

Oregon Poetry Association Annual Report, 2018

Membership

OPA currently has **308 members**, up from 258 at this time last year, an increase of nearly 20 percent. Board members Charles Castle and Diane Corson serve as membership co-chairs. This year they held readings and launched bookmark and tote bag campaigns to help get the word out about OPA. (Purchase your tote bag in the book room, pick up some book marks, and help us spread the word!)

Publications

This year we produced the long-awaited 2016 *Verseweavers*, edited by Eleanor Berry, as well as the 2017 issue, edited by Dale Champlin. Both beautiful issues were mailed out together in late summer. With the transition to a new editor and new process, we did have a bump—the omission of the winners of one of the 2017 contest categories. Those poems will be included in further printings of the 2017 *Verseweavers*, as well as in the 2018 issue, and they have been posted to OPA's website, oregonpoets.org.

OPA also published *Cascadia 2018*, the anthology of the 40 award-winning poems from our annual K-12 student contest, distributing it to the winners, their teachers, and their school libraries. The lovely 72-page volume was produced by Tiel Aisha Ansari, with cover photo by OPA board member Shirley Marc.

Our monthly **newsletter** is edited by board member Bruce Parker and board alternate Dale Champlin. Bruce has been reaching out to OPA units around the state for news, and Dale, in addition to designing our new logo, has given the newsletter a vibrant new look. We switched to MailChimp as our newsletter platform a few months ago. On average, around 60 percent of recipients open the newsletter.

OPA Online

OPA's **website**, oregonpoets.org, got a bit of a makeover this year. We're grateful to Katie Eberhart, who recently retired from co-managing the website, for her years of service. Currently managed by Tiel Aisha Ansari, with Shirley Marc and Dale Champlin training to take over, OPA's website attracts around 3000 views per month and is host to

- a **calendar** of poetry events around the state (to which you can post your own events);
- OPA **announcements** and a sign-up for new post notifications;
- **poems** by our contest winners;
- **book reviews** (many thanks to our book review editor, Carolyn Martin);
- board meeting **minutes** and other organization documents;
- and lots more!

OPA's **Facebook** page has 698 followers. We'd like to gain a presence on **Twitter**. If this is something you could help with, talk to a board member or email oregonpoets@gmail.com.

Oregon Poetry Collection

This year board members Joy McDowell and Erik Muller worked with counterparts at the Knight Library of the University of Oregon to

- promote the collecting and cataloguing of books for the Oregon Poetry Collection, housed at the Knight Library (1501 Kincaid St., Eugene, OR);
- encourage the moving of the collection this September to a location allowing **browsing** (check it out!);
- and collaborate on the planning and presentation of the first Knight Library **Undergraduate Poetry Prize** and Award Reading. OPA contributed financial support for the project, selected OPA judges for the contest, and identified two OPA/local poets and introducers for the award reading.

Conference

We're grateful to board member Shirley Marc for planning this year's conference. Shirley does her best to accommodate everyone's needs. Our registration fee increased a bit due to the increase in venue costs. Food, beverages, and AV are expensive. We are open to having future conferences at a community college with catered food, or some other venue; however, those who have to travel would then have to find their own overnight accommodations. If you have ideas about conference locations, please feel free to make a note of it somewhere on the evaluation sheet. We would also like to thank so many of you who made donations with their registrations.

Contests

Our spring contest received 130 entries, with 109 entries from Oregon, and our fall contest 105, with 79 from Oregon. Amy Miller served as contest chair. Our 2017/18 Cascadia student contest, funded by the Collins Foundation and co-chaired by Lisa Baldwin and Tiel Aisha Ansari, received 303 entries from 42 schools around the state. The award ceremony was held in Springfield and attended by (very excited!) student winners, their families and teachers, and several OPA board members. Four of our student winners placed in the Manningham Poetry Trust Awards, the national student contest facilitated by the National Federation of State Poetry Societies.

Treasury

Treasurer Lynn Otto implemented monthly financial updates to the board, an annual report to the membership, the purchase of Facebook ads to promote our contests and conference, and the tracking of income by program/activity. Our **conference budget** tends to be very tight, depending on some donations to supplement conference registrations, as venue and catering costs continue to rise, but we're happy to report that our **adult contest** entry fees covered the contest prizes and remuneration for the judges.

This year, thanks to a donation, we were able to catch up on production of *Verseweavers*, which is part of our operations budget, not our contest budget. **Membership dues** are our main source of operations income, and since the cost of producing *Verseweavers* has risen, we have come to the conclusion that we need to raise our dues a bit (and, at the same time, simplify our dues categories). The **proposed dues changes** are as follows:

- Regular one-year membership, currently \$27, increases to \$35
- Regular two-year membership, currently \$50, increases to \$65
- Student one-year membership, currently \$17, increases to \$20
- Elimination of "senior" and "family" membership discounts

Our **student contest** funding is the most difficult to procure, as it requires many hours of writing grant applications, which may or may not be granted, sometimes leaving us with no funding. We are very grateful for the anonymous donation of \$1500 for the production of the next two issues of *Cascadia*, our anthology of the students' winning poems, and we encourage OPA members to **consider becoming a short- or long-term sponsor of some aspect of our Cascadia contest**: publicizing (\$400/year), awards celebration venue rental (\$400-\$500/year), refreshments (\$500/year), printing and mailing of invitations and certificates (\$110/year), and/or cash prizes (\$400/year). Email Lynn at oregonpoets@gmail.com.

We are very grateful to have received a sizeable **bequest** by the late Patricia Ruth Banta, a longtime member of OPA. We will keep \$3000 of the \$17,050.00 bequest in our bank account to avoid bank fees. The remaining portion will be used to purchase certificates of deposit as a quasi-endowment to increase the stability of the OPA so it may continue its mission of promoting poets and poetry in Oregon.

Finally, the ongoing board members express their **appreciation** for the excellent work of our outgoing president, Lisa Baldwin, and secretary, Joy McDowell, as they retire from the board. Many thanks!