

WPA

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Check out the web-site for their photos and bios.

*In This Issue**Note from the editor**Special award announcement**In the Classroom**I Punctuation**II Reflection**Letters to the Editor**Donald Hall in Seattle**'Zine publishing experience**Coming events**General information***Note from the editor**

When I volunteered to be the new editor of WPA's newsletter, one primary task that faced me was development of submission guidelines. Once they were completed, they were approved by Board members and published on the WPA web site.

Another task was self-assigned: to come up with a name for the newsletter. Since our poets cogitate, ruminate, speculate, sweat, curse and cry over finding just the right word, it seemed fitting that "word" would become the new name.

After some discussion and consideration, it was decided that the membership could be well-served if we published the newsletter as a link from the web site instead of sending the entire file to your private email addresses. We hope you enjoy that efficiency.

It is my hope that you will also enjoy this issue. The editor's "door" will be open.

Maggie Kelly

newseditor@washingtonpoets.org

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Applications for the WPA Poetry Roadshow are due by September 29th.

More information and an application form that can be downloaded are on the WPA web site.

It is time to . . .

. . .change your clocks to standard time (Oct.29).
 . . .think about what poem(s) you will enter in WPA contests.
 . . .plan ahead for Burning Word, April 28, 2007

WORD!, the newsletter of the Washington Poets Association, is published four times each year. The next issue will be published in December. The deadline for submitting material for consideration in that issue is Monday, November 27th. Please read the submission guidelines that are on the web site and if you have any questions, contact the editor at the email address above.

Lifetime WPA memberships recognize contributions of DeFrees and Hulett

by Ed Stover

The WPA Board of Directors recently recognized poets Madeline DeFrees of Seattle and Ruth Hulett of Vancouver, Washington, with lifetime memberships for their contributions to WPA and to the poetry community at large over the years. They have been a source of inspiration.

But what was their advice on finding inspiration? Keep your eyes and ears open, draw inspiration from the physical world around you, then relate those sights, sounds and sensations to the unique inner world of personal experience.

Their wisdom has been shared with many — both taught writing and literature for years, DeFrees at the university level, and Hulett in the public schools. Hulett, too, taught drama and is active in community theater as an actor and director.

While craft can be taught, the raw material of poetry comes from the writer's personal world. Hulett says she finds the raw material for poetry all around her. "I can be sitting in the yard, and look up and there it is right in front of me — it comes from whatever is happening around me. It may come when I'm not even watching for it." Hulett, the daughter of a county school superintendent, says, "I always had a knack for words."

As a nun, DeFrees learned to carry words in her head: "In those days (before Vatican II), we were booked every minute of the day. We had free time only on rare occasions, but I always carried a pen or pencil and kept an old envelope in my pocket. We would do housework — I always got the stairs because I was short — and I would think about a poem. I learned how to carry a stanza or two in my head until I had a minute to write it down." An Oregon native and former Catholic nun with nine books of poetry to her credit, DeFrees' most recent, *Spectral Waves*, (May 2006, Copper Canyon Press), was favorably reviewed in the *Sunday Seattle Times* on Aug. 13.

Neither Hulett or DeFrees consider themselves every-day writers. "I'm not a real scholar about it; I'm sporadic," said Hulett.

"People say you should write every day, but I think with poetry that's kind of hard," said DeFrees, who has stretches, a month or two, of regular writing followed by breaks. Her senses are always tuned in, however — listening, watching for whatever will inspire her muse.

Her poems start in one of two ways, she said: "Figurative language, something I hear or come across in a book; or it will start with an experience, something different I've seen, maybe while traveling."

Sometimes the trigger is word music: "I heard the comment, 'a scatter of lights,' and it stayed with me." Or one that is odd: "I was talking to a friend who is a bus driver ... he said, 'I saw a lot of dead birds out driving.'"

The grammatical snafu stuck with her. For DeFrees, this is grist for poetry: "If you start with a fragment of language, the job is to find out why it's important and what the rest of the words are. If it's an experience, then why is that experience important? What's new or strange about it, and what words connect with it? If it's (the poem) working, at some point you hook the two things up — if you start with language, you will hook that up with some experience of your own."

Both Hulett and DeFrees are active in the WPA. DeFrees was a featured reader at Burning Word 2006 in April. Hulett has taught many workshops and has been a board member twice in years past. Both have pursued their calling, despite the demands of family and work.

Those who hear the muse must respond, says DeFrees: "I think writers need to write," she said. "They must make sense of an experience, understand an experience, and impose a form (style of writing) on that experience."

Ed Stover is Secretary for the WPA Board of Directors. His bio can be found on the WPA web site by clicking on "Board Members."



The next meeting of the WPA Board of Directors will be on October 14, 2006, in Seattle. If you go to the WPA web site and click on "Board Members" you will find an easy way to contact Board members by email .

IN THE CLASSROOM

I

Using Semicolons

by Chris Dahl



Arthur Plotnick dotes on semicolons.

In his book *Spunk & bite* (subtitled: *A writer's guide to punchier, more*

engaging language and style) he devotes a whole chapter to the much-maligned semicolon, the only punctuation mark besides the neglected hyphen that gets singled out for special treatment. He quotes essayist Lewis Thomas, who says that the semicolon gives the language, not the full destination stop of the period, nor the brief slump of a comma, but a refreshing moment before you plow on further into the wilderness.

Exactly how does this help us understand when to use a semi-colon? By giving us the *why* that will illuminate the *how*. For example, the most common use of the semicolon is to link two complete thoughts (sentences) that could be joined by a conjunction: "A small black form bit at her ankle but an even smaller one crawled inside her sock to feast." These two sentences wind together to form a single thread. Written another way it would be: "A small black form bit at her ankle; an even smaller one crawled inside her sock to feast." The difference between the two is that the first rushes the two halves of the compound sentence together while the second breaks for a second between the separate ideas; in a sense, it beckons and lures the reader forward.

A closely related use for the semicolon again unites two separate thoughts, this time linked by a conjunctive adverb or transitional phrase. If a conjunction (*and, or, but*), links things together then a conjunctive adverb (e.g. *accordingly* or *incidentally*) would be an adverb that works the same way. There are many other words that function the same way--*hence, instead, still, meanwhile*. Transitional phrases ferry us from one shore of a thought to the other: *as a matter of fact, even so, in the first place, in conclusion*. When using a transitional phrase, the semicolon color guard marches in front, while a foot-soldier comma guards the phrase's behind. "The pesky

black marks had reached the top of her sock; therefore, she had no choice but to slop her foot in a bucket of sulfuric acid and drown them."

The trick with semicolons is not *how* to use them but knowing when *not* to use them.

Another common use for the semicolon is to separate a series of phrases that already contain punctuation. "The lines stretched for miles: commas, barbed, raking the ground like spurs; the two-barreled colons, rigid and unswerving; semi-

colons, delicate but sporting agile hooks on their feet; periods, heavy as catapults; and the rest, each fitted within their specialties, hyphens, dashes, ellipses, the whole complement." Usually, in this type of usage, the list is preceded by a colon, but not necessarily.

The trick with semicolons isn't *how* to use them, but knowing when *not* to use them. Paul Robinson, in his 2002 essay "The Philosophy of Punctuation," talks about "pretentious and over-active semicolons" having reached epidemic proportions. The writers "place two clauses in some kind of relation to one another" but use the semicolon to "relieve (them) of saying exactly what that relation is." Use the semicolon precisely and sparingly; the black army of punctuation marks will then part around your feet, marching on to devour some lesser writer who hasn't learned how to defeat the most vicious members of the horde.

Chris Dahl has been the editor of the Olympia Poetry Network newsletter for eight years and a publishing poet for thirty. (This article first appeared in longer form in the August issue of the OPN News and Letters and is published here with the author's permission.)



2006-07 Paul Gillie Workshops

Named after a founding member of the Olympia Poetry Network, workshops will be held at the Olympia Timberland Library, 313 -8th AV SE at 7:00 p.m. on the following dates with presenters as indicated:

October 12 — Tim Kelly
November 9 — Joseph Green
December 14 — Paul Nelson
January 11 — Carolyn Maddux
February 8 — Derek Sheffield
March 8 — Jeanne Lohmann & Don Freas
April 12 — Chris Dahl
May 10 — Allen Braden

OPN website:
<http://home.comcast.net/~yake//opn.html>

IN THE CLASSROOM

II

Reflections

by Lyn Coffin

I taught creative writing this spring at a high school near Seattle. One day the students were asked to write an in-class poem about a recent breakup, describing their feelings. In response, one young man wrote the following:

Im a kill you
cut throat now u die
why
die, die, die
Im southside
I'll kill u witthe gun
keep yo mouth wide
why
cause you should die,

burnt up, no life
cut deeply with sharp knives
you dyeing isliketaken a thousand lives
why
Imcrazy, you made me like this,
pissed at you and the world,
all over you, a dumb ass girl,
with a jerry curl.
sryke.
Its that time, good bye
you are done,
your life is none

When I first read the poem, I was afraid. I thought "keep yo mouth wide" was a reference to his thinking that I talked too much in class. "Im southside" — I, a "honky," live in a middle and upper class (mostly white) neighborhood, and he, an African American, lives in a lower class and "minority" neighborhood. I thought "you made me like this" referred to me and all the other adults in his life who had let him down, who had failed to help him reach his potential anywhere except in basketball.

In rereading I saw that, no, the student's threatening response wasn't against me, but against the statistically-most-likely-target, his ex-girl friend.

I caught myself. Didn't we talk about poetic license? Wasn't I over-reacting in a "culture of fear" way to a powerful piece of writing? I read over all other student responses, looking for something similar. Nowhere in any of the other angry, depressed, guilty, resentful, accusatory writing, was there so much as a hint of anybody's taking violent action against another person.

What made the piece powerful? There were the "i" sounds in the poem—the rhyming of "die" and "I" and "why" and "knife" and "life" and the concluding "truncated Shakespearean sonnet" couplet—"you are done/ your life is none." I imagined myself as a lecturer explaining, "You see, the victim's life is no longer hers; it is forfeit. Neither is it the victimizer's, since it amounts to zero in his eyes. The speaker of the poem is saying he will manipulate the physical (by killing his victim), until her physical state is equitable in its nullity to the state of its metaphorical value."

I called my supervisor at the school and she said I was legally responsible to report the student's work to school authorities because it was "a credible threat." So I did. The student was sent to the school nurse for a talk. He never really spoke to me again. He got excused absences from the rest of our classes together. If I had it all to do over, would I turn him in? I don't think that is the most pressing question. Pressing questions always have to do with present dilemmas.

We live in a country that seems to me both violent and repressive, lawless and litigious, a country that is scared and arrogant. I think my student was just reflecting the message he hears and sees all the time in the media in America—including most newspapers. The message is "cause you should die."

I have a teacher's poetic dream. In this dream, I know just what to say to help this student, all students. In this dream, I listen well enough and speak true enough so students start to heal. Our hates fades with our hurts. The wish to harm becomes a wish to help. Somewhere down the line, the student will be able to write a different poem bidding a loving farewell to his ex-girl friend.

Groups like The Washington Poets Association, fostering connections among "unacknowledged legislators of the world" in a spirit of inquiry and non-violent camaraderie can help make this poetic dream a political reality.

Lyn Coffin is the author of 7 books, including translations, with a new one coming out this fall.

The Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg competition in poetry is for writers who are no older than 40 by November 6, 2006. Details at: <http://dorothysargentrosenbergmementalfund.org>

Letters to the Editor

Whidbey Island
August 28, 2006

To: Washington Poets Association Editor
Thoughts on Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving, I give thanks that I belong to Washington Poets Association and Whidbey Island Writers Association and before, the El Paso Manuscript Club.

Having just moved to Whidbey Island from El Paso, Texas, I am a stranger here. I have not made real friends yet. But I did join the WIWA and the WPA. Because of my ability to write poems and essays, I belonged to a group of kind people who helped me whenever I needed it. Because poets and writers have the understanding and empathy to say a good word for another poet based on his or her poem or writing, I am fortunate and grateful.

I hope to be an asset to the writing community and give back something worthwhile.

Linda Lim-Du

Linda, thank you for writing and welcome! - Editor

Letters to the editor are welcome. Please follow submission guidelines posted on the web site.

Poet Laureate reads in Seattle

by David Hecker

A full house waited at Elliott Bay Book Company in Pioneer Square, Seattle. The scheduled reader had not shown up on time, but no one left the room. The audience was told that Donald Hall was staying at a nearby hotel and would be present momentarily. Again, no one left or complained. Hall was on a tour, promoting a recently published collection of poems, *White Apples and the Taste of Stone: Selected Poems 1946-2006*.

Donald Hall, using a cane, was obviously concerned about being twenty-five minutes late. Wearing a tweed, deep green and black sport coat, he was assisted in getting onto the platform. His disheveled long hair hung down his neck; a mustache and goatee provided a balance to his receding hairline. He apologized for being late, explaining that a fire alarm at his hotel had incapacitated the elevator and walking down three flights of stairs was an ordeal for someone who was seventy-eight years old.

Neither his age nor the hotel incident altered his upbeat attitude. A one-time Professor of English at the University of Michigan, Hall had relished teaching and here one could sense his joy in having an audience. In a clear, emphatic voice he read poems about his late wife (Jane

Kenyon, also a notable poet), their beloved dog Gus, and a baseball poem that had nine stanzas, nine lines per stanza, and nine syllables in each line. Each poem Hall read was accompanied by information, evaluations, and commentary very similar to what he had written in earlier books.

Hall's remarks provided insights into his approach to writing. Include a counterbalance in each poem, he advised. He was especially insistent on revising poems, over years if necessary, before submitting them for publication. He also recommended reading poets that one dislikes or poets who write in styles different from one's own preferences, claiming that no change comes without conflict. He ended with "Affirmation," a poem with its emphasis on age and losses that had punctuated the overall reading. and indicated his having come to grips with his long life and key incidents in it.

After the reading there was a Q & A session that was followed by extended applause by an appreciative audience. Little did we know that our applause would echo in greater volume in June 2006, a month and a few days after this reading, when Donald Hall was appointed as the next Library of Congress's Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry.

David Hecker's poetry can be found in local publications such as Exhibition and Poets West. Hecker has read at the Frye Museum, Ravenna Third Place Books, and Epilogue and writes reviews of literary events for the Belltown Messenger. He publishes letterpress under the label SLA Presses.

E-Publishing and the poetry revolution

by William Scott Galasso

Not since Gutenberg introduced the first movable type press in Europe, has poetry and publishing undergone such a sea change as that produced by the Internet. No longer confined to paper and cloth texts or brick and mortar buildings, poetry publishing has grown exponentially. Websites dedicated to poetry including ezines, journals, anthologies and even serialized books, now number in the thousands. There are websites, which connect the poetry community including www.poetrysociety.org. There are guides to self-publishing or specialty publishers such as www.cowboypoetry.com or the haiku-based site www.theheron'snest.com. In addition, one can find university-based guides such as *Chattahoochee Review* or independent sites such as poet/editor Jana Harris' www.switched-ongutenberg.org which published the poem "Xochitl" by the author of this article. (*Editor's note: Scott's poem is awesome! It's subject is Frida Kahlo and when you go to the web site to find it, click on Vol. 3, #2.*)

In short, we are witnessing a poetry revolution based upon the democratization of e publishing resulting in a wide spectrum of quality and quantity. A poet must still rely on his or her skill with language and the ability to convey the truth of experience artistically. The editor or publisher will continue to express a vision based upon a personal point of view, by what he or she chooses to publish. But now, for the first time, poetry's rich tradition has been combined with instantaneous and worldwide access via the Internet, creating new and exciting market opportunities. Welcome to the brave new world of online poetry!

William Scott Galasso is the author of seven poetry books, including [Rainbow Music](#) and [Vermillion Falling](#). He has been published in the U.S., Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Romania, Croatia, and the U.K.

Switched-on Gutenberg, an on-line poetry journal, seeks submissions for its next issue: ***Poems of Place and Displacement***. Poems will be taken by e-mail from September 1, 2006 to December 20, 2006. Please visit the website for further guidelines: www.switched-ongutenberg.org.

Poetry by the scores

If you want to research something about poetry, find a specific poem or poet, or just see "what's out there," the following sites will give you more information than you could ever use:

<http://poetry.about.com/mlibrary.htm>

<http://www.poetry-portal.com/index.html>

<http://dmoz.org/Arts/Literature/Poetry/>

Whatcom County poets are honored winners in the Sue C. Boynton Poetry Contest

A new annual poetry competition was named after Sue C. Boynton, a well-loved resident known for her poetry. The competition was open to any resident of Whatcom County; there were no other requirements.

James Bertolino, Anita Boyle, George Drake, Robert Huston, Malcolm Kenyon and coordinator Susan Erickson formed the organizing team and Jack McCarthy, performance poet, and Nancy Pagh, a Western Washington University faculty member, were the judges.

There were 20 winners and 14 merit award poets ranging in age from kindergarten to senior citizen. On June 9th award-winning poems were read in a special ceremony, and again on July 6th, to mark the beginning of a year-long Poetry Walk. The 20 winning poems have been engraved and mounted in store windows around Bellingham's Fairhaven district, creating the poetry walk.

Anita Boyle designed full-color, poetry placards for all winning and merit award poems, as well as a poem by Sue C. Boynton. These will be mounted in Whatcom Transit Authority busses, and will also be on display for a year.

(Editors note: Thanks to James Bertolino for emailing the information for this news item.)



Continue reading to find out what is happening. If you want your group listed in the next issue, send your information in by Nov. 27th.



Readings, etc.

Anita Feng reading from her book *Sadie & Mendel*, winner of the 2005 Backwaters Press Prize, Tuesday, **October 3, 7 p.m.**, In Other Words, 8 NE Killingsworth St., Portland, OR & Sunday, November 19, 2 p.m., Elliott Bay Book, Seattle, WA

SoulFood Books Café is the site of a new reading series, 7-9:00. **Oct. 4** Poets from Floating Bridge Press *Pontoon #9*; **Oct. 10** **Jack & Adelle Foley**; Oct. 19 **Susan Rich & Kathleen Flenniken**; Nov. 16 Paul Nelson & Charles Potts; contact Michael Dylan Welch welchm@aol.com or Lana Hechtman Ayers moonlit.cloud@yahoo.com.

Finishing Line Press Night of Verse at Ravenna Third Place Books, Friday, **October 13, 7:30 p.m.** RTPB presents local poets **Jane Alynn**, **Donna Frisk**, **Laura Gamache**, and **Carlos Martinez**. Each has a chapbook published by FLP. Contact Rachael Mann, rachaelrtp@yahoo.com.

Puget Sound Poetry Connection, Distinguished Writer Series and open mic, Blu Wolf (across from Tully's on Broadway, downtown Tacoma), features **Kathleen Flenniken**, **October 13th**, 7:00 p.m. Open mic sign-up 6:30.

Featured readers at Olympia Poetry Network, Traditions Café, 5th and Water St., Olympia, 6:30-8:00. **October 15**: **Thomas Thomas**; November 18: **Holly Hughes**; December 20: Winter Reading featuring OPN and audience reading winter poems by other poets.

The featured readers at the Ice Cream Renaissance 2108 Main Street, Vancouver, WA: for **October**, **Flora Durham** and November **Ken Palmer**. **Christopher Luna** hosts. More information: 360-694-9653

The Potential Space: an Exploration of Art, Creativity, and Psyche! Various arts including poetry performance in annual event held by NW Alliance for Psychoanalytic Study, **Nov. 4, 5-9PM**, Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle. Contact Janice Hickey: jhickeymsw@aol.com.

North End Forum, gathering of poets and musicians, at Bai Pai in the lounge, 2316 NE 65th St. in Seattle, **Monday evenings** 8 to 11. Hosted by **Jed Myers**, medjyers@hotmail.com.

Poets **Belle Randall**, **Joannie Kervran Stangeland**, and **Donald Kentop** read, 7:30 p.m., **Nov. 30**, "Alice" Room, Richard Hugo House, 1634 Eleventh Av., Seattle, **David D. Horowitz**, 206-633-2725, rosealleypress@juno.com

Poets **Michael Spence** and **David D. Horowitz** read, 7:30 p.m., Dec. 6th, "Winslow" Room, Richard Hugo House, 1634 Eleventh Ave., Seattle; **David D. Horowitz**, 206-633-2725, rosealleypress@juno.com

20 poets are winners in the Moonviewing poetry contest sponsored by the WPA and Seattle's Japanese Gardens. To see the list of winners and to read their winning poems, you can go to the WPA web site page http://www.washingtonpoets.org/2006_moon_poems_contest_winners.html.

Are you a member of the Washington Poets Association? If not, go to our website, www.washingtonpoets.org and find the on-line membership form.

