



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

League of Minnesota Poets

Email: leagueofmnpoets@gmail.com

Website: mnpoets.org



Year in Review



The lifting of mask mandates ushered in 2022. Eager to return to our much loved in-person events, plans for Blizzard were underway. A big house was rented, and registration began, but a bit too soon. New Covid cases continued, and people were still a bit too leery to venture

into rooms with others. The Blizzard Retreat was moved back to Zoom, and we hoped for an in-person Spring Conference.

In February, the board voted to change the name of our anthology, *The Moccasin*. The League of Minnesota Poets had been publishing *The Moccasin* in one form or another for 84 years. The publication had been named after the Minnesota state flower, the Showy Ladyslipper, also commonly known as the Moccasin in the Anglo culture of our founding members in the 1930s.

The word “moccasin” is an anglicization of the Ojibwe word “makizinan.” History has not changed, but our understanding of it has. Today, we acknowledge

the painful wounds of ethnocide, genocide and the forced displacement of indigenous people here in Minnesota. We cannot change our past, but we can examine it and use our understanding of it to improve our future together. This is why the board voted to change the annual publications name to *Agates*. Glaciers dispersed the Lake Superior Agate, Minnesota's state gem stone, throughout the state making them both common and unique. Like us, each has its individual beauty. The new name plated designed by member Deborah Goschy reflects the waters of Minnesota.

Agates

We represented the League in the annual Twin Cities Pride March June 27, 2022. Our numbers were divided between this and the National Federation of State Poetry Societies' Annual Convention in Columbus, OH the same weekend. In Minneapolis, we promoted the addition of 2 LGBTQ categories to our annual contest. We distributed 3000 flyers that day and another 3000 prior to the contest deadline July 31, 2022.

(See Cover Photo. L to R: Stephanie Stein, Jess Morgan, Henry Kneiszel, Michael Moore, Amanda Bailey)

Spring Conference

To everyone's delight, we were able to have an in-person Spring Conference in Rochester hosted by Southeastern Minnesota Poets. Workshops by Lisa Higgs, Christina Flaughter and keynote speaker Danny Solis were enjoyed by 42 participants.

The League of MN Poets Presents

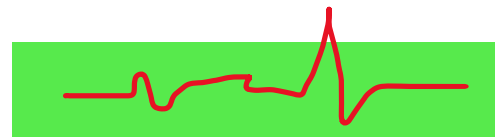


Kahler Grand Hotel in Rochester, MN

the name change of the League's annual anthology was announced and Meredith Cook was recognized and applauded for her 36 years of editing The Moccasin. Peter Stein completed his 3rd consecutive term as President and Amanda Bailey was elected President. Adam Rangel was elected Vice President, but shortly thereafter resigned. Jana Bouma was appointed Interim Vice President until a permanent appointment could be made.

The first John Rezmerski Memorial Manuscript contest launched with an August 1, 2022 submission deadline. Summer weather brought lots of outdoor activities including an excellent turn out for the Woodtick Poetry Retreat on Horseshoe Lake.

Bill Anderson and volunteer crew wowed Rain Taxi Book Festival goers in July. Inviting people to write and hang poems on their PoetTree, they promoted the League and sold members' books. At the end of July, the League in collaboration with Button Poetry staged its first BlackBerry Peach National Slam Qualifier at the Icehouse in Minneapolis for a sold out audience. Kevin Yang emerged as the winner and was sent to Daytona Shores, FL in the fall to represent MN at the 4-day national slam with a total of 40 poets. He made it through several preliminary rounds, but did not make it to the final round of 12 poets.



Board 2022 - 2023

PRESIDENT: Amanda Bailey
 VICE PRESIDENT: Adam Rangel
 SECRETARY: Jana Bouma
 TREASURER: Mary Schmidt
 PAST PRESIDENT: Peter Stein
 REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS:
 Susan Chambers, Lisa Higgs,
 Michael Moore, Nicole Borg,
 Nancy Cook, Jess Morgan,
 Vincent O'Connor, Charmaine
 Pappas Donovan, Annette
 Gagliardi
 MEMBER AT LARGE: Brendan
 Brophy, Meredith Cook

Pride Festivals



In September, the League's book table traveled to Pride Festivals in Duluth and Mankato. Pictured here volunteers Jana Bouma, Sue Chambers, Micah Ruelle, Deborah Goschy and Derek Liebertz (all but Micah from SMPS chapter) Stop to strike a pose, before getting back to greeting festival goers and promoting the League of Minnesota poets.

Fall Conference

The League moved it's Fall Conference from its usual time in October to the first weekend in November so as not to conflict with NFSPS's first BlackBerry Peach National Slam that was held in Daytona Shores, FL in conjunction with the Florida State Poetry Society's annual convention. That was not the only change. This year the annual contest winners were celebrated in one festive fancy gala event on the Saturday night of the conference in Alexandria, MN. This left more time open for workshops and getting to know each other better. Most presentations were done in a TV talk show format, which facilitated coalescing. Pictured here, Micah Ruelle reads her winner.



Youth Initiative

Due to unforeseen difficulties, awards weren't given in the Manningham Trust Student Poetry Contest by NFSPS. In our state competition, the League awarded 1st Place to Morghaine Gannaway (Junior Division); 3rd Place: Emily Funk; 2nd Place: Ingrid Scholberg; and 1st Place: Emily Jans (Senior Division). Each has been invited to submit their winning poem to NFSPS 2023 Manningham contest. Going forward, students may submit directly to the NFSPS student competition. Isadora Gruye was appointed to CoChair with Brendan Brophy to strategically plan a new League Youth Initiative.

Chapter Reports

Cracked Walnut

In 2022, Cracked Walnut continued to sponsor the Poets & Pints Reading Series (at Sisyphus Brewing on 3rd Wednesdays) and Literary Bridges Reading Series (Next Chapter Booksellers on 2nd Sundays). The Cracked Walnut Poetry Workshops returned to in-person meetings for ongoing opportunities for poetry critique (Highland Park Library on 1st Saturdays). We also run the “Cracked Walnut Writing Collective” where writers gather to work from writing prompts and other activities to generate new writing (Merriam Park Library, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays). In April, one of our board members, Micah Ruelle, taught a class on Indian poetry, “Writing the Book of Love” (Franklin Library, Minneapolis). Cracked Walnut also began publishing a monthly newsletter that promotes not only its activities but those of the League. Cracked Walnut’s website was updated in 2022 and can be found at <https://www.crackedwalnut.com>.

Cracked Walnut 2022 Officers:
President, Michael Moore
Vice President, Bill Anderson
Secretary, Micah Ruelle
Treasurer, Mary Schmidt

Cracked Walnut 2022 Board members:
Jessi Atherton, Ashley Cardona,
Mugunthan Ganesan, Donna Isaac,
Stanley Kusunoki, and Tony Plocido.

Penned Poets

2022 was the first full year for this chapter that was founded in November of 2021. The main goal of Penned Poets has been to develop and support a creative community for those outside big population centers, at a far distance from other writing groups, and/or with limited ability to attend in-person meetings. This chapter meets weekly on Zoom and uses rotating meeting formats to include writing workshops, poem discussions, support sessions and performance practice. By the end of the year, this chapter had 70 members, the largest chapter in the League. One thing it can boast is consistent and increasing engagement with member poets.

Heartland Poets

Meets the first Saturday of the month from 10-1 at the Brainerd Public Library.



Char Donovan, Sue Sterling, Benjamin Hallada & Karen Crider
(members missing from John Thornberg & Pamela Wolters)

Karen Crider and Char Donovan read at the Talking Stick workshop and book launch. We had a small Christmas party at Char Donovan's home, but we didn't host any community events in 2022.



Southeastern Minnesota Poets

Our 2022 highlights include hosting the League of Minnesota Poets' Spring Conference and offering our February Bright Lights Stories in the Night zoom event and gallery exhibition/poetry reading, along with a published chapbook of the work and illustrations included in the grant-funded project.

Grand View Poets

Has been a critique chapter of the League, but in 2022 began to plan an expansion. This chapter has no treasury and elects no officers, but Nicole Borg currently serves as their Regional Vice President on the League Board. In December of 2022, Grandview Poets changed the chapter's name to **Great River Poets**. We hosted a Poetry Potluck social with poems, food and good cheer at an art gallery in December and planned to expand to hosting a monthly poetry workshop (first Tuesday) led by one of our members.. We have more "active" members now than in the past five years, so I could see our programming expanding.

Mississippi Valley Poets & Writers

Besides providing regular programs, critiques and fellowship about poetry weekly, the chapter sponsors a contest with the League and for the Nature Area Poetry Walk. We host and maintain this poetry walk. Every other year, when we replace poems on the signs, we hold a dedication/ reveal ceremony for the Nature Area Poetry Walk. We also create and sell post cards sets of the ten poems on the walk. This chapter's growth in part can be attributed to their ability to have hybrid meetings, in person meetings that include participants on Zoom.

President: Annette Gagliardi

Vice-President: Laura Kozy Lanik

Secretary: Dave Anderson

Treasurer: Mary Schmidt

Southern MN Poetry Society

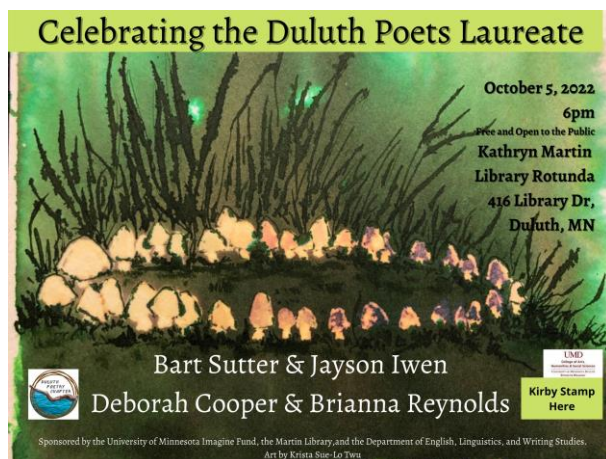
This chapter's main focus is sharing poetry, creating writing opportunities and hearing speakers. We shrunk during COVID, now stagnant, need to brainstorm about ways to encourage people back to in person meetings. Let us know who we can call on to be speakers, do workshops for us. We had a Christmas party at Willow Brook in Mankato. Many residents came and enjoyed listening to poetry. We meet 2nd Saturdays at the Fillin' Station in Mankato.

CoChairs: Jana Bouma & Derek Liebertz

Treasurer: Susan Stevens Chambers

Duluth Poetry Chapter

Meets Sundays @ Wussow's Concert Cafe (upstairs) @ 1 PM. A growing chapter, they finished 2022 with about 30 members. A couple of their highlights for the year include hosting League poets on stage at Duluth Pride and a special UMD reading.



The 15-year-old UMD Poet Laureate program invited Duluth Poetry Chapter poets to read in dialog with them. In 2022, plans for a Slam Dunk event were laid, but the event had to be postponed to a more post Covid time.

Ely Chapter

With Covid creating an inability to gather or hold in person events, numbers shrunk in the Ely Chapter. By the year's end, they had a membership of one, Vincent O'Connor. If anyone in that area is available to help that chapter grow again, please contact Vince voconnor@oconnor-consulting.com

Membership by Numbers

Chapter Members	League Members
0 Cracked Walnut	0
1 Ely	1
7 Heartland Poets	4
20 SEMN Poets	15
28 Grand View	13
30 SMPS	unknown
30 Duluth	10
39 MS Valley	5+
70 Penned Poets	unknown

Numbers in the left column represent the members in the chapter.

Numbers in the right column represent the number of chapter's members who are also League members, if known. Most chapters do not keep a membership roster and have estimated these numbers. Cracked Walnut plans to offer memberships in 2023.

Regional Vice Presidents have reported a total of 225 chapter members. However, several chapters report that less than half of their members are also League members. The League had a total of 210 members at the end of 2022.

Memberships are the League's main source of income. Chapters can help the League help them by encouraging their members to join the League of Minnesota Poets.