next couple of meetings and then, after that, begin populating Little Free Libraries with copies or otherwise dispersing them. Now is your best chance to build your collection of our publications. If you're an author member, you're also welcome to bring your books to sell. I am looking forward to greeting each and every one of you. Please plan to join us.

Steven Shields
President, Georgia Poetry Society

GPS Member News

David Hutto's poem "If You Were Ice" won **FIRST PLACE** in the Alabama State Poetry contest (of 156 entries).

Lynn Farmer's poem "Naming" won **THIRD PLACE** in the Massachusetts State Poetry Society contest (of 149 entries). Lynn also won a **1st HM** in the Texas contest (152 entries) and a **6th HM** in the Barbara Stevens Memorial Award (179 entries).

Kit Schmeiser won a **7th HM** in the Barbara Stevens Memorial Award (179 entries).

Randy Mazie won a **1st HM** in the Virginia Corrie-Cozart Memorial Award (122 entries), a **6th HM** in our own Georgia Poetry Society Award (61 entries) and a **4th HM** in the Florida State Poets Association Award (57 entries).

Brenda Kay Ledford's children's poetry book, *Reagan's Romps*, was published by Kelsay Books in February, 2021. Her children's picture book, *The Singing Convention*, was published by Catch the Spirit of Appalachia, Inc. in April, 2021.

Poetry Contests: Submissions open now through November 15*
(Results expected to be announced at the January meeting.)

The Byron Herbert Reece International Poetry Award is open to GPS members and non-members. Length and form: Open. Theme: Nature.

The Ira E. Harrison Social Issues Poetry Award is open to GPS members and non-members. Length and form: Open. Theme: Any contemporary American social issue.

Forms of Poetry Award is open to GPS members **only**. Form: Open. Length and theme: Open.

The Moon and Chickens Award is open to GPS members **ONLY**. Poems must be about the moon OR chickens. Form, theme and length: Open.

Charles Dickson Chapbook Award honors poetic achievement in a chapbook-length work. Length and form: Open. Manuscripts associated with haiku or other "Eastern" forms are given priority. Theme: Any.

The Reach of Song Member Excellence Award is open to GPS members only and will accept submissions in February of 2022. Details to follow in the Winter newsletter.

The Georgia Poetry Society Award, sponsored by the Georgia Poetry Society, is open to NFSPS members only (your GPS membership qualifies you as an NFSPS member). Theme: Subject: Life in the future, beyond Earth or on it. Form: Any rhyming form, slant acceptable, no nonce forms, identify form on entry.

*For more contest details, see the Georgia Poetry Society website georgiapoetrysociety.org

MEET YOUR NEW OFFICERS



President-Elect

Julia Caroline Knowlton was born and raised in Ohio and Michigan and began writing poems at age ten. She has a BA (French/English) from Duke, MA and PhD degrees (French Literature) from UNC-Chapel Hill, and an MFA (Poetry) from Antioch University. Recognition for her work includes an Academy of American Poets College Prize and a Pushcart nomination. The author of five books, she was named a Georgia Author of the Year in 2018. Julia is Professor of French at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, where she has taught for 25 years.



Vice President-Elect

Lucinda Clark is the founder of P.R.A. Publishing and Poetry Matters Project. She has worked with visual artists and authors and poets on the protection, promotion and marketing of their creative work for over 30 years. Clark has sponsored and judged numerous art and writing contests for school-aged children to seniors throughout her arts promotion career.

Clark is a published poet. The award winning poetry series, *View From the Middle of the Road*, has become the launching pad for a number of diverse artistic projects. Clark is a member of the Academy of American Poets, Augusta Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and IBPA. Clark currently resides in the Columbia County, Georgia, area with her husband and two pit terriers.

MEET YOUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Kathy Ellis seriously started writing poetry seven years ago but always had poetry dancing in her head. Writing poetry is therapy and a creative endeavor for Kathy and a platform when there are important things to say. You will find Kathy's poetry in *Peninsula Poets*, *The Reach of Song*, *Ohio Poetry Day Association*, *Setu International Journal*, *Poetry in Nature*, *Dissent Voice*, *Poetry Society of Michigan Poetry Five-Year Anthology 2021* and *Oracle Magazine*. To her delight (and surprise), works have received several awards and honorable mentions. She self-published her first book of poems in 2017, *Primer*, and recently self-published her second book found on Amazon, *Wings from Roots*. Kathy has spent two years writing a poetry form adventure story, which has been accepted by a publisher and scheduled to be on the shelf by next year. Kathy co-leads Johns Creek Poets and a writing group from the Spiritual Living Center of Atlanta. Kathy is an *English as a Second Language Coach/Instructor* and *Cross-cultural Communication Trainer*. She holds a Master's in Education with additional graduate studies in Spanish, linguistics, culture and conflict management. Kathy hosts an international homestay and two multilingual cats.



George Hess is a native Californian who came East to escape the counterculture. He began writing poetry as a high school senior and has continued to write and attempt publication since then. He has an academic background in Language Arts and Linguistics and graduated degrees to go with that. George taught at the college and university level for 40 years, most recently at Kennesaw State University for 29 years in Elementary and Early Childhood Education in 2012. Other academic posts include the University of Iowa, Columbus State University and Boise State University, as well as a fellowship at California State University, Bakersfield, and two fellowships at Oxford University, England. Since retiring, he has devoted himself to fine woodworking, poetry writing and chauffeuring his wife, Maxine, who is a professional artist. He has become expert in collecting rejection letters. He has lived with cats most of his adult life and is currently the servant of two found three-year-old demanding and persistent feline sisters.

OUR NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2021
10am-2pm

Location:

Longwood Park- Dogwood Pavilion
20 Pearl Nix Pkwy
Gainesville, Georgia 30501
(See page 7 for map and directions)

Agenda

9:30 **Coffee and socializing**

10:00 **Welcome and announcements** (Steven Shields presiding)

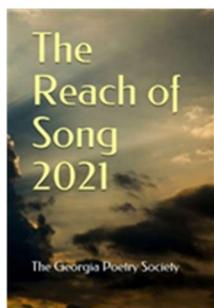
10:15 **Open mic** (general)

10:45 **Reading by Trish Percival**, author of *Awake with Low Slung Moon*, winner of the inaugural Ron Self Poetry Chapbook Award (copies for sale afterward)

11:15 **Break for lunch** (book sales, Trish book signing)

12:30 **Workshop** “Poetry Contests Dos and Don’ts”

1:00 **Open mic 2** *The Reach of Song 2021* readers



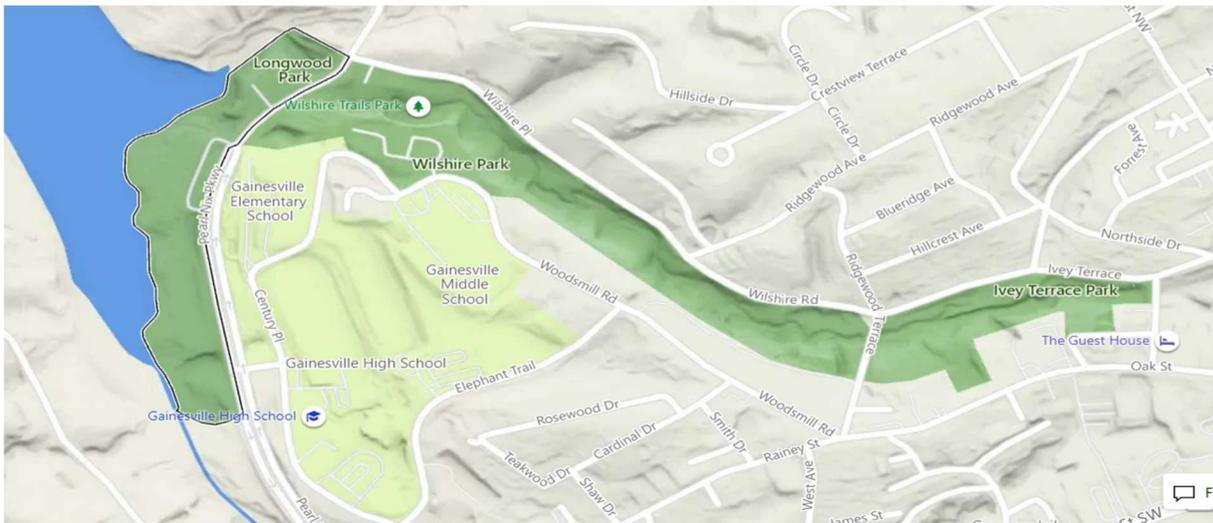
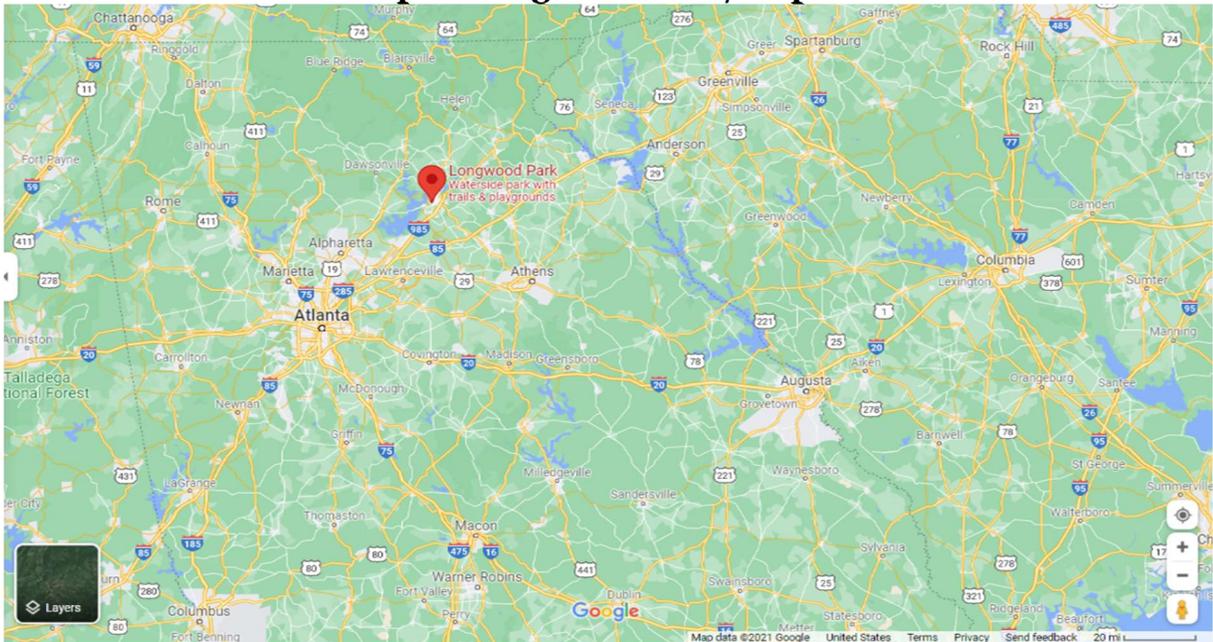
1:30 **Closing** (book sales, raffle)

2:00 **Adjournment**

Mark your calendars:

Quarterly meeting dates for 2022: January 22, April 23, July 23, October 22

Map to Longwood Park/Map of the Park



Directions:

From Atlanta: take I-85 N toward GA-400/Greenville; continue on I-985 N, following signs for Gainesville; take exit 20 for GA-60 toward GA-53/Gainesville/Candler Rd; keep left, following signs to airport; turn left onto GA-365 GUS N/GA-60 N/Queen City Pkwy; in 2.7 miles turn right onto Washington St NW; turn left onto West AVE; turn right onto Rainey ST; turn left onto Ridgewood Terrace; turn left onto Wilshire Rd; turn left on to Chestatee Rd; in 0.2 miles arrive at Longwood Park

Note: there are public restrooms within the park facility. There are picnic-style tables in the pavilion. You are welcome to bring a folding chair if you prefer. In case of inclement weather, we will still meet. Just be prepared for soggy conditions. Rain boots recommended.

Questions for President-Elect Julia Caroline Knowlton

Q: *As president of the GPS, what items are first on your agenda?*

A: My first priority will be to connect with the other elected members and the membership at large to get a sense of their interests, priorities and preferences. I would not presume to move forward without getting a sense of what members want and need.

Q: *What will be your focus?*

A: Along with my regular duties, such as quarterly meetings and contests, I am interested in youth programming and the promotion of diverse voices in poetry. I would like to reach poets who may not know about the Georgia Poetry Society. In addition to diversity and inclusion in terms of membership, I am interested in promoting poetic forms both on and off the page. This might include open mic events, multimedia showcases and spoken word, along with printed poems. Personally, I am “wedded” to poems on the page, but I know there is a lot of talent for unconventional poetic forms. I am also interested in the possibility of bringing poetry readings into hospitals and jails. That may be ambitious, but it is good to “think big” at times.

Q: *What would you like GPS members to know about you?*

A: I started writing poems when I was around ten years old. My mother typed up my poems for me, and I will never forget her encouragement. We sent them off to SEVENTEEN® magazine, and they were accepted for national publication. One of my high school English teachers encouraged me and gave me a book of poems by Edna St. Vincent Millay. His encouragement meant the world to me. In college, I won an Academy of American Poets College Prize. That gave me momentum as well.

I am a Professor of French at Agnes Scott College in Dacula, where I have taught for the past 25 years. I have published a scholarly book, a memoir and two collections of poetry. Alice Greene & Co. will publish my new chapbook titled *Poem at the Edge of the World* in 2022. I believe in the power of poetry as an open door to “truth and beauty”—the ideals John Keats gleaned from the ancients. The truth at times is ugly, and poetry must be the vehicle to communicate what is ugly or even evil in life. An example of this is the way contemporary poets such as Jericho Brown expose and condemn racism in their work. Poetry takes language out of the everyday realm and lifts it to a higher form of communication. It can be a great source of comfort, discovery and release.

Q: *What type of poetry most interests you?*

A: Any poem that gives me a shiver down the spine interests me. This is what Emily Dickinson was getting at when she talked about feeling as if “the top of her head were taken off”. I marvel at poems that are more than just the sum of their parts, poems that push language to its limits and paint symbols and unexpected images using words. I return again and again to the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, Wallace Stevens, Sappho and Anne Carson, among many, many others. When I did my MFA I discovered the work of Claudia Rankine, Terrance Hayes and Kaveh Akbar. I think every unforgettable poem lodges in the brain and heart like an unanswered question. The unanswered question is the mystery. I believe the mystery and “shiver down the spine” come from an ultimately unknowable spiritual place.

A Word with Featured Reader Trish Percival



At the quarterly meeting, Trish Percival will read from *Awake with Low Slung Moon*. In anticipation of that event, I asked what inspired her to write this particular work.

“Honestly, the real spark for the book was the contest GPS was running and the call for submissions, indicating that not enough entries had been received. As a former officer of GPS, I wanted the contest to succeed. So I put together the chapbook and sent it in. I was delighted when the independent judge, who won last year’s contest, selected my book.

My book contains poems written over many years, none are very recent. I’m not good about submitting my work, so only a handful had been published before. If there is a theme, it is probably loneliness, though I did not think about that at the time. The most recent poems have to do with the dissolution of a thirty year marriage and the fallout from that related to moving out of a house I’d lived in for most of those years and the loss of a beloved garden.

A few poems unrelated to the loss of home and marriage are related to that garden and to the loss of my mother and brother many years earlier. Although this sounds rather dreary, I think some of the poems are funny and some celebrate what is beautiful about life, gardens and family.”

Share your news with fellow GPS members
Deadline for the Winter newsletter is December 9th.
Send news notes to newsletter@georgiapoetrysociety.org
And remember to add the email address to your contacts!

Editorial Commentary: Focus on Mission

In 1979, founding members of the Georgia (State) Poetry Society made their objectives clear with a three-fold mission:

-To stimulate a love and appreciation for poetry in everyone, poets and listeners alike

-To further the practices of poetry writing and reading by providing contests and publication opportunities through our anthologies and chapbooks

-To provide opportunities for all poets whether young, new or established to study, practice, hear and read good poetry through our Quarterly Meetings and our Poetry In The Schools program.

Now consider the cultural climate in 1979. A decade of civil unrest, economic instability and political upheaval was ending. America was reeling in the aftermath of anti-war protests, Women's Lib demonstrations, "stagflation" and the Watergate scandal. Beyond the din of blaring newscasts and vitriolic editorial commentaries, poetry offered a more peaceful form of expression.

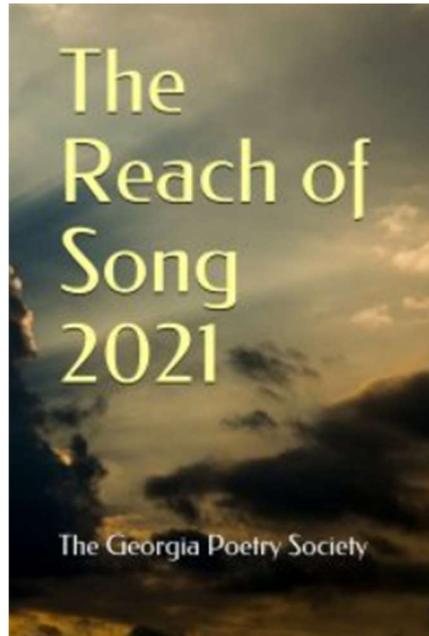
Since its inception, the GPS has supported the poetic endeavors of its members. Despite the trials of each succeeding decade, the Society has continued to grow in outreach and membership. But, as with any organization, there is a potential for members to lose sight of the original purpose. Let us not stray. I propose instead we take this time to sharpen our focus on the mission.

We *believe* in the mission: it is timeless. Moreover, it is our duty as members of the Society to further the noble objectives of the founders. As an affiliate of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies, we promote, as written in their constitution, the "importance of poetry with respect to national cultural heritage".

I encourage all GPS members to translate belief in the mission into action. Perhaps you might donate a copy of *The Reach of Song* to a local library. Add a copy to a little free library. Or give a copy as a gift. Invite friends and neighbors to attend the next quarterly meeting— better yet, inspire them to join. The society needs poets and poetry appreciators. After all, why write what no one cares to read?

We value poetry because it promotes connection, giving each new generation access to the voice of the past. Every age, according to Ray Bradbury, alternates between "doses of despair and tonics of salvation". The poetry of every generation tells stories of both. Looking back on the poetry of the past illuminates the present and informs the future. So we continue with our mission ever onward and outward, linking age to age through that hallowed language: poetry.

-Laurie Jones, Newsletter Editor



**Remember to
purchase your copy
of *The Reach of Song*
2021**

**Available through
the GPS website or at
the October
Quarterly Meeting**