

**History of the Stroll of Poets:  
30 Years of Strolling**

**Written and Compiled by  
Max Vandersteen**

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## History of The Stroll Of Poets Society 1991 To 2021

In the short time that I have been a member of The Stroll Of Poets Society I have experienced a variety of impressions, emotions and perceptions. I was enthralled when I discovered that there was a group where I could share and hear poetry with others. Not having written poetry for decades, it was a reinforcement for me to take it up again, especially with the possibility of seeing some of my poems in print again. After I joined the Stroll the next task was to sign up for a reading which was another step in becoming a part of the poetry scene for me. Completing that, I could submit my first poem for inclusion in the 2016 edition of The Stroll Anthology. I was uncertain and unsure what to expect but I decided to check out the Haven only a week before I was scheduled to read.

From the first Haven reading that I attended at The Upper Crust I was made to feel welcome. I met a few of the attendees that evening, enjoyed some coffee, some company and some great poetry. I picked up on the enthusiasm in the response of the audience and was captivated by the poems that I heard. The next week I returned to the Upper Crust to share my poetry with other members of The Stroll. Even though I was so nervous that I could not stop shaking, when I entered I was soon made to feel comfortable by the Haven Crew and people in the audience. As I read my selected poems I grew more confident as I received hearty applause after each poem. When I was finished reading I was ecstatic over the response that I received from the audience and the mic host. I was hooked from that point and have been a regular attendee at The Haven ever since, including the past couple of years while the Haven has been held on line, via the Zoom platform, due to the Corona virus.

In the six years since that date I have become involved with the Stroll in a variety of ways. I have not only read as a featured reader yearly but also participated in the open mic opportunities frequently as well. After getting brave enough to sign up for a couple of shifts as the door host and the mic host I began to get more familiar with the setting and the routine. I then became involved with the Haven site crew at The Upper Crust. I found it rewarding to help other readers prepare and perform their works and to become a part of the Stroll community. As I continued to attend more Haven gatherings, even when I did not read, I got to know more and more Stroll members and revel in the companionship of all my new friends. Friends, I was so pleased to find, who also had a passion for verse and sharing their voices and reflections through poetic expression. I decided to attempt to get a seat on the board of this organization that was becoming so important to me. To my delighted surprise, after two years as an associate board member, I became the vice president of the board of The Stroll Of Poets.

I cannot help but feel that it is an honour and a privilege to be in this position when I think about all of the hard working board members who have come before me. The many years, the many events, the many members and the many voices who have spoken through this organization inspires me to promote the legacy and the evolution of the wonderfully compassionate community that makes up The Stroll Of Poets Society. This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Stroll and as a part of the celebration and recognition of that fact I would like to present an historical chronical of our group since its origin in 1991. In delving into the historical archives I have become more connected to the voices of the past and present and desire to record some of

the echoes for the benefit of the future voices of our group. Viewing, through the archives and newsletters, I have developed a connection to those voices and to the seasons of events, politics, celebrations and sentiments associated with the passage of time. I have been able to hear and now see and touch the progression of the history of the Stroll.

You will also find, assembled in this document, a compilation of historical newspaper and magazine articles to present some of the highlights of the past thirty years. These publications can be found after the historical facts and personal recollections in this work. Unfortunately, the cutbacks in journalism and the advent of the internet have significantly decreased the amount of press coverage over the past decade or so. Included in this historical account also are lists of founding members, past board members, anthology editors, Edmonton Poets Laureate (several of whom were Stroll members), and deceased Stroll members. I have also invited many Stroll members to submit a reflection or an anecdote about a memorable occasion which have also been added to this story about the growth of the Edmonton Stroll Of Poets Society. I would like to thank all of those members who responded by sending me their recollections.

To start off this wonderful story I would like to begin with an account of the very first stroll and an insight on the origins of the Stroll, written by one of our founding members, Doug Elves, and posted in the Stroll Of Poets web site. What a wonderful beginning it was:

## **A Glance Back at the Birth of the Stroll**

As we prepared for another annual Stroll of Poets, several years ago, I thought back to the first Stroll, to why and how it began; and wondered whether it was still meeting our needs. My needs as I saw them back then likely were similar to those of all poets.

After several years away from poetry, I had begun composing poems again in the late eighties. I looked, too, for outlets: especially public readings. There were a few readings here and there around town. Mostly they were “juried” by what appeared to be very narrow cliques. Getting a spot on the roster of readers seemed a matter of currying friendship and favour with a host. Many other poets appeared to be in the same position as I was: outsiders.

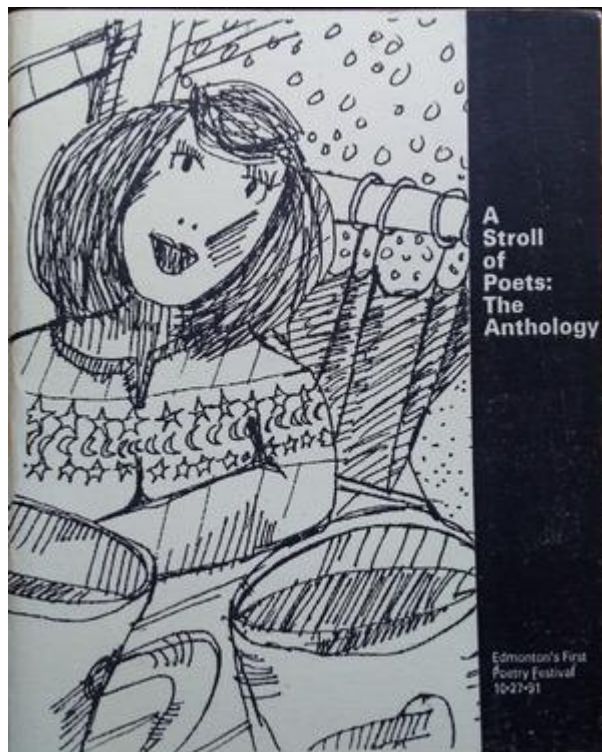
The format of a short series of readings organized by a group of women was the most promising and fairest I had seen: two invited guest poets, augmented by an open stage to a reasonable maximum number. With a break, the entire program reached to two hours. I was grateful to Ruth Donovan, Alice Major, Rhona McAdam and the others for that very pleasant and well-promoted mini-series; so was disappointed to learn that they were not going to continue it. To keep it alive, I contacted them and found myself reconvening an organizing committee. This time it comprised Alice, myself, Diane Zinyk and Glen Kirkland. We held a season of a half- dozen monthly readings in the above format. in general we felt quite good about the series, but the stagnant attendance figures made us wonder whether there might not be something lacking in our format or approach. In June of 1991, that series also came to a close.

Must poetry accept its status of pauper of the arts? What could be done to give it the weight of public acceptance, and hence an ever-expanding importance? The Fringe brought new audiences to live theatre, and the Gallery Walk drew new patrons into art galleries. But how to do the same for poetry . . . ? I mulled over these questions when chatting with Lori White, proprietor of Afterwords, a second-hand bookshop on Whyte Avenue (long since gone). But of course: there are several venues on Whyte which could lend themselves well to poetry readings: bookshops and bistros. Do it all on the same day: it becomes an ‘event’ then. Lori was intrigued and volunteered her shop. I went around the corner to speak to Margo Cross of Athabasca Books, and she began her long enthusiasm for our event. Down the street to Bjarne’s Books. Bjarne Tokrud liked the idea. At that point I knew it could fly. I called Ivan Sundal, and his enthusiasm told me that poets would go for it. He and I convened a meeting on August 23, 1991.

Glen Kirkland, Alice Major, Bert Almon, Ruth Donovan, Olga Costopoulos, Anna Marie Sewell, Ken Wilson, Ivan and I and met and set a plan for the first Stroll of Poets exactly two months later. We all worked the phones, contacting every poet we knew.

It was all organized on a shoestring. Most publicity was free; though we charged each venue ten dollars, which gave us a promotional budget of \$110.

Twenty-seven days before the event, we held a general meeting of all the poets, the agenda including the question of whether to form a society. Near the end of the meeting someone asked if an anthology could issue from the event. Logic dictated that there was no time to consider it, but we were poets. Again, several people spread the word by phone to ask poets each to submit a poem to the publication. Lori’s bookstore was the “post office” where poems were to be dropped off and picked up. The \$690 printing cost was, I think, fronted



by Tom Trofimuk; and Toni Ford designed the now-familiar page layout of our anthology. With 165 copies printed by Stroll day and another fifty available later, he recouped his money. Most copies were sold to Stroll members themselves, of course. While we have a few copies of subsequent anthologies still available, there are none to be had of this inaugural issue; rare and, within a tiny market, likely quite valuable. Stroll day, October 27, brought a gratifying turnout to hear the sixty or seventy poets despite the early cold snap. The first “No Bards Barred Bar” took place after the event, and all of us felt quite drunk on poetic euphoria even before entering the bar.

In November we applied to register as a society, and spent one Sunday filing slowly through Athabasca Books where a cable TV cameraman recorded dozens of poets, each reciting for the broadcast audiences. Members even reported seeing some clips in subsequent months.

Then came the first “Twelve Days of Poetry,” many of them grouped around themes. Fortunately, our list of poets extended no further than could be accommodated through the twelve days; with the finale just like the other evenings, only bigger. Five or six poets performed; culminating in Mary Howes reciting to the musical background of Guerrilla Welfare. We all got drunk that night too.

Our first Annual General Meeting took place in March, 1992. Ivan Sundal was duly nominated and elected President. Plans were set, structures formed, and we were away.



But growth brings new problems. If we were to fulfill our democratic, inclusive goals, we were going to have to accommodate many more poets than before. Formulas for reading schedules were debated, and the issue resolved. One problem threatened to halt the anthology publication,



however; if we were to print an anthology with each poet again given a full page for poem and bio, a new physical format was required. We couldn't saddle staple the binding by volunteer labour, as we had in the first year. The larger size called for "perfect" binding, which meant a much higher cost of publication. How to raise the funds for it? With a mixture of excitement and dread, Ivan and I and a few others launched ourselves into organizing a small fundraiser. "Poets of the Four Quarters" took place on the summer solstice, during which four favourite poets recited in the four corners of the 33rd floor observation level of the AGT Tower. The event was catered with wine and a variety of munchies from our gracious restaurateur supporters, and our poets recited their last lines as the sun set at 10:06 p.m. The profit came to about \$350: not huge, but enough to leverage the credit of our printer of several years, Ali of Scholastic Printing. We had also received our first grant from the Alberta Foundation of the Arts, to be used for other expenses of our season.

The expanding roster of poets created challenges in organizing the Twelve Days of Poetry, as well. The 1992 event was created around eleven poets chosen from the anthology by the producers of CBC Radio literary programming in Edmonton. These eleven poets were then each asked to invite three others to recite on the same evening. The CBD producers attended all eleven events, selected their favourites, and recorded these at the 12th Day of Poetry. Controversy erupted amongst the poets who had not been included, for they felt that you had to be someone's friend to be selected. The point was valid, so the executive came up with the plan that we all know by now: blind judging by jurors drawn from the community, and so on. In retrospect we have often marvelled at how the Stroll year had become a cohesive whole. The all-inclusive Stroll fed poems to the Anthology, the Anthology fed the roster into the 12 Days of Poetry, and the first eleven days created, by audience vote, the shortlist for the finale.

The weekly series arose at some point to fill a further need for poets to recite. Again, we struggled with the issue of democratic selection, and filled the first weekly series roster through a kind of hockey draft. Each weekly series is constructed in a different way, however, reflecting the creativity of the year's executive.



And the writers' circles continue as well. I wish more members took advantage of them. My own experience with them was positive, for we all tried to extend the democratic and peer-support ethic into the round- table discussion.

I wish all Stroll members and executive members much fertility in their imaginations as they work on the Stroll. To new members: put your own stamp on it; just be prepared to adapt to the demands of the membership; for events organized with the same individuals at centre- stage and as arbiters tend to frustrate the poetry community. Better to have a rotating roster of hosts and styles running each reading.

- Doug Elves, 2005

## **History of the Stroll of Poets Society**

The following Chronological account of events and development of The Stroll of Poets Society is gleaned from salvaged newsletters, archived magazine and press articles and past Stroll of Poets Anthologies. It moves forward from Doug's composition on the birth of the organization and illustrates how the Stroll became an important and respected voice for the arts community in Edmonton. The organization was involved in many activities promoting local artistic expression and development of successful participants in municipal, provincial and federal literary councils and competitions. Over the years the Stroll has consistently shown a strong support for opportunities to promote literature and writing among the youth of our city as well. It is my hope that by capturing the evolution of the group, the bonds of the individuals within it, and spotlighting the events it has participated in that I can bring forth an appreciation for their presence in the City of Edmonton.

I also wish to portray the growth of relationships between the Stroll of Poets and the vast number of local businesses, literary associations, public and educational facilities, media outlets, and government agencies over the past thirty years. The mutually beneficial interaction has helped to make Edmonton the vibrant cultural center that it has now become. The events, venues and festivals staged by and participated in by the Stroll of Poets have helped to establish and are an integral part of the festival tradition and reputation of our City of Champions.

In the earlier years of its existence the Stroll invited the public to interact by selecting their favorite poets at venues such as The Twelve Nights of Poetry or slam events, for example. A great deal of planning was involved for the Stroll of Poets Society to stage the large-scale events such as The Poets Stroll or The Twelve Nights. Committees, facilitators, and other roles were designated each year to successfully outline, organize, schedule, and execute the events. Over the years, as the festivals and the organization evolved, some of these functions were assimilated into other events while other procedures have been scaled down somewhat as well.

Initially all communications between organizations, the press, and/or Stroll members (including Newsletters) was conducted through Canada Postal Services, telephone, and even Fax transmissions. More recently, these methods have been replaced in large part with internet

communications such as e-mail, web sites, Facebook and other social media formats. This has significantly affected the roles and responsibilities of the Stroll board members and committees over the thirty years that The Stroll of Poets has been in existence.

There was also a great deal of support and interaction with the press, and other media such as television and radio. Much of that has unfortunately subsided with cutbacks and change of focus for media coverage and change of platforms for media itself. It is much more difficult in some ways to reach a general portion of the public not specifically inclined to search out events in the field of arts or literature. Where newspapers and magazines carried items relevant to many sectors of the community which may then have been more easily noticed by all readers it is now possible only through specific searches to locate news or announcements for interests outside of the sensational.

Not incorporated into this history are many of the numerous occasions where the Stroll of Poets promoted book launches for members of the organization, as there were countless such occurrences through the years. Although some are indicated, I feared that it would take a lot of space to include each and every one. Therefore, it is my hope that I have not created hard feelings by missing many of them. Suffice to say that the Stroll of Poets Society has always been very supportive of individual as well as collective achievements and promoted those achievements on all levels. To find more accurate or detailed information please see the newsletters and/or press clippings corresponding to the dates and events captured in this historical recollection. Several additional memorable experiences, contributed by Stroll members have been included after the following write up as a means of highlighting these events and, through them, the kinship developed amongst the members of the Stroll.

Still, it cannot possibly do justice to the relationships and friendships created between members of the Stroll and the unending support provided for each other over the years of striving together to promote their own voices and the collective voices of poets attempting to reach out to the public. The poetry so often reflected the beauty of our people and landscapes, the problems plaguing our politics and identity, personal relationships to the customs and cultures of our community, and the enduring powers of nature and love. It also dealt with fears and frights, defined hopes and dreams, and struggles for human rights. At times a refuge to its members it has still been a powerful voice for the arts and enjoyment of fine literature.

## 1991

So it began, with the Stroll holding readings monthly until June in 1991 at first, and then the first Stroll event on Whyte Avenue, based on the concept of the Gallery Walk, moving from venue to venue in October. A group of 65 poets travelled and read at locations starting from Bjanre's Books and moving westward to Café Mosaics, then Grabba Jabba, Athabasca Books, Afterwords Books, Aspen Books, common Woman Books, Varscona Books, Blue Nile Restaurant, and ending at Edmonton Bookstore. That was followed by a television recording of poetry reading from Athabasca Books in November and then the first Twelve Days of Poetry began on December 17<sup>th</sup> at The Upper Crust Restaurant to finish off that inaugural year. The exceptional

event was facilitated in several different venues on twelve occasions ending on January 4<sup>th</sup> of 1992. It featured eleven poets selected by the Stroll who would each read, along with three members which they themselves selected, through the first 11 nights of the event. Four finalists were selected from these readers to compete on the final evening.

## 1992

The first Annual General Meeting was held in March of 1992 and Ivan Sundal was elected as the first President of the Stroll of Poets Society. The annual membership fee was set at \$5.00. The initial board meetings were conducted in the Mezzanine Meeting Room of the Renford Inn on Whyte. One of the first events organized by the Stroll of Poets was a benefit event held in Vista 33 observation lounge, on the 33<sup>rd</sup> floor of the A.G.T. Tower, on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Called "Poets of the Four Quarters, it featured Mary Howes, Nigel Darbasie, Molly Chisaakay, and Gerald Hill, four Edmonton poets, reciting in the four corners of the lounge area. It was hosted by Alderwoman Lillian Staroszik and sponsored by A.G.T., Upper Crust Restaurant, Arden Theater, Sweetwater Café, Confetti's and New Asian Village, Café Mosaics, Bullock Catering, and Alberta College Conservatory of Music.

**POETS OF THE FOUR QUARTERS**

A benefit event for the Stroll of Poets Society

MARY HOWES

NIGEL DARBASIE

MOLLY CHISAAKAY

GERALD HILL

Thursday, **June 18, 1992**  
**8:15 p.m.** to sunset (10:06 p.m.)  
 in the four corners of **Vista 33**  
 (A.G.T. Tower, 33rd floor observation lounge)

A select quartet of Edmonton poets will recite in solstice light. Enjoy the wine, the treats, and spectacular views with friends between brief performances.

Tickets \$15, available at  
**The Gramophone,**  
 10020 - 101A Ave.  
 & **Athabasca Books,**  
 8250 - 105 St.  
 (includes wine, deli bar. No GST.)

Honorary Host and Patron:  
 Ald. Lillian Staroszik

Sponsors include  
 A.G.T., Arden Theatre  
 Sweetwater Cafe,  
 Confetti's & New Asian Village,  
 Upper Crust Restaurant,  
 Alberta College Conservatory  
 of Music, and Cafe Mosaics

As the membership grew along with increased participation, planning carried on through the year for the next Stroll Festival set to begin on October 4<sup>th</sup>. A total fifty four poets participated in the twelve venues that were lined up to stage poetry readings, most of which are unfortunately no longer around. They included, as some of founding members may recall, places like Mosaics, Tastevin, Earth's, Varscona, Athabasca Books, Campa Java, H McColl's, Continental, Bjarne's Books, Vertigo, Grabba, J. Strauss, Strathcona, Hanratty's, Courtney's, L'Alliance, and S. Carrol. It was a great success and made it apparent that there was a great interest in Edmonton in the sharing of words. It was determined that over 1500 persons attended those Festival events.

The first Stroll of Poets Newsletter was created and mailed out to members in November. It announced a meeting to be held that month in The Renford Inn in order to plan for the upcoming 12 Days of Poetry. The newsletter also included an analysis of the attendance at all venues participating in the recent Stroll event. The newsletter was issued from the office of The Stroll of Poets Society: 103, 10826 – 78 Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 1P8.

The 12 Days of Poetry that first full year included forty-four poets, selected anonymously by a jury of Stroll members, who judged their entries in the first Stroll Anthology, also published that year. Four poets read on each of the first eleven days. Of those poets a final four were selected, by the same jury to read on the final, twelfth day, where the winner was chosen.

### 1993

During 1993 Speakshops and Workshops were introduced and led by Anna Marie Sewell and Walter Kaasa for members to improve their skills. The Poetry Live Series was staged every Thursday that year at Latte Café. An outreach program was initiated and successfully implemented their goals of encouraging groups of people to write and share their words and to promote interest in poetry in the city of Edmonton. The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council sponsored twenty outreach poets with \$100 grants through this initiative. Leaflets soliciting participation were once again distributed throughout the city by Stroll members.

Stroll newsletters became a regular communication to members with 4 issues published during the year. The first was in March and provided sign up and submission forms for the third annual Stroll Festival and guidelines for the annual anthology. It also listed details of the upcoming AGM: \$5.00 membership fees were due; submission of forms for the Stroll Festival; submission of poem and bio for the anthology; opportunity to declare a desire to participate in the 12 Days of Poetry; nominations and election of the board (recommended to elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer and a total of eight to ten members). The newsletter was issued from a new office location of 10503 – 100 Ave, Edmonton, AB, T5J 0A8.

There were two newsletters in August, the first on the second of the month was The Stroll of Poets News. It offered news on the commencement of regular office hours and planning details around upcoming workshops and preparations for the Festival. The next issue was The Stroll Scroll (picked up from the list, or scroll, of participants in the festival) and would remain the name of the newsletter for several years. It took on a more formal format that reiterated most of

the news in the previous newsletter. The October Stroll Scroll detailed the schedule for the Festival and also included articles about the outreach program and the Thursday evening poetry live events. Those articles were also repeated in the December issue which included details of the 12 Days of Poetry event as well. It also contained a couple of advertisements resulting from work of the outreach committee. One was from the Grant McEwen Community College announcing new courses being offered in creative writing and the other was a call for 16 poets to work in community outreach workshops for an honorarium of \$100 each.

In preparation for the Stroll event leaflets were distributed by Stroll members, referred to as Poetroopers, to advertise it in advance. Opening day was deemed “Beret Day” and Don McKay, the poet in residence at the U of A and winner of the 1991 Governor General Award for Poetry, was featured at the opening brunch held at the Strathcona Legion. That year an Open Stage was managed by Andrew Thompson and the culmination of the Festival was celebrated at the No Bards Barred wrap up event. Participating poets received a \$10 honorarium and an Anthology for their performance.

Some repeat and many new South side venues were lined up by the busy Stroll board members that year including Sunflower Gallery, Hanratty’s Teashop, Greenwoods Books, Latte Café, The Black Dog, Athabasca Books, Mama’s Bistro, Bjarne’s Books, Continental Trust, and Hugh McColl’s.

The Twelve Days of Poetry once again featured Don McKay on the final Day of the event. The 44 participating readers were selected by Stroll members based on their Anthology entry but the four readers for that last day as well as the eventual winner were selected, based on their performance, by patrons that year to add more excitement to the event.

## 1994

In early March of 1994 the Outreach directive again concentrated on encouraging groups to write and share poetry and increased their effort to secure funds for developing poets. Thanks to the directions learned during an initial instructive workshop conducted by Alice Major and Glen Kirkland, Stroll poets were paired up and completed two visits to a society or group of their choice. During the first visit the poets read their own work and then conducted a workshop aimed at stimulating the production of poetry. During the second visit the group participants presented and discussed their creations.

This effort was mentioned in the first of four ever improving Stroll Scroll newsletters for the year in March. It included a message from the president, Ivan Sundal at that time, which was to become a regular feature. This newsletter indicated that the Stroll was receiving funding at this point from The Alberta Foundation for the Arts and from The Canada Council as well to encourage the development of poetic events. It announced a new workshop with Don McKay and Jan Zwicky to take place in May dealing with editing the work of others. An article about the weekly Latte Café readings included the fact that a grueling new format, known as sweatshops, were held during this event on the last Thursday of each month. Also in another article it was mentioned that Vi’s for Pies was holding a poetry reading event on the last Sunday afternoon of

each month. An interesting new event was also to occur in Calgary in the month of June, it advertised as well. Calgary was scheduling its first annual Stroll event.

The following Stroll Scroll, in May, included a message from the new president, Candace Bamber. The evolving Scroll was then including graphics and pictures and looking more sophisticated with each edition. It began to include a calendar of events, updates on workshops, retreats and reading series regularly. It became much easier for members to keep in touch with events and receive updates about activities with the distribution of five newsletters during 1994. The following events, occurring during the year, were detailed in subsequent newsletters in August, September, and December.

The Twelve Days of Poetry in January, 1994 attracted four hundred attendees during the first eleven days and an additional one hundred and sixty in the final day. The Stroll board arranged for event sponsors, the Canada Council, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Edmonton Journal that year and it was coordinated very successfully by Anna Mioduchowska along with assistants Doug Elves and Myrna Garanis. The host for the twelve successive evenings was Jocko and featured forty-four poets, guest poet, Don McKay, along with Dancer of Poems Debra Shantz, Voice of Danced Poems Mary Howes, and the Thomas Trofimuk and Kathleen Henderson Band. The Stroll also presented composer Anna Beaumont performing renditions of poetry from previous anthologies on the twelfth day.

Seventy-five poets participated in the first Calgary Stroll of Poets on June 5<sup>th</sup>, sponsored by the Writer's Guild of Alberta, along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Readings took place at several venues along the strip such as Sandpiper Books, Bagels and Buns, Peppers Deli, Mount Royal Village, Books n Books, Melrose Café, The Croft, Sandcastles, and Decadent Desserts. A wrap up party, hosted by Judy Hamill of CBC1010, and poetry sweatshop concluded the day at the Ship & Anchor Pub.

An invitation to the Stroll of Poets for members to read in the Read Canada tent during the evenings in August and an anthology proofreading bee was held in the Stroll office that month also. The anthology was launched in September at Greenwoods Bookshoppe with readings by Candace Bamber and Alice Major. A voice workshop was conducted by Walter Kaasa in the month of September. Walter was also featured in the opening brunch for the Festival in October.

## 1995

The year 1995 saw the publication of five newsletters once again. The May edition carried a logo for the first time which was replaced by a new logo in the September issue. During this year the newsletters contained new features about welcoming new members, a feature column, titled the way I write, which were submitted by Stroll members, literary magazines and poetry contests on top of the regular news updates and Stroll announcements. Some of the calls for poetry submissions were local and some were even foreign. The opportunities were numerous and they included calls for poetry for Fiddlehead's Dress Code writing contest (NB), Madame Bull's Tavern literary magazine (Edmonton), Rowan Books Christmas Anthology, The Amethyst

Review's Vanishing Breeds Contest (NS), the Isabel Miller Award in Celebration of Women in Art (Edmonton), Autumn Tide Press (Montreal), CBC and Saturday Night Magazine (Toronto), Global Graphics (California), Wicked Magazine (California), Whiskey Island Magazine poetry/fiction contest (University of Cleveland), Jottings Magazine (San Jose, California), Original Creations Magazine (Georgia), Poetechniciens Magazine (England) and The Straits Times (Singapore).

The fourth edition of the Twelve Days of Poetry was run through the month of January and was considered another smashing success. It was becoming a recognized and ever more appreciated event and was well covered by the Edmonton press.

During the first half of the year a new reading series was held on Tuesday evenings at Café Soleil on Whyte Avenue. It was dubbed Poetry Night in Canada and featured four scheduled readers from teams that were drafted to begin the season, and an open stage event weekly. The series concluded in June with a sudden death playoff series where two poets went head to head with only one advancing to the next round. The last one standing would be declared the winner but, unfortunately, I could not find any information on who that was.

During the Alberta Book Fair, held March 31 to April 2, that year, the Canadian Author's Association sponsored several writing workshop at the downtown public library. A workshop on writing for a younger audience was conducted by Sheldon Oberman (children's book award winner) and Cora Taylor while another workshop on mystery writing was led by Janice Mant. Alex Mair conducted another workshop on humor and a workshop on publishing your own work was led by Mary Dawe. Grant MacEwan Community College also staged the April Fools Literary Cabaret during the festival which presented an event on the main stage which was The Duelling Presidents. It featured Alice Major, representing the Writers Guild, versus Janice Mant, representing the Canadian Author's Association. Other presentations during the evening included performances by Cora Taylor, Fred Stenson, Nancy Gibson, Shirley Serviss, Sheldon Oberman, and the Strolling Fools (made up of Stroll of Poets members) as well as Bill Damur on flute and illustrator Robert Woodbury.

Other events that occurred for the Stroll in 1995 included weekly writers circles, held in the Idylwyde public library on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. One of these groups was facilitated by Sandra Mooney Ellerbeck and the other by Jacques Benoit. The Poetry Festival, again staged in the month of September, opened with Di Brandt featured at the Stroll Brunch. The Idylwyde branch of the public library was beginning to host more events on behalf of the Stroll of Poets and in October they hosted an event called the Halloween Harvest of Poetry. Ten members presented a poem during the evening. The launch of the Stroll Anthology occurred December third that year at City Hall. The Twelve Days of Poetry commenced in December with the first six events occurring just before the end of the year. The second half of the readings took place in January of 1996.

There was considerable debate through the year about the possibility of a Stroll poet laureate, who would be known as the Big Bard, in an attempt to increase visibility of the organization and improve the quality of poetry (as per their mission statement). The big question and influencing



factor that arose was democracy versus quality. It was also an aim of the Stroll president, Candace Bamber, to extend the poetry community and reach out to other poetry organizations.

With the birth of the Stroll web site in 1995 new communication channels began to open up and the board decided to include an introduction stating what the Stroll was about and who they were. The site was to also include event schedules, links to other poetry sites, poems by members, and a system to sell Stroll anthologies and calendars.

The Edmonton Stroll of Poets Society sister group, the Calgary Stroll of Poets featured over 60 poets in various venues (cafes and bookstores) along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue on June 4<sup>th</sup> of this year.

## 1996

The year 1996 began with the final six days of the hugely successful Twelve Days of Poetry Event for The Stroll of Poets which was coordinated by Jannie Edwards that year. Many of the venues staging readings that year no longer exist in the Old Strathcona vicinity of Edmonton. Locations included the Commissary, Buy the Cup Café, Martini's Bar and Grill, the Upper Crust Café and the City Media Club. Shortly after this event concluded five members of the Stroll of Poets participated in a presentation held at The Princess Theater on the evening that "Total Eclipse" was screened by reading poems dedicated to a departed one. At the AGM, held that year at First Baptist Church, Jocelyn Veret was elected as the new president of the Stroll of Poets.

As stated earlier, the relationship between the Stroll and the Idylwyde public library branch was continually growing and an opportunity was again provided by the branch to stage an event for Valentines Day called "Heart Beat Poetry". Of course, the themes of the poems dealt with love and relationships. The Idylwyde branch also offered the use of their meeting room to the Stroll to hold meetings for the writers circle groups which extended throughout the entire year. Poetry by Stroll members was also published in a periodical published by the library titled *The Source*.

In conjunction with World Figure Skating Championships, being held in Edmonton from March 20<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Stroll of Poets was invited to play a role in the Feel the Spirit Festival held simultaneously at the "World Village" in the Edmonton Agricom. There, thirty poets read over three evenings on the theme of the village and the festival, which was "Good Living". A couple of months later, on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, Di Brandt, U of A writer in residence, conducted a writing workshop at the U of A L'Uni Theatre of Edmonton called *Writing Magic*. Also, that month the 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of *Madame Bull's Tavern* was sponsored and launched by Black Dog Freehouse.

The third annual Calgary Stroll of Poets occurred on June 2<sup>nd</sup> in restaurants and bookstores along 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue once again.

The summer months introduced a new reading venue at Persimmon Deli and a new thematic structure. The "World Series Poetry" games were played weekly with a different baseball related category for each event. After Scrub the first night, the following week the name of the game was Starting Line-up. This was followed by Casey's Hall of Fame, then Free Agents night and the season concluded with another Scrub event.

The Stoll Festival officially kicked off on October 5 but the night before that a special presentation was organized by Doug Elves to replace the opening day brunch which had been held in previous years. It was a grand affair, which also served as a fundraiser, with special guest star staged in the Skylight room of the Strathcona Legion. The featured artist was Merle Collins, a British spoken word poet originally from Grenada, who performed to a packed house. The festival commenced the next day and each night wrapped up with the No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion. A musical group comprising Stroll members, called the Poets Unplugged, also provided entertainment at the bar with acoustical music. Numerous bookstores situated in Old Strathcona were included in the venues for the Stroll festival. Where have they all gone? These various locations all participated: Breadstick Café, Alhambra Books, Princess Theater, Greenwoods Books, The Bagel Tree, Strathcona Books, Black Dog Freehouse, Misty Mountain Coffee, Athabasca Books, Mama Bistro, Bjarne's Books, and Orlando Books. There was a total of 111 poets who performed during the festival.

November was a memorable month for one of the Stroll's founding members when Alice Major travelled to England to read her poetry at Leeds University on the seventh. She was honored with a runner up award in the *Stand Magazine* poetry competition. Late that month the Stroll was also invited to participate in the Canadian Author's Association event at the U of A Education Building.

The Stroll Anthology was launched at an Emergency General Meeting held on December first in order that the board could provide information and hold a vote about an important decision. As there appeared to be a strong likelihood of a competing festival occurring one week prior to the Stroll of Poets Festival, should the Stroll reschedule their festival for the spring to avoid a conflict. The "word on the Street" (WOTC) festival, traditionally promoted and held at this time in Toronto by an Ontario corporation as a part of a National celebration of Poetry, was also federally funded. The vote was held to gain the confidence of the membership in the Board's decision making process. The good news for the Stroll was that, in the end, WOTC decided not to schedule an event in Edmonton.

## 1997

A lot of postage was used for a total of seven Stroll Scroll Newsletters that were mailed out to members throughout the year followed up by six more through the year of 1997.

The Twelve Days of Poetry, organized this time by Marilyn Hooper, initiated the year 1997 for the Stroll. It was again well received with a total of 600 attendees through the first eleven days and 225 more on the final day. In total 44 poets read over the 12 events.

The reading series, organized this time around by William Nicholls, returned and ran from February through to the end of May at Block 1912 European Café. With another different angle this year, each week ran on a different theme which were decided upon by the membership from entries submitted at the end of the year before. The first was Leaps not Taken and was subsequently followed by Parents and Children, Funny eh?, the blues-the spirit, Play Things,

Fools Night, Stars of the University, Green, Her/His Name, Heroes and Holy Innocents, Poets read favorite poets, Pop, and then observations on the opposite sex to conclude the series. The writers circles also continued at Idylwyde, to start the year and continued throughout, held on Tuesday evenings, facilitated by Reineke Gerding-Lengle, and Thursday evenings, facilitated by Sandra Ellerbeck. A pair of writing courses were also offered at Grant MacEwan Community College, City Center Campus, during the first months of the year. One of them was led by Theresa Shea and centered upon A Sense of Place: Poetry and Region. The other course was Writing the Short Story conducted by Dianne Linden.

The 1997 AGM, convened at St Anthony Teacher's Center on March 22, brought in a new set of bylaws for the Stroll of Poetry Society, replacing the original bylaws utilized since 1991, reorganizing the size and the structure of the board due to the growth of members and events. It also welcomed in a new president in Anna Mioduchowska for the upcoming season. Anna also became the first member to take on the role of archivist for the Stroll.

The Calgary Stroll of Poets ran a subdued version of their Stroll Festival at a single location on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Along with poetry readings, a Sweatshop event was coordinated by Judy Hamill at Michaelangelo's Workshop Café.

Calls for poetry submissions, advertised through the Stroll Scroll, included Edmonton's Snowapple Press Anthology "Undercurrents", Hamilton's Mekler & Deahl Publishers request for Chapbook manuscripts, and Rowan Books of Edmonton had two calls, the first being for poems to be included in a new series of Volumes of Verse and the second was a call for poetry by women who had experienced forms of depression or isolation.

The Stroll of Poets also solicited poems to be submitted electronically in order to be published as an e-poem on their developing web site. These poems would also be archived by the National Library of Canada. See Magazine included poetry by Stroll members in its volume 176 April edition focused on renaissance of the Spoken Word.

On October 5<sup>th</sup> the Stroll Festival commenced with an opening brunch featuring performance poet, playwright, and actress Sheri-D Wilson. This year's festival was organized by Marilyn Hooper, who arranged for a repeat of Dean MacKenie and the Jupiter Trio's performance of Alan Ginsberg's "Howl" during the festival, She also lined up the five venues which staged the events each day which included Alhambra Books, Athabasca Books, Bagel Tree, Breadstick Café, Greenwoods Bookshoppe, Misty on Whyte, Orlando Books, and Traveller's Antiques.

Immediately following the festival Alberta Book Fair Society held their Book Fair, which this year became known as "The Word Is Out", in the old Strathcona bus barns. The Stroll manned a table, among many other book stalls, where they also sold anthologies calendars. Visiting authors and poetry readings were highlighted throughout the fair.

The fall and winter of 1997 saw the reading series continue on Tuesday evenings at the Upper Crust. It was coordinated by Virginia Gellese. A Fall poetry workshop was sponsored by the Stroll and conducted in the Heritage Room in City Hall. The workshop was entitled "Travelling with the Muse". It was organized by Louis Munan, who divided it into three sessions: Part A was led by Alice Major, Part B was hosted by Bet Almon, and part three was facilitated by Doug

Barber. November 30<sup>th</sup> saw the launch of the Stroll of Poets Anthology at City Hall and drew a crowd of 100 people.

The Twelve Days of Poetry ran from December 27 until January 17. Stroll of Poets presented readings at several different locations again. The started out at Station X Café for the first 3 nights, Grounds for Coffee for the next 3 nights, La Boheme for evening 7,8 and 9, Sariena's Café for the next 3 nights, and the Hellenic Cultural Center for the finale on the 12<sup>th</sup> evening, where the 5 audience favorites read on the last night. Another great event to end another great year for the Stroll.

## 1998

The Stroll of Poets Society membership swelled to over 200 during the year 1998. There was a need for an increase in volunteers, coordinators for the multiple events, writing circles and workshops, help for anthology and newsletter production (five printed during this year) as well as administration requirements. During the early months of the year several calls for poetry submissions provided opportunities for Stroll poets to enter poems for consideration. *Other Voices* called for poems with an Alberta theme for their tenth anniversary issue, "Extreme Alberta", to be published in that spring's edition. The Canadian League of Poets, out of Toronto, called for manuscripts of 15 to 24 pages for a Canadian Poetry Chapbook Competition. Rowan Books put out an early call for submissions to be considered for a 1999 anthology on the topic of depression and/or isolation, particularly for among women. The Stroll of Poets also continued to publish member's poetry electronically on their website. The location of the web site at that time was <http://www.ccinet.ab.ca/stroll>

January saw the conclusion of the Stroll's Twelve Days of Poetry with the final day held at the Commissary Bistro and Deli on this occasion. The coordinator, Doug Elves, also arranged for entertainment to be provided by Local artists The Rault Brothers Rhythm and Blues Band. Almost immediately afterwards, a workshop was scheduled for January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. Sessions were led by Ted Blodgett, Shirley Seviss, and Gerry Potter. On top of meeting every third Thursday evening at Idylwyde Library, the writers circle began to hold a day time meeting on the third Tuesday as well. Thursday sessions were led by Gordon McRae and Andrew Thompson while the Tuesday groups were hosted by Jennie Frost.

Opportunities continued to expand for Stroll members with further workshops, courses and even a consultation process offered through the Writer in Residence program at Grant MacEwan Community College. At that time the writer in residence was Alice Major (from February 17<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>) and she provided the consultations and also presented some of her poetry during an event staged at the college on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. During that time an editing course was also hosted by Nancy MacKenzie on consecutive weekends during March through Continuing Education and held at the Edmonton Public Schools Boardwalk location. For adventurous poets a slightly more remote offering, advertised in the newsletter, was a writing course offered at the Art Institute of Guatemala in the city of Antigua, This course ran from March 28<sup>th</sup> to April 6<sup>th</sup> and was instructed by Merna Summers. Another workshop, on producing a chapbook, was organized for April 25<sup>th</sup>

and was organized and taught by Ivan Sundal, Myrna Garanis, Jocko, and Anna Mioduchowska. Workshops were again made available in the middle of September by coordinator Louis Munan. On the 12<sup>th</sup> Anne Le Dressay and Ted Blodgett were the facilitators and on the 13<sup>th</sup> Gerry Potter and Sheri-D Wilson were the facilitators of the courses held in the Heritage Room of City Hall. The topics of these workshops revolved around poetry in the everyday, poetry in the exotic, and poetry in the performance.

The Stroll AGM occurred on March 21<sup>st</sup> and one of the actions passed in that meeting was to increase the membership fees to \$10 for the upcoming year. Other events staged during the year included a special reading presentation at Sariena's Café, organized by Louis Munanon on May 21<sup>st</sup>. This event featured Australian poet Jan Owen accompanied by Mary T MacDonald and Jocko who read as well. The Stroll Festival occurred in October once again in most of the same venues it was staged in the year before. A new location this year was the International Hostel. The Strathcona Legion hosted the opening Brunch in the Griffin Room and the main attraction was poet and street musician, Tim Lander, with members of the writers guild also attending the function.

The Anthology book launch happened on December 12 at City Hall along with a half dozen Stroll poets reading poetry and a performance by harpist Tracy Brown. The year ended in the midst of the Twelve Days of Poetry festival which was coordinated by David Hugget that year. As in the year before, the first three evenings were held at Station X Café, the following three occurred at Grounds for Coffee, the next three at La Boheme. The events on the tenth and eleventh days were at Saiena's Café and the final event was at the Hellenic Cultural Center once again with entertainment provided by the Rault Brothers Rhythm and Blues Band.

## 1999

Grant MacEwan Community College once again offered a variety of writing courses January through April of 1999, although only a few dealt with poetry. This year the Tuesday night reading series was shifted to the Sugar Bowl Coffee and Juice Bar for January and February. It moved again to Block 1912 for the month of March and then relocated to La Boheme Restaurant April. Stroll member, Suzanne Batten, also coordinated a Speakeasy event every Monday evening at Misty on Whyte as well. The Stroll poetry circle at Idylwyde Library no longer met due to a lack of participation but a group met at Jennie Frost's house on three Monday afternoons during the months of March, April and May and was then also discontinued. Other events promoted by the Stroll were abundant however. One example would be the May 1<sup>st</sup> Women's Spirit Circles get together to experience women's rituals across traditions of old world cultures. Another would be the series of four fund raisers, billed as the Poetry In Motion Coffeehouse was sponsored by the Baha'i Community in support of the Edmonton Women's Shelter and WIN House. A help bank was present at each of the events for donations of pots & pans, dishes, bedding, clothing, small appliances etc. All events were presented at the Baha'i community center where entertainment and poetry reading were a part of the evening. The first event was February 20<sup>th</sup> with poetry and music. The next was scheduled on June 19<sup>th</sup> with harpist Marcelle Labrossiere entertaining along with folk singer and guitarist Roy Agnew. West Jet tickets for two were given out as a door prize as well. The final show was staged on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

The 1999 AGM convened March 20<sup>th</sup> at City Hall once again in the City Room. A new board was elected with Nancy MacKenzie chosen as the new president. A call was put out for cover art for the annual Stroll Anthology and it was decided to create a new publicity committee. The benefits identified for this group would be public relations experience, skill development & career consultations, recommendations & letters of reference, public recognition & certificates, free admission to some events, volunteer appreciation nights, personalized media guide, contact with funding agencies, publication & production credits, opportunities for internships, introduction to arts professionals, and personal promotional materials.

April, which was National Poetry Month, was a busy month beginning with a special event that was sponsored by the city of Edmonton this year and commencing that spring. A collaboration between The Edmonton Arts Council, the Canada Council, and Edmonton Transit brought Edmonton Transit patrons in touch with the vibrant poetry community within the city by featuring poetry by sixteen poets on their buses throughout the year of 1999. Although the deadline for submissions was May 31 the event was launched by Jocko and Tracie Scott through a poetry slam held at Dewey's Pub on Campus on April 14<sup>th</sup> and covered by the Edmonton Journal and CFRN News as well. As part of the celebration of National Poetry month, Orlando Books also staged five poetry readings for the Stroll of Poets during the month.

A celebration in honor of the winners of the Modern/Traditional Poetry Contest was held on April 6<sup>th</sup> at La Boheme as a part of the Tuesday night Reading series. This reading featured the first prize winner, Mary T MacDonald, and one of the second prize winners, Craig Miller. The poem of the other second prize winning author, Chris Tenove, was actually read by Ivan Sundal. A special prize was also awarded to a poem by Rebecca Luce-Kaplar for her glosa (which was four lines over the allowed limit) because it was such a fine example of exploration of a traditional form. This poem was presented by Alice Major. Honorable mentions also went to Richard Davies, Ben Murray, and Teri Taylor-Tunski. Then, still in April, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month, together with sponsor The League of Canadian Poets, the Edmonton Art Gallery staged a special reading event. Poets from across the country including Patrick Friesen, Rhona McAdam, and Richard Harrison, were joined by local poets Jocko, Jacqueline Bell, Kath MacLean, Nancy Mackenzie, and Anna Mioduchowska on this very special occasion.

Another unusual but special occasion occurred on during the summer on July 4<sup>th</sup> that year when two Stroll members, William Nichols and Audrey Whitson, were married with many of their Stroll friends present at Alberta Avenue Community Hall.

In September "The Word is Out Book Fair" was held at the downtown Edmonton Public Library on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The event was coordinated by Jenine Dumont and included poetry readings by Stroll members as well as a table promoting and selling published works of Stroll members manned by Vanna Tessier and other volunteers that she solicited for the cause. And in Calgary, that month, the Society of Poets, Bards and Storytellers participated in their Stroll Festival as well. It was kicked off with coffee, croissants and poetry readings at Annie's Book Shop in the morning and then continued at Author Author Bookstore, Razz Barry's, and Pages Books before moving to Kensington Pub to conclude the day's activities with a wrap up party.

The beginning of October once again heralded the onset of the Stroll Festival beginning on the third of the month and was coordinated this year by Rusti Leahy. It opened once again with a brunch in the Griffin Room at the Strathcona Legion featuring special guest Tim Lilburn. Dean McKenzie and Spiritus provided entertainment during the No Bards Barred Bar and he managed the sweatshop event at the finale as well. Book sales were also made available during that event. The scheduled readers presented their poems at various venues such as Isis Books, Orlando Books, Traveller Antiques/Bjarne's Books, Alhambra Books, Athabasca Books, Greenwoods Bookshoppe, and International Hostel. Another reading that month occurred at Idylwyde Library on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The special event was billed as "Poetry for Windy Nights".

The month of December included the Anthology launch and Christmas party at City Hall on the 18<sup>th</sup> of the month. The year then concluded with the first three days of The Twelve Days of Poetry Festival on the 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> at Orlando Books. The festival continued into the new millenia with readers at Grounds for Coffee on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of January, at La Boheme on the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> and then at the Upper Crust on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of the month. Day 12 of the event featuring the finalists and hosted by MC Keysia Jarmicka, from CBC Radio One, was held at the Strathcona Legion with music provided by Eddie Patterson.

## 2000

After the success of the Twelve Days of Poetry that anthology from the previous year went on to become the number 5 best seller in Edmonton book stores in 2000. January also saw the return of writers circle meetings which were held on Monday afternoons, again at Jennie Frost's house. February ushered in the new Poetry Tuesday reading series coordinated by Mark Kozub. A theme was assigned to each week and the venues alternated each month. During that first month the readings took place at Block 1912. The four Tuesdays incorporated the themes of Birth, Valentines Day, Explosions and then Slice of Life. During March the events took place at Grounds for Coffee highlighting themes like Modern & Traditional, Childhood, Awakenings, and then Metaphysical. Razzelberries Restaurant and Cappuccino Bar hosted the first reading during the month of April with a Prairie vs Maritime Showdown. The following Tuesday reading was a Jazz event held at Yardbird Suite. With the theme, of course, Nature of Jazz. There was great jazz music, art and poetry readings by Mark Kozub, Shirley Serviss, Richard Davies, and Dean McKenzie with an open mic session afterwards. The final two Tuesdays of April, the readings occurred in the Centennial Room at The Stanley Milner Library with the theme of the third week being Re-birth and the last one was The End.

The initial workshop of the year was coordinated by Pamela Young and scheduled for February 19 at Norquest College. The workshop was called The Music of Poetry, The Poetry of Music, thus dealing with the blending of poetry and music. It was conducted by Dean McKenzie. The Espresso Poetry Contest "Lines from the Heart" concluded a week later with an Espresso open stage event at Oliver Music. A mix of music and poetry based on the theme of love was performed during the event cosponsored by the Stroll and Oliver Music. Other reading series events included "Grounds for Jammin" hosted by Mark Kozub on the last Saturday of each month at Grounds for Coffee, which included comedy, music and dancing, along with the poetry

readings. Friday nights at Razzelberries was folk night and also often included a poetry open stage along with the folk music.

The Stroll AGM was held on March 18<sup>th</sup> in City Hall and another new president was elected to head up the Stroll of Poets Board. Mar Kozub, the Alberta Beatnik Poet, took over the leadership of the organization. Shortly thereafter the stroll figured in a spoken word CD which was released at the end of the month. Tupperware Sandpiper issue 3 was devoted to the writers and musicians who collaborated on the production. The disc included a total of 22 tracks.

During April, which was National Poetry Month, the Stroll of Poets arranged an online poetry workshop called "Poetry Exchange". Poems sent in by Stroll members were forwarded to established poets who replied with feedback on the submitted poem. The Stroll of Poets in conjunction with The League of Canadian Poets conducted a Poetry Relay Contest which also concluded in April. Poets, randomly placed in groups of five, each contributed 2 or 3 lines to a poem which was then passed on to the next group member via e-mail. The winning entries were published in the Stroll newsletter and also read at the Canadian Poets League's "Rites of Spring" event on April 6<sup>th</sup>. The team of Nancy Mackenzie, Myrna Garanis, Gordon McRae, Catherine Patrick, and Jannie Edwards and the team of Diane Buchanan, Dean McKenzie, Jocelyn Verret, Dianne Bennet, and Rusti Leahy actually ended up in a draw so both the of the teams read during that evening and also had their poems published. The result of another contest was also published in the April edition of People's Poetry Letter and cited on The Literary Network web site. That was the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual International People's Haiku and Senrya Cantest which called for submissions referencing people such as themes of human nature or human condition.

What began as Summer Tuesdays at the Backroom Vodka Bar with Stroll poetry readings and entertainment by the Raving Poets was such a hit that it was held over for the rest of the year. The group consisted of Mark Kozub (the Alberta Beatnik), Thomas Trofimuk, Randy Edwards and somebody called only Mysterio. Each Tuesday the best poet was selected by the audience and invited to read on August 31<sup>st</sup> at B Scene Studios. At that performance the readings were burned on to a CD along with accompanying music. The disc was released at a showcase of the Raving Poets on September 12<sup>th</sup> where a new logo for the Stroll of Poets was also revealed. The CD was given air time on local radio stations CJSR and CKUA as well as coverage on A Channel's Wired and a documentary aired on the Bravo Network gaining the Stroll some excellent exposure. Also during the summer of that year, Alice Major was named president of the League of Canadian Poets, while her book, "Tales for an Urban Sky, was named to the Literary Network's Top Ten Poetry Books. Her fourth collection of poems, "Corona Radiata", would also be launched in December, later that year.

A busy Fall that year began on September 15<sup>th</sup> with The Word is Out Book Fair, produced by David Hugget, where Stroll members had the opportunity to join in poetry readings and sell their publications. The University of Alberta offered several writing courses at that time through the Faculty of Extension, one of which was led by the Stroll's Jocko. That course, Poetry Crossfire, dealt with the poet's relationship with the public audience. Opportunities for poets to share their works also arose at various other venues through the fall of that year. On the first Saturday of each month Paris Market offered a reading series. Luna Loca held an open stage for spoken word and music every Sunday. The Olive Reading Series took place on the second Tuesday evening of



every month at Martini's Bar and Grill as well. There were numerous calls for poetry by publications competing for submissions at that time as well. Harpweaver publishers, from Brock University, was requesting poetry manuscripts while Poetry Kit Magazine, People's Poetry Letter, Grain Magazine, Oolichan Books, and Cambridge Writers Collective were also all seeking submission of poems. Online, 701 Magazine, Qwerty, and Poetry Podium were taking submissions of poetry as well.

The annual Stroll Festival commenced on October 1<sup>st</sup> with the opening brunch featuring Jeffrey McDaniel, from California, on this occasion. Strathcona Legion hosted this event as well as the No Holds Barred Bar after hours which provided entertainment, poetry sweatshops and book sale opportunities. The festival was extended to a full week this year with venues presenting readings daily including special guest Clifton Joseph, from Toronto. In celebration of the year 2000, the focus of the daily reading events was 2000 years of Poetry and they shifted to a different era and hosted in a different venue. Day 1, on Sunday, the focus was, of course, The Stroll of Poets. The next day, the format was a poetry Slam dealing with poetry based on the era B.C. On day 3 the format was Vagon Poetry and the era was 1A.D to Beowulf with the following day focused on 1<sup>st</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century poetry called eXeXeX Poetry. The Thursday event, which was day 5, was on the time period of 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century poetry. Friday, it was 19<sup>th</sup> century poetry and the theme was to be Poetry Sports while 20<sup>th</sup> century poetry was the focus for the final day held at The Stanley Milner Library Theater. The other venues which hosted readings throughout the week were: The Naked Cyber Café, Trader Antiques & Bjorne's Books, Orlando Books, Athabasca Books, Greenwoods, Alhambra Books, and International Hostel.

The annual Stroll Anthology was rolled out at a book launch held once again at City Hall. The newsletter distributed this December was the first issued with the new logo for The Stroll of Poets Society. The Twelve Days of Poetry did not start until January of 2001 this time around.

## 2001

The Festival kicked off the year 2001 for the Stroll on January 4<sup>th</sup> and it was decided to use a predetermined panel of judges from outside of the poetry community to judge the poetry during the readings. The jury was made up of: 1.) Donna Rollie, Municipal Advisor, Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2.) Nancy Critchley, Creative Director, Shandwick International, 3.) Sandhano Schuhze, Artistic Director, Northern Light Theatre. 4.) Gordon McLure, Business Services Advisor, Alberta Municipal Affairs, 5.) Michael Phair, Councillor, The City of Edmonton. 6.) Peter Brown, Host of CBC's RadioActive. 7.) Lori Nagy, Community Investment Advisor, ATCO Gas. The venue for the first eleven days was Grounds for Coffee & Antiques with the final day moving to the Sidetrack Café. There were mixed reviews following the event about using a bar to highlight the poets although the exposure was significant.

Some of the readings scheduled that spring included a Valentines event at Naked Cyber Café which featured erotic and XXX poetry. The following week The Songs of the Street Art Foundation staged a coffeehouse and poetry night at the Bissel Center presenting music and poetry. The readers who were present read poems that were entered in a contest and would be included in an anthology to be sold by Our Voices vendors. Open stage readings were a part of

the Paris Market Reading Series which was scheduled for the first Saturday of each month. The event included scheduled readers, who were paid an honorarium of \$10.00, and had an open mic as well. The Olive Reading Series continued on the second Tuesday of every month at Martini's Bar and Grill and Luna Loca also maintained their open stage every Sunday. During February, March, and April CBC radio aired a variety of Albertan poets and artists in its program called Midday Express.

Opportunities to submit poetry were abundant during that time. Advertised in the Stroll Scroll were such publications as Stanzas, out of Maxville Ontario, who called for long poems, Prairie Journal, in Rhode Island, and Broken Jaw Press from Fredericton, New Brunswick. There were other submission requests from Descant, in Toronto, West Coast Paradise Publishing, out of Sardis B.C. and Prairie Fire from Winnipeg. More local calls came from LIBEL, a publication in Edmonton, Snap, seeking prairie based poetry, and Filling Station, out of Calgary. At the same time, the Stroll of Poets was announcing that they wanted poems from Stroll members only for the first edition of proposed quarterly chapbooks. The Chapbook would be titled "Orphans of Silence". Springboard.ca was also looking for poems to be used in a new website producing electronic greeting cards for all occasions.

The AGM, held again in the Heritage Room at City Hall on March 24<sup>th</sup>, saw the re-election of Mark Kozub as the president for the upcoming season.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> the Backroom Vodka Bar was the site of a simultaneous launch of Phil the Cowboy Poet, otherwise known as Phillip A Jagger, and Volumes I and II of "Tongue Circus", produced by the Alberta Beatnik, otherwise known as Mark Kozub. The two CD's, billed as thrills of verbal gymnastics, sold for \$10.00 each and included recordings of the previous stroll by the Raving Poets Band, The Alberta Beatnik, Thomas Trofimuk, Gary Lee, John King Farbro, The Revy Man, Phillip Jagger, and more. A few days later, on May 4<sup>th</sup>, the Bistro Trio, including members Louis Munan, Adriana Davies, and Paul McLaughlin, launched Prairie Themes and Dreams with a reading for three classes at Oliver School.

Courses and contests were also a part of spring in 2001. The University of Alberta Faculty of Extension offered two courses in the month of June. One of them, Fishing with the Line, was instructed by Daphne Marlatt and dealt with using energy of variable line length and format in writing prose or poetry. The Second course was called Accidental Verse and the instructor was Marilyn Dumont. It was an introductory poetry workshop. Passenger Magazine, published in Baltimore invited poets to enter their Five Senses Prose and Poetry Contest and Synchronicity Magazine, from Calgary, also ran a poetry contest. The Ontario Poetry Society (TOPS) conducted a contest for the best Haiku, the best free verse, and the best rhyming poetry with winning poems to be published in their We Are TOPS Newsletter. The Alberta Poetry Festival Society also held a contest for the best TANKA poem (5-7-5-7-7 syllables per line in a stanza. The winning poems in this contest would be published in an anthology printed by Inkling Press and also burned on a CD.

Six Stroll members were randomly selected to participate in a project with the Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists (SNAP) starting in August. The poets, Kathy Fisher, Ryan Baier, Gordon McRae, Ellen Wells, Alison Nicholls, and Shirley Serviss worked with artists from

SNAP who provided images for the poets to write accompanying poetry. The theme for both art forms was Consciousness of Time. Backroom Beats open stage at the Backroom Vodka Bar ran an open stage once a week throughout the summer months and was concluded with the production of a CD of readings by the weekly winners of the best poet of the week as chosen by the audience. Those poets were Kathy Fisher, Amir Ghahary, I'm, Gary Lee, Chandra Pederson, Kevin Solez, Gabriel Motshega, Vivek Dasoar, and Rob Pue.

In September the U of A Faculty of Extension again offered two writing courses. One was a repeat of Marilyn Dumont's introductory poetry course, Accidental Verse and the other was on writing Haiku poetry instructed by Bruce Ross and extended over 8 Thursday from September to December. The Peace Talks was the name given to the weekly open stage at the Backroom Vodka Bar, carried over from the summer and held from September through December. It also featured entertainment by the Raving Poets.

On the same night that the Stroll Festival kicked off at Yardbird Suite with the Raving Poets, Alice Major launched her latest book "Some Bones and a Story" there as well. The Festival extended for a four day period and the main attraction was the Weekend Walkabout on Sunday to wrap it up. Several Calgary Stroll members travelled to Edmonton to join in the events and revelry as well. Friday night was celebrated with poetry readings and art exhibition at SNAP Gallery. Saturday had an extensive schedule of events with Poetry for Kids staged at the Stanley A Milner Library and Poetry by New Canadians at Grounds for Coffee during the day, and then Poetry and Dance at Paris Market in the evening. This event featured poetry readings by David Huggett, Richard Davies, Shirley Serviss, and Peter McPhee. The organizer of Toronto's Scream in High Park Poetry Festival as well as dance performances. EatLard Fudge, Calgary poet Steve Gillespie, along with accompanying dancers stunned the crowd and it kept getting better. Next up was Phillip Jagger with an accompanying dance troupe. This was followed by a chilling performance where dancers read a poem by Mark Kozub during their routine. Delvina Greig's sexual rant was the next act and the evening's entertainment finished up with the circle poems of Kevin Solez which had the audience in a clasped circle during the rhythmic, twitching, sexual recital. Sunday was the day of the Stroll after a morning brunch starring Bert Almon, one of the founding members of the Stroll of Poets Society. With the attendees from Calgary the functions had over 150 participants. The festival was celebrated with the No Bards Barred Bar once again that evening which included a poetry survivor show. Coverage of the festival was quite extensive with articles in See Magazine, the Edmonton Journal, the Edmonton Examiner and footage on CFRN-TV, CBC-TV and the A Channel.

The Stroll was invited to participate in a Sixties Exhibit at the Provincial Museum with musicians and poets presented on four occasions. The first was scheduled on November 17<sup>th</sup> and included Gary Lee and The Alberta Beatnik with the second show held on November 30<sup>th</sup> featured Gordon McRae and Kathy Fisher. The next two programs were held in February and March of the next year and the poets in those shows were Alison Nicholls and Dean Mckenzie in one and Myrna Garanis and Gail Sohat in the other.

From December 5<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> a Special Christmas promotion offered poets a chance to read for a cause. With a donation to the foodbank or Our Voice at the "Art from the Unknown Show" poets could not only read a poem with a social justice theme on stage but they could also add the poem

to the poet tree on display through the event. The Stroll of Poets Anthology launch occurred at City Hall on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Also, in December the Bistro Trio performed and read once again in “Love at Timothy’s” to the delight of patrons at Timothy’s Restaurant.

## 2002

The 2002 edition of The Twelve Days of Poetry was coordinated by Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck and was again staged at Grounds for Coffee through the first 11 days with a full slate of readers for the audience to choose the daily best poet winner from this year. The four finalists came down to Mary T McDonald, Gail Sobat, Thomas Trifinuk, and Mark Kozub who read on the final evening at the Winspear Theater.

On Valentines Day, The Bistro Trio was invited to do two shows at Il Forno Restaurant. There, they read and performed sentimental, funny, and lusty love poems, mostly written by other poets but some originals as well, to a delighted audience.

The spring of 2002 involved several members of the Stroll in conducting or instructing several workshops and courses. Running on January 29<sup>th</sup>, February 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, Gina Varty led a workshop through Metro Community College called “Discover Your Creative Soul” held at Harry Ainley School. It dealt with expression through writing, drawing and/or dance. Gina also conducted a workshop February 27<sup>th</sup> and March 6<sup>th</sup>, also at Harry Ainley, on Reading to an Audience. The focus was on keys to lifting words from the printed page. February 23 was the date for a workshop collaboration by Phillip Jagger, Mark Kozub, and Myrna Garanis, of the Stroll, along with Lynnete Bondachuk of ESPA on Creating Chapbooks and CD’s. A contingent of Stroll Poets shared the teaching of a course on Poetic Observation- the fine line between poetry and art at The Muttart Conservatory on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Gary Lee, Anna Marie Sewell, Ruth Ann Donovan, and Christina Towers presented instructional direction on the relationships between nature/art/poetry. Also in March, on the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, Shirley Serviss led a workshop called “Inviting the Truth” at Grant MacEwan Community College. It dealt with turning historical events into various literary forms.

There were also a few contests publicized by the Stroll that spring. New Poetry Magazine requested poetry submissions with winners to be published by Thought Wave Publishing and the Broken Jaw Press, out of New Brunswick also called for entries in their New Muse Awards Contest. Locally, the Writers Guild of Alberta teamed up with the Canada Council of the Arts, Edmonton Transit, Edmonton Public Library and Pattison Outdoor Advertising to repeat the “Take the Poetry Route” competition, displaying selected poems on Edmonton buses and transit stations, again this year.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> the Raving Poets were in action once again at the Citadel Zeidler Theater for a specially organized 90 minute performance and poetry reading event during the Edmonton ATA Convention. The quartet of Mark and Mike Kozub, Thoma Trifimuk, and Randy Edwards were joined by John Cmalmsers and Kathy Fisher to present their poetry. Interestingly, an account of Paul McLaughlin reading poetry at Joy Blue Restaurant, while on a trip to Chicago, was included in the newsletter, indicating that he participated in the “Yammer” open stage event. He indicated

that the appearance of a Canadian reading in the US was a challenge but that it was well received.

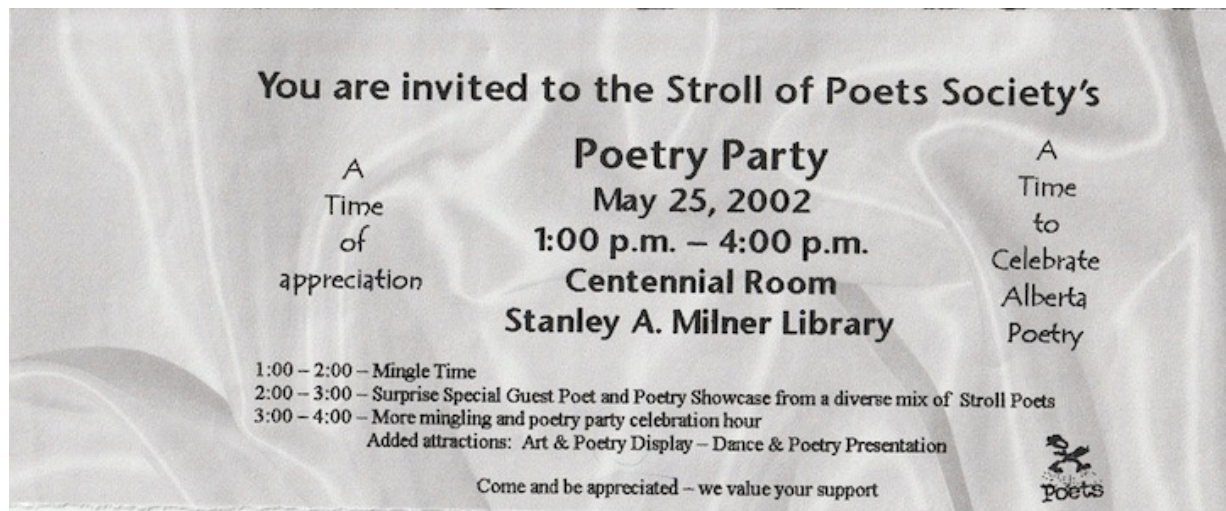
The Stroll of Poets AGM was held on March 23<sup>rd</sup> resulting in the election of a new Board of Directors, with a new president as well in Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck. The group expressed the tradition within the Stroll of Poets respecting democracy and inclusivity was a significant accomplishment of the organization. They stressed the importance of continuing the practices of putting veterans alongside first time readers at open stage events and Stroll Day and the democracy of the Anthology as examples of why the Stroll was respected by visitors and other organizations. A decision was made, and proudly announced, to purchase a new P.A. system for the Stroll as well.

Less than a week later two events took place on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The Writers Guild of Alberta arranged a fundraiser for the Youthwrite Summer Writing camps dubbed, the Rhymes with Orange Hall Party, at the Orange Hall. Sheri-D Wilson and “The Dirty Boys Band” provided entertainment and The Raving Poets were also present that evening. Also occurring on that date was a poetry showdown, held at O’Byrnes and aired on CBC Radio’s Face Off Challenge, between Stroll poets Jocko Benoit, Tim Bowling, Marilyn Dumont, Mark Kozub, and Shirley Serviss. Shirley was awarded top honours in for the day.

April, being National Poetry month, had a full slate of scheduled poetry events, including several sponsored by The Stroll of Poets Society and Edmonton Public Library. Scheduled readers and open mic readers were invited to bring their poetry to the Stanley A Milner Library every Monday and Wednesday night between April 3<sup>rd</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup>. Each of those evenings required poetry of a specified theme. For instance, April 3<sup>rd</sup> was April Fool, while the theme for April 8<sup>th</sup> was Dealing with Breakups and for the 10<sup>th</sup> it was Love Alberta Style. April 15<sup>th</sup> featured poems on the topic of Dealing with Death, the 22<sup>nd</sup> was Youthwrite Night and April 24<sup>th</sup> the theme was Healing. Additionally, on April 5<sup>th</sup> the library hosted a showdown billed as the “Showdown at the Poetry Corral”. It was a classic Battle of Alberta between 3 poets representing Calgary versus 3 poets representing Edmonton. Then on April 26<sup>th</sup> the Stanley A Milner Library also sponsored a fundraiser for the Bissel Center where a \$5.00 donation was required to enter or participate in the event which was called “Poetry of Victory and DaFeets”. Dancers performed a show based on interpretations of original works of cutting edge Edmonton poets, Street Poetry, and readings by winners of the competitive Raving Poet Series from 2001.

Meanwhile, there were other venues holding readings throughout the month of April as well. The Beat Goes On series was brought back to the Backroom Vodka Bar for the nights of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. They also hosted the launch of the book called The 52 Poem by Thomas Trofimuk on April 16 and then on the 20<sup>th</sup> they hosted a poetry reading event called The Many Faces of God. During that evening a variety of Stroll poets read selections of spiritually intense poems. Alice Major was also featured that night, reading from her book “Bones and a Story”. The Naked Cyber Café repeated their poetry reading event of edgy, x-rated, LGBTQ2 verse, this year calling it the Fetish Party, on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Expression Café also staged a reading event on April 23<sup>rd</sup> called Write in the Line of Fire which was an exploration of social justice through poetry. It was hosted by Anna Marie Sewell and Leo Campos.

May 25<sup>th</sup> saw the return of the Stroll to the Stanley A Milner Library where they held a Poetry Party. By inviting poets, media, sponsors and the public to the affair it was designed to be a chance to mingle between all parties.



The Red Deer Word Festival occurred on June 1<sup>st</sup> with poetry readings held in that city and an anthology produced from the poems submitted by participating poets. From July 25<sup>th</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> the Festival of the Words was staged in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan where Stroll member, Shirley Serviss, read from her book "Between the Lines".

After a relatively quiet summer the annual Stroll festivals occurred on September 7<sup>th</sup> in Calgary with poets travelling from Edmonton, St. Albert, Red Deer, Turner Valley, and High River to join in. It commenced in Edmonton on October 1<sup>st</sup> and continued until the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month. It was kicked off with the Brunch at the Strathcona Legion, this year featuring Linda Rogers from Port Alice B.C. Linda was a professor at the University of Victoria as well as a reviewer for the Vancouver Sun, The Victoria Times-Colonist, Toronto Star, and the Globe and Mail. She was the recipient of numerous wards for both poetry and fiction. After poetry readings at International Hostel, Athabasca Books, Orlando Books, Greenwoods Books, Alhambra Books, Bjarnes Books, and Naked Cyber Café the festival wrapped up once again with the No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion.

During the later months of 2002 the Stroll was invited to participate in a few more events such as the Halloween Poetry Party held in the City Arts Center on October 31<sup>st</sup> and featuring the Poetry Thugs, another venue featuring Youthwrite poets as well as a Youth Funk Rock Band on November 14<sup>th</sup>, and a Poetry Party held on November 21<sup>st</sup>. The last event of the year was the launch of the Stroll of Poets Anthology on December 8<sup>th</sup>.

A few other ventures that Stroll members were involved with during the year included a video production of Terrence Harding's "I'd Like to Die Just Like This" by Michael Hamm. The production, about Paris as a lovely paradise, was voted best production at the 2001 ACE Awards. Some Stroll poets volunteered their time at the U of A Hospital through the Artist on the Ward Program. Volunteers worked one on one with patients reading literature, helping and teaching them to write prose and/or poetry and providing companionship. During the year, Alice Major

had travelled to Australia and while she was there she read her poetry at a couple of venues as well.

Stroll poets also had the opportunity to submit poems to another four sources before the end of the year including Grain Magazine in Saskatoon, the Poets Corner Award conducted by Broken Jaw Press out of Fredericton, New Brunswick, Fiddlehead Magazine, also out of Fredericton, and Captain of Consciousness Journal in Ontario.

## 2003

Robbie Burns, aka Doug Barrett, was present at the 2003 Twelve Days of Poetry along with piper Justin McMurdo and haggis served to all who wished to try for a new twist to spice up the festival. Readings were staged at La Boheme, City Arts Center, Whitemud Crossing Library, and Strathcona Legion. Sponsors included CBC, Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Public Library, Greenwoods, The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Vue Weekly, and Writers Guild of Alberta. Calgary poets Tanya Dion and Scott Alderson also participated in the festival fun. The finalists determined after 11 days were Mary T McDonald, Shirley Serviss, Pierrette Requier, Nancy MacKenzie, William Nichols, Thomas Trofimuk, Joyce Pinkney, Audrey Shield, Audrey Whitson, Andy Michaelson, Ben Murray, and Ken Wilson. The CBC Face-off Poets were Nancy MacKenzie, Mary T McDonald, Ben Murray, Thomas Trofimuk, and Audrey Shield. Participants in the 12 Day CBC finalists Promo included: Michael Appleby, Linda Jennings, Anna Mioduchowska, Pierrette Requier, and Ken Wilson. Mary T McDonald ended up being the national winner of the Face-off competition.

2002  
**CBC Presents**  
**The 12 Days of Poetry**  
**STROLL POETS**

January 5 – 25  
 Poets selected by a community jury perform in favourite and new exciting venues  
 Free admission first 11 Days

**I Sunday, Jan. 5 at 2 pm**  
 La Boheme Restaurant, 6427-112 Ave.  
 Diane Buchanan, Sherrilyn Jahrig,  
 Mary T. McDonald, Dean McKenzie  
 Host: Sandra Mooney Ellerbeck  
 La Boheme serves brunch 10:30-2:00

**II Tuesday, Jan. 7 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Doug Elves, Jo-Ann Godfrey,  
 Shirley A. Serviss, Gerald St. Maur  
 Host: Marilyn Hooper

**III Wednesday, Jan. 8 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Joyce Harries, Phil Jagger,  
 Barbara Curry Mulcahy, Pierrette Requier  
 Host: John Chalmers

**IV Thursday, Jan. 9 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Michael Appleby, Nancy Mackenzie,  
 William Nichols, Julie Robinson  
 Host: David Huggett

**V Friday, Jan. 10 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Trevor N. Dekort, Carlean Fisher,  
 Taras Toroshenko, Thomas Trofimuk  
 Host: Kathie Sutherland  
 Tea and sweets for sale  
 at City Arts Centre readings

**VI Sunday, Jan. 12 at 2 pm**  
 Whitemud Crossing Library  
 Shopping Centre, 145, 4211-106 St.  
 Tom Emmens, Concorcia L. Mendoza,  
 Anna Mioduchowska, Joyce Pinkney  
 Host: Myrna Garanis  
 Coffee and desserts sold by  
 Cheesecakes & More

**VII Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Danielle Dalton, Sue Marxheimer,  
 Paul McLaughlin, Audrey Shield  
 Host: Helen Lavender

**VIII Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Drew Jeffries, Catherine McLaughlin,  
 Louis Munan, Audrey Whitson  
 Host: Rusti Leahy

**IX Thursday, Jan. 16 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Linda Jennings, Geraldine Matus,  
 Andy Michaelson, Jessica Stratton  
 Host: Jocko

**X Friday, Jan. 17 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Tim Cusack, Kathy Fisher,  
 Michelle Lambert, Ben Murray  
 Host: Alice Major

**XI Sunday, Jan. 19 at 2 pm**  
 Whitemud Crossing Library  
 Shopping Centre, 145, 4211-106 St.  
 Tanya Dion, Anne Marshall,  
 Christina Tower, Ken Wilson  
 Host: Faith Fernalld  
 Coffee and desserts sold by  
 Cheesecakes & More

**The Grande Finale**  
**XII Saturday, Jan. 25, 7 pm**  
 The Strathcona Legion Griffin Room  
 10416 - 81 Avenue (doors open 6:30)  
 \$8 advance at Greenwoods' Bookshoppe,  
 7925-104 Street; \$12 at the door

- Eleven performers chosen by audience demand from previous Days of Poetry give short readings. MCs: Anna Marie Sewell together with CBC
- Robbie Burns Day celebrations: Piping in the haggis, Justin McMurdo; Address to a Haggis read by Doug Barrett. A taste of haggis included
- Hot Cottage – warm up and dance out the 12 Days to this legendary blues band after the readings, about 9:15

**740 VUEWEEKLY**  
 cbc radio ONE  
 Edmonton Public Library  
 The Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
 EDMONTON  
 AR  
 COUNCIL

The Bistro Trio were active on Valentines Day once again. The Spring Reading Series kicked off on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the City Arts Center with featured reader Gary Geddes and on February 24<sup>th</sup> the Poet Thugs were featured at the Banned Book Café while Stroll poets were slated to read at the series until the end of March. The City Arts Center was also the site of two workshops conducted by Stroll members that spring. From the Stone to the Jewel was a lesson on editing, refining and proving of the written word, conducted by Bert Almon on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Wind Eye-Windows into Writing was awriters circle event conducted by Pierrette Requier on April 26<sup>th</sup> to provide a process where participants could playfully find the author within.

The Stroll of Poets AGM was held on March 22<sup>nd</sup> complete with poetry readings, book giveaways, and door prizes. At the meeting new president Ivan Sundal was elected to lead the Board of Directors and Oswald Myer was voted in as vice president.

During the functions of National Poetry Month in April the CBC Face-off Poetry Contest determined its winner to be Mary T McDonald of The Stroll of Poets Society. The poem that Mary entered and read was “Conformity Be Damned”. Earth Day was celebrated at Hawrelak Park on May 4<sup>th</sup> and the activities included a reading event which The Stroll of Poets participated in by presenting poems with the theme of environment during the event.

Near the end of the summer the Calgary Society of Poets, Bards and Storytellers staged their Stroll Festival in venues along Kensington Road. A bus load of poets from Edmonton travelled south to join in and also conducted a writing work shop on the trip down to Calgary. The date of the festivities was September 7<sup>th</sup>. The Edmonton Stroll occurred a month later, on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The brunch, commencing the festival and again held at the Strathcona Legion, featured a poetry reading by special guest Shani Mootoo. Shani was the U of A Writer in Residence at that time. Also presenting during that event was the Stroll’s Mary T McDonald, who read her CBC Face-off award winning poem and an essay that she wrote, and which was included in that year’s Stroll Anthology, entitled “How do Poets Stroll”. Participating venues, along Whyte Avenue, were familiar names like Alhambra Books, Athabasca Books, B-Scene Studios, Travellers Antiques and Bjerne’s Book, Greenwoods Books, International Hostel, Naked Cyber Café, and O’Byrnes Irish Pub. As per tradition the event concluded with the sweatshop reading event and No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion.

Shortly after that Ozzie Meyer took over as acting president of the Stroll for the remainder of the season. The reason for this was that Ivan Sundal and Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck both stepped down from their positions, as president and past president respectively, when they were awarded a short-term contract to archive Stroll documents and create a procedures manual for the organization. This was made possible, largely due to the hard work of Doug Elves, by funding received through a grant made available by the Alberta Government Community Initiatives Program.

That fall season The Raving Poets Society organized another Tuesday night Reading Series at the Backstreet Vodka Bar. Reading poets were accompanied by instrumental music provided by Jock and the Poetry Thugs. The Stroll Anthology was rolled out at Stanley A Milner Library, in the Centennial Room, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. Prior to the end of the year the Stroll Scroll also ran a request for submissions for a poetry contest sponsored by Inkling Press, who would publish



the winning poems, through Magpie Productions, in an anthology. The contest, The River City Retro Centennial Project, offered \$300 in prize money for poetry written on a variety of themes looking at the city's colourful past. Several possible topics were suggested: immigration, floods, fire, oil, hockey, bridges, jazz, theater, schools, money, mercy flights, garrisons, railroads, brothels, gold, politics, land, furs, wars, tornadoes, parties, mining, bars, epidemics, logging, booze and religion – wow, quite a variety!

## 2004

January 6<sup>th</sup> was the start of The Twelve Days of Poetry in 2004 and over 1000 people attended the presentations over those 12 days. Coordinator, Tim Cusack (aka Jack O'Byte or Tim O'Shanter), along with planning committee members Andy Michaelson, Ivan Sundal, and Pierrette Requier, carried off a smashing, successful, and popular festival presenting a wide range of poetry in several venues. Day 1,2,and 3 were staged at O'Byrne's Irish Pub, day 4 was held in Steeps Tea Lounge, and day 5 poetry was heard in Whitemud Crossing Public Library. The readings moved to Stanley A Milner Library for days 6 through 9 and to Martini's Bar and Grill for day 10, then back to Whitemud Crossing Library for day 11. The finalists, decided upon by the panel, then read at the Hellenic Hall on the 12<sup>th</sup> day to conclude the festival. This year the festival was sponsored by Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Edmonton Arts Council, Edmonton Public Libraries, and Vue Magazine.



**The 12 Days of Poetry**

**January 6 – 24, 2004**  
Poets selected by a community jury perform in favourite and new exciting venues  
Free admission first 11 Days

**I Tuesday, Jan. 6, 7 pm**  
**O'Byrne's Irish Pub, 10616 - 82 Ave.**  
David Huggett, John Leppard, Tavia Grabas, Joyce Pinckney  
*Host: Ozzie Meyer*

**II Wednesday, Jan. 7, 7 pm**  
**O'Byrne's Irish Pub, 10616 - 82 Ave.**  
Linda Jennings, Anne Gerard Marshall, Shirley A. Serviss, Vanna Tessier  
*Host: John Chalmers*

**III Thursday, Jan. 8, 7 pm**  
**O'Byrne's Irish Pub, 10616 - 82 Ave.**  
Andy Michaelson, Deborah Lawson, Jacqueline Smith, Ronald Kurt  
*Host: Tim Cusack*

**IV Friday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.**  
**Steeps – College Plaza, 11116-82 Ave.**  
Ruth Galloway, Tim Scheybeler, Michael Appleby, Darlene Spong Henderson  
*Host: Andy Michaelson*

**V Sunday, Jan. 11, 2 pm**  
**Whitemud Crossing Library Shopping Ctr., 145, 4211-106 Street**  
Ben Murray, John Chalmers, Connie Lloyd, Concorcia L. Mendoza  
*Host: Marilyn Hooper*

**VI Tuesday, Jan. 13, 7 pm**  
**Stanley Milner Library,**  
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
M. Jennie Frost, Rawn Sidor, Mechelle Flynn, Naomi McHwraith  
*Host: Christina Tower*

**VII Wednesday, Jan. 14, 7 pm**  
**Stanley Milner Library**  
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Diane Buchanan, Sue Marxheimer, Andrew Thompson, Paul McLoughlin  
*Host: Andy Michaelson*

**VIII Thursday, Jan. 15, 7 pm**  
**Stanley Milner Library**  
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Cliff Therou, Anna Mioduchowska, Faye Francis, Jocko  
*Host: Shirley A. Serviss*

**IX Friday, Jan. 16, 7 pm**  
**Stanley Milner Library**  
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square  
Donald G Butler, Oswald Meyer, Michelle Lambert, Sandra Mooney-Elberbeck  
*Host: Michael Appleby*

**X Saturday, Jan. 17, 2 pm**  
**Martini's Bar and Grill, 9910-109 Street**  
Joyce Harries, George Metcalf Jr., Rebecca Schellenberg, Dennis Porsnuk  
*Host: Audrey Whitson*

**XI Sunday, Jan. 18, 2 pm**  
**Whitemud Crossing Library Shopping Ctr., 145, 4211-106 Street**  
Gail Sobat, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Jo-Ann Godfrey, Valerie Zimmel  
*Host: Katie Sutherland*

**The Grande Finale**

**XII Saturday, January 24, 7 pm**  
**Hellenic Hall, 10450-116 Street**  
\$10 advance at **Greenwoods Bookshoppe**, 7925-104 Street, and **Volume II Books**, 12433-102 Ave., \$12 door

- **Eleven poets** chosen by audience from previous Days of Poetry give short readings in two sets.
- **Tribute to Robbie Burns**, Tim Cusack
- **Rault Brothers** – outstanding Rhythm and Blues band, long regarded as one of Alberta's finest!

**VUE WEEKLY** | The Alberta Foundation for the Arts | Edmonton Public Library | **EDMONTON ARTS COUNCIL**

The Stroll of Poets Society had grown to over 600 members at that time. At the AGM Andrew Thompson was voted in as the new president and Jocko Benoit as vice president to lead the organization for the next season.

With the evolution of technology, it was decided that the Stroll Newsletter would be distributed electronically by e-mail in the future.

The anthology for that year was launched on December 12 at the Stanley A Milner Library once again. It included poems by 113 Stroll members and 2 additional poems by guest contributors. The first of those was Wendy Morton, Canada's Poet of the Skies, from Victoria while the second was Karen Solie, who was the writer in residence at the University of Alberta that year.

## 2005

The Twelve Days of Poetry, in January of 2005, was staged at Martini's Bar and Grill for day 10 and then at Whitemud Crossing Library for day 11.

Stroll member Tim Cusack was the winner of the CBC Face Off competition in that year.

New Stroll board of directors president Jocelyne Verret was elected during the AGM that spring.

Alice Majors is named as the City of Edmonton's first Poet Laureate.

The Reading Series was held on Monday nights at The upper Crust Restaurant.

## 2006

World Poetry Day was celebrated on March 21 and on that day Steeps Tea Lounge on Whyte hosted a night of poetry readings by members of The Stroll of Poets, the Raving Poets, Poets Ink, the League of Canadian Poets, and other organizations.

A new weeklong poetry festival was scheduled for September this year with TELUS, a new corporate sponsor, signed on as well. Kicking off the festival was Edmonton's poet laureate, Alice Major. It also opened with a brand new event, labeled as the Killer Blinks Evening because all poems were to be less than 30 seconds in duration. At that point the poets would be cut off by a cacophony of sound produced by an orchestra prompted by a jury timing the authors. Sixty poets were scheduled to read in the frenzy of words The format was the dreamt up by Myrna Garanis and Ivan Sundal to create an exciting and competitive atmosphere, and that it surely did. There was also Concrete Poetry – covering the cement in Churchill Square were poems written in chalk.

## 2007

The Stroll AGM was conducted in the Edmonton Room at the Stanley A Milner Library on March 25<sup>th</sup> where the 16<sup>th</sup> annual anthology was also launched. Newly elected president, Julie Robinson and vice president Jo-Ann Godfrey took over the reins of the Stroll board after that meeting.

Ted Blodgett succeeds Alice Major as the second Stroll of Poets member to be named as the Poet Laureate of the City of Edmonton.

The Return of The Killer Blinks fast paced action began another Edmonton Poetry Festival, which ran from September 17<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> at the City Arts Center. Activities were under the direction of Edmonton Poet Laureate, Alice Major, and gave the public the opportunity to hear the spoken word in several downtown venues throughout the week. Mayor Mandel officially kicked off the festival with Poetryworld which saw special noon hour performances at Center Stage to share the works created in the Honour Songs and Poets Across Borders projects. Other events included a hip-hop night at Grant MacEwan downtown campus and a video poem night at Metro Cineman called “Open Your Eyes to the World”. Upon completion of the festival a chapbook was created containing the poems of the 60 poets who participated in the Blinks event.

After the festival concluded the first chapbook containing the poems recited during the Killer Blinks event was printed by the Stroll of Poets.

A Haven reading was held in an alternate location at Greenwoods Bookshoppe in October.

## 2008

The Haven reading series featured Jalal Barzanji, the first Edmonton writer in exile, along with local spoken word artists Anna Mioduchowska, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Ruth Anderson Donovan, and TDL Turner at the Upper Crust Restaurant on January 21<sup>st</sup>.

At the AGM once again, a new president was selected with Gary Garrison becoming the new leader of the organization.

The second annual Blinks event, this year called “The Revenge of the Killer Blinks” was gaining in popularity as a feature of the Stroll of Poets and this year 66 poets participated in the event and had their poem published in a chapbook for the second year in a row. It was conducted in September during the Poetry Festival opening night at the ARTery. The Poetry Festival review read: *The Revenge of the Killer Blinks* went off last night as the opening salvo in the war known as the Edmonton poetry Festival. It was a great night all around with some truly “killer” verse layed out for all to hear. A great opening night! Thanks to all for coming out and blowing the place up, and to all the volunteers who made it cook. Join us tonight for *Insomnicidal Kleptomaniac – An Evening of Experimental Verse*. The ARTery, 9535 Jasper Avenue. 7:00pm

start. Guests include [Doug Barbour](#), Nico Rogers, Joel Katelnikoff, Christine Stewart, Jeff Carpenter, Michael Gravel, Glenn Robson & Tonguebath, and the inimitable [Christian B](#)

## OUR BEST RESPONSE YET!

Posted by [Michael Gravel](#) on September 9, 2008

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The E-Town poetry community's response to PoFest '08 has been fantastic! Better than we could have hoped for! You should all sit down and give yourselves a nice round of applause (or down a round of boilermakers, if that's your thing). Despite all odds – zero budget, a late start, some organizational hiccups, [Jeff Carpenter](#)'s Mickey Rourke fixation – this year's PoFest is looking like it's going to be the best yet in terms of participation. Here are some quickie numbers:

- 77 blink readers
- 82 cafe readers
- 25 sweatogs
- Another 15 or so performing on Friday and Saturday nights
- Around 130 poets in total

Not bad for a middling city in a generally anti-arts province and a festival with only a few sheckles in its whiskey bag (the old Crown Royal bags? Anyone?). On behalf of the org team, I want to say a giant thank you to everyone who signed up to read and volunteered to help this little endeavor fly. We owe you hugs and kisses. And some beer. Only two days to go!

## 2009

The Poetry Festival, moved to April this year to coincide with The League of Canadian Poets celebration of National Poetry Month, launched with the rapid-fire Blinks event. It also included hip-hop artists, a poetry slam competition, a zen poetry event, workshops, readings in bars and restaurants by many, many local poets, and a finale featuring many headliners such as Vancouver's C R Avery, a blues, hip hop, and spoken word performer.

"The Return of the Killer Blinks" chapbook resulting from the event staged as a part of the Stroll Festival this year contained the poems of 67 participating poets in the popular event.

In August a reading by Stroll poets was held at a rarely used venue. Revelations Book and Gift Co-op hosted Gary Garrison, Nail Maile, Marguerite Redshaw and several open mic readers for an event.

## 2010

Sharon Ingraham is voted in to the president role for the Stroll of Poets along with Lorraine McFaddin as the vice president at the AGM.

Stroll of Poets member Marty Chan is named the writer in residence for the Public Library.

The Edmonton Poetry Festival staged this year resulted in the fourth Blinks Poetry chapbook called “Blinks in the Belly” and contained the poems of the 47 poets who tried to beat the buzzer while reading their poem to an audience. The theme of the Festival was “Found in Translation”.

The Haven Reading Series moves from Friday evenings to Mondays in October.

## The Raving Poets

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**The Raving Poets** was a collective of poets and musicians who held a series of live, weekly [poetry](#) with [music](#) events in [Edmonton, Alberta, Canada](#). It ran from 2000 to 2010.<sup>[1]</sup>

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### Origins<sup>[edit]</sup>

The Raving Poets had several [open mic](#) ‘music and poetry’ precedents in [Edmonton](#), but the actual first ‘music *with* poetry’ event happened in the summer of the year 2000.

That year, three of the ‘founding fathers’ were board members with the [Stroll of Poets Society](#), an Edmonton poetry group that hosted two annual reading series. Mark Kozub was president, Thomas Trofimuk,<sup>[2]</sup> Volunteer Coordinator and Gordon McRae, Treasurer. The Board was tasked with finding ways to expand and revitalize the Society, which faced declining membership.

During the May 4th, 2000 Stroll of Poets board meeting, in keeping with the expansion mandate, three new "Subsidiary Roles" were created, Media Liaison, Liaison with other Arts Groups and Open Stage Coordinator. Though both Mark and Thomas were optioned for sharing the role of Media Liaison, it is the Open Stage Coordinator role that

gave Mark the impetus to start up something completely new – with Thomas sharing the hosting duties with him.

The new reading series, Poetry Tuesdays ran through February, March, and April 2000. The Backroom Vodka Bar was used as the venue of choice in two of those three months. The ad of the March series ran, “Beware the Odes of March, hosted by Phil, the Cowboy Poet with *The Art to Choke Hearts* band.” Though Mark and Thomas read during the March series, neither were part of the ‘band’.

The real beginning happened when this ad was posted in the May 2000 Stroll newsletter under the heading "More Chances To Be Involved"

*"The Alberta Beatnik (Mark Kozub) and Thomas Trofimuk are looking to host & coordinate a monthly 'Open Stage' event down Whyte Avenue, starting in June or July. (The goal is simple: get new members.) If anyone has a lead on a funky Whyte Avenue venue that might need the extra business (and might even pay the Stroll a small fee to boost it), call Mark Kozub at ... ASAP"*

“The Raving Poets” began as the name of a reading series, but soon came to be thought of as the name of the band, and later, the collective of poets and musicians who performed together on weekday evenings.

On March 23, 2002, Mark, Thomas and Gordon left the Board and the Society for good during the Stroll’s Annual General Meeting. From then on, their energies were directed solely toward the Raving Poets.

### **Founding Fathers**[\[edit\]](#)

- [Mark Kozub](#),<sup>[3]</sup> bass
- [Thomas Trofimuk](#),<sup>[4]</sup> keyboards
- [Randall Edwards](#),<sup>[5][6]</sup> guitar and synth
- [Gordon McRae](#), drums and percussion
- [Michael Gravel](#),<sup>[7]</sup> MC

### **Notable Poets**[\[edit\]](#)

[Michael Appleby](#), [Ryan Baier](#), [Jocko Benoit](#), [Joe Blow](#) (Todd Anstead), [Michelle Boudreau](#), [Natalya Brettle](#), [David C. Brydges](#), [Anton Capri](#), [Dawn Carter](#), [John Chalmers](#) (Revy Man), [Christine Comeau](#), [Tim Cusack](#), [Adriana Davies](#), [Corine Demas](#), [Trisia Eddy](#), [Bonnie Enes](#), [Tyler Enfield](#), [Kevin Feeley](#), [Kathy Fisher](#), [Delvina Greig](#), [Corey Hamilton](#), [Margaret Haugen](#), [Jenn Heather](#), [Cathy Hodgson](#), [Michael Hogan](#), [Alison Hurlburt](#), [S.E. Ingraham](#), [Philip Jagger](#), [Wendy Joy](#), [Chris Krueger](#), [Todd Kuziw](#), [Jefferson Lavender](#), [Shelley Lawson](#), [Gary Lee](#), [Rusti Leahy](#), [John Leppard](#), [Mandie Lopatka](#), [J.P. Lorence](#), [Laurie MacFayden](#),<sup>[8][9]</sup> [Jan Mann](#), [Aaron J. Marko](#), [Paul McLaughlin](#) (The Middle Poet), [Kerry Mulholland](#), [Nerissa](#), [Ubaka Ogbogu](#), [Nicole Pakan](#), [Roy Picou](#), [P.M. Pilarski](#),<sup>[10]</sup> [Mary Pinkoski](#), [Justin Poulin](#), [Monika Ptak](#), [Ray Rasmussen](#), [Jadon Rempel](#), [Shima Aisha Robinson](#), [Victoria Rohac](#), [Kelly Shepherd](#), [Patti Sinclair](#) [Adam Snider](#), [c.t. staples](#), [Suzanne Steele](#), [Lara](#)

[Thesenvitz](#), [Mingus Tourette](#), Deborah Vos, [Amy Willans](#), [Francis A. Willey](#), Rosemary Wilson, [Sheri-D Wilson](#)

### **The Concept**[\[edit\]](#)

The Raving Poets was conceived as an [open mic](#) poetry event with improvised musical accompaniment. As the [jazz](#) poet scenes in the 1993 [Mike Myers](#) movie, [So I Married an Axe Murderer](#) prove, it was not a new concept. What set the Raving Poets apart was the incredible variety of musical and poetic styles performed. From the wordsmiths, everything from [Slam](#) and [hip-hop](#) to [erotica](#) and nature poetry, with generous doses of politics, confessionals and rants. The musicians matched these forms with equally eclectic styles, from [folk](#), [rock](#) and [jazz](#), through [ambient](#), [experimental](#) and other [electronica](#).

### **Series**[\[edit\]](#)

- Peace Talks, 2001
- The Beat Goes On, 2002
- Pig Poetry, 2003
- Fall of Love, September 23 to November 25, 2003
- Mumbo Jumbo, A Word Circus, April 6 to August ??, 2004<sup>[11]</sup>
- Kill Phil, vol. 2, September 7 to December 7, 2004
- Rock the Kasbar, February 8 to April 26, 2006
- Rapture, February 1 to May 31, 2007
- Space Monkey, November 7 to December 12, 2007
- Heart Beat, March 5 to May 28, 2008
- Born to Write, October 15 to December 3, 2008
- Sofa King, April 1 to May 27, 2009
- 9½, October 7 to December 2, 2009<sup>[12]</sup>
- Sotto Voce, April 12 to ??, 20??

### **Venues**[\[edit\]](#)

- The Backroom Vodka Bar, 2003–2006
- The Kasbar Lounge, 2006–2010

### **Recordings**[\[edit\]](#)

- Peace Talks, 8-CD set, 2001
- The Beat Goes On, 8-CD set, 2002
- Pig Poetry, 2-CD set, 2003
- Mumbo Jumbo, A Word Circus, CD, 2004
- The Raving Poets - Remixed, CD, 2007

- [Live at the Kasbar](#), podcast, 2006

## **The Roar**[\[edit\]](#)

The Raving Poets created a festival, The Roar,<sup>[13][14]</sup> which ran for two years, 2006 and 2007, between the demise of the Stroll of Poets “stroll” and the advent of the Edmonton Poetry Festival.

### **2011**

While the Haven was usually held weekly at the Upper Crust Restaurant on Monday evenings until March 21, a reading was also held at Greenwood's Bookshoppe on Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.

Once again at the AGM, a new president was elected to head the Stroll board. Naomi McIlwraith took over the reins of the organization with Anne Gerard Marshall as vice president.

The theme of the 2011 Poetry Festival was “Get Caught Up” and it kicked off with a night of African poetry. Also included in the festival events were the Favorite Poem Lift-off, Poetry & Jazz for a spring afternoon, How to live with a poet, Poetry and Wine tasting, and Poetry and Mysticism. The affair also restarted the “Poetry Route” (now known as [Poetry Moves on Transit](#)) — poetry on Edmonton Transit vehicles throughout the city. The year 2011 was the first year of the Blinks with the theme of “Great Blinks of Fire”. The entire event was filmed and published on YouTube: [PoetsHaven - YouTube](#)

In June another member of the Stroll of Poets was named as Edmonton's new Poet Laureate. Anna Marie Sewell becomes the fourth Poet Laureate of the city.

### **2012**

The Edmonton Poetry Festival ran in April again with the theme of “Words on the Line”. Stroll poets listed as headliners by the festival were Douglas Barbour, Jannie Edwards, Alice Major, Peter Midgley, The Raving Poets Band, Pierrette Requier, Anna Marie Sewell, and Jocelyne Verret. The schedule of events included Sketching with words – a workshop with poets and visual artists, Resonance – a poetry and film installation, Queer poetry the first bilingual French Twist, Short-order poetry on Sir Winston Churchill Square, A poem-and-honey tasting, and Free-range poetry at the city market.

### **2013**

**JANUARY 17, 2013 BY ADMIN**



## Edmonton Stroll of Poets – Vision 2013

**Title:** Edmonton Stroll of Poets – Vision 2013



**Location:** Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

**Description:** If you are a member of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets, you are invited to Vision 2013, an opportunity to share your perspective on where we are now and where we want to be in the next three to five years. Your contributions will help keep the Stroll a growing and dynamic voice in Edmonton’s poetry community.

In April, “Word Nation” was the theme celebrated during the week-long Poetry Festival from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup>. Poets laureate from across the nation took part in the poetry events. These included the Stroll of Poets Blinks event, poetry readings, slam poetry, concrete poetry, workshops, youth events, Indigenous, African, and French events as well as collaborations with music, theater and visual art. The poets performing during the Canadian Poetry Party week were:

George Elliott Clarke; poet laureate of Toronto, Ontario  
Liz Lochhead; poet laureate of Glasgow, Scotland and Scots Makar (national poet of Scotland)  
Fred Wah; Canada’s Parliamentary poet laureate  
Janet Rogers; poet laureate of Victoria, British Columbia  
John B Lee; poet laureate of Brantford, Ontario  
Evelyn Lau; poet laureate of Vancouver, British Columbia  
Bruce Meyer; poet laureate of Barrie, Ontario  
Eric Folsom; poet laureate of Kingston, Ontario  
Marty Gervais; poet laureate of Windsor, Ontario  
Don Kerr; poet laureate of Saskatchewan  
Tanya Davis; poet laureate of Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Kris Demeanor; first poet laureate of Calgary, Alberta  
Anna Marie Sewell; poet laureate of Edmonton, Alberta  
CR Avery; beatbox poet, musical recording star

21 participating venues in the varied presentations included;

City Hall	Citadel Theater	CKUA	Metro Cinema	Artery
Stanley Milner Library	Three Bananas Café	L Espresso Café	Africa Center	
Crepe Symphony Café	CBC Center Stage	Duchess Bakery	Daffodil Gallery	
Southeast Edmonton Senior’s Center		Pavilion Lacerte, Campus Saint-Jean		
Koffee Café	Nina Haggerty Center	Harcourt House		
The Faculty Club, U of A Campus	Sutton Place Hotel			Audrey’s Books

Of particular interest was the representation by the Stroll on the Board of Directors and the Coordinating Team of the Poetry Festival that year.

Board of Directors:

Alice Major – President

Gary Garrison – Vice President

Julie Robinson – Treasurer

Michael Penny, Jannie Edwards, Glenn Robson, Ellen Kart, Ken Davis, and Mary Pinkoski

Coordinating Team:

Rayanne Doucet – Executive Director

Al Rasko – Financial Consultant

Michael Gravel – Web Designer

Laurie MacFayden – Bus Route Coordinator

Julie Robinson – Poets in Schools Coordinator

Joe Gurba – Assistant Producer, Volunteer Coordinator

John Leppard – Sound/Tech Guru, Blinks Coordinator

Marc Nipp – Graphic Designer

During the Poetry Festival events in April, Alice Major was inducted into Edmonton’s Art and Culture Hall of Fame. Also during that annual Edmonton Poetry Festival of 2013 several Stroll members were listed among the headliners of the event. They included: Douglas Barbour, Kimmy Beach, Astrid Blodgett, Alison Clarke, Jannie Edwards, Michael Gravel, Deborah Lawson, Giselle Lemire, John Leppard, Alice Major, Naomi McIlwraith, Anna Marie Sewell, and Jocelyne Verret. The theme of the event was “Word Nation”.

## 2014

Douglas Barbour, Kimmy Beach, E.D. Blodgett, Jannie Edwards, Gary Garrison, Randy Kohan, Deborah Lawson, Giselle Lemire, Alice Major, Clint McElwain, Julie Robinson, Shirley Serviss, Anna Marie Sewell, and Jocelyne Verret were Stroll members who were included among the headliners of the Edmonton Poetry Festival in April of 2014. The theme for the festival was “Word Bridges” and events for the week long affair included Poems at City Hall and the Downtown Farmers Market. *Conduit*: work by immigrant writers, Creating across Cultures, the first hosting of Edmonton’s Slam Finals were also staged during the Poetry Festival. The Stroll of Poets once again staged a Blinks event at the ARTery, this year called “In the Blink of an Eye”.

## 2015

John Leppard is voted in as the new president of the board for The Stroll of Poets at the AGM that year. Joining him as the new vice president was Marco Melfi.

Another well known Stroll of Poets member was named the new Poet Laureate of Edmonton as Pierrette Requier took over the roll this year.

The Edmonton Poetry Festival, themed “Poetry Moves” that year, billed these poets among the headliners of the event that year: David Brydges, Kathy Fisher, Gary Garrison, Shirley Serviss, Michael Gravel, Leif Gregerson, Giselle Lemire, John Leppard, Laurie Macfayden, Marco Melfi, Peter Midgley, Don Perkins, Roylin Picou, Pierrette Requier, Jocelyne Verret, and Anna Zeltserman. Venues also featured poets from across the country and the question: how does poetry move us? Poetry and politics. *Une soirée de poésie décoiffante*. A gala evening. Whiskey and Words from Wise Women. “Gone With the Blinks” was the theme of the Blinks event which the Stroll of Poets entered into the Edmonton Poetry Festival in 2015.

Two different events occurred on September 12 in which Stroll members were involved. The John W Bilsland Awards Gala was held at the Strathcona Place Seniors Center where Anne Lightfoot, Audrey Ruth Shield, Anne Stewart, Michael Mott, and Barbara A Fraser read selections of their poetry. Also that evening, at the Kaleido Arts Festival, musicians and poets were invited to participate in a live contest where they were judged on presentation during their performance, which was limited to 3 minutes duration.

The fall Haven Reading Series opened with an event at The Upper Crust Restaurant on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup> but readings were also scheduled for Audrey’s Books on a couple of Sunday afternoons as well. The season commenced with a Laureate’s Challenge featuring Pierrette and Charlotte Cranston who invited poets to write and read a poem about who you really are or some of your secrets. Starting that month, Stroll member, Shirley Serviss conducted an 8 week writing workshop, running Thursday evenings, at the City Arts Center. The goal of the workshop was to help writers to transform their experiences into written words in varying formats. At the same time Shirley was also calling on Stroll members to contribute to the “Artists on the Wards Campaign”. The objective was to contribute poetry that would be displayed at the U of A Hospital during Alberta Culture Days. Several Stroll poets (Mary Campbell, Doug Elves, Naomi McIlwraith, Wendy Joy, Rusti Leahy, Vanda Ulich Petrut, Marguerite Redshaw, Kathy Fisher, and Gary Garrison) were recorded reading their poetry at a Haven event and published on YouTube this year

A significant honour was bestowed upon Stroll member Madura Katta when she was invited to read her award winning poem for the UN International Day of the Girl Summit at the UN Headquarters on October 9<sup>th</sup>. Another milestone was achieved for Stroll member Richard Davies when it was announced that his poem “Free” won the prize for poetry in The Alberta Retired Teachers Association Writing Contest.

November turned out to be a busy month for poetry in Edmonton. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month Audrey's Books staged a poetry reading for Halloween called Dead Poets Haven. Pardon me for adding that the Haven Reading on November 2<sup>nd</sup> was my debut with the Stroll of Poets reading at the Upper Crust along with Dani Zyp, Henry Victor, and Alison Clarke and the mic host was Mel Huizinga. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of the month the Writers Guild of Alberta hosted an evening with Rasp and the Wine at the Kasbar lounge in Gianni's which included an open mic opportunity. The Rasp and the Wine returned to Gianni's on the 25<sup>th</sup> when Stroll member Gary Garrison presented an evening of his poetry. Other events that month included the Blue Pencil Café, jointly organized by the Writers Guild of Alberta and the Canadian Literature Center. An opportunity to schedule an appointment on November 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> with Pierrette Requier, Edmonton Poet Laureate, or Greg Bechtel, BPAA Fiction Book Award winner, to discuss one's work in progress was the goal offered as the award. The Alberta Translators and Interpreters offered workshops on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of the month on Literary Translation and another workshop was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. That one, "Poetry with Heart – by Heart" dealt with learning skills for by heart performance, was led by Giselle Lemire, who was Edmonton's 2013 Poetry Slam winner.

The Writers Guild of Alberta held a Holiday Party on December 4<sup>th</sup> which featured a reunion of the Raving Poets and including an open mic poetry reading. The year concluded with a call to "bring your own event" to the Poetry Festival to be held in the coming spring. Five opportunities were available to submissions received before January 1<sup>st</sup>. The festival administrators would assist with promotion and set up of venue to host whatever event and artists that winning entries desired to host.

## 2016

Besides the regular Haven readings, the year began with other venues as well. Starting January 24<sup>th</sup> and then also on February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup> Common Ground Café offered open mic opportunities for poets, story tellers and comedians. Stroll members were also invited to the Highlands Public Library for a workshop on January 23 facilitated by Stroll member Alice Major. The workshop, "Poetry Meets Science" dealt with scientific concepts as poetic inspiration and metaphor for poetic themes.

The Poets on Fire Fundraiser, held at On the Rocks was an interesting affair offering prizes for poetry stage performances. The first twenty poets to sign up and pay the \$20 entry fee were judged by 5 jury members selected from the audience. The competitors were judged on delivery and confidence, crowd response and interaction, and on content comprehension. First place was awarded to Joti Butler, second to Clayton Sanders and third place went to Markus Eymann. A little later in the month, on February 29<sup>th</sup> the Stroll staged a Leap Year Open Mic Challenge. The challenge was in the request to use these words in creating a poem: New Orleans, sphincter, trombone, orange, fly, elephant, giraffe, valentine, limousine, philosophy, potato, and mouse – a challenge indeed. Gary Garrison and Audrey Brooks hosted the occasion.

Another contest in support of the University of Alberta Hospital was brought to the Stroll by Shirley Serviss. The poems were to be written about a hospital experience, hope, illness, or wellness and the winning poems were displayed on the Poetry Walk along the second floor hallway. Poems were to be submitted to the Friends of University Hospital Poetry Contest before March 1<sup>st</sup>. Another memorization workshop, called Poets go Paperless this time. It was conducted by Giselle Lemire, who ran the Poetry by Heart workshop the year before as well.

The Stroll of Poets AGM was held on March 20<sup>th</sup> in Room 7, on the sixth floor of the Stanley A Milner Library. The entire board was re-elected for the upcoming season. The new anthology was rolled out and the cover design was submitted by Trudy Grienauer that year.

The Stroll announced that the deadline for that year's Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest would be April 4<sup>th</sup>. The contest was very popular throughout the country and many Stroll members entered the contest annually with some also winning recognition in the results. Instrumental in the administration of the contest was stroll member David Brydges. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April a reading by the group called Borderlines Writers Circle along with Stroll members took place at Millwoods Library. The group was set up as a mentorship program to assist immigrants to produce written word English Literature and the theme for the reading was dialogue that celebrates diversity.

The Edmonton Poetry Festival 's theme for 2016 was Poetry Becomes and it ran from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup>. One event they staged was a venue submitted by Stroll members on April 17<sup>th</sup> at Zocalo Café in McCauley during the "Inner City Drum Beats" festivities. Alice Major, Gary Garrison, Leif Gregerson, Charlotte Cranston, Naomi McIlwraith, and Pierrette Requier, along with winners of the Inner City Drum Beats Poetry Contest all read as part of this event. On the next day, the Stroll hosted the now annual Blinks event cosponsored that year by the Edmonton Poetry Festival as well. The evening, called "Everything but the Kitchen Blinks", was hosted by Trudy Greinhaur who was accompanied by the Blinks Philharmonic. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, Stroll members Alla Zeltserman and Peter Midgley read along with Metro Federation writer in residence Marty Chan, followed by an open mic, in the Fireside Lounge at the Strathcona County Library. On that same night, Pierrette Requier also took part in an event supporting local writers at the Highlands Library.

Also taking place during the festival that year were some events sponsored by St. John's Institute. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> "Poetry Becomes Spirit" was the billing for the evening featuring the group Wine & Wild Women Wordsmiths held at Latitude 53. The following evening St John's Institute sponsored a writing workshop with guest Armand Garnet Ruffo. Also, that day, and evening, YEP Showcase was a presentation of Massawa Café, Poetry Among the Pines was a special attraction conducted by the River Valley Adventure Company, and three sessions hosted by Latitude 53. The first event was Poetry Becomes Conscience, while the second was called Brown, Black and Fierce. They were followed by a presentation titled Poetry Meets – Waiting Around. The final day of the festival, April 24<sup>th</sup>, was labeled The Café Readings because readings occurred at several downtown cafes throughout the day.

Fresh Verse, which was held at the Haven Reading at The Upper Crust on the evening of May 24<sup>th</sup> that year, included 7 young poets who treated the packed house. The Canauthors Alberta

Branch extended a welcome to Stroll poets at the Exporting Alberta Award Presentation and Gala at Holy Trinity Anglican Church on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May. This was an evening of readings, fellowship and celebration of the best of 2015 with the Exporting Alberta Awards.

The Writers Guild of Alberta held their “Creativity and Happiness” annual conference and AGM at SAIT on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> presented participants with a chance to celebrate Canadian Literature, hone their craft, and network with professional writers. The conference kicked off with a Literary Pub Night and then closed with the Literary Awards Gala. On the Saturday a workshop with Richard Harrison was offered on “My Words are in the World – Now What”. During the workshop examined how poets deal with changing expectations for their work before and after publication.

Mid-month in June another workshop was available for poets in Edmonton when poets were also invited to attend the “Third Verb Poetry Workshop: The Art of Connection” at the Union Bank Inn. This workshop was divided into three parts providing an introduction to poetry as the art of connection, in-class writing exercises and then concluding with time to share newly produced poetry.

During the month of July three separate Youthwrite summer camps were conducted to promote the skills of young writers. Stroll of Poets members Mark Kozub, Barbara North, Janice MacDonald, and Randy Williams were involved in teaching the courses. July 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> was Just Write, held in Edmonton. July 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> was the Youthwrite Park Experience held in Bragg Creek. July 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> it was Youthwrite River Valley Experience held again in Edmonton.

The summer months provided opportunities for poets to send in their work to two calls for submissions. The Prairie Journal of Canadian Literature had a July 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for poems to be included in their Alberta Muse Issue coinciding with Alberta Cultural Days (September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup>). Greenboathouse Press, out of Vernon B.C., requested poetry manuscripts for publication the following year to be submitted prior to August 31<sup>st</sup>. In response to the devastating Fort MacMurray fire, a call for poetry submissions to be published in a fundraising anthology, called “Fire and Sky Anthology” was organized by Stroll member David Brydges. Another offer to share poetry was through the call for poets to share Poetry at Stephansson House on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Poets who wished to read poems on the theme of Nature were requested to send in a reply with three original poems by June 22<sup>nd</sup>. A total of 8 poets would be selected to share their poems on the historical site of Stephansson House at the end of August. Other poetic activities were also planned for participants on that day.

During the Fringe Festival Pierrette Requirer hosted a colourful, multicultural, collaborative event on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August involving a cast of Musicians, poets, and dancers.

The Haven launch in September called for poets to read poems regarding the Stroll history or silver or the number 25 in honour of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stroll of Poets Society commencing that season. September 6<sup>th</sup> was a community open jam session In McCauley with Gary Garrison hosting musicians, singers, and lyricists in an acoustic jam session. On September 7<sup>th</sup> a reading, held at Revera Churchill Senior’s Residence, was titled Beauty, Remembrance and

Old Memories was jointly sponsored by the Stroll of Poets. All authors shared poems in remembrance of beauty, remembrance and old memories.

The new season saw the start of a new series of courses that would be instructed by Shirley Serviss. The first was “Running with Pens: Your Life Story” running on Tuesday evenings from September through to November. Participants would learn the art of transcribing the material of their life into articles, blogs, poetry or other literary forms. “Writing Your Life ran Tuesday afternoons during the same time frame. It focused on writing about life stories or memories while the third course, which was “The Personal Essay: Writing in Baggy Pants”, occurred on Thursday evenings that fall and specifically taught on the form of essays to write about one’s experiences. Also running on the first Tuesday of the month, from September through to December was a workshop with Alison Clarke called “A Trip to the Fantastic”. The creative writing experience was focused on creating poetry in response to art. The busy month continued with Tuesday night sessions in Sir Winston Churchill Square with Melle Huizinga leading a writers circle, sponsored by Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE), for 4 consecutive weeks.

Through Alberta Cultural Days activities included the STArts Fest in St. Albert which scheduled 6WP on the Trails. This event saw pairs of poets stationed at 6 locations along the Red Willow Trail system read their six word poem. Also, on October 1<sup>st</sup>, “The Art of the Spoken Word” was the name of an event staged at the Musée Héritage Museum. 15 spoken word artists were selected to give a ten minute reading there and paid a \$25 honorarium. The 3 word challenge required that the poets include the *words land, market and lineage* in their poem (but not in the title) referencing the exhibit at that time, which was Weiller and Williams Co Ltd: Building a Livestock Empire. On October 1<sup>st</sup> the Arts and Culture Council of Strathcona County also held Words in the Park – Book Fair and Sale in the Sherwood Park Community Center AGORA.. The festivities there included free workshops, artisan displays, author book signings, prize draws and interactive games.

On October 21<sup>st</sup> the CAVA Gallery staged “Climb; A multidisciplinary Show” produced by Janis Dow, hosted by Pierrette Requier, directed by Giselle Lemire, with music by Braden Gates and spoken word by Janis Dow. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of October the Haven moved to Audrey’s Books for “Measures of Astonishment” which featured a lecture by former Saskatchewan poet laureate. Glen Sorestad and Dymphny Dronyk, former president of the League and included open mic spots for poets from the Stroll.

Alice major achieves two more milestones when her book *Standard Candles* won the Robert Kroetsch Award for Poetry, as part of the Alberta Book Awards, and is also shortlisted for the WGA Stephan G. Stepansson Award for Poetry as well as the League of Canadian Poets’ Raymond Souster Award. Secondly, she was named as one of the 25 Influential Alberta Artists from the previous 25 years. Another significant accomplishment went to Alison Clarke who was named 2016 Writer of the Year by the Afro Canadian Heroes Awards.

On November 1<sup>st</sup> the anthology *Fire and Sky*, mentioned earlier, compiled by David Brydges, was launched at the Wood Buffalo Regional Library with musical entertainment provide by Jamie Gardner and speeches by Guy Choquet, director of the Red Cross Alberta Recovery as

well as Perry Gillan, Deputy Chief of Fire Prevention. \$315 dollars in book sales was raised and a further 22 copies were donated to the library. Along with Fort MacMurray poets Julia Bennet and Kiran Malik-Khan Stroll contributors included: David C. Brydges, Mary Campbell, Daniel Pillar, Sandra Mooney-Ellebeck, Hank Binnema, Audrey Brooks, Kathy Fisher, Marcia O'Connor, Audrey Seehagen, and Jocelyne Verret, who was also the editor. All participants enjoyed a rewarding evening of fine poetry, music, and community spirit. The anthology was also launched in Edmonton at Yiannis Taverna Greek Restaurant on December 15 with readings by the Edmonton contributors. Kathy Fisher was the Master of Ceremonies and Roylin J. Picou was a special musical guest for the evening.

The Olive at the Almanac presented Stephen Brockwell and rob mclennan on Tuesday, November 8 at the Almanac Gastropub & Cocktails. Stephen, hailing from Ottawa, won the Archibald Lampman Award in 2004 and rob, also from Ottawa, won the John Newlove Award in 2010. This series ran from September to April, on the second Tuesday of the month, since 2000 and offered a mix of emerging and established poetic talent.

Richard Davies offered a workshop opportunity in a session called “Exploring Poetic Sensability” on November 26<sup>th</sup> at the Highlands Public Library. Participants were requested to share/read a short poem by someone who influenced them to write poetry and also a brief personal poem that they believe represents their own approach, style or voice. This was followed by discussion and feedback. Then on October 30<sup>th</sup> another poetry event commenced at Café (Center for Advancement of Faculty Excellence) at MacEwan University. The Poetry Installation was titled “I Don’t Want to Die In the Digital Age/Window of Light and Text” featured works by Tim Bowling and J. Mark Smith and ran until February.

As part of the Season of Silver celebrations Audrey’s Books hosted featured readers, an extended open mic, and sales of past Stroll Anthologies on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

Edmonton’s Poet Laureate and Stroll member, Pierrette Requier, performs a poetry reading for City Council on December 13<sup>th</sup> with special guests from the Stroll of Poets Society. Coffee and muffins were served to councillors and attendees after the reading.

## 2017

The year 2017 started with a workshop that commenced on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January called “Get Tight With Rhyme”. It was headed by Jade O’Riley and held, once again, at the Highlands Public Library. The focus of the course was to introduce participants to poetry forms such as the sonnet, Rondeau, Rondel, Villanelle, and Triolet. Two other workshops, facilitated by Shirley Serviss, and held at the Meadows Community Recreation Center, commenced in January that year as well. From the 24<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> of March the Tuesday evening meetings were called “Writing Your Life” and focused on writing one’s life stories. The other workshop, called “The Personal Essay – Writing in Baggy Pants” ran from January 26<sup>th</sup> to March 16<sup>th</sup> on Thursday afternoons. The intent of this course was to assist the participants in transforming their experiences, opinions, and memories into essays.



Stroll of Poets member Mary Campbell was teamed up with musical guest Donna Durand at the Wild Earth Café in support of the Alberta Council for Aging on February 10<sup>th</sup>. With the musical accompaniment of Donna, Mary read her poem *Rest, Little Mamma, Rest* which was a part of the LitFest of the previous year.

Another workshop was then conducted from February 9<sup>th</sup> to March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Castledowns YMCA on Thursday evenings. This was another event targeting the involvement of young writers called “Be a Video Poem Maker”. This writing and film making workshop was intended to instruct teens to write poems and present them via film media.

In celebration of the Stroll of Poets 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, dubbed “The Season of Silver”, a special celebration was scheduled for Stroll members only at the Dovercourt Community Hall on February 18<sup>th</sup>. The gala was called the “Founders Feast” and honoured the amazing folks who laid the foundation for The Stroll of Poets Society and those who kept it thriving for 25 years. During that evening affair councillor Michael Walters also read a poem in honor of the organization.

During that month other occasions involving Stroll members included Joyce Davies at the Chateau Lacombe on February 21<sup>st</sup> leading a creative writing course on: What can happen when you sign up for a workshop. This event was sponsored by the Women’s Canadian Club of Edmonton. Stroll members also participated in a performance poem event sponsored by Westcorp Windsor Park Plaza on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Then on February 25<sup>th</sup> Diane Robitelle conducted a Poetry and Art workshop at the Highlands Public Library. This course was an exploration of colours and gestures that you can give to enhance your poem dealing with the relationships of colour to one another and to words. Besides the regular Monday night Haven readings at the Upper Crust, three poetry readings were held on weekends at Audrey’s Books during the spring season as well.

March 19<sup>th</sup> was the date of the AGM and the Anthology book launch for the Stroll of Poets and it was held at Massawa Café and Bistro that year.

Two poetry contests were advertised by the Stroll that spring as well. The deadline for the annual William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest was March 31<sup>st</sup>. The competition, administered by Stroll member David Brydges from Cobalt Ontario, offered prizes of \$300 for 1<sup>st</sup> place, \$200 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place, \$100 for 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and \$75 for 8 honourable mentions. March 31<sup>st</sup> was also the deadline for “Words of Wellness”, the yearly call for poems by the Friends of University Hospitals. Eight poets would win an opportunity to read their poem on April 19<sup>th</sup> at the McMullen Gallery and display their poems in the gallery, located on the second floor of the hospital. June 22<sup>nd</sup> was the deadline for the annual, Edmonton based, John W Blisland Literary Awards for Seniors. These were all contests that Stroll members had been active in for some years at this point.

On April 11<sup>th</sup> Stroll member Claire Kelley read from her new book *Maunder*, as part of The Olive Reading Series, at the Almanac Gastropub and Cocktails. While the month of April was again the time for Stroll poets to engage in the 30/30 event, writing a poem each day of the

month according to prompts provided by leader Trudy Greinhaur, it also marked another National Poetry month. It was celebrated in Edmonton with the Poetry Festival which ran from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month. The theme of the festival was “Horizons/Eskonahkwahk. Stroll poets among the headlining writers included Bert Almon, Douglas Barbour, Kimmy Beach, Alison Clarke, Kathy Fisher, Claire Kelly, Laurie Macfayden, and Pierrette Requier.

Coinciding with these dates was the commencement of Stroll writing workshops, once again conducted by Shirley Serviss, From April 18<sup>th</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup>, she led “Personal Essay – Writing in Baggy Pants”, on Tuesday afternoons at the City Arts Center. From April 20<sup>th</sup> until June 8<sup>th</sup> she hosted “Writing Your Life” on Thursday afternoons at the City Arts Center.

The Festival Events included an event, billed as Multilingual Horizons, at McLuhan House featuring the launch of Polyglot Magazine, on Monday the 17<sup>th</sup>. On that evening “Poetry is Life – Life is Poetry”, the Theatre Dialog hosted a tribute to the lives and poetry of Russian poets and featured Pierrette Requier reading Anna Akhmatova. The next afternoon, Featured Performer-Poetry Central had readings in Beaver Hill Park. Later that evening The Stroll of Poets hosted their Quicksilver Blinks Event in the Mercury Room as well. On Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> a performance announced as a French Event for the greater public scheduled a free reading called French Twist: Poésies de tout horizon at the Kasbar. That night, at midnight, CJSR 88.5 FM Radio with host Michael James aired a special with poetry, musicians and writers which included several interviews with artists as well. The Yellowhead Brewery hosted “Wine and Wild Women Wordsmiths” on Friday night. Then on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> several more poetry readings were staged. They were: “Our Planet, Our Poems: Your Work Now” at McLuhan House, “YEP Showcase” at Massawa Café, “Cutlines: Through the Landscapes of Experience” at The Almanac (at 1:00 PM) and “The View from Here” again at The Almanac (at 4:00 PM), “Clouds on the Horizon – Query” at Latitude 53, “11<sup>th</sup> Annual Evening of Poetry” at The Strathcona County Library, and also “Birds on a Wire” at Studio 96. Sunday also saw many venues staging readings as part of the festival’s The Café Readings series, one of which was “En Francais” hosted at Massawa Café. “Beyond Reconciliation” was an event that ran at Studio 96 on Sunday evening.

Following the festival, on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> National Poetry Month Reading in Council featured Pierrette Requier reading her poem for Make Something Edmonton Mural Project trilingual City Poem *Edmonton – notre ville – pêhonân* in City Hall and included special guests.

On May 6<sup>th</sup> The Writers Guild of Alberta organized Mentorship Celebration event, called “Three Emerging Voives”, with mentors (established Edmonton authors) introducing three new voices of emerging Edmonton poets. Marco Melfi, Jacqueline Kwan, and Sherryl Melnyk read their poems at the Tiramisu Restaurant. Other events that occurred that month included a gathering of poets to read at Starbucks downtown arranged by Dani Zyp and Karen Lumley as well as the Stroll of Poets’ annual Fresh Verse, at the Upper Crust readings, offering 8 young poets 5 minutes each to read their poems and included an open mic session to conclude the evening.

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual Fresh Verse Event was staged by the Stroll at the Upper Crust providing an opportunity once again for eight youthful voices (under 25) to present their poetry in a five minute reading. This event was held near the end of the season once again on May 31st.

During June of 2017 other ventures of note included the following. On June 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> “Juxtapositions” was the theme for the Writers Guild of Alberta’s AGM which was held in Lister Hall at the University of Alberta. Bursaries were available to participants in need to attend the event which included keynote speakers Yasuko Than and Todd Babiuk. Catherine Owen conducted a workshop on writing and play, called “Eavesdropping on Mars” about the pleasure of writing poetry and short stories. An exhibition was staged by Jocelyn Verret and Father Douglas at Sir Winston Churchill Square on the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the July 4<sup>th</sup>. It was called “Conversations in Pen and Paint” and in bearing witness to the relationship between different forms of artistic expressions. It featured the art of Douglas in response to the poems of Jocelyne. Leif Gregersen, named the “Spotlight Writer” for the summer of 2017 by the EPL, also put on a free workshop at the Woodcroft Branch of the Edmonton Public Library teaching the expression of yourself in words.

Youthwrite camps were again held during the weekend of June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Bennet Center this year. The venue offered young writers to participate in a few days of writing and the opportunity to network with published authors Mary Pinkoski, Bob Chelmick, Minister Faust, and Omar Mouallem.

The late spring and early summer months presented poets with opportunities to partake in the Easy Writers writing group which met on the last Thursday of each month. It was led by a different participant each meeting. Another writers circle was scheduled by the WGA called “Borderlines” and paired inexperienced writers with mentors. The group was a multilingual, multicultural mix designed to encourage English writing.

Calls for poetry contest submissions were made during those months by Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest, Prairie Journal, John W Blisland Awards, Glass Buffalo Writing Contest, and Stephansson House Historic Site. Another opportunity was the Request for Content requested by Stroll member Daniel Piller for his upcoming book “A Mother’s Love”. Dan sent out a plea to young mothers and fathers to submit 2 sentence responses to the questions: What does a mother’s love feel like and In what way do your children show their love for you.

The fringe that year included works by Strollers Gerald St. Maur once again, featuring Mel Huizinga, as well as a play by Kenneth Brown. It was also announced during that summer that Stroll founding member and former poet laureate of Edmonton had been given the Lieutenant Governor’s Distinguished Artist Award for 2017.

During the 2017/2018 season the electronic online Haven sign up page was opened to facilitate the creation of the Haven schedule for readers as well as mic and door hosts. In conjunction with this, the Stroll board also created a Haven committee and refined the process of distributing duties associated with setting up and facilitating the Haven Readings.

After the summer months, on September 7<sup>th</sup>, The Almanac was the site of the WGA Fall Kick-off. The full and exciting program included representatives of various literary organizations, festivals, residencies, and reading series. They included: David Belle (Edmonton Public Library writer in residence), Gail Sidonie-Sobat (The Writers Union of Canada), Alice Major (Stroll of

Poets), Sharon Day (Edmonton Public Library), Fawnda Mithrush (LitFest Alberta), Julie Robinson (The Writer's Guild of Alberta), Rayanne Doucet (Edmonton Poetry Festival), Jean Crozier and Caterina Edwards (Finding the Unique), and Heather Dolman (STARFest).

On September 16th, writing, meditation, reflection, and sharing were the activities in the Late Summer Writing Retreat held at the Horizon village and led by Antionette Voute Roeder. The Almanac was the site of the Frontenac House 2017 Poetry Launch on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Billy Rae Belcourt, Laurie Macfadyen, Vivian Hansen, and Lisa Pasold were the four featured readers for the event. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September, the winners of the Glass Buffalo Poetry Contest were announced and presented their poetry at the Yellowhead Brewery. An evening of song and spoken word with Donna Durand and Kathy Fisher was an entertaining affair held at Wild Earth Café on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

September was also the starting month of a new season for the Stroll reading series with a launch date of September 18<sup>th</sup> and a theme of "On the Wing" featuring poetry about birds that frequent the Edmonton area. Shirley Serviss once again instructed three different Creative Writing Classes through the City of Edmonton. Memoir: Writing Your Life ran September 19 to November 7<sup>th</sup> on Tuesday afternoons at the City Arts Center. Non-fiction: Running with Pens was held on Wednesday evenings from September 20<sup>th</sup> to October 20<sup>th</sup> at Clareview Arena. Writing the Personal Essay: Writing in Baggy Pants ran Thursday afternoons at the City of the Arts from September 21<sup>st</sup> through November 9<sup>th</sup>.

What a month of treats for poetry and music lovers in October! The WGA presented an Open Mic – Read Like the Pros evening at The Almanac on the 5<sup>th</sup>. On October 13<sup>th</sup> it was "Memory and Loss" an evening of poetry and song with poetry by Alice Major, Donna Durand, Pierrette Requier, Katie Flaherty, Mary Campbell and music by Anne Hurley and Jim Videto was presented at Woodcroft Community Hall and admission was FREE. The book, *Memory and Loss – A Canadian Anthology of Poetry*, was available for sale there for \$15.00.

Burning Moon Salon was one of two attractions on the night of October 14<sup>th</sup>. Held at YEG, it featured Alicia Lake Campbell, Josh Luukkonen, Darien Selander, and Kelly Shepherd with music by Karen Donaldson Shepherd and required only a Food Bank donation for entry. On that same night the Wild West Poetry Festival was held in the Kasbar venue of Yiannis Taverna. Poets from across Canada read with local open mic poets in a competition for a prize for the wildest read poem. Singer/songwriter Donna Durand, spoken word poet Kathy Fisher and musicians Anne Hurley & Jim Videto highlighted the entertainment as well.

Audrey's Books hosted Dead Poets'Haven reading on October 29<sup>th</sup> featuring an open mic for opportunity for readers with poems written by or inspired by dearly departed poets.

November 2<sup>nd</sup> at The Almanac the WGA staged an event with Reading and Discussion on Finding Your Audience featuring fiction writer Debbie Willis and poet Marco Melfi, who won the Sharon Drummond Chapbook Award, reading from their work. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, the threesome of Laurie MacFadden, Billy-Ray Belcourt, and Kelly Shepherd read from their work at Audrey's Books' Visceral Poetry billing. Calls were announced during newsletters that month for

poets to submit poems for the annual anthology and also for a chapbook, to be published by the Stroll of Poets, with Magpies as the theme.

Audrey's Books was once again the site of an Evening of Poetry, on this occasion hosted by Alice Major and featuring poets Susan McCaslin, Antoinette Voûte Roeder, and Randy Kohan on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Also that evening, The Almanac staged an event billed as Poetry of the Potus with The Raving Poets Band. The band provided live improv music to accompany open mic poets reading on the year with the Trump. The following evening, at Robertson-Wesley United Church, Julie Robinson and Brooke Leifso facilitated a workshop which invited people to a justice focused effort. "Speak our Words – Explore Through Poetry Workshop" promoted community building through reflection on current injustices in our society. As well as poetry reading by Julie Robinson the group also read and wrote poetry on that theme. On November 14<sup>th</sup> the Olive Reading Series headlined Marco Melfi and Lise Gaston followed by an open mic at The Almanac. Additional poetry readings occurred at Audrey's Books on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

The WGA Holiday Party with Marty Chan and Fiddler Daniel Gervais was held at The Almanac on December 7<sup>th</sup> and included poetry readings, music and holiday cheer.

## 2018

The New Year starts with the Olive Reading Series "Writers in residence evening" at The Almanac. Featured readers for this occasion are Margaret Christakos (U of A) and Deborah Willis (MacEwan U).

January 25<sup>th</sup> sees the launch of sister poetry society Parkland Poets with current Stroll board member heading it up as its inaugural president.

January 28<sup>th</sup> is the first reading at Audrey's Books for that year. The Stroll Newsletter included an essay by Gerald St. Maur called The Reading of Poetry outlining how to prepare and read poetry to an audience.

February 1<sup>st</sup> the WGA presents: Reading and Conversation with Marilyn Dumont at The Almanac. Marilyn read from her work and facilitated discussion about creativity, identity, and place. The Olive Reading Series continues at The Almanac with Sharon Thesenon February 7<sup>th</sup> and then Lizie Derksen and Sharon McCartney on February 13<sup>th</sup>. February 20<sup>th</sup> was the date that the Stroll of Poets launched their newly published Chapbook Magpie Poems in the McMullen Gallery at U of A Hospital with Rusti Leahy, Myrna Garanis, Julie C. Robinson, Anna Mioduchowska, and Nancy MacKenzie reading their contributions to the book. February 25<sup>th</sup> sees another Haven Series reading at Audrey's Books.

March 1<sup>st</sup> the WGA presents: Blast from the Past! At The Almanac, hosted by Mike Gravel. 8 writers share their earliest writing. The readers are winners in their contest where one line was submitted from the entry poem. The most surprising, descriptive, tender, or off the wall lines will be selected. Feb 15 deadline. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, The Olive Reading Series, at The Almanac

Gastropub presented Jumoke Verissimo and readers from their board along with an open mic session once again. Then on March 15<sup>th</sup> WGA Presents: Borderlines Writers Circle Readings 2018 was held at Whitemud Crossing Library hosted by EPL writer in residence, Darrin Hagen. New work by six multicultural, multilingual writers who completed the Writers Circle Program. March 18<sup>th</sup> was the date of the Stroll's AGM at 3 Bananas Café.

From March 15<sup>th</sup> to May 9<sup>th</sup>, at the Blue Curve Gallery in the Glenrose Hospital, the art of Janis Dow was on exhibition and the show opened with Janis reading from her poetry collection to start the art. A WGA webinar was streamed on March 24<sup>th</sup> called "Smash All the Rulez". James Harbeck discussed the rules of the English language and the effects you can have by breaking them.

Book launches during the first quarter of 2018 included: Hive by Randy Kohan; Secret Wish of Dragon H by Llara Stefiuk-Gaudet; The Theater by Guy Chambers; Welcome to the Anthropocene by Alice Major; Perfectly Beastly by Hugh McAlary; The Air is Elastic by Ella Zeltserman.

Calls for poetry submissions announce by the Stroll of Poets for the first quarter of 2018 included The Polyglot Magazine. With a deadline in March the winning poems would be used for their spring 2018 issue of multilingual art and poetry launched on April 22<sup>nd</sup> during the Edmonton Poetry Festival. They requested poetry themed on curating our Canadian Literature Canons or where culture/heritage and language intersect. A Celebration of Poetry at Rutherford House called for poems based on "Family". An announcement event would also be schedule for April 22<sup>nd</sup> during the Edmonton Poetry Festival. March 17 was set as a deadline for poetry submissions to a Request for Kitchen Poetry by Shirley Serviss on behalf of U of A Hospital. The poems, to be related to kitchens, were then read and displayed during an art show at the McMullen Gallery on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

The thirty poems in thirty days challenge comes around again at the onset of April for interested Stroll members with Trudy Greinhaur managing the event. The beginning of April also marks National Poetry month and the coming of another Edmonton Poetry Festival which meant that the Stroll would sponsor another Blinks event as part of the festival. Year 12 of the annual blitz of 30 second poems was an eye to eye and word to word show down with the Blink Philhormanic prepared to rev up and drown out breakers of the time limit. That year the event was dubbed Made Ya Blink. Much of the pre-festival promotion and ticket sales had been done through the internet that year.

WGA Presents: Writers in the Hot Seat in conjunction with the Book Publishers Association of Alberta on April 5<sup>th</sup> at The Almanac. The affair is a demonstration of a typical meeting with a publisher. Strathcona Place Center presented a Poets and Writers Networking event on April 6<sup>th</sup> providing an opportunity to meet other writers, network, as well as create and share work in a poetry slam.

Starting almost simultaneously with the festival are the Creative Writing Courses with Shirley Serviss. City Arts Center was the location for Thursday evening gatherings from April 19<sup>th</sup> to May 24<sup>th</sup> for "Playing with Words", a review of the elements of poetry and what differentiates it from prose. "The Personal Essay: Writing in Baggy Pants" was held at the City Arts Center from

April 19<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup> on Thursday afternoons. The topic was transforming life experiences into a variety of personal essays. The “Writing Your Life” course was also held in the City Arts Center on Tuesday afternoons from April 17<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Almanac hosted another in The Olive Reading Series on Tuesday, April 10 with featured readers Marilyn Dumont and Loic Mulatris and an open mic session followed. Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup> at Wild Bird General Store. 15 contributors to The Magpie Chapbook read their poems for a \$5.00 donation.

The 2018 Poetry Festival ran from April 22<sup>nd</sup> to April 29<sup>th</sup>. The theme that year was “Your Voice Here/Nêhiyawêtân/Toi.Ta Voix. Ici.” It presented venues such as Multilingual Voices: Expanding the Canlit Canon, Indigenous voices in poetry and art, a Masterclass with Christian Campbell, Queer Expressions, and Family Ties.

Highlights of the week were:

Wine and Wild Women Wordsmiths

Family Ties

Queer Expressions

Poetry & Philosophy with Jan Zwicky

Alchemy: Our annual Poetry Party

nêhiyawêtân

In One’s Own Voice – 4 diverse poets including Christian Campbell, a compelling Bahamian poet

Christian Campbell’s Master Class

Literary Cocktails – the U of A Press celebrates its new creative titles

The All Star Slam – 8 of Edmonton’s top poets compete

Stroll poets considered headliners were announced on the Festival website: E.D. Blodgett, Richard Davies, Michael Gravel, Rayanne Haines, Randy Kohan, Laurie Macfayden, Alice Major, Pierrette Requier, and Jocelyne Verret were in this list.

During the Poetry Festival, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Edmonton Poetry Festival and Sandstone Weddings presented “A Wedding of Women’s Words & Music with The Giselle Lemire Bridal Party & Wedding Entertainers Trois Lèvres Rouges featuring Kathy Fisher at La Cité francophone.

April 22<sup>nd</sup> was also the deadline for the Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest.

April 28<sup>th</sup> was the “Get Your Words Out” 2018 four day WFSC Writer’s Conference at County Hall Conference Rooms. Heart of the City Mentorship Opportunity with Nasra Adem (Youth Poet Laureate) application was April 29<sup>th</sup>.

River Valley Researchers presented a poetry reading in the North Saskatchewan River valley on Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. The event started out at the University of Alberta Humanities Center then proceeded to the River Valley for a guided walk, a talk on indigenous history of the area, followed by a poetry reading by Margaret Christakos, the U of A Writer in Residence.

Events during the month of May that year included: WGA Presents: Five New Voices at Tiramisu Restaurant with readings from 5 graduates of their annual Mentorship Program occurred on May 5<sup>th</sup>. The next day, Audrey's Books presented "An Afternoon with the Authors" showcasing the writers whose work had been shortlisted for the Alberta Literary Awards. Readers included: Lisa Martin, Sadia Masud, Cynthia Scott Wandler, Jennifer Bowering Delisle, Kimmy Beach, Billy-Ray Belcourt, Nicole Moeller, and Igy Kin. Spruce Grove Public Library Presents: Spring Festival for the Arts on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Wednesday Night Writers, set in motion by Leanne Myggland Carter, have met for 10 years with over 40 participants from surrounding areas.

Fresh Verse 2018, the sixth edition of this event, featured 8 youth poets and an open mic session at the Stroll's Haven Reading Series held at The Upper Crust Restaurant. In June several Edmonton poets and Strollers staged a fundraiser for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) called a Poetry Protest to rally against the immigration policies of US President Donald Trump. Taking part in the reading were Lisa Mulrooney, Adriana Onita, Jaspreet Singh, Julie Robinson, Peter Midgley, Tyler Hein, Matthew Stepanic, and Luciana Erregue.

Also at this time were numerous calls for poetry or performers for venues. Some of these opportunities were: Arden Theater in St. Albert requested poets/performers to share their earliest writing endeavors at "Grownups Read Things They Wrote as Kids" scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup>. Stephansson House called for poetry submissions with the selected poets given the opportunity to read their work on site during the July 15<sup>th</sup> event "Poetry at Stephan's House". The Freewill Shakespeare Festival requested spoken word artists to participate in stage events during the festival running from June 21<sup>st</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>. Players at the Fringe was seeking for Bring Your Own Venue participants to propose works with up to 4 performers reflecting the theme "The Sound of Words in a World of Sound", especially in a multi-disciplinary collaboration. The selected groups would have a chance to perform at The Wee Book Inn during the Fringe Festival.

The WGA conducted two workshops during the summer months that year. In July it was in the format of a webinar on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Called Indexing: The Art of Writing Reader Friendly Indexes for Nonfiction Books it instructed on the creation of proper and useful indexes. On August 12<sup>th</sup> a workshop about market needs, trends and publishing pursuits in a course called What Publishers Want and it was led by literary agent Sam Hiyate. Starting July 22<sup>nd</sup> and running until October 19<sup>th</sup> another exhibition of collaborative work by Jocelyne Verret and Father Douglas, again called "Conversations with Pen and Brush", went on display. A reception, with a poetry reading by Jocelyne took place on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

"Interiors" with poetry by Amy Willans, Cathy Hodgson, Kerry Mulholland, and Laurie MacFayden was presented by Friends of University Hospitals on August 8<sup>th</sup> in the McMullen Gallery. This reading took place amid the art of Gillian Williams and was accompanied by musician Bev Ross. August 25<sup>th</sup> was the date for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual version of the Late Summer Writing Retreat at Horizon Village South. A new venue, Chapters Books, hosted a poetry reading on August 25<sup>th</sup> as well featuring poets Ronald Kurt, Jasse Anger, Hannah Hackney, and Ky Perraun.



Just before the new Haven season commenced a couple of other poetry events took place in the beginning of September. The WGA Edmonton Fall Kick-off was held in The Almanac on September 5<sup>th</sup>. At this yearly planning event entertainment was provided through the readings of local poets and writers on this occasion. The authors included were Darrin Hagen (EPL writer in residence), Michael Hingston (Metro writer in residence), John Leppard (Stroll of Poets), Fawnda Mithrush (LiFest Alberta), Heather Dolman (STARFest), Nicola Brown (Canadian Authors Association), and Lisa Mulrooney (Parkland Poets). Then, on September 13<sup>th</sup>, Ellen Kartz was featured in a poetry and prose presentation at The Aviary billed as “The Tenderness of Stone”. She pleased the audience with poetry, prose, and photographs reflecting her recent trip to the Himalayan mountains.

The Stroll of Poets Haven Reading Series launched their new season on September 17<sup>th</sup> at The Upper Crust Restaurant. Make it Musical was the theme for the evening so poets were invited to include instruments, bring a band, or come with a painting that inspires you about playing, etc.

A piano-Poem Duet, with Stroll member Diane Robitelle and pianist Zac Bellward was a part of New Music Edmonton’s See You or Something in September III Show at Holy Trinity Anglican Church on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Also, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> the WGA aired a Webinar on building a writer’s platform and finding their audience with Canadian writer Kimberley Grabas. Then on September 27<sup>th</sup> the Edmonton Public Library staged an event at Highlands branch called “The Moon is a Circle, Come Sing – Darrin Hagen in Conversation with Anna Marie Sewell”. The EPL writer in residence and Stroll poet discussed the spirit of sharing aloud and, after performing their own work, invited other to share their poems, songs, or reflections as well. The Parkland Poets Society Reading Series started up again on September 27<sup>th</sup> as well.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of the month the Writers Foundation of Strathcona County hosted its 11<sup>th</sup> annual Words In the Park – Author Fair and Book Sale in conjunction with Alberta Culture Days. It was held at Spark Gallery and boasted of all things literary. Also on September 29<sup>th</sup> Spruce Grove Public Library hosted Poets in the Park in the event tent at Central Park in Spruce Grove. Naomi McIlwraith was the feature reader for this event and she shared poems from her book *kiyâm*: poems which explores the beauty of the intersection between *nêhiyawêwin* (Plains Cree language) and *âkayâsimowin* (English).

A function at the public library Highlands Branch was held on October 11<sup>th</sup> called EPL Presents: What Makes Poetry. It featured poets Alice Major, Rayanne Haines, Matthew Stepanic, and Ahmed Knowmadic discussing poetic expression vis a vis traditional versus modern and page versus stage. Two of these poets went on to start a regular podcast series called Lets Get Lit, A Drunk Poetry Podcast. It was hosted by Rayanne and Matthew and co-sponsored by wine expert Gurbinder Bhatia so the show combined poets with a wine sample associated with the spice of each poet or poetic theme. The program contained reading and discussion of poetry with guest authors and their first podcast came from The Almanac on October 17<sup>th</sup>. The last event of that month was a themed reading at Audrey’s Books called The Dead Poets Haven on behalf of the Stroll of Poets.

November 30<sup>th</sup> was set as the deadline for submissions to a new chapbook to be published by the Stroll of Poets entitled “Winter Water”.

Emerging Authors Showcase was sponsored by the Spruce Grove Public Library on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. It included several Stroll poets who read at the Keephills Community Hall that evening. Among the readers were Chantal Beaulieu, Katherine Koller, Naomi McIlwraith, Rayanne Haines, Shari Narine, and Miji Campbell. The showcase was emceed by Thoma Trofimuk.

The WGA November Members Night, billed as Verse of the Universe celebrated the birthday of Carl Sagan on November 7<sup>th</sup> at The Almanac. Sixteen open mic spots were drawn from entrants to read their poetry accompanied by special guests The Raving Poets. The band was comprised of members Randall Edwards on guitar, Thomas Trofimuk playing piano, Karen Shepherd playing the violin, and Michael Gravel as the emcee. On November 14<sup>th</sup> The Olive Reading Series, continued at The Almanac featuring readings by Rayanne Haines and Matthew Stepanic. The 30<sup>th</sup> of the month was the deadline for submissions to the Stroll of Poets new chapbook "Winter Water".

The 5<sup>th</sup> of December was the date that WGA December Member Night was held at The Almanac. A series of poets read from their work during that evening which was set up to have the various poets represent demographics of sequential decades. Th representative poets included Alison Clarke, Charlie Gill, Barbara Grodaes, Joyce Harries, Tyler Hein, Peter Midgely, Anna Mipduchowska, and Ariana Townsend.

The year closed with calls for applicants for two projects commencing in 2019. A December 14<sup>th</sup> deadline was set by the Edmonton Poetry Festival to submit proposals for a Bring Your Own Venue event for the upcoming festival. Another one was a request, by Stroll poet Kim Blair for volunteers for her "Portrait and Poetry Project". Aimed at being a fundraiser for The Stroll of Poets, Kim asked for 35 to 50 head/shoulder pictures complete with an accompanying poem about the model. The intention was to produce and sell the portrait pairs with a share of the profits going to the Stroll. The Inner City Expositors Project was requesting volunteers to assist with screening and editing submissions from amateur poets, primarily from the inner city, as a prelude to publication.

Notable during the year was the increase in Haven Reading Series events staged at Audrey's Books who continued to be very supportive of the Stroll. They also helped individual Stroll members with book launches at times. Founding Stroll member, and webmaster at that time, Doug Elves, stepped down after 15 years of maintaining the Stroll website. Experimentation with the Stroll logo was evident on several Newsletters that year as well (check out visuals included later in this document).

There were several books published by members that year (not all launched at Audrey's). A sampling of these:

Raising Grandkids by Gary Garrison

Crisp-Maned Bay by Nancy MacKenzie

The Space Between by Antoinette Voûte Roeder

Awaken the Wildness Within by Janelle Schmidt

Borderlines Anthology by the WGA Borderlines Writers Circle

## 2019

January of 2019 included 2 events put on by the Writers Guild of Alberta. The first was an on line webinar in the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> hosted by Kimmy Beach called “How to Edit Your Work. That evening, at The Aviary, was January Member Night called Blue Monday. These events were followed up by another WGA event on February 6<sup>th</sup> at The Almanac called Biographies of Two Alberta Cities.

January 31<sup>st</sup> was the deadline announced in the newsletter by Shirley Serviss for another Friends of University Hospitals Annual Poetry Contest, called “Words of Wellness”. As well as an opportunity to read their work for the winning poetry submissions was the opportunity to have the poem displayed in McMullen Gallery in the U of A Hospital.

The WGA was staging another Member Night which featured once again a Calgary and an Edmonton author in the Biographies of Place: Literary Tales of Two Cities on February 6<sup>th</sup>. The WGA also produced a Webinar on February 21st, Social Media for Writers. To instruct writers on using platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Goodreads to submit and/or post poetry, who/how/what to follow, and how to engage with others.

The WGA March Member Night featured several writers in residence from different Alberta institutions at The Almanac on March 6<sup>th</sup>. These writers, available to writing communities for assistance and consultation, included Matthew Stepanic, Rayanne Haines, Wayne Arthurson, Nisha Patel, Katherine Koller, and Mary Pinkoski.

Woodrack Café was the location of a poetry reading on March 13<sup>th</sup> called Wild Spaces: 3 perspectives from 3 poets. The readers who were presenting poetry regarding what wild spaces meant to them that evening were Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck, Ellen Kartz, and Janelle Schmidt.

The Stroll of Poets AGM was held in 3 Bananas Café on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The Anthology was also rolled out at the meeting.

Readings from the Winter Water chapbook were performed by contributors at the Wild Bird General Store on March 31<sup>st</sup>. That day was also the deadline for ICE Imprint submissions for poets from inner city and homeless to be published in a book later in the year. Commencing the beginning of April Trudy Greinhaur, of the Stroll of Poets, once again facilitated the 30/30 Poetry Challenge. She provided optional prompts, which participants could use if they wished, to encourage the poets to produce a poem each day throughout the month of April. All the poems written would be recorded in a google doc. that she maintained and kept up.

Coinciding with the 30/30 event, as with the year before, The Edmonton Poetry Festival had a full slate of scheduled events. The theme of the year was “Homeward”. Headlining poets included Rayanne Haines, Claire Kelly, Ellen Kartz, Peter Midgley, Lisa Mulrooney, Pierrette Requier, and Anna Marie Sewell.

It was also, once again, announced, promoted and marketed primarily on line. Little or no information was provided through the press. Numerous events at many venues filled the week-long festival. In fact, several workshops were also offered on line during the festival. “YouTube,

On the Other Hand”, which taught how to make content that people want to see and read, was led by Alexis Hillyard. “Eggshells and Bad Yolks: Embracing Vulnerability as Editors” was a workshop about embracing the hidden potential of vulnerability in editing practices and was led by Peter Midgley. Jenna Butler led another course on creating your own words for the places and landscapes where you live called “Home and Away: Writing Our Lands”. Understanding musicality and how it affects your words was the focus of a workshop run by Arlene Paré called “Music in Poetry With Arlene Paré”.

On April 20<sup>th</sup> Audrey’s Books hosted an event presenting many greater Edmonton area poets in an event billed as “Where Words Come From: A Celebration of Patrick Lane” where the authors discussed his influence on their writing journey, read from his work, and from their own. The poets present for the event included Jenna Butler, Peter Midgley, Kathy Fisher, Gail Sidorie Sobat, Ellen Kartz, and Leanne MC.

The Stroll of Poets and the Edmonton Poetry Festival sponsored and staged “Winking, Blinking, and Naughty”, their annual Blinks event at The Aviary on Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Blinks Philharmonic ensured that none of the free verse, spoken word or slant rhymed performances went beyond the 30 second time limit by blasting anyone who did. On Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, The Matrix Hotel staged this year’s version of “Wine and Wild Women Wordsmiths. The hotel also hosted back to back events all the next day with shows called “Homebody”, then “Alive & Open”, followed by “The Alongside: Poetry & The Architecture of Home with Canisia Lubrin”. They concluded the day with “Homefront, The Saturday Poetry Party. The final day of the festival, on Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, The Café Readings filled several venues downtown through the afternoon while CKUA Studio also hosted “Translating Home” that evening.

During the festival the winners of the Spring 2019 Poetry Moves on Transit winners were also announced. As a result, Danae Strelau, patti Sinclair, Don Perkins, and Kim Mannix had their winning poems displayed on the Edmonton Transit buses and recorded in [Edmontonpoetryfestival.com/poetry-route](http://Edmontonpoetryfestival.com/poetry-route) web site.

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Edmonton poet Randy Kohan read from his book “Hammers and Bells at Audrey’s Books prior to departing on a reading tour of Russia. Edmonton Public Library, Capilano Branch, hosted an event with Carissa Halton, Alice Major, and Kelly Shepherd discussing their writing practices and what it means to write place, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the month. The Stroll of Poets once again held their Fresh Verse event for young, emerging poets at their Haven Reading Series on May 27<sup>th</sup>.

Movement and Text Workshop with Leah McInnes was conducted at the John and Maggie Mitchell Art Gallery on June 1<sup>st</sup>. This performative lecture on movement and text guided participants through a stretching and moving techniques combined with a series of writing and drawing exercises to inspire conversation about how language affects one’s body. June 24<sup>th</sup> was the date of a Poetry Reading at McMullen Library, University of Alberta Hospital. In conjunction with a display of art by Lauren Crazybul, indigenous poets Naomi McIlwraith, Corinne Riedel, Kali Stewart, Sage Giroux, and Daniel Poitras read from their poetry as well.

During the spring and early summer Richard Davies, of the Stroll of Poets, offered members two services to help them with publishing their work. The first was a consultation service regarding collections of poems in terms of publishing considerations. The second service Richard offered was preface or introduction writing for books that you plan to publish. He provided an overview of the purpose and organization of the book and also described your poetic sensibility and uniqueness. He also wrote an essay that was also included in the Stroll Newsletter called “How do you Know a Poem is Good”. In the essay he suggested that important things to look for included whether the title grabbed your interest, the look (or shape) of the poem, stanza breaks. As well as scanning the last word of each line to get the gist of the poem and determine the merit of the writing.

Over the summer months there were two deadlines for poetry submissions which members could participate in. July 7<sup>th</sup> was the last day to send poems in for Poetry at Stephansson House with the actual reading of the winning poems taking place on July 21<sup>st</sup> as well. The deadline for submissions to editors Myrna Garanis and Ivan Sundal for their proposed book “Life of Pie” was August 15<sup>th</sup>. They requested poems that were sweet, savoury, mathematical, or pie in your face humorous.

On September 14<sup>th</sup> Audrey’s Books was the site of a book launch and author signing event for a book containing poetry and visual art recognizing the beauty and spirit of the western regions of Canada. “Vista of the West contained poetry by many local area poets including Doris Daley, Rayanne Hianes, Alice Major, and Trudy Greinhaur. On that day also, at the University of Alberta Botanic Garden, a workshop focused on the connection between writing and our physical surroundings was led by Lisa Martin. The day of walking, reflection, and writing was called Writing Habitat: A Day of Writing and Reflection.

Oh No! Not another Stroll launch Haven Reading Series was revved up for September 16<sup>th</sup> at The Upper Crust Restaurant again with Anne Gerard Marshall and Alice Major hosting the first reading of the new season. Starting a short time after that, Shirley Serviss once again instructed writing courses, offered at the City Arts Center, of interest to poets. On Thursday nights, from September 26<sup>th</sup> to November 19<sup>th</sup>, the content of the course was transforming experiences into a variety of essay forms. It was called “Writing: The Personal Essay; Writing in Baggy Pants”. Running from October 22<sup>nd</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup>, on Tuesday afternoons the course was Writing; Writing Your Life”. The focus of the class was to evoke participants to write, in various formats, in response to prompts and memories.

During the month of September, the Writers Guild of Alberta was active in presenting several poetry events involving members of the Stroll. The WGA kick-off event, on September 4<sup>th</sup>, at The Almanac on Whyte, had a program introducing upcoming literary events for Edmonton so was represented by poets and authors of local literary groups in a special reading event. Reading on that night were Fawnda Mithrush (LiFest Alberta), Alicia Chantal and Jessica Coles (Editors Edmonton), Mary Pinkoski (Regional Writer in Residence), Katherine Gibson (Edmonton Public Library/Capital City Press), Lisa Mulrooney (Parkland Poets), Amy St. Amand (Bolo Tie Collective), Wendy McGrath (The Olive Reading Series), and Speaker TBC (Stroll of Poets).

Alison Clarke shared a bit of her history and ideas on self-publishing in the first of two events sponsored by the WGA at the St. Andrew's Center starting on September 27<sup>th</sup>. That event was billed as "Alison Clarke – An Author's Journey". The next evening Alison led a workshop, called "Alison Clarke – Travelling Different Worlds: The Importance of Setting", in which she led participants through an exploration of setting.

During Alberta Culture Days, the WGA sponsored three events, with the first in the city of Fort Saskatchewan. On September 27<sup>th</sup>, in the Kilograms Restaurant & Café, the event was "Poetry Sharing Circle with Anna Marie Sewell". Stroll member and former Poet Laureate Anna read from her works along with members of the Fort Saskatchewan Writing Club. Two of the events were scheduled for the next day, on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup> in Edmonton. At the Edmonton Public Library Strathcona Branch, The WGA, Edmonton Chinese Writing Club, and Canada-Chinese Friendship Society of Edmonton hosted an event with panel discussion, book displays, and singing. The discussion centered on cooperation between organizations in providing support to immigrant writers. The panel was made up of representatives of the organizations as follows: Dr. Zanyu Zhou (President, Edmonton Chinese Writing Club), Amy Chiu (Former President, Edmonton Chinese Writing Club), Lisa Mulrooney (Member at Large, WGA Board of Directors), and Ashley Bilodeau (Bolo Tie Collective). There was also a reading and stage event in the Calmar Curling Club billed as "Calmar Prairie Players Present: Playwright Afternoon with Chris McKerracher" on the Sunday as well. It included a one act play, dramatic readings and staged readings. There were also events occurring in several other communities surrounding Edmonton during Alberta Culture Days.

The WGA, again, during October, sponsored three events inviting participation by local poets. "Special Monday Night Write Night with Capital City Press" was a two-part session at Capilano EPL Branch on October 7<sup>th</sup>. The first half, a mini-workshop titled "The Images Inside", was conducted by Wendy McGrath. She led participants through an exploration of the relationship between image and text. This was followed by a talk by Rayanne Haines on what agents and publishers are looking for in a manuscript. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month "WGA Edmonton October Member Night – Writing Groups" presented speakers from some of the local groups, like Inkhorn Society, Morinville Word Docs, and The Inkblot talking about the formation of writing groups and/or locating one that may best fit your needs. Then a webinar was conducted on October 19<sup>th</sup> about the process of creating a book proposal. The course was instructed by Michael Hingston.

On October the 12<sup>th</sup> future poet laureate for the city of Edmonton, Titilope Sonuga, and also Bernd Hildebrandt recited their poetry intertwined with musical accompaniment created by Scott Smallwood and Shawn Pinchbeck at the opening event of Mazuka Music and Art Society called Thali Ringig. It was a multimedia collaboration with several other musicians and artists taking part in it at Holy Trinity Anglican Church. Then, at MacEwan University's "Live at High Noon", on October 17<sup>th</sup>, Luciana Erregue-Sacchi (writer in residence, Action for Healthy Communities, Edmonton) and Peter Midgley (Artistic Director, St. Albert Readers Festival) read from their recent works and also conversed with Stroll member and former Edmonton poet laureate, Anna Marie Sewell.

November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 was the date to connect to your inner self and discover what is possible with Janelle Schmidt as she discussed this through the content of her book “Awaken the Wildness Within” at the Eleven Eleven Collective in Sherwood Park. Strategies for publishing your book was the topic, former publicist, Anne Logan presented through a WGA webinar on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

Parkland Poets staged three events through November that were open for poets from the Stroll as well. Poets from Parkland Poets shared spooky poetry at the Multicultural Heritage Center in Stony Plain on the 8<sup>th</sup>. They sponsored a Slam Poetry Event with cash prizes at Perks Coffee House in Spruce Grove on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Member poems were paired with photographs of Stony Plain Library Photo Fan Club and sold during the month as well.

During that fall the board members of The Stroll of Poets reached out with an online Development and Outreach Initiative created by board members Marco Melfi and Josh Luukkonen. It invited suggestions from Stroll members for activities that could help grow member’s skills or promote the impact of the Stroll in the community. The board offered to assist with promotion, advertising and liaising of the selected proposals. The board also formally created a Haven Crew to tend to all of the components that made the Haven Reading Series possible. This included scheduling readers, mic and door hosts, and sound equipment responsibilities. The Writers Union of Canada requested, via the Stroll board, that members participate in a letter writing campaign to encourage the teaching of Canadian content in schools. The Stroll of Poets also proposed to publish another chapbook, called “Local Planet”, with November 30<sup>th</sup> set as the deadline for submissions by members.

Recognition for Stroll member Anna Marie Sewell came when she was announced as the Writer in Residence for MacEwan University. Alice Major received an Honorary Doctor of Letters Degree from the University of Alberta that month as well. To commemorate the award, the U of A also donated an historic book to the Bruce Peel Special Collections. The book, “Old Spookes’ Pass and Other Poems (1884) by Isabella Valancy Crawford, was the first book by a woman to be published in Canada. A Celebration was held for her at Audrey’s Books on November 28<sup>th</sup> in honor her achievements including the degree that was granted to her, the 11 books of poetry and essays that she had authored and recognizing her as the founder of the Edmonton Poetry Festival.

Audrey’s Books supported members of the Stroll by hosting Haven Readings through the year and also promoted book launches for several members. These included “Circle” by Alison Clarke, “Riverlines: Poems of time and place along the North Saskatchewan River” by Doug Elves, and “The Eater of Dreams” by Kat Cameron, who all read there on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

## 2020

At the start of the year a new project was initiated by Gary Garrison called the 20/2020 Trifecta. Stroll members were requested to participate in a new concept similar to the annual 30/30 poetry workshop. The objective was to write a poem on or before the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month throughout the

year from January to December. The poems were recorded, and retained, on a google doc for the purpose of producing a chapbook at the end of the year-long project.

“WGA Presents: Blue Monday” was held at the Glass Bookshop on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Rayanne Haines and Shawn Hamm were guest speakers discussing their mental health journeys and how the bearing they had on their writing. The Stroll Newsletter announced a call for poetry submissions, particularly by BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+ writers, and people from outside traditional writing communities, for an anthology to be published by Coach House Books. The collection would be titled “Watch Your Head: Responding to the Climate Crisis” and the proceeds from sales went to climate justice groups.

Chosen from suggestions by Stroll members to the Outreach and Development Initiative was a workshop called “Utopia and Dystopia”. This idea was submitted by Shirley Serviss, who also facilitated the course. On February 22<sup>nd</sup> at McMullen Gallery in the University of Alberta Hospital, the group gathered amidst the art display, the living wall and the river valley soundscape. Participants could contemplate ideas of paradise and utopia, as well as societal inequities and the world ecological and political turmoil, to produce written word formats. Another workshop, staged by the WGA, invited poets to a Special Write Night Workshop at the Clareview EPL on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Attendees experimented with framing and story telling devices that deviated from structural norms.

The WGA hosted another event on March 4th at Audrey’s Books called “Writing and Alcohol”. Insights into the drunken writer mystique and support systems for writers in recovery were offered during one of the WGA’s monthly events. Ivan Sundal and Myrna Garanis held a book launch at Park Towers on International Pi Day, March 14<sup>th</sup>, for the “Life of Pie” Anthology. It contained pie poems from 31 contributors. From March 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> Fort MacMurray hosted the Western Perceptions Writers Festival with special emphasis on, but not limited to, indigenous writers from the west of Canada.

At this time the Corona virus was sweeping the country and almost every live event was cancelled, or at least postponed until a future date. Besides the 2020 Edmonton Poetry Festival, the Stroll of Poets board decided to cancel the live AGM and rescheduled an on line zoom meeting in its place for June 28th. At that time Stroll president, John Leppard, issued a special message to the members via the electronic newsletter.

## **Message from John Leppard**



Hello my friends,

It is my greatest hope that you are all safe, comfortable and well.

We are certainly enduring some turbulent times right now. For those most dramatically impacted by COVID-19, I am sending an abundance of virtual good wishes and support. Some members of our community may be feeling the emotional effects of social distancing more than others. If you know of a Stroll friend who may be experiencing such a challenge, please consider reaching out to lend some support. We are stronger together, my friends, never more so than now.



Along our thirty-year journey we have had challenges and overcome them, had successes and celebrated them, and always at the heart of our organization continues to be the poems and poets. These will endure regardless of the length of time needed to heal our world and put COVID-19 in the rearview mirror.

I am grateful to the efforts of some of our members for providing creative leadership to keep our poetry flame alive. I encourage you to check out the invitations from Gary Garrison, Trudy Greinauer and our Parkland Poetry friends, outlined in our newsletter and Facebook page. Please let us know of any on-line collaborations you may be involved in that may be of interest to other members. We will do our best to promote and support you. You may contact me at [leppardjohn@hotmail.com](mailto:leppardjohn@hotmail.com)

The Stroll board is monitoring the ever-unfolding changes this viral event is eliciting. We are confident that when things stabilize we will again meet and share our verse, face to face and heart to heart. Details on a future date for our AGM and anthology release will be made available when we have a clearer picture of what the future holds. We will continue to provide updates in our newsletter and on social media as needed.

Until then, my friends, on behalf of the board and associates, I wish you peace.

Yours in verse,  
John Leppard

Two of the other scheduled events that were delayed are the following two big events.

Two other presentations during the month of March involved several Stroll of Poets members. On March 19th, at The Royal Alberta Museum Amiskwaciy Theater the Writers Guild of Alberta sponsored a special multicultural, multilingual production showcasing several celebrated Edmonton female poets and storytellers. Called "She, The River". Their voices expressed, through tales of their journeys, what it meant to be in collectively present in Edmonton at that stage of their lives. The production was also supported by the Edmonton Heritage Council, The Edmonton Arts Council, Glass Bookshop, Lets Get Lit Poetry Podcast, Glass Buffalo Magazine, and Lazy Kitten Productions. The powerhouse line up was made up of:

Rayanne Haines: the breath & voice of witches burned at the stake

Titilope Sonuga: the amen to prayers of women reaching for God and here, doing the work

Anna Marie Sewell: the silence between two rivers

Pierrette Requier: a daughter of the wind, une fille du vent

Laurie MacFayden: writer, painter, dreamer, dancer by the North Saskatchewan River  
Alice Major: found and made her place by the North Saskatchewan; 1<sup>st</sup> poet laureate of the city  
Iman Mersal: Egyptian poet who voiced the conflicts with nature within the human heart  
Medgine Mathurin: multilingual author who used words to demystify the art of healing  
Nisha Patel: Edmonton poet laureate at the time and 2019 Canadian Slam Champion

\*\*\*She, The River was eventually premiered on YouTube on October 15<sup>th</sup>.\*\*\*

At The Holy Trinity Anglican Church, on March 29<sup>th</sup>, Stroll members were involved in another production called “Life is Poetry; Poetry is Life”. The poetry/play stage production was about the life and poetry of Nikolai Gumilov, Anna Akhmatova, and Osip Mandelshtam, Russian poets during Russia’s Silver Age of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The event was directed by Kan Brown and included a cast made up of:

Pierrette Requier – read Anna Akhmatova

Michael Gravel – read Nikolai Gumilov

Randy Kohan – read Osip Mandelshtam

Ella Zetserman – told the story and read from her own work

Events that could still proceed were primarily those that were planned for or could be adapted to be hosted on line. The April 30/30 still went on as planned with Trudy Greinhaur collecting the poetry of participants through electronic e-mails for instance. The 20/2020 Trifactory project also ran continuously throughout the year. The Stroll Newsletter, of course, continued to be sent out virtually every week and kept members up to date with board decisions and online events. Poetry contests, such as the Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest still carried on as usual. The deadline for entries was extended, however, to May 1<sup>st</sup>. The Edmonton Poetry Festival presented their first on line PoFest Poetry Contest during their 15 Anniversary that year. The deadline for entries was May 31<sup>st</sup>.

Calls for submissions began to come in for writing, both fictional and nonfiction, regarding the effects of the Covid pandemic and associated restrictions on people’s lives and daily routines. Literary groups, such as The Ontario Poetry Society, and other associations sought such work including the University of Alberta Faculty of Arts. They produced a collation of these submissions, called “Stories of Change”, which included reflections on the effects of the isolation, social distancing, cancellations, uncertainties, etc. It was a virtual presentation in the form of Word documents, PowerPoint slides, social media material from Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and personal blog sites. The sharing of literary forms was destined to continue. Another opportunity was in the form of a request for submissions of video poetry readings to Ian Ferrier. Ian was the curator and presenter of the monthly Words and Music literature program in Montreal and he was also the judge of this contest looking for “Hope” video poems, to be received by August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Parkland Poets began to hold their readings on the zoom platform at the end of March with members of the Stroll of Poets in attendance on line for that event as well. The WGA also began to operate through more online webinars and courses through varying platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and YouTube. Beginning on April 15<sup>th</sup> and running for six weeks they

offered “Small Words with Muscle with Vivian Hansen”. In this workshop participants worked with sound, structure, imagery, and meaning to discover the elements of poetry. On May 9<sup>th</sup> their next course was a webinar “Writing Place, Writing Self, Writing History: The Documentary Poem with RDR. Ryan Cox”. Attendees worked with and through historical documents to explore and create poems in a documentary mode.

Although the WGA was unable to carry through with plans to host their “Spring Cleaning” Open Mic event, scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> at The Almanac, they eventually successfully launched their new Online Reading Series on June 18<sup>th</sup> with poetry reading followed by Q&A with poet Amy LeBlanc. The presentation was led by WGA Communications and Partnerships Coordinator Ellen Kartz. The Stroll of Poets staged their first online open mic poetry reading billed as “Summer Songs” on June 26<sup>th</sup> for the reunion of members to reconnect with friends, relax, have fun, hear poetry and try out the new technology. Two days later, on June 28<sup>th</sup>, The Stroll of Poets conducted their first on line AGM as the board also could not convene in person with members in a live situation.

When the winners of the Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest are announced in July that year there are several Stroll members included. Administrating the competition annually was David C. Brydges, winning Honorable Mentions were Max Vandersteen and Lois Hammond, and Winning Judge’s Choices were Deborah Lawson and Rayanne Haines. July 14<sup>th</sup> the WGA Online Reading Series presented Spruce Grove poet Lynn Gale including a Q&A after her reading. This was followed by two more poetry readings in the next two weeks with Fort MacMurray poet Dorothy Bentley on July 21<sup>st</sup> and then Edmonton poet Paul Pearson on July 30<sup>th</sup>. Kat Cameron was the next poet as a featured reader on the series getting the opportunity on August 11<sup>th</sup>.

As the anthology could not be launched live at customarily done at the AGM due to Covid 19 it was decided to have a distribution, including distancing protocols, at the home of Anthology editor Deborah Lawson on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Since not all members had the chance to pick up their anthologies during the summer this distribution opportunity was repeated on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The WGA Fall Kick-off was also a virtual affair that year held on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Agendas and schedules of literary affairs of all sorts were shared by Alberta literary groups. The scheduled readers were Fawnda Mithrush (LitFest), Shelley Youngblut (Wordfest), Peter Midgley (STARfest), Alexandra Handley (Calgary Distinguished Writer Program), Meg Braem (CDWP Writer-in Residence), Alicia and Rhonda (Editors Edmonton), Reps from the Alexandra Writer’s Center Society, Claire Kelly (NeWest Press), Shaun Hunter and Rosemary Griebel (Calgary Public Library), Sarah Krotz (Canadian Literature Center), Susie Moloney and Conni Massing (Edmonton metro and regional Writers in Residence), Elisabeth Hegerat (Word on the Street Lethbridge), and Nisha Patel (Poetry Fest).

A cross Canada evening of shared poetry and prose occurred in an on line event called “Identities Panel” on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Dealing with how poetry and prose shape our ethos and how engagement with female artists informs society’s behavior it consisted of readings and discussions by Rayanne Haines (also the producer), Canisia Lubrin, Shazia Hafiz Ramji, and Rebecca Thomas.

In order to reconnect with poetry lovers, The Edmonton Poetry Festival decided to join up with LiFest from October 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in a virtual on line co-festival.

The Stroll of Poets reading series moved on line with the launch of the new season on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Called “Haven at Home” it was scheduled to be presented, via the Zoom platform, every second Monday until the AGM to be held the following spring. The first two meetings were entirely open mic sessions in an attempt to accommodate numerous anxious readers.

A weekend event called “JustWrite Online” was presented from November 6<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> offering workshops for participants to engage with writer Marty Chan, poet Mary Pinkoski, playwright Darrin Hagen, and writing instructor Karen Hamdon.

A session about the role of arts vs climate change, which was a part of a virtual conference on climate change organized by Massey College in Toronto, included Alice Major, along with two other artists, and Canada’s Heritage Minister. Alice presented at this “Massey is Missing COP26” (the cancelled global conference) panel discussion on preparation to ensure that the next conference is as productive as possible.

Naomi McIlwraith was part of a short film produced by Rebeca Sadowski called “The Sash Maker” which featured poetry by Naomi. The video was available on line December 6<sup>th</sup> through “Weesageechak Begins to Dance 33” which was the annual development festival Indigenous work.

As a result of the cancellation of live gatherings even book launches had to take the route of using virtual platforms to announce, preview, and market new publications. During the fall of 2020 these included:

“When Conditions are Right” by award winning authou, Randy Kohan on October 17<sup>th</sup>

A virtual Launch Party by Stonehouse Publishing, complete with readings, occurred on November 7<sup>th</sup> with 5 new books which included Anna Marie Sewell’s “Humane”. The others were “Rough” by Robin vavn Eck, “Censorettes”, by Eliabeth Frank, “All the Night Gone”, by Sabrina Uswak, and “Fall of Night” by D.K. Stone.

On November 30<sup>th</sup> a CD containing 16 songs and poems by Clint McIlwaine was launched. It was titled “Love the Land & Us” which was also the name of the song, included on the disc, that he performed at the Monte Vista Variety Show. On that same date Alison Clarke launched her new book titled “Phillis” with poetry concentrating on the life of American poet Phillis Wheatley, who was the first African American woman to publish a book of poetry (“Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral”) in 1778.

Stef Guilly released her 3<sup>rd</sup> book “Nestle In: poems for hope and inspiration” on December 1<sup>st</sup> and then presented readings from it on line on December 17<sup>th</sup> which also invited the audience to participate in a session combining poetry and self care for rest, relaxation and rejuvenation.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> Stony Plain poet laureate, Stroll of Poets and Parkland Poets member, Lisa Mulrooney, launched her new book of Haiku Poetry, called Moments”, on a special edition of Parkland Poets Society’s Poetry Reading and Open Mic events.

## 2021

Gary Garrison facilitated a sequel event to the 20/2020 Trifecta of the previous year with a new initiative involving monthly poetry prompts to spark creativity and group collaboration. The name of the 2021 event was “Cures for Eikosienaphobia”. The term, referencing the fear of the number 21, was the theme for poetry topics for that year.

To celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week Spiritual Poetry Connections hosted a poetry reading event co-hosted by Lisa Mulrooney and Len Gierach. It featured readings by Jan Jorgensen founder of the Lawn Chair Soirée monthly literary series and editor of sitting duck press from Montreal, and Angie Hall. Of Cree and Stoney ancestry and graduate of Art Therapy and Spiritual Informed Arts followed by discussion afterwards.

The Stroll of Poets initiated a venture prompting members to send 7 postcards, containing one of their poems on it, to other participants and in return also receiving 7 postcards from other participants during the week around Valentines Day. Called “Poetry Postcards for Valentines”, the idea was to spread a little poetry love around in a fashion different than virtual meetings. Also, on February 14th, Lisa Mulrooney was one of several international poets laureate invited to read on Cultivating Voices Live Poetry’s Laureate LoveFest 2021 virtual poetry reading webinar.

Two writing workshops were lead by Stef Guilly a short time later. On February 24<sup>th</sup> “Love On Poetry introduced the use of meditation to produce poems resulting from an inner focus on love, whether of partner, friend, nature, or pets. In the second workshop, titled “Self-Love Poetry, the focus was on accessing love of self through meditation to reflect on self-care, self-love, shame, and barriers to self-love. In both workshops poetry was written and discussed among participants afterward. Stef orchestrated two additional online workshops during the month of March as well. The second was a repeat of the first held 10 days apart on the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> and were called “Celebration”. As the title indicated, the focus was on celebration and expression of it.

March 21<sup>st</sup> was the date that the AGM was held virtually again that year. Janis Dow, the first new president since 2015 was elected at the meeting. The board collectively agreed to extend the duration of the reading series for an extra two events to include March 29<sup>th</sup> and April 12<sup>th</sup> in an attempt to give more members an opportunity to be a featured reader during the year. Since the anthology could again not be rolled out or distributed to members at the AGM it was again decided to roll it out at the editor’s home, Deborah Lawson’s house on May 26<sup>th</sup>. It was later decided to add an additional date to also make the anthologies available for pick up on August 14<sup>th</sup>.

An activity selected by board members from the half dozen proposals submitted to the Stroll’s Outreach and Development google doc solicitations was sent in by Shirley Serviss. The proposed activity was a writing circle and advertisements went out for a facilitator. Among the several submissions, the name of Gary Garrison was selected to run the group meetings. The first of ten weekly meetings was held, via the zoom platform, on May 26<sup>th</sup> and enjoyed by the ten participants involved. During the month of April, the annual 30/30 poetry writing event was again facilitated by Trudy Greinhaur who collected all of the poetry submitted in response to prompts provided by her on a Google.doc. Submissions were also once again requested by David Brydges for the annual Dr. William, Henry Drummond poetry contest. The Fresh Verse event for the Haven at Home Reading Series was conducted on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Two other fairly significant member activities took place that spring as well. The Glass Bookshop and Shelf Life Books joined Armistice Press in sponsoring a virtual book launch for their first 4 chapbooks. The event was hosted by Anna Marie Sewell and announced the release of “Sword and Smoke” by Sara Campos-Silvius, “Bone Chips and Gemstones” by Wilda Kruize, “Exaltation” by Adeline K. Piercy, and “Wandering Teeth” by Mackenzie Wiebe. The other virtual presentation was announced by Keyana the Artist who was a poetry and dance performer. She staged 4 events through YouTube which were “Poetry Therapy for Teens” on April 9<sup>th</sup>, “Story Time for Kids” on the 10<sup>th</sup>, “The Journey: Open Mic” on April 17<sup>th</sup>, and “Meet and Greet the Author” on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the month.

During the Heart of the City Festival, which ran on the weekend of June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, several virtual workshops and poetry readings were shown amid other dance and music events as well. “The Best Spoken Word Variety Show” presented local poets and comics and was hosted by Stef Alzati. The poets highlighted in the show included Ben Freeland, Donna Durand, Paula Eva Kirman, Lady Vanessa, KazMega, Sophie Kim, Adele Fontaine, and Shima Robenson/Dwennimmen. Two writing workshops hosted on line were oral story telling with Lady Vanessa Cardona and poetry editing led by Nisha Patel.

The Espresso Poetry Collective, a group of Calgary based women poets launched an anthology during their virtual presentation called “Uncommon Grounds” on June 28<sup>th</sup>. The collection resulted from workshops initiated by Laurie Anne Fuhr, who read her poetry, along with Linda Hatfield, Kimberlee Jones, and Sharon Kristie during this event sponsored by Owls Nest Books and emceed by poet Anne Sorbie.

Poets wishing to contribute to a poem circulated on line by the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State and the Arizona Poetry Center could add a line or two to “Dear Vaccine: A Global Vaccine Poem”. The purpose of the project was to promote COVID-19 vaccination worldwide and was announced in the Stroll Newsletter at that time. YouthWrite Edmonton events were also announced in the newsletter to invite young writers to participate in the workshops that were held in the river valley between July 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. YouthWrite River Valley I, for 8 – 11 year olds, taught basic writing techniques and genres. YouthWrite II was divided for 12 to 14 year olds and for 15 – 20 year olds to teach and discuss writing, ideas, and their work.

On July 11<sup>th</sup> Bob Chelmick of CKUA Radio once again streaed a tribute to pies with song, story, and poetry. He read poems from contributors to the “Life of Pie” anthology. Among them were Stroll members Kim Mannix, Patti Sinclair, Anna Marie Sewell, Gary Garrison, Jannie Edwards, Shirley Serviss, Leslie Dawson, Jo-Ann Godfrey, Anna Mioduchowska, and Robin Smith. Vi’s for Pies Restaurant also agreed to sell copies of the anthology in house. Shortly after this the winners of the Dr. William Henry Drummond Poetry Contest were announced and the list also included a few Stroll members once again that year. Honorable Mentions were awarded to Brenda Gunn, Kathy Fisher, and Maja Osmangic while S.E. Ingraham won a judge’s choice award.

A relatively quiet summer did see the Stroll board announce another drive through the Outreach and Development committee requesting input from members into a google doc in an attempt to solicit proposals and suggestions for activities to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stroll of

Poets Society. From the dozen ideas submitted by the extended deadline of September 21st, the board selected three of them as feasible to pursue during the upcoming year. Ideas on differing themes, input by three different people or groups, became a combined effort when all agreed to work together on a common theme for a chapbook of poetry dealing with Strolling. Laurel Sproule, Neil Meili, and Naomi McIlwraith agreed to collaborate on this project to assemble a collection of poems regarding that topic. The second proposal that was approved was submitted by Kayleigh Cline. Her idea was to request members to send in poems that were written in response to poems written previously by Stroll members and published in past Anthologies. She suggested that it be called “Poetry Remix” and that the poems submitted should be published on social media platforms like the Stroll website and group Facebook page. The third approved project came from Max Vandersteen who proposed to write up a history of The Stroll of Poets Society to be available to members on the Stroll website.

In the thirtieth year of Stroll of Poets Society the Haven at Home Reading Series commenced on September with an entirely open mic event with the theme Wordy Thirty. Whatever could be associated with thirty was a plausible topic for a poem. The Stroll board encouraged members to increase use of social media to promote poetry in the community since it was difficult to reach them via live interaction during the covid restrictions in place.

World Food Day fell on October 16<sup>th</sup> and was also the date that contest winners were announced by Poetry X Hunger for the contest titled “Our Actions are Our Future”. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Capital Area Food Bank and poet Rebecca Roach sponsored the contest and sanctioned the theme of hunger. They also used winning poetry entries in FAO newsletters and Capital Area Food Bank messages. The Poetry X Hunger website included many of the poems on their website including several submitted by Stroll members. Instrumental in liaising this effort with the Stroll was Hiram Larew.

The deadline for another project requesting input from poets was December 15<sup>th</sup> for the “Bleeding Heart Art Space – Common Flame Project”. Responding to the light and warmth seen in others was the theme sought in entries and the winning entrants would be able to use the Art Space social media platforms to share their ideas, process, progress and final result over a one month period. A new artist would be highlighted for six consecutive months.

Over the last few months of the year the works of Stroll members were again rolled out in book launches such as the launch of Jo-Ann Godfrey’s chapbook “Tranquility of Focus in late September at an invitational reading event. October 15<sup>th</sup> was the release date of another CD by Stroll member Clint McElwaine called “Where Music Comes to Play too”. It included music from songwriters of the Edmonton Uptown Folk Club. A launch of books by several poets and writers by Wordfest.ca on December 5<sup>th</sup> included one called “the rightful skin” by the Stroll’s patti Sinclair published through Rose Garden Press. Friends of University Hospitals launched an anthology of poems submitted over the past 20 years on December 17<sup>th</sup>. It was called “Revealed; the Hospital Experience from All Sides” and contained numerous Stroll member contributions.

## Memories and Tributes by Stroll Members

**Ruth Anderson Donovan**

*Intro: To prime the well for commemorations of the thirtieth year of the Stroll of Poets Society, I will share a prose poem that tells of a few lights along the path that led me to this poets' community, and share some memories of a few of the people and early days of Stroll activities that stay in my mind's eye and my heart:*

### **Poetry, Performance, and some recollections of the Early Days of Edmonton's Stroll of Poets Society.**

The first stage appearance I recall took place on an improvised platform set up for the Christmas concert at Silverton country school — I think my brother got to play a sheep, while I was given a joke to tell between acts involving holding Mom's cheese grater behind my back for the punch line-- my parents gave me the names of local luminaries to replace the American content of "Abraham Lincoln was a great man, George Washington was a great man, but here is a grater." I was shy and felt like pulling the skirt of the mauve party dress Mom made me over my face to hide.

Mom sang hymns around home, and I learned early on to sing The Lord's Prayer, but the only way I could bear to sing for company was to hide behind the wall that separated our galley kitchen from the living room. I happily went about making up songs of my own until Daddy asked me "Why don't you sing something?"

At nine I sang in our town's first music festival and carried the top trophy home across a plank where our culvert had washed out - my solo performance career went downhill from there. My first published poem appeared in the Carnduff Gazette Post News, School Vox when I was in third grade — it rhymed, and told of Pinky the pig, who never grew big, and who won a fine prize at the fair— the same fair at which my Great Aunt Lillian would win at the turkey shoot — she was the first poet I knew, and penned and performed clever verses for showers or the town's curling banquet.

I memorized all 22 stanza of Longfellow's poem "The Wreck of the Hesperus" to recite in 4th grade- ( don't ask me why). Out town held "Amateur Night", where people could sing or tap dance, play the spoons or recite, and win a prize.

In eight grade, I took part in Bryant Oratory — my hands still tremble recalling the tale of King Tut's tomb.

We left the farm that I still write about and moved to Saskatoon, I remember Mr. Hunter inviting writer W.O. Mitchell to read to our English class, and Mr. Wilson, moving me from features to helping edit our collegiate newspaper in 12th grade, but he'd been a reporter and said I didn't want to find myself chasing ambulances for a career— He told me about a 22 volume Oxford English Dictionary at The University. After studying art and English there, I became a teacher



too, and it was 8 years after I secured a job in Edmonton that I met other writers, in '84, at a Writer's Guild of Alberta retreat at Strawberry Creek. Shirley Serviss invited me to join her poetry circle, which had grown from a poetry class at the university taught by Bert Almon continuing to meet at the High Level Diner, and later in one another's homes — that was when I first met long-time mentor Alice Major.

I remember two years away in London—taking in events at the Poetry Library, and readings by international poets Joseph Brodsky, and Derek Walcott— Walcott told us : “if you want to get to know another culture, read its poetry, because nobody writes poetry for money” (He later won a Nobel Prize). I remember reading above a pub at the Wooden Lamb , and attending Apples and Snakes Poetry Cabaret, then returning to Edmonton in '89, when the *High Level Poets* decided to celebrate ten years together by holding “A Poets Gallery” featuring circle members, and an open stage in the Members Lounge at the Edmonton Art Gallery. Ernie brought his ghetto blaster to all three open stages, with music to accompany a repeated recitation of a tribute to his deceased dog.

I recall Alice and Doug Elves working together to continue such readings and open stages at the public library for a year, which morphed into local poets meeting, around a table at St Anthony's Teacher's Centre, to form a grass roots poetry society to promote spoken word. We decided to call it The Stroll of Poets Society, because our audience and the poets would stroll from bistro to bookstore venues along Whyte Avenue, in this once-a-year celebration of the work of local poets. Sound-poet prof Douglas Barbour riffed off the sounds of a cappuccino machine.

Doug Elves asked the venues for funds to pay each reader \$10— for many, this was the first time they had been paid for performing poetry. I remember Thomas Trofimiuk saying that there had to be an anthology to document the event, and his putting up the funds to print it—readers each got a copy, and, for many, it was the first time they had their poetry published. With a \$10 membership fee and 65 readers in the first Stroll, I think we broke even. Treasurer Ivan Sundal would know.

I recall sitting at a table at Faith and Ivan's, making a schedule with yellow stickies, grouping the poets who would perform at the Stroll on Whyte, where each reader read twice, and a distinguished poetry professor could end up reading in a set with a 13 year old. That was also where we hand-stitched souvenir chapbooks from *The Blinks*- a riotous winter evening of 30 second poems where Naomi and Audrey banged pots and Garry blew on his didgeridoo to keep readers on time. At a spoken word workshop with voice coach John Patrick Gillese, I recall trying to perform a poem about my mother-in-law's garden, and everyone helping me when I couldn't read for tears.

I remember dances after Stroll readings, with Thomas and his band playing , and Kathleen Henderson singing into a mic. I remember the “No Bards Barred Bar” at the Southside Legion, and Jocko (Jacques Benoit ) emceeding its Poetry Face-off, where future Poet Laureate Anna Marie Sewell first met her husband Doug Barrett; I have a picture in my mind's eye of Phil Jagger dropping poems on the floor one by one as he performed, and Mary T. MacDonald, in her special shoes, happy to be dancing. I remember Mary's family coming to hear her read at the spin-off Twelve Days of Poetry competition initiated by webmaster Doug Elves, and listening to her poem about haunting the British Library after she died—ghost writing. I remember

performances by group of poets called Spiritus, with English Consultants Richard Davies and Glen Kirkland, and teacher Dean Mackenzie accompanying on his guitar.

The Stroll community has changed over time— and adapted, alongside offshoots like “The Roar” at Yanni’s Taverna, complete with musical improv. The Stroll’s on-line journal “e-poem”, was at one time archived in the digital collection of The National Library of Canada; an agent from Gage found my “Lament for Via Rail” and asked to publish it in a grade 11 textbook I later taught from. It showed up in a chapter on poetry and technology alongside a poem by Langston Hughes.

There are many more chapters to the changing story of the Stroll for others to recount — I’ve only touched on a few of the many poetry events, workshops, and venues, and wonderfully varied poets who made up The Stroll’s community. How the Stroll moved downtown on a Sunday afternoon, as a sub-set of The Edmonton Poetry Festival, and readings moved from a Stroll weekend during Poetry Month in April, with a double page spread schedule in now-defunct “See” or “Vue Magazine”, to a weekly reading series Monday nights in the back room at “The Upper Crust” running from fall to spring, until Stroll readings had to move on-line via ZOOM for “The Haven at Home”— all changes other poets will recall; I am grateful that poets continued to gather in the back room at “The Upper Crust” on 109 Street, to share treats and listen to the lives poets shared through their poetry. I am grateful for “The Haven at Home”, when we could no longer meet face to face. I wanted to end The Poets Haven a Home season with appreciation for spoken and written-word opportunities afforded me all my life, and especially through the Stroll of Poets Society, that helped me to find community through the practice and sharing of poetry.

2/02/22.

### **Alison Akgungor**

I have always been impressed by the Stroll’s openness and generosity in fostering new poets and giving voice to newcomers to Canada, including in their own languages.

Gary Garrison’s amazing Leonard Cohen impersonation, complete with hat and guitar on the occasion of Leonard’s 75th birthday which corresponded with a Stroll night on Sept 21, 2009

Alice Major's very touching family stories in poems which became Memory’s Daughter (published in 2010)

The November 2011 Stroll night when ice from the first snowfall of the season kept me trapped on the High Level bridge for 90 minutes with the mike and sound equipment for our poetry reading. Fortunately we had guest slam poets that night, including Mary Pinkowski, who could project without a mike.

Anne Gerard Marshall's powerful Glosa poem based on a poem of Alice Major, reflecting how we inspire each other

Listening to Naomi McIlwraith weaving Cree into the poems which became her kiyam collection (published in 2012)

The humour and fast-paced fun at our annual Blinks events, including the one in April 2013 when Liz Lochhead, the Makar or National Poet of Scotland was in attendance

John Leppard's amazing spoken word performances which introduced me to this wonderful form of poetry.

Shirley Serviss's humorous and all too truthful poems making us laugh at ourselves.

Diane Robitelle's very spiritual poetry making words come alive with dance and sometimes art.

Clint McElwaine's beautiful nature-laden cowboy poetry, sometimes set to music.

Pierrette Requier's beautiful French poems, personifying the months of the year so vividly.

The magical words of a Nepalese poet transporting us to his faraway world.

### **Scott Alderson, Calgary**

Friday Morning Memory:

From 2001-2005 the Calgary Stroll of Poets and the Edmonton Stroll of Poets were collaborating on events like "Showdown at the Poetry Corral" at the Stanley Milner library and participating in each others Stroll day. Groups like the Raving Poets were admired and the executives from both cities were trying new ways to stimulate interest in the Strolls. One way was the pre-stroll readings and events. One I recall the most profound was in Edmonton at Paris Market in downtown. [Philip Alexander Jagger](#) was pushing a shopping cart that was modified with Eatlardfudge(Steve Gillespie) in it. He would stop suddenly and Eatlardfudge would read a poem, then we followed until they stopped again. Also there was a woman who was well-known in Edmonton circles( can't clearly recall her name, Delvina I think), she read an original piece about the Trollup of Saturday Night while removing pieces of clothing. It all wrapped up with the featured reader(Peter somebody from Toronto). He was amazing. We Calgary Poets were treated with great respect and given red carpet treatment. Calgary reciprocated and a whole school bus full of Edmonton Poets attended Calgary's Stroll. In 2002 Edmonton Stroll member Ken Sutton chose to use my picture for the Edmonton Stroll of Poets webpage. The picture he took of me at the "Showdown at the Poetry Corral" event. Great times with great people. Thank you Edmonton, city of my birth, for the memories.

## Hank Binnema

### 2003?

It was a café on 109 Street: I don't remember exactly which one now. I had heard a bit about the Stroll of Poets and its annual stroll. I don't remember exactly how and where: I know I had taken a writing workshop with Shirley Serviss, and she had mentioned it.

There was a poetry reading at this café on 109 Street, and cycling in the neighbourhood, I decided to check it out. I thought I'd quietly slip in a corner, have a drink, and listen anonymously to some poetry. That was not to be. Almost immediately after I slipped in, a lively gregarious man introduced himself as Andy Michaelson and we chatted about poetry and I learned about the Stroll of Poets. I remember nothing else about that day.

Later that year, the Stroll of Poets had a reading at the then-called Centennial Library downtown. Dianne Buchanan and Paul McLaughlin were two of the poets: the other two I no longer remember. After the poet reading, I spoke to Oswald Meyer, from whom I got some affirming and kind statements. It was to be another year before I worked up the nerve to participate in what was then an annual stroll.

Although the structure, and many of the people involved, has changed over the years, I have always appreciated the welcome and hospitality from the Stroll of Poets that has now changed location over to the Poets Haven at the Upper Crust. I have tried to remember when I saw a new person, to show the same kind of welcome. I have met a number of new friends as a result. The Stroll of Poets has been a haven for poetry for many years.

### 2009

It was the beginning of my second year as a board member of the Stroll of Poets. I had spent a year being the Haven Coordinator, scheduling in a time when although we had internet, our computer facilities were not quite as advanced as they are now. I had spent most of Tuesday evenings emailing reminders, rescheduling when there were cancellations, and other assorted follow-up from the previous night at the Upper Crust.

There was a lot of turnover on the Board that year. There were just two of us, Gary Garrison and me, returning to the Board that year. My biggest fear was that I would be asked to be a treasurer; no organization wants me as treasurer. So I was ecstatic that Alice Major immediately volunteered, in fact, asked, to be treasurer.

We easily got enough new volunteers to sit on the board for the following year. I again volunteered to be Haven Coordinator, and two people volunteered to assist in that. Anne Gerard Marshall volunteered to be in charge of being the door host.

A decade has passed since that year, and these are just two of the people who many Haven participants will recognize as reliable long-term volunteers still contributing their valuable time to the ongoing running of the Poets Haven at the Upper Crust, now, sadly, but hopefully temporarily, curtailed due to the ongoing pandemic.

## David Brydges

### Thank You for the Homecoming

For thirty years, poets have strolled  
through Edmonton's "*people's poetry palace.*"  
The Upper Crust creators so down to earth you can  
smell apple pie on their breath and an occasional  
glass of wine week after week after week.

One night a stranger strolled  
into the dim backroom where  
the action featured four poets.  
He had never read in public before  
and to this day doesn't remember what  
poem was chosen when he signed up  
for the open mic program.  
Will dread and phantom danger self-placed  
landmines be a blowup blunder?  
He remembers looking behind  
at the cupboards saying tonight I  
literally came out of the poetry closet.

A place dark, lonely, non-intimidating,  
and lacking any human warmth.  
In other words, a safe, cerebral, neurotic asylum  
for a fantasy poet being initiated into realities realm.

After he had finished reading his unknown poem,  
applause erupted; smiles flooded the room,  
as the buzz of belonging broke itself free.  
In a room full of word alcoholics not anonymous anymore.  
His tortured tongue unraveled invisible chains.  
A little louder voice said, you've arrived at a home haven.  
After living in that oral orphanage for so long.

Later he would shake hands with strangers, now friends,  
learn their names, enjoy their poetry, be featured too.  
Generally, feel connected to a literary community for the first time.  
An arrival still greeted with gratitude and a hug.

## Tim Cusack

### A Stroll Down Stroll of Poets Memory Lane

It began with words. Spoken words in fact. There was a phone call in 1997 inviting me to participate in a poetry reading with a collective of poets in the greater Edmonton area. I did not live in the Edmonton area at the time. I was teaching in the rural town of McLennan, Alberta. I had been writing for several years by this point and loved teaching poetry. I had befriended a wonderful community member who loved coming to the community school for poetry evenings that I was running with students. Young at heart but in her early 80's this wonderful woman would recite the Cremation of Sam McGee for the students. I would read my original poems to her. She would ask for printed copies which I readily shared. Little did I know that Carmeline Kirkland was reading my poems over the phone to her son, Glen!

The call I received, inviting me to join the Stroll of Poets, was from Glen Kirkland, one of the founding members of the Stroll. He had been hearing my poetry vicariously through his mother. Glen, a renowned area poet and teacher, would eventually have a hand in helping me get a teaching job in Edmonton. He was a dear mentor who, through kindly inviting me to the Stroll, opened doors for me that I value and cherish to this day.

The Stroll was the perfect environment to learn and ply the craft of writing, reading, and performing the spoken word. I loved traveling to Edmonton for those autumn sessions. I got to read at so many niche venues and above all, meet so many diverse and talented poets. I was hooked! When I moved to Brooks, AB from McLennan, I would drive to Edmonton for events; especially the 12 Days of Poetry events; which is where I cut my teeth on hosting readings. I participated in the anthology many times and even served as a proof-reader for a couple of years. Eventually, I moved to Edmonton (via Glen's advocacy) and was able to give back to the Stroll by serving on the executive. I fondly recall organizing several spring reading series with Andy Michaelson, co-hosting 12 Days events, as well as the annual fall readings, and participating in the Monday evening Haven series.

Through the Stroll I got to cross-pollinate performance styles, largely due to the amazing opportunities created by the Alberta Beatnik himself (Mark Kozub). I had the opportunity to read with so many creative, inspiring, and talented individuals at an array of Edmonton venues. It was through the Stroll that I was able to develop my chops as a performance poet and win the CBC Poetry Face Off in 2005. I credit my development, growth and efficacy as a poet to the wonderful community that is the Edmonton Stroll of Poets.

Life moves us along. Situations change. For some time now, I have been away from and even tried to "quit" poetry in favour of other writing endeavors. The thing is...poetry won't quit me. I

still write and who knows, may once again take to the coffee houses, bookstores, pubs, and airways to send forth my latest pieces. After all, it all begins with words!

### **Richard Davies**

Some misc. memories from the beginning...

Doug Elves in his intro in the 1st anthology remembers correctly.

Individuals were doing chapbook launches more and more.

The old, now gone, Cafe La Gare had weekly readings.

(Thomas Trofimuk engaged readers and poster-advertised the readings himself there.)

Alberta Poetry Yearbook, CBC Radio which covered La Gare readings and poets, and the then-annual Edmonton Journal poetry competition brought more Edmonton poets out of the weeds.

People helping to coalesce the Stroll kickoff included Glen Kirkland, Elves, Alice Major, Andrew Thompson, Ken Wilson, and Ivan Sundal.

There was a strong U of A representation along from the beginning: Bert Almon, John King-Farlow, Doug Barbour, and Gov.-General winner Ted Blodgett.

The venues for the annual Sunday readings including Stanley Carroll Boutique, Hanratty's Tea Shop, an auto dealer Hugh McColl's, Earth's General Store, a bar Courtney Blake's, Sunflower Gallery, Princess Theatre, L'Alliance Francaise, Johann Straussa restaurant--Continental Treat, in addition to several book shops and cafes.

There were strong diverse voices at the beginning: e.g., Molly Chisaakay, Peter Cole, Marilyn Dumont--First Nations, Nigel Darbasie--Trinidad, Anna Mioduchowska--Poland.

Membership grew with each fall stroll such that, by 1993, The 12 Days of Poetry became the necessary Christmas version.

For this event, venues in other parts of the city were used: La Boheme, Grounds for Coffee, The Upper Crust, The Sugar Bowl, Strathcona Legion, The Comisary.

Other special events followed like the Dearly Departed readings at Audrey's and the workshops given by many poets at libraries.

## Leslie Dawson (from December, 2021 Stroll of Poets Newsletter)

Thirty years ago, at its organizational meeting, Doug Elves suggested the Stroll of Poets name because it actually was a stroll. It began as an annual event where scores of poets and listeners strolled down Whyte Avenue, from bistro to bar, from bar to bookstore, poets speaking and listeners listening to the poets read their works. Ivan Sundal recalls one meeting when someone pointed out that the word “stroll” was also used to describe “johns” looking for prostitutes. Others said, not to worry, we’ll reclaim the word for our own.

The Stroll was an annual event for nearly two decades, taking place on the first Sunday of October. The venues included car dealerships, where one dealer even claimed to have sold a car at the event. Many poets cut their teeth reading to an audience during the Stroll, including Anne Gerard Marshall, who read aloud for the first time there. Sixty-five poets read the first year, with at least two hundred in the audience, says Alice Major. With the exception of the first year, listeners also voted on their favourite poets, with a winner declared each year. Afterwards, the multitudes retired? to the No Bards Barred Bar (at the Canadian Legion). Today’s Stroll activities are “relatively sedate,” says Major, admitting, “we were a lot younger then.”

Because the annual event was a lot of work for just a few people, The Stroll evolved into a weekly event, with many volunteers, at the Upper Crust Restaurant. Now, during Covid times, it has transformed into a Zoom meeting called “Haven at Home”. But The Stroll of Poets is not just a literary trick. *It really was a Stroll.*

## Janis Dow

Some good memories/funny things from my memories of the Stroll these past 5 years:

- Watching Audrey Brooks gather names for her 'found words' poems from the audience.
- Seeing Jean Jacques in a costume, with a flashlight under his chin- with the lights out- performing a poem about the moon!
- Hugh McAlry's children's poems (not Haikus but another name can't recall)
- Ellen kartz's paperless performances
- John perched on the stage at the 25th Anniversary dinner watching the show
- John's poem about volunteers
- Anne Marshall at the door taking money, counting it and talking to so many people!
- Markus and Josh by the door at the Haven like bouncers
- Alice waving the clear donation box at the beginning of Havens.
- AGM's at the 3 Bananas cafe



## Jannie Edwards

If a group of apes is a shrewdness and a bunch of ravens is an unkindness, what, pray tell, do you call a collection of poets? An obvious place would be to search poetic form and technique: A stanza? Nah, too organized. A caesura? Ugh, pretentious. I think it was the Founding Fathers Doug Elves and Ivan Sundal who came up with the notion of a *Stroll* of Poets. And truly, the collective noun became reality. On a designated Sunday in the Fall, small groups of poets would read in cafes along Whyte Avenue for five minutes each (often over the hiss of milk foamers and espresso machines). Patrons quaffed coffee and nibbled pastries as they listened and then would stroll along to the next venue for a different menu of poetry.

Other innovations emerged: a riotous No Bards Barred Bar and poetry sweatshop at the end of the first Stroll Sundays; then, later, the 12 Days of Poetry event which extended from just after Christmas Day to Robbie Burns Day in January. Stroll members were invited to submit one poem to a jury of Edmontonians from all walks--media and sports personalities; politicians; performing, visual or communication artists; business people who selected 44 poets from the pool. Selected poets were then grouped in fours to read in restaurants and bars on 11 different evenings spanning the old and new years. Patrons voted on their favourites and four poets with the top scores performed at a big gala on or close to Robbie Burns Day. It was at one of these galas that we had a contest to see who would name the two strolling icons on the then Stroll logo. As I recall, the winning names for those lovely, zany characters were Zoot and Zaza. T-shirts were made. I wish I still had mine.

The early days of the Stroll were all about making the road by strolling. The vision was improvisational, warmly welcoming of diverse voices, ages and poetic styles, and, most importantly, it was so much fun. One poem from those days that stands out for me is Bert Almon's marvel of concision: "Seersucker: Poet's groupies." (Forgive errors of memory.)

I am so pleased to see this anarchic, innovative, creative spirit lives on in the Stroll decades later.

## Kathy Fisher

I ascend the elegant staircase of Whyte Avenue's Architectural Jewel in the Crown - The Princess Theatre. My heart is in my throat. It is 1:00 p.m. and I am overlooking a small group gathered in the lobby. This is my first public reading of poetry. I am a participant in Edmonton's Whyte Avenue-centred Stroll of Poets - then a wildly organized chaos which consisted of two-readings-per-poet-in-one-day event! Tim Bowling has finished his five-minute set to appreciative applause. It is now my turn. I have one friend in the audience. The crowd settles to a full silence. I lean on the bannister, look out at the audience, and start my first poem. In an instant, it seems, the reading is over. The crowd applauds again. A tall young fellow comes over and wants to talk about my work. All of a sudden, my interior world has been revealed outside of me, transmitted and received. I am buzzing - and - I am a *poet*!!

The rest of the day is a wondrous blur - I have another reading in two hours before which I immerse myself in other's poems in venues ranging from bookstores to cafes to performance spaces. That was my initial foray into Edmonton's eclectic, inclusive, inventive and constantly evolving poetry community. The Stroll has been the spine of my poetry experience, offering up friends and allies, opportunities and inspiration.

I moved from Montreal to Alberta in 1987. A university friend who knew I loved poetry introduced me to a *Real Poet* - none other than Thomas Trofimuk, one of the founders of the Stroll. Like so many others I was to meet, Thomas has had a hand in introducing me to the wonderful poetry community in Edmonton and further, in shaping my poetic and performance practise, especially working with poetry and music. Through our long association, I appeared on radio and TV, produced a CD with the *Raving Poets Band* and countless Mark Kozub poetry compilations, performed at many special events and honed my skills as emcee while riffing off the styles of two talented emcees - Mark Kozub and Mike Gravel.

A few moments that stay with me:

My first reading with the Raving Poets Band. We were allowed to do three LONG poems!! (Soon scaled back to one poem per person per night.) Wednesday nights were a poetry ritual - I can't enumerate how many poems I "tried out" on the RP crowd at the backroom Vodka Bar - and other subsequent venues, over a 10-year span.

Monday nights at The Haven have supplanted our music and words ritual. The experience of reading out loud proved a fine training ground for poets - we honed our voices and techniques, and listening skills with one another, just as we do currently with the Stroll.

In early days, pre-Haven at the Upper Crust, there was a semi-curated series of poets drawn from the Stroll Day to perform typically in the winter. Where else but Edmonton would poetry draw a standing room only crowd at -30!!

I recall meeting with the late Diane Buchanan at the Upper Crust when the Stroll Board at that time was floating the series over the year idea. She invited me to scout out the space with her. That Board was visionary! The Haven at the Upper Crust (pre Covid at least!) has since evolved as an established Edmonton poetry institution. I still love the way we applaud for first time readers - that was a practice from the *Raving Poets* adopted by the Stroll - (I believe).

Not all my experiences were hearts and flowers. In my decades with the Stroll I have witnessed some intense ups and downs. One summer I returned from time down east and Thomas and Mark Kozub had started offering opportunities for us to read with live improv music. Highly addictive! And not universally received as "pure poetry" by some of the old guard. The most vicious meeting I have ever attended was one where Mark was totally taken to task for replacing a buzzy mic with decent sound equipment!! He was visionary but boy oh boy - at that AGM there was horrific resistance!! It totally socked me that peace-loving poets had this snarly side. In time, Mark's vision would play out as brilliant but I am afraid he bears scars from that time. He was a very gentle, able and humble leader, and a very talented bass player and poet who regularly recorded live readings.

The make-up of the Edmonton poetry scene has always been varied, one of its strengths. All ages, backgrounds, education levels and writing levels. Prize-winning poets like Alice Major still read alongside first time readers. This is one of the Stroll's great strengths - inclusivity and open curation.

I am so grateful for my long association with the Stroll, for the many times I have been moved, transported, laughed, cried, exceeded and taken the stage. Reading at the Haven is reading to a fabulous room of fellow poets, friends and astonishingly good listeners. I have one rule for my own readings - always do something that is comfortable or comforting, and always take a risk - this is a room that invites and welcomes risk-taking - mostly!

Another misadventure I had in the 1990s was someone, who was by the book religious, took offence to one of my poems - and tried to get me thrown out of the Stroll altogether - for blasphemy. I later learned that a special board meeting was convened - and they stood up - brave souls - for freedom of speech!! I had no idea that my mid-winter reading caused such a controversy. But the good people of Edmonton - in such an Edmonton way - non-plussed and democratic - kept to their values and I kept a membership that I had no idea I was at risk of losing!

Thank you to Stroll Board and volunteers who keep the Stroll alive and vibrant, live and on-line. To poet regulars and incidentals - please - keep coming back!! (Yes, poetry is one of the healthier addictions.)

And, when we are finally able to meet in public, I will be front of line to raise a toast to the Stroll's glorious past and to the next 30 years - **long may the Stroll thrive!!!**

## Myrna Garanis

### Chapeau-etry Contest

This memory/anecdote is from 2005 when Alice Major was Poet Laureate. Among other prizes, the overall winner received the opportunity for an interview with Alice so that she could produce poetry lines, an ode perhaps, to the chapeau judged as best.

The "hat" contest had six categories to choose from: Classical/Elegant; Extreme; Romantic/Lyrical, Medieval, Haiku and Silly. Jurors were Councillor Michael Phair and the Fine Arts Librarian at Edmonton Public Library, Karen Grove.

Current Stroll members will be familiar with the names of many of the winners: Leslie Dawson won the Silly Hat category; Anna Marie Sewell won for best Haiku-inspired hat; Jo-ann Godfrey for Romantic Lyrical; Marguerite Redshaw (now deceased) won for Classical/Elegant (and she was both);

Naomi McIlraith must have been a runner-up (I have her photo wearing an outlandish hat), Andy Michaelson (also deceased I believe) won for best Medieval hat, and the overall winner as well

as well as Extreme category winner was Clinton Collins. I didn't know him. Contest entry was open to all festival go-ers if I recall. There were many small but charming prizes, including Leonard Cohen's I'm Your Man documentary CD which had just been released. All winners received an "Official Wallet-size Poetic License" as well.

I'm afraid the Chapeau contest was my brain-child, aided as always by willing volunteers. We didn't have many entrants, surprisingly, but those who modelled their creations were amazing.

### Gary Garrison

One thing that stands out for me is when I was Mic Host and Allison Akgungor phoned me ahead of time to ask me to do something for Leonard Cohen's 75th birthday. She had just published a poem in a book created specifically to honour him on his birthday called *Leonard Cohen, You're Our Man: 75 Poets Reflect on the Poetry of Leonard Cohen*. Her request inspired me to write new lyrics for "Bird on a Wire." While I was on the phone with her, in fact, I came up with the first few words, "Like a flame on a cake . . ." The night of the Poets Haven, on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009, when I was the mic host, I brought my guitar, borrowed a black fedora from someone, and sang the song. It was such a hit that I was asked to sing it again after the AGM the following March.

#### **Flame on a Cake** (to the tune of "Bird on a Wire")

by Gary Garrison

*(Performed at the Stroll of Poets' Poets Haven, September 21, 2009, to celebrate Leonard Cohen's 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday)*

Like a flame, on a cake  
like the rhythm in a song line I've deliberately gone to heroic lengths to break,  
I have tried, in my way, to be young.

Like a child, run amok,  
like a toddler playing with his plastic duck,  
I can still scatter words off my tongue.

But I swear, on this day  
by 75 years flown away,  
that I will celebrate here with you.

I see poets gathered for their weekly read.  
This says to me, we all have a need  
to say our pieces and write some more,  
although we know there's no money to do it for.

Like a recluse on a stage,  
like a January prairie blizzard rampage,  
I have done most everything a poet can do.

When I see myself here and poets all around,  
I wish I'd lived 50 years in Edmontown.  
Your community here is alive and rich,  
even though your provincial government's a bitch.

Like a flame, on a cake  
like the rhythm in a song line I've deliberately gone to heroic lengths to break,  
I have tried, in my way, to be young.

### **Jo-Ann Godfrey**

The Stroll of Poets Festival started and ended at the Strathcona Legion and in between there were hourly readings at eight different venues, bookstores and bistros. One hundred poets hit the streets. At the brunches guest poets were invited. I especially remember Saskatchewan poet Tim Lilburn whose poetry I still love.

We also had the Twelve Days of Poetry. That's when audience favorites were invited back to read. It was very special. Jurors such as executive director of The Writers' Guild of Alberta, musician/composer of film scores, novelist, creative writing instructor, columnist the Edmonton Journal, Honorary Mayor of Old Strathcona, picked the winners. I remember reading at the Hellenic Hall. I tried so hard to get a poster if the event with my name on it, but it vanished. I think after the readings, they had a random pick of a few names and they got to read too. The feature readers each received \$25.00.

Between 1997-2000 I distributed the Stroll of Poets anthology to the different bookstores in Edmonton for them to sell, Audrey Books, Orlando Books (1993-2002), Greenwood's Bookshoppe, Athabasca Books, Alhambra Books and Isis Bookstore. They were all very accommodating and we were lucky to have their keen interest in writers and their success. I remember Jacqueline Dumas of Orlando Books, a writer herself. One of her books that I read, "Madeleine and The Angel", I thoroughly enjoyed. She did lots of launches for smaller books and displayed chapbooks. I remember going to the launch of Christina Tower's book entitled, "Lake at Mile 27 and other poems." It was about her staying at the forest fire lookout. I had just visited one at Stony Mountain so I was interested in what she

had to say. Sharon Budnarchuk of Audreys books was equally helpful. On time I had extra copies of a book I was published in and she agreed to sell them for me.

I just remember these people the most, but all the people were all lovely to deal with. I liked that job but it was just that we were travelling so much.

### **John Leppard**

I'll be honest with you; this is really hard for me. I've been so immersed in the people and events associated with the Stroll for the last while, that I find it difficult to reflect on the numerous moments of wonder that have accompanied this journey. Nothing in particular stands out, and yet everything does...if that makes any sense. I have experienced the many joys and occasional frustrations of working with the most passionate, dedicated, smart and fun folks I've ever been around. I love the moments spent with my community but ask me to single any one of them out as more luminous than the others... and I draw a complete blank. So, I do apologize that I am not going to be able to contribute anything to this valuable project. Instead, I will celebrate its unveiling and count it, yet another, moment of wonder.

### **Deborah Lawson**

#### ***PROOFREADING Bees are Tougher Than Most Other Bees!***

As editor of the *Stroll of Poets Anthology* for the past eight years, I've collected more than a few wonderful memories. But perhaps the most dramatic occurred in 2015, my first year on the job.

Each year, after all the poems have been submitted, edited, and laid out as they will finally appear in the anthology, the editor assembles a group of volunteers for the Proofreading Bee. Since 2015, the number of participants has ranged from eight to 21. This Bee is generally held in February, and the date is set well ahead of time, usually in December or early January—long before anyone knows what the weather will be like in far-off February.

The venue of choice for the Bee has been the Percy Page building, where the Stroll of Poets has its office (staffed by the accomplished and always-marvellous Ellen Kartz, with whom I've had the monumental pleasure of working for all eight years—and that's another wonderful story in itself!). But back to 2015 ... When the chosen date rolled around, Alberta pulled one of its famous one-day blizzards. And a furious squall it was! I live only a couple of kilometres from the Percy Page building, but it took me 45 minutes to drive there, most of it in first gear of my ancient, five-speed VW Golf.

That was the year only eight people showed up. Everyone entered the room shivering and snow-encrusted. But the prize of the night went to Anne Gerard Marshall. As she was on her way, for some unknown reason her car just “quit,” and another driver compounded Anne's initial car

problem by turning it into a fender-bender. Fortunately, neither she nor the other driver was hurt, and Anne had factored in plenty of time for the extra-slow drive she figured was ahead of her. What she hadn't counted on was getting into an accident. And, as many of you know, Anne doesn't carry a cell phone. We had no way of knowing why she was late, but after about 10 minutes we decided to go ahead without her. When she finally arrived, about half an hour late, we learned that not only had she arranged for the tow-truck driver to take her vehicle to the appointed repair shop, but—secure in the knowledge that she could get a ride home after the Bee—she'd also persuaded him to deliver her to the Percy Page building.

A lot of people would have just thrown up their hands in frustration, decided it was too late to bother, and gone home. But, as Anne's long and faithful history as doorkeeper at the Upper Crust has shown, I should have known better than to count her out. She, along with Randy Kohan, Karen Lumley, Naomi McIlwraith, Janet Smith, Robin Smith, Laurel Sproule, and tdl turner, made "The Proofreading Bee of 2015" the most memorable of my tenure as editor—so far!

PS: I may have taken a few liberties in the relating of this story ... but not many!

### **Nancy Mackenzie**

I have a poem that I'd like to share. It was written for David Huggett who for a long time helped to coordinate the 12 days of poetry. His presence at all of these 12 days for years was appreciated!

### **Viaticum**

*– the passing over to eternal life  
for David Huggett*

Spring melt on the boulevard  
between Highway 2 north and south  
yields a proud concoction of lab and collie  
tail wagging, stick-carrying, trotting.

We're heading north, home from the last weekend skiing.  
At 120 kilometres per hour I glimpse the dog  
and wonder how he'll cross one side of the road  
or the other.  
Glimmers of old spirits this weekend  
when skiing at Sunshine.

In blue sky schussed by brief blizzards

an intimate presence took shape  
as my daughter clamped boots into bindings behind me  
and I reached for skis propped on the lodge's deck.

Alpine sun and stillness flashed around us  
with grey snow masks on Goat's Eye.  
Days after his death, David may not yet have left Earth.  
Some part of his song, wind along the aspens  
a memory fluted through

David with his old leather jacket  
the organizer's voice at Stroll of Poets  
board meetings  
the successful advocate at readings.  
David and his apologetic smile,  
handing readers the board's white envelope of cash.

This afternoon, angling home, another reward:  
I saw an eagle on the snow  
beside an open gift of water;  
a raven's shadow on the ice;  
and a spirit or a memory –  
neither one  
nor the other; we were heading north  
from the last weekend skiing.

There are a couple of other people I'd like to mention. One is Jean McKenzie, who recently passed away. She did two of the anthology covers and also took part in the Stroll, for decades.

The other is Dean McKenzie, who gave a great performance of Alan Ginsberg's Howl at one Stroll finale - at the Strathcona legion, and who also was very generous with his praise and support of poets, often calling up individuals after their reading to tell them how wonderful their readings were.

**Also submitted by Nancy Mackenzie:**

Jean Carmichael McKenzie  
August 1, 1931—December 9, 2021

For decades, Jean was a member of the Stroll of Poets, and she created the artwork for two anthology covers. The sketch of the reader on the 1997 cover shows me! Jean is the reason I joined the Stroll of Poets. When she invited me to come, she said, "A bunch of us get together and stroll to different venues to share our poems and have a lot of laughs." She certainly made me laugh, every time we were together. When I went to the historic Carmichael home in



Strathcona, where her grandparents had lived, and where she'd grown up and raised her children, I was made very welcome and offered the opportunity to look through some of her art folders. Of course, her house was full of her paintings, and the many sketches were a delight. The cover for the 1997 anthology depicts the feminine in sensuous detail.

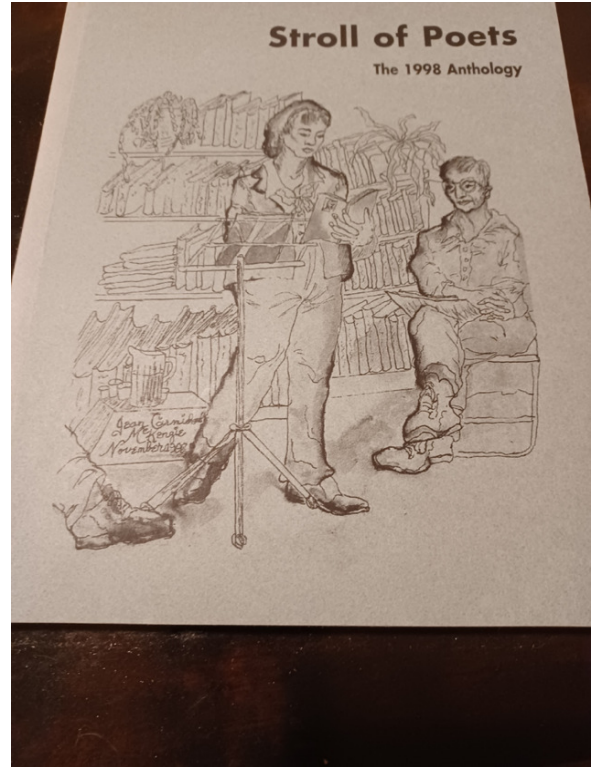
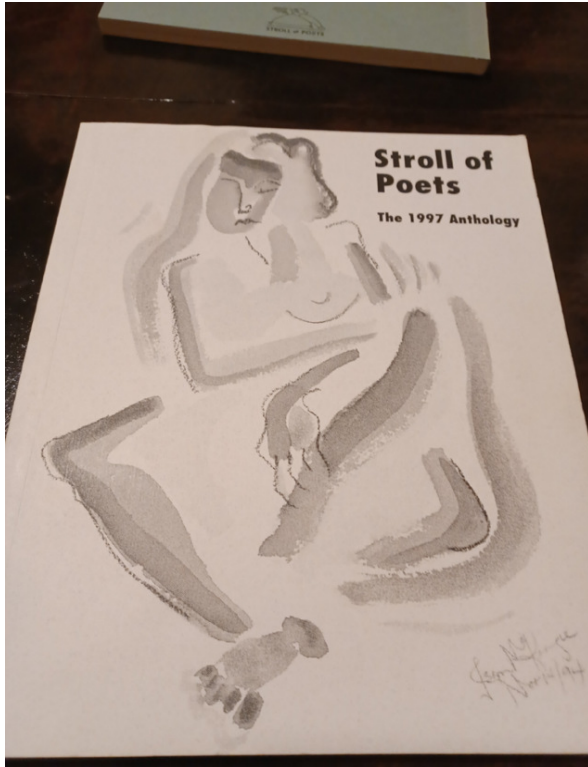
For me, and many others, Jean was like a mother. She'd grown up knowing my mom and her family and my dad and his family—all from the South Side. Her husband, Red, was friends with my dad from the time they were in Kindergarten together, until my dad passed away in 2018. Red is a treasured friend to me and continues to share his vast horseman's knowledge with me. He's been in the Thoroughbred racehorse business since he was young—first as a jockey, then as a trainer, and he's still training today.

Her bio from an earlier anthology reads: Jean McKenzie is a grandma, artist, poet, and racehorse owner whose family goes way back in Strathcona's history...She studied at the University of Alberta, Banff, Red Deer College, Sutton Art, Montaigne, France. She enjoys celebrating the feeling of life forces and form with pigment of paper or canvass and hopes the viewer can share this joy.

Jean received her BEd in 1954 and a BA in Art History in 1959. She was an elementary school teacher for 29 years, two of which she spent teaching in for RCAF families in Metz, France. She was principal at Argyll, King Edward, and Mill Creek elementary schools. In 1978, she obtained an M.Ed, and in 1982, a Graduate Diploma in Art Education, which included Early Childhood study in England and art research in New York and the Orient. A collage painting entitled "Educator of the 60s" showed in the International Delta Kapa Gamma Art Show in Chicago in 1978.

Jean's many travels—from riding camels to the pyramids and sphinx in Egypt, to watching bullfights in the scorching Spanish sun to flying down the Nile to Thebes and Karnak, to touring art galleries and museums in the British Isles—amassed a huge collection of photographs, which she shared with classes of students.

Each time we talked on the phone, or were together at poetry readings, art shows, or the racetrack, Jean would end our visit with a lengthy blessing upon me and my family. I know that blessing deeply, as she is deeply missed.



1997 and 1998 Stroll of Poets Anthology Covers by Jean McKenzie

A poem, written by Jean in 2018, follows.

The Courtyards  
by Jean Edith McKenzie

As I, aging Jean, looked outward to a bird's  
playground view of the courtyard, I melted  
with love and heartthrobs for those who passed  
through my life. I pictured them frolicking  
among the snowy shrubs and flowers, riding upon the wooden  
pieces sculptured from birds and animals  
which graced the pathways.

Some stopped to whisper Christmas poems to each other  
and laughed as real-life problems faded away.  
Life is, after all, the continuation  
of childhood expanding into adulthood. Then into  
peacefulness and the long rest.

I'd like to have lingered at each step,  
in the courtyard of my mind, and bring joy  
to others I might meet, with smiling, healing hands  
they would walk with me. Along my way  
forwards, with some who will divide and share  
with me, on my way towards a heavenly home forever.

August 2018

### Alice Major

My initial contribution to the first Stroll of Poets was to tell Doug Elves, who had come up with the idea: “This will never work, Doug. It’s hard enough to get people out to *one* reading, never mind ten of them at once.”

How wrong I was. On October 27, 1991, I was trotting along Whyte Avenue with my pack of four poets. We had just read at Aspen Books to a nice audience draped around the bookstore’s shelves and sitting on the floor, and we were only one of *fifteen* such quartets who were performing at the bookstores and coffee shops in Old Strathcona that afternoon. Sixty poets sharing their work with attentive audiences at an array of bookstores, most of them now, sadly, gone: Common Woman Books, Varscona Books, Bjarne’s (amid the antique leather editions and ancient maps on the walls), Athabasca Books and Afterwords. Or there were the cafes: Café Mosaics, Blue Nile, Grabba Jabba.

I read my 10 minutes of poetry along with Ivan Sundal, Kathy Kostyniuk and Michael Cenknier, then we consulted our program schedule printed on a sheet of bright yellow paper and decided individually which reading we wanted to take in next. Later, we’d reconvene for our quartet’s second reading of the day.

Afterwards, we put our jackets back on and headed back out into the bright autumn afternoon—at least, I think it was bright. The memory blurs with all the other Strolls in those first 15 years. Sometimes that Sunday afternoon might be briskly windy, unexpectedly balmy, or snow-squally. Whatever the weather, the shows went on. And on.

### Clint McElwaine

I think I have been a member of the Stroll for about 21 of the 30 years. Although I have never been a member of the board I have helped out whenever I could as Mic Host, door host and with some fund raising. My very first fond recollection was a break through in getting my work published. After hearing me Gerald St Maur suggested I publish with CDs which I did with his company Magpie Productions, Inkling Press. This also led to a lasting friendship with Gerald and Edna. Many other friendships with Stroll members followed. Being heard at the Stroll

opened many doors for me and resulted in several gigs which I enjoy. Examples include The Hurting and Cheating part of and Edmonton Poetry Festival event, opening the show for the Indie group Cold Water Road during their Edmonton concert, events for our homeless community, being a feature reader or performer at other poetry organizations, and many others. All this was packed into a few months as I spent half of the Stroll seasons down in Arizona.

That being said, by far, the most important part was the Monday night havens either as a reader or supportive audience member. It became almost like a family for me with many more lasting friendships. I recall getting supportive notes from dozens of Stroll members when my son passed. And they really helped. It was organized by Anne Marshall who has become my most special friend. We have a tradition of reading together at the Haven which will continue on October 18th.

I also enjoyed and valued the process of building a library of Stroll members work including yours. And as many Stroll members are also artists, I have built a collection of their work as well.

I realize this has been more about the ambiance of the Stroll rather than events and milestones but I hope it will be of help to you in some small way.

### **Naomi McIlwraith**

#### **A WANDERING POET DECIDES TO STAY IN EDMONTON**

This soul was a wandering poet who thought she had to go to far away where all the good poets went to study. But in 1998 she was in Camrose, Alberta studying English literature when her professor, Dr. Anne Le Dressay, won a spot in the 12<sup>th</sup> Night of Poetry. This wandering poet came into Edmonton with a few of her friends one evening to the Hellenic Hall near the Royal Alexandra Hospital where, as it happened, the wandering poet was born. She'd never been to a 12<sup>th</sup> Night of Poetry before, and the image remains fixed in her mind more than twenty years later. The hall is dark, and she can see a lightly-lit stage far away from where she and her friends sit. In the middle of the stage on a stool within a small circle of light sits a lone poet offering gifts of love and light to the audience. In the previous couple of weeks over the course of eleven nights, four poets each night shared their words – that's four poets each night... forty-four poets all tallied. From the forty-four poets, four are chosen to read on the 12<sup>th</sup> Night. It's hard to recall all the poems she heard that night, but Maya Angelou once said, "At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel." So this wandering poet figures she can cut herself some slack if she doesn't remember the poems. She does, however, remember how she felt that night – alive, excited, intrigued, hopeful, awed.

Soon after that 12<sup>th</sup> Night of Poetry, this poet became a member of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets and decided to stay in Edmonton rather than go to New Brunswick to study poetry. Since then, she has remained alive, excited, intrigued, hopeful, and awed by the many poets whose words

and ways have always welcomed her and always made her feel good. She knows how good she feels when in the midst of these poets. And they've made her laugh until she cried, like the time when versifier Gary Garrison got all dolled up in a long red skin-tight dress to fit snugly over his lean six-foot-plus frame and then breathed heavily into his nearly-six-foot-long booming didgeridoo for one of the many Blinks! events. These were hilarious evenings of 30-second poems read by frantic poets who were scared to get blown off the stage by the Blinks Philharmonic Orchestra if they went an inch or an iota past 30 seconds. The invention of two of Edmonton's Finest Founders – Myrna Garanis and Ivan Sundal – the Blinks! kicked off the Edmonton Poetry Festival each year and included not only poets but an esteemed orchestra of players of the didgeridoo, flutes, fiddles, tin whistles, rattles, harmonicas, cowbells, tinker bells, spoons, forks, knives, pots, pans, bike horns, fog horns, and other instruments of that ilk. The parameters put onto poets to get on the stage and get off the stage 30 seconds later and somehow insert a poem in between were a thing to behold. And oh the freedom and hilarity and laughter that these 30-second restraints unleashed in the many poets who've Blinked several times over the years!

In some of the loneliest times of my life, the Stroll of Poets' community has lifted my spirit such as when my father was so sick, then palliative, then passed away, and I was trying to write my thesis to honour him and my Mom. Alice Major invited me to her poetry circle fifteen or sixteen years ago, and I remain a member to this day. Diane Buchanan, who passed away a few years ago, also invited me into her poetry group. And Shirley Serviss first approached me in the open space between the Second Cup coffee shop and the Milner Library so many years ago when she heard me read a poem about cucumbers; as is Shirley's beautiful way, she encouraged me to continue my exploration of *nêhiyawêwin* – Plains Cree, the Indigenous language that my father spoke even though he was not Indigenous and one of the languages that my maternal ancestors spoke. And Anne Gerard Marshall has helped me laugh when it seemed laughing was not possible. I've known Don Perkins since time immemorial – don't tell him I said that! Don, as well, has generously cheered me along my poetry journey. I feel badly that I can't name all the people in the Stroll of Poets who have shaped me as a poet, but I want you all to know the profound influence you have had on my life. Please know that until the end of time, I will remember that you have made me feel special.

That the Edmonton Stroll of Poets remains alive and robust in 2022, more than 30 seconds – er, I mean 30 years – after its formation in 1991, speaks to the vigour and resilience of both this beautiful and welcoming Stroll of Poets but also to the humanity and humour of the human beings who breathe life into the Stroll and our poetry community every day.

Good thing this wandering poet decided to come home to Edmonton and listen to the poems being made here. She's still listening...

## Marco Melfi:

### The Haven Reading Series

- It's hard not to start with the Haven. The Stroll and the Haven are so linked. I think I attended my first Haven back in 2010, when I was still new to Edmonton. I was impressed there was such a well-established reading series that welcomed new people and encouraged first-time readers. That encouragement gave me a boost to write, write more and work at my writing. A decade on that welcoming spirit continues and really sustains the community.

### The Blinks @ the Edmonton Poetry Festival

- I don't have one single memory that necessarily stands out but I wanted to highlight how fun this annual event was. A night of 30-second poems with a band counting those seconds down, ready to trumpet, bang or didgeridoo time is up made for some hilarious readings. A poem in under thirty seconds isn't as easy as it seems! For the many years that it ran, it brought together many different genres and poets, provided a creative way to introduce people to poetry and turn people into poets (even if for one night). It also demonstrated collaboration between the Stroll of Poets and the Edmonton Poetry Festival.

### The Founders Feast - 25th Anniversary of the Stroll

- The celebration took place in February of 2017 (if my memory serves me right). It was a nice event to celebrate and learn about the Stroll's founding, founding members and the community of poets that has grown since.

### The Stroll of Poets Anthology

- While not an event, I think it deserves mention for what it means to the Stroll, the membership and poets who get to see a poem published for the first time or the 30th time!

## Anna Mioduchowska

One of the many gifts Stroll of Poets has offered its members over the years was a chance to hear a variety of powerful poetic voices, both local and from *away*. On the list of visiting guests who graced the Stroll various stages, are poets from as far away as Grenada – Merle Collins - and Scotland – Tom Pow.

The Stroll's third season, 1993-94, coincided with the time University of Alberta's Writer-in-Residence Program hosted one of Canada's prized poets, Don McKay. Jan Zwicky, another accomplished poet whose name has since joined the list of our country's icons, was also staying in Edmonton that year. The Board recognized the double opportunity and invited Don to be the guest reader at the annual brunch, then both poets to lead concurrently running poetry workshops.

Splitting oneself in two was not an option. I drew Jan Zwicky out of the hat, and spent happy, intensive hours workshoping under her generous guidance the poems our group had submitted before the session. I think we were all a little in love with Jan by the end of the day, and my much improved poem found a publisher soon after. The Strollers in Don's group were equally smitten.

When Don McKay's stint as WIR was drawing to a close, the Stroll, many of whose members had gone to see him with their poems, organized a public reading/good-bye party for the two poets. Both of them submitted poems to the 1993 Anthology.

### **Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck**

My first stroll participation was in 1992 during the 2nd Annual event. I remember reading a call for poets in an ad in the Examiner community newspaper.

And, what a deal, connect with other poets, share a poem in a café, receive \$10.00, plus an anthology. The place to sign up was a few doors down from the Old Strathcona Hotel. Doug Elves, Ivan Sundal, and Ken Wilson were busy signing up poets for the event. I didn't know at the time that I would one day be sitting on the board with them, brain-storming, planning, organizing, and being part of continuing to offer poetry to the community.

Back in the 50s, I had been born too late to be old enough to hang out with Beatniks in cafes, but I had aspired to be a Beatnik at ten years old in 1967 when I dressed up as one for Halloween. As the years went by, I had some success as a lyricist, collaborating with music compositions. The songs were recorded, radio played, charted across Canada.

In the 90s, the Stroll gave me the opportunity to share my own voice through poetry.

The Stroll had inspired me so much that I wanted to give back, to not only encourage other poets, but to be involved with securing venues, coordinating volunteers, basically, helping where there was a need.

I started off on the board as Secretary when Anna Mioduchowska was president, and then continued when Jocelyn Verret had a term. During that time, I also organized and facilitated a writer's circle held at the

Idylwyld (Bonnie Doon) branch. The library invited us to do public readings, showcased poems in their publication, *The Source*.

Throughout the years, I took a turn at co-coordinating one of the Strolls, and a 12 Days of Poetry event. Also, a turn at coordinating an Anthology launch. By 2000 I had had a hand at helping out in just about every area of the Stroll,

so it seemed a natural progression when it was my turn to be president. I went in with the intent to encourage the spirit of camaraderie, and tagged the line: "May the Stroll Stand Strong."

Doug Elves, one of the founders, who was treasurer at time, confirmed for me that I was on the right track when he said, "Sandra is the Stroll Shepherd."

Also, I created an acrostic of sorts that was another encouragement at the time,

**S**uccess  
**T**ogether  
**R**ewards  
**O**verall  
**L**iterary  
**L**ongevity

There were many highlights throughout the years, one was when a group of Edmonton strollers traveled on a rented bus to participate in the Calgary Stroll. A few regulars from Calgary had attended

our event and had invited us to join them. Everyone who was on the bus has a story to tell. Another highlight was when Michael Walters, during his presidency led us on an adventure to create an opportunity for inner city poets.

Throughout the years, every Stroll of Poets brunch, wrap up party, and every 12 Days of Poetry Event had highlights.

There were many mentors throughout my time in the Stroll of Poets Society. As already noted, Doug Elves, Anna Mioduchowska, Ivan Sundal, Jocelyn Verret, Michael Walters, Ken Wilson. And, the following:

Ruth Anderson Donovan, Jannie Edwards, Tom Emmens, Myrna Garanis, Jocko, Ron Kurt, Rusti Leahy, Alice Major, Nancy MacKenzie, Ky Perraun, Pierrette Requier, Shirley Serviss, Anna Marie Sewell, Thomas Trofimu, Mary T. McDonald, Gary Garrison, and many more. Some not only comrades in poetry, some became close friends.

Mary was a mentor in many ways, to many. At 80 years old she had her first book published. Her second, at 85. Mary was part of the “Living Room Circle,” and when it was hard for her to get out, we met in the boardroom at the lodge she was living in: McQueen Lodge. She had appreciated that the group kept the heartbeat of her poetry ticking.

“It was not only an honor, but a joy in 2003 to work with Ivan Sundal to compile the Stroll Archives.”

I carried with me all that I learned from the Edmonton Stroll of Poets to my role as a Literary Representative for the St. Albert Cultivates the Arts Society, to do what had never been done, to cultivate poetry within the St. Albert community.

Throughout the years I have resurfaced from time to time. I also took on the challenge to participate in the Twenties Aplenty: 20/2020 project created and hosted by Gary Garrison. Prompts stretched the mind, heart, and spirit at the time we all exited a world we once knew and entered into an uncertain one, controlled by the pandemic. Gary had also been (maybe still is) part of a writer’s group that I was part of with various Stroll members: “In the Living Room Writer’s Circle” hosted by Alice Major.

Congratulations to the Stroll of Poets for 30 years of making an impact in the community, as noted on the website, “We are a warm and friendly grassroots organization, we create a supportive community of artists that welcomes members of all ages and all levels of experience.”

May the Stroll Stand Strong!

In poetship, Sandra



## Marcia O'Connor

Although I'm a recent member of the Stroll of Poets I would like to share memories of my initial experience therein. I don't remember the formal poem that I read for my first contribution to the Stroll, but this addendum really captures the immediacy of the experience.

I had been attending the readings for several weeks and the possibility of challenging myself to read during open mic was becoming more of a certainty. Prior to the initial reading, I would arrive late, and leave immediately when the session concluded. I always refused the proffered chair and remained standing near the pocket doors at the back. I felt as if I was my own social experiment in forging social contact centred around something that had, up until then been a very private experience. In time, my reservations slipped away and I regularly contributed my poems and forged a few friendships. I began to actually look forward to facing my demons and bonding with the sea of faces before me. I remember the palpable murmur of response when I tapped into a universal acknowledgement of a creatively coined sentiment.

The Stroll of Poets has opened many gateways of poetic exploration and expression and strengthened my ability to bond with a variety of people who place faith and hope in the expression of their ideas. Looking back, it seemed inevitable, but my initiation was sped along by the palpable sense of acceptance and encouragement that remains the cornerstone of my experience with The Stroll.

I've been seen in the company of poets recently.  
Live ones.  
A change, I must admit,  
rather than just their printed words.  
I've always had those.  
This was just their voices in ordinary conversation,  
until every one had quietened  
and the few selected ones took their turn,  
voicing over my pounding pulse,  
their poems.  
This is what it is like.  
Just listening,  
hitch-hiking,  
transported by others sharing.  
It's three hours early  
and I'm already dressed.  
No one will notice if I don't show up...  
What was I thinking?

## **Julie C. Robinson**

### Stroll Reflection

I arrived in Edmonton in 1999 from downtown Toronto where poetry readings went late into the night. For example, Libby Scheier was scheduled to read at 9:00 p.m. in a small bar and I left at 11:00 that night even though she hadn't yet shown up, which, of course, she would do, eventually. Seeking out poetry in Edmonton led me to some later night events with the Raving Poets Band, but also to the Stroll of Poets, who, thankfully, had afternoon and early evening readings. I loved the October Stroll Days, the 12 Days—you could win \$20!, and I loved going to the Legion for brunch, poetry, and a poetry-related talk. It was amazing to be with so many people who were passionate about poetry. I was inspired by the poems I heard, the energy I felt, as well as by the democratic structure and behaviour of the organization. It was a community in which I felt I could belong. I gradually became involved in some administrative aspects of the organization including being a part of the birth of the Haven Reading Series, but more importantly, I made friendships that have lasted 20 years and counting. Thinking about it now, I realize the impact the Stroll has had on my life. I would not be who I am now without the people who embody the Stroll of Poets, what I learn from them, the opportunities they give me to show myself and to grow. The Stroll isn't all things to all people, but it is intentionally welcoming and celebratory. It is as much about people as it is about poetry. I have since never encountered anything like it.

## **Shirley Serviss**

During the years of the annual stroll we often had a guest speaker at the No Bards Barred Bar to wrap up the Stroll. I was one of the readers at a participating car dealership and can remember belting out a poem about the Take Back the Night march. It was the perfect venue to yell out the chants.

Later on (not sure when) a panel of judges picked poets from the anthology to read at an event called the Twelve Days of Poetry held during the Christmas season. The chosen poets read in various venues throughout the city not just in Strathcona where the fall Stroll was held. I remember a cold winter night at a cafe on 97th street downtown that was so crowded people were sitting on the floor. Audiences voted and the poets who won the most votes read at the Strathcona Legion on the Twelfth night. I can remember reading at that and being so nervous that my teeth stuck to my gums my mouth was so dry.

Alice was also a nervous reader back then and used to have a little shot of liquid courage from a flask she carried in her briefcase before her turn. Hard to believe now!

We weren't always as supportive of each other as we seem to have become. I can remember being asked, "how long do you intend to milk failed marriage and motherhood for your material?" I wish I'd been quick enough to say, "until the cows come home." Another time when I read a poem at the Stroll that I'd written on the plane coming home from San Francisco the day before, another poet said to me, "I'd never read a poem I'd just written. It's a bit like bringing

grapes to a banquet when people are expecting wine.”

I think many of us still use the Stroll to try out new work on an audience. Let them eat grapes!

### **Gerald St. Maur**

Lots of fond memories, though nothing in particular comes to mind. I can go back to the Whyte Avenue readings in various cafes and bars in the beginning but I have a particular fondness for the Upper Crust readings and the chats with you and many others. We all learned the huge range of subjects and styles that our members could present.

### **Ivan Sundal**

#### **The NBBB: a memoir**

What do you do after you stroll up and down Whyte Ave, from 1-4 pm, performing or listening at different café and bookstore venues?

You go for a beer, right?

That’s half of what the NBBB facilitates. The other half involves poetry, games and competitions.

And what do we call this open-to-anyone post-Stroll event? The NBBB. And how did this name come to be?

Well there we are: Ken Wilson, Anna Marie Sewell, and I in a Vietnamese café on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue firing out words and phrases in a storm of brains. It went something like this:

Bar for bards

Bards bar

All bards welcome

Bards not barred

No bards barred bar

Eureka! That’s it! NBBB!

We ran this event for years at the Strathcona Legion till they closed their operations at that location.

I think it would be lovely to reincarnate the NBBB after the Sunday Stroll-type readings.

This was another of my favorite inventions of early Stroll days. I think it was likely the brainchild of Doug Elves.

We sold brunch tickets ahead of time, which covered the Strathcona Legion's expenses and profit. The Brunch started at about 10 am the morning of the Stroll, and at about 11:30 we introduced our special guest reader who then had about 45 minutes on the stage to entertain and inspire the host of poets to hit the streets and deliver their own gems through the Stroll venues. A perfect start to the day.

We covered the Guest's expenses and fees with AFA or EAC funding.

## **Gina Varty**

I remember...

- \* actually strolling up and down Whyte Avenue on a Sunday in October to go from venue to venue to listen to poets reading their poems.
- \* getting paid a \$10 honorarium for reading my poems during the Stroll's infancy when everyone read at two different venues.
- \* as a reader: climbing narrow staircases to get to venues, competing with the expresso machine at a cafe or two, watching a cat move off a couch to make room for listeners at a used bookstore, and seeing my name in print in the VUEWEEKLY newspaper as a reader in the Stroll of Poets.
- \* as a listener: trying to decide three times per Stroll which readers I wanted to listen to at about ten different venues spread over six blocks or more of Whyte Avenue, and visiting a car dealership to hear poetry.
- \* on Friday, February 10, 1995, hearing one of my poems, "Living In The Light", sung by Anna Beaumont at Cafe Select in Manulife Centre. Edmonton recording artist and club singer, Anna Beaumont, and collaborator keyboardist Anderw Glover had selected three poems from *Stroll of Poets - The Anthology 1994*, and set them to original music

## **Ken Wilson**

I remember the first meeting of the Stroll. Peter Cole had invited me to the meeting. I really didn't know what it was about except that it had something to do with poetry. The other people I remember being at that first meeting included Bert Almond, Olga Costopoulos and Dug Elves. If I left anyone out I apologize. At the meeting Dug was the planner. He came up with the idea of a poetry festival. We would get venues to agree to host host four readings. Four or five poets would read at each venue four times and the audience would move from venue to venue. Bert Almond suggested it would be boring to read at one venue only. Why couldn't the poets also move from venue to venue. We all agreed and from this came the image of a poet walking from one venue to the next. Then someone came up with the idea of calling the festival "The Stroll." After that all the people who were at that meeting were referred to as "The Bricks," a term I have never embraced.

Soon after that there was a general meeting was held where a large group of poets gathered to discuss the festival. The first thing the group wanted to do is change the name. Surely we could come up with something better. So we had a brainstorming session where anyone could make a suggestion the we wrote all the answers then had a vote. Some of the suggestions included; The

Edmonton Strollers, The Edmonton Poets festival, The Strolling poets, and a half a dozen more. Then we voted and “The Stroll” won by a landslide.

The other thing I remember about that meeting was that Dean McKenzie asked if we couldn't put together an anthology of poetry by all of the poets in the Stroll. There was very little time before the Stroll but with the help of many people and a few late nights it was finished on time. The books were put together one night using volunteers and a very large stapler. The format hasn't changed over the years but the number of poets have. The original stroll anthology published in October 1991 had only 56 poems . By 2003 the stroll anthology had 132 submissions.

## **Stroll of Poets President's Messages 2012, 2013**

A Message from the Acting President of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets - tanisi kahkiyaw  
nimiyot6t6mitik:

Greetings, All my Good Friends,

So much good poetry resounds through the City of Edmonton (amiskwaciy-waskahikan) these days! The Edmonton Stroll of Poets, an inclusive collective, encourages less experienced poets to gather with more experienced wordsmiths to share the ancient spoken craft of communicating ideas, love, passion, and hope through words.

Please join us at the Poets' Haven Reading Series on Monday nights at the Upper Crust Restaurant on 109 Street and 86th Avenue, just a few blocks south of the High Level Bridge. Four or five scheduled readers are each allotted 10 minutes to read, and an open mic sign-up gives unscheduled readers each 2 minutes to read. Readings at the Upper Crust begin at 7:00 p.m., and there is a small fee of \$5.00 to cover coffee, tea, and sweets. Before the Stroll of Poets Annual General Meeting at the end of March 2012, the reading series at the Upper Crust will continue in addition to four more readings scheduled at Greenwood's Bookstore on 103 Street and Whyte Avenue. Check out the Stroll of Poets website for the Monday-evening and Sunday-afternoon reading schedules:

<http://www.strollofpoets.com/>

Listen closely for free verse and rhyme, meter and metaphor, paradoxes and oxymorons, similes and synaesthesia, litotes and hyperboles, a wee bit of irony, and a whole lot of feeling!

In the first quarter of 2012, Mary Pinkoski, John Leppard, and Alice Major will each present a poetry workshop. Watch for further notices about these exciting learning opportunities.

Thank you to the current Stroll of Poets Board of Directors for their confidence in me to serve as Acting President until the AGM. I was asked to fill in when Sharon Ingraham resigned for health reasons, and I agreed, provided the Board proceeded according to Stroll Bylaws. At a special meeting of the Board on 26 October 2011, a motion was made to appoint me as Acting President; the motion was seconded, a vote was held, and all Board members but one voted in favour of appointing me. I was the one Board member who did not vote"

We use language because we need to say something to each other, we need to hear each other, and we need to touch each other. Poetry distills the human experience in evocative images, sounds, and words. In case you don't know, I greeted you with a few Cree words, a language that means a lot to me. Though Cree is one of the original languages of this region, there is now an astonishing array of other languages here. Listen carefully for the beauty of each!

Sincerely,  
Naomi McIlwraith, Acting President (October 2011 - March 2012)

## A Message from the President of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets-Naomi Mellwraith

tdnisi kahkiyaw omasinahikAwiyiniwdk Alcwa kd-nitohtahkik nihtd-wasinahikAwin 6ta amish,uaciy-wdskahikanihk-Greetings to all of you who write poetry and who listen to poetry in this great city of Edmonton! Those first words of my greeting are written in AhiyawAwin-the Plains Cree language.

The Edmonton Stroll of Poets thrives in the thoughts of so many wonderful wordsmiths, who deliberate over something important: a poem that has been shaped and chiseled and buffed into a gleaming jewel.

If you haven't already, consider attending the Poets' Haven Reading Series at the Upper Crust Restaurant from 7:00-8:45 on Monday nights or at Audrey's Bookstore from 2:00 -4:00 on the occasional Sunday afternoon. You can find the Upper Crust Restaurant at 109th Street and 86th Avenue, just a few blocks south of the High Level Bridge. Audrey's Bookstore is located at 107 Street and Jasper Avenue. Four or five scheduled readers are each allotted 10 minutes to read, and an open mic sign-up gives unscheduled readers each 2 minutes to read 1 poem. Be sure to check out this Stroll of Poets website for a printable schedule of readings at both the Upper Crust and Audrey's Bookstore: <http://www.strollofpoets.com/schediprintout.php>

You will be mesmerized by the sheer diversity of voices and perspectives, as poets gather to share their work in English, French, Italian, Pukhto, Ukrainian, Plains Cree, and other languages. Poets from as far away as Nepal and India and from as near as amish,uaciy-wdskahikanihk (Beaver Mountain House-a.k.a Edmonton) read, recite, chant, or sing their words to a receptive audience.

I am thinking of all the local talent but also of home-grown audiences and supporters, such as the Greenwood family, who have championed resident poets and authors since their opening in 1979. Sadly, Brad Greenwood passed away this summer, and the Stroll of Poets Board of Directors, on behalf of the Stroll's membership, offers our sympathy to the Greenwood family for their loss. We are saddened too by the closure of Greenwood's Bookstore, in the wake of brother Brad's passing, knowing that our community has one fewer bookstore to frequent.

We also extend our sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Beauvais on the passing of their son, Ryan, this summer, and to Ryan's girlfriend Erika Luckert. Ryan was one of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets' newer and younger members, and may his loved ones be sustained by warm memories of him.

To Sharon and Steve Budnarchuk, please know that the Edmonton Stroll of Poets Board of Directors and Members deeply appreciate your continued support for many years and for offering your space for our Sunday afternoon readings.

As I write this on Tuesday, 30 October 2012, here also is what I read in today's Editorial in The Edmonton Journal:

..., the continued slide in traditional publishing across the country does not bode well for anyone who writes books or cares about them. With pressures squeezing the industry, including dramatic growth in digital reading and self-publishing, continuing to grow, and fewer and fewer literary presses remaining in play—on Monday two of the world's biggest publishing companies, Random House and Penguin Books, announced plans to merge—a lot of authors are going to find it harder to find publishers who are committed to Canadian voices.

With Poets' Haven consistently drawing audiences of approximately 50 every Monday night, it's clear that there is no lack of local audiences who approve of the literary efforts of local poets. My good friend Shirley Serviss once said many years ago that poets should try not to worry too much about getting their words published in a book, and she added that when poets read their words aloud to an audience the words come to life in a way that they can't on a page. I believe this to be especially so with poetry.

Such was the case last night at the Upper Crust Restaurant, as yet again 48 people congregated to hear 4 scheduled and 8 open mic readers. There were poems about poetry, beautiful women, Pope John Paul's visit in 1984 and a sagging lawn chair, what it means to be Italian in Alberta, zombies, something about a 5-dollar day and swearing too much, and a whole lot more!

Strolling since 1991, the Edmonton Stroll of Poets has inspired so many local poets in providing a platform for them to share their finely-honed words. I have seen developing poets gain self-confidence, and I have seen more seasoned poets mentor and encourage these emerging poets. Having personally benefitted from this tutelage myself, I am honoured to serve with Allison Akgungor, Alice Major, Mary Campbell, Anne Gerard Marshall, John Leppard, Marcy O'Connor, and Diane Robitelle on the 2012-2013 Stroll of Poets Board of Directors.

I want to conclude by acknowledging the audience, for without you to hear our words we poets would be lost, not knowing to whom we might give our luminous gems. Thank you for showing us that despite the troubling phenomenon of the loss of independent bookstores combined with the increasing difficulties in Canadian publishing, poets do have a place in our community and we do something important with our words as we reflect on life at this time and in this great place we call home—dta ktkinihk.

Naomi McIlwraith  
30 kas katinow i -pts im 2012



## Stroll of Poets' President's Message December 2013

### The Wordsmith at Work

Around the backyard fire pit of a Stroll member, seven poets gather to share their carefully-wrought thoughts. A week past the full moon they weigh their phrases, and deliciously-chosen words lift as sparks from the wood leap into the sky. Like molten metal, a thin silver of light hangs suspended in the cobalt backdrop; the poets have brought their words to the fire for further smithing. The first poet writes of the body's eloquence and a second poet of death as a sharp plunge or a slow slippage away from the quick. Much-travelled, a third poet describes a humorous restaurant scene in Agrigento, a city in Sicily. Another poet turns to words from her faith for hope. One poet brings a welcome male perspective but with the courage to consider a woman's insights into mothering and grandmothering. The sixth poet ponders the politics of fur trade marriages and the seventh a healing circle she recently attended.

In many ways a poet crafting her poem is much like a blacksmith at his forge. Just as the blacksmith gently taps his hammer over the anvil in the final delicate shaping and patterning of his work, the poet casts her words forth with pure energy: the ear's malleus transmits the tympanum's vibrations to the incus and the stirrup-shaped stapes registers the pleasing tones. A well-versed poet inclines her ear toward the sounds of the words, ensuring that they complement the meaning, and the audience leans in to receive the poem as a well-tempered metaphor. So textual we've become that we sometimes forget that if there are no ears to hear the words a poem suffers greatly. But the Edmonton Stroll of Poets' reading series, Poets' Haven, offers a special opportunity to hear the words that contemplative versifiers gently mould into the finer form we call a poem.

Emerging from the refiner's fire, a poem is a like a promise because someone cared enough for long enough to think deeply and write mindfully on an idea. What kind of a promise does a poem make? At the funeral of Peter Cox, Anne Gerard Marshall's husband of forty-four years, we heard the poem "Success," by Ralph Waldo Emerson, and, though Emerson crafted his poem more than a century ago, every time someone chooses to recite it, the words ring true and fresh and clear. As the words of Emerson's poem rang through the Chapel, we heard the promise that a poem, like a wisely cast idea, is the right way to say goodbye.

We said goodbye to our dear friend and beloved poet, Diane Buchanan, just a few short weeks ago at her funeral. The author of four books, *Ask Her Anything*, *Between the Silences*, *(Unruly Angels)*, and the soon-to-be released *Horseshoe Moon*, Diane hosted a small poetry circle that I was blessed to bring my own ideas to for even more hammering and shaping. At her funeral, her brother Tony, a lawyer, spoke of Diane's knowledge of her audience, but he also pondered the value of a poem. Deeply affected by his sister's concern for her subject in *Between the Silences*,

Diane's collection about the losses she witnessed as an observer in family court, Tony read this poem.

### Little Girl Lost

He brought her into the courtroom.

She wants to take her home.

Four-year-old Maggie plays

around their feet where they stand

at opposing counsel tables  
telling the judge their sides.

Voices angry, bodies tense  
they list the reasons why  
they can't agree on custody.

The little girl crawls out

from under the tables,

takes Daddy's hand

then reaches across

that hostile space  
to grab Mommy's hand

and hangs there lost  
in the uncertainty  
of the in-between.

Diane Buchanan, *Between the Silences*

When Tony Richards read "Little Girl Lost," I felt a collective hush in the Robertson Wesley United Church as my own heartbeat slowed, just as it slows when I hear a prayer.

Even as we can prayerfully and poetically bid someone a final farewell, so too can we prayerfully greet a person with a poem. I know some people who pray each time a new baby joins humanity in its headlong race, to where we're not always sure. In this race to somewhere, this rush to everywhere, there are infinite opportunities to pray. Each prayer is a time to stop, and in the stopping there is a stillness, a rich occasion to reflect intensely in a poem. And I know

some people who write poetry each time a baby is born. God knows, and so do we, that a prayer can't hurt the human race and neither can a poem. Is there any doubt that at those times when it seems a poem isn't the right thing to do, somehow a prayer is uttered, such as when a precious friend succumbs to illness and we've nothing left to do but say goodbye as gracefully as we can. The single act of choosing or composing a poem to honour she who has passed on also appeases the hurt of those who, in her absence, will carry on. To Diane's family and to Anne's family, know that our hearts are broken with yours.

A poem offers permission too. At the launch of Poets' Haven on September 9th at the Upper Crust Restaurant, the poems we heard allowed us to laugh, cry, think, and even dream about launching into space. With the theme of LIFT OFF!, we revelled in the possibilities of the 2013-2014 Poets' Haven reading series. More recently, poetry allowed a young woman to remember sweetly the difference between love and lust at breakfast as the sprig of parsley placed tenderly in her hair. Not long ago at Audreys Bookstore, several people gathered to lean into the warmth that poetry offered on a sunshiny cold Sunday afternoon after Saturdays storm. Richard Davies offered a wonderful workshop on "sound and Image" last weekend, and we're looking forward to Rayanne Doucet's workshop in January and Jannie Edwards, workshop in February.

The Edmonton Stroll of Poets has many to thank for supporting our efforts to keep poetry resounding through this great city: Audreys Bookstore, the Upper Crust Restaurant, the Edmonton Public Library, the Edmonton Arts Council, the City of Edmonton, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Writers' Guild of Alberta.

Bards have kept their promise to permit us to listen closely and believe fiercely that human life is so much more eloquent with poetry in it. This message has taken me longer to compose than I wanted, but as I reflect back over it I am filled with hope and gratitude for the place of poetry in my life and all the poets who befriend me and refine me. As the blacksmith wields his hammer, the poet taps out her beat, the ear's tympanum resonates with the rhythm of the malleus on the incus, and the stapes like a stirrup gives us opportunity to hearken the poet and her work.

Naomi McIlwraith 15 December 2013

# Annual Reports

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORTS EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings Strollers;

Thank you for your support this year. Whether you were involved as a board or committee member, mic or door host, or an engaged Haven audience member, your investment was of immeasurable value to our community. I'm pleased to report that it was another successful season in what has become an enduring tradition of excellence for the Edmonton Stroll of Poets. As I reflect on the completion of our twenty-sixth year of operation I am gratefully reminded that what made us still sustains us. We were born to serve poetry and poets in and around Edmonton and we continue to do so.

The Poets' Haven continues to grow in popularity providing new and experienced poets an opportunity to express themselves in a democratic and supportive atmosphere. I am also grateful for the efforts of Janis, Susana, Anne, and Marco for their contributions that keep our regular poetry gig running. I'm also thankful for their contributions on the board along with Alice, Naomi, and David. I'd like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for Naomi McIlwraith's incredible long service to our board (12 years!) and to David for his contributions this past year. We wish them both the best.

I've always been impressed with how we've been able to hold true to our values and continue to seek ways to innovate and grow. Maintaining relevance and imagining progress, in an evermore-connective world, is a challenge we embrace. As always, it is the strength of our membership that keeps us vital. You're the heart, you're the beat, and you're the thump that keeps us jumping!

Yours in verse, John Leppard

## 2019 ANNUAL REPORTS EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well, my friends, another successful Stroll of Poets year is over and as I reflect on the season a number of feelings present themselves. I am so grateful for the contributions of our many volunteers. We are powered by your energy, thank you., I am also thankful to our supportive membership, whose financial donations allow us to continue to keep membership costs and

Haven fees at an accessible level. We truly are the best ticket in town. I shared the sadness we all felt, as we bid farewell to three long-time members of our community, Vanna Tessier, Max Foster, and Melle Huizinga. Their unique voices in our choir will be missed.

I felt tremendous pride in the Stroll many times this past season and I'd like to share a highlight. While testing the sound system for a Sunday Haven at Audrey's Books, a stranger asked me what was happening. "Poetry Reading?" he asked, "I write poetry!" That fellow stayed, and although extremely nervous, shared a lovely poem he'd just written, at the open mic. When finished, he was met with applause and smiles that carried him back to his chair. He had just received the overwhelming support typical of a Stroll welcome. It is my hope that he will accept the invitation to join our community, but if he doesn't he will always have that moment of validation; that moment when he was heard. I've never felt more proud of our family.

One more feeling, simply one of joy. We welcomed over twenty first-time readers at the Poet's Haven open mic this year. That's a lot of affirmation for new poets regardless of age or ability. What we do, we do well my friends, and I can't wait to see what the next year brings us!  
Yours in verse, John Leppard

## **2020 ANNUAL REPORTS EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Another wonderful poetry season is coming to a close and as we stand at the threshold of our 30<sup>th</sup> year of operation I marvel anew at the power of poetry and poets. Certainly, that power would not manifest without the strength and determination of our many volunteers who sustain its governance and manage our highly successful Poet's Haven Reading Series. It has been my absolute to work with an amazing group of people including the Stroll board and associates, our administrative assistant Ellen Kartz and anthology editor Deborah Lawson. Their unwavering support and commitment to the health and welfare of the Stroll and its membership are the heart and soul of our organization.

This year the board bids farewell to our friend Marco Melfi, who has served as vice-president for six years. In that capacity he has acted as my sounding board on many occasions. His honesty and support have been of such immense value to the Stroll. Marco has also served in the capacity of Haven coordinator all of those six years and under his guidance we modernized the sign-up process, altered the floor plan at the Upper Crust to accommodate more seating, and have seen our average nightly attendance go from 38 to 50. But that wasn't all that he did. He also served as website manager and communications coordinator, developing our presence on social media. When the board decided that the Stroll should further extend its arms to the community, Marco took the lead on our exciting Outreach and Development Committee. We are so grateful for Marco's dedication and commitment to the Stroll of Poets and wish him all the very best in his new leadership and poetic pursuits.

To all who volunteered their time this past season to support the Stroll and the Poet's Haven Thank You, so very much. Every contribution is of value and tremendously appreciated!

Yours in verse,  
John Leppard

## **2021 ANNUAL REPORTS EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Greetings friends,

Recently, I witnessed the return of a pair of Canada geese to my neighbourhood. Their distinctive, joyful call and majestic presence filled my heart with hope. This winter has certainly been a dark one in so many ways. Last spring, circumstances required that we examine innovative ways to keep our community informed and engaged. Our leadership group and membership recognized the growth opportunities inherent in these challenges. Your commitment to sustaining the heartbeat of poetry has not wavered and I am proud of your courage and contributions.

Our Poet's Haven reading series found a new home online. Thanks to Janis Dow and the Haven team, we have been able to provide a space for poets from across North America to share their verse in a respectful and supportive virtual atmosphere. We dearly miss the friendly confines of the Upper Crust Café, but are well situated to continue with this format until safe to do so. A huge note of thanks to Lisa Mulrooney for her patient instruction in the finer points of Zoom management.

The 2020 anthology made its way into our hands thanks to the tireless efforts of our stalwart editor Deborah Lawson and her team of volunteers. She offered time, energy, and lovely front yard to insure that we had a safe and friendly way to acquire our copies. We are so fortunate to have someone as passionate and dedicated managing this worthy publication.

We are in a sound position financially, due in large part to your generosity as members. You truly understand the value of what the Stroll seeks to do and your contributions help significantly in this regard. Many thanks to our fiscal wizard, Alice Major, for keeping us solvent and secure.

The year ahead will be an interesting one. We will be celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with some special events. The pandemic continues to create uncertainty as to how and where we may be able to commune, yet one thing remains certain. We will continue to find ways to celebrate poetry and poets in the same spirit that started our community flame burning thirty years ago.

In closing, I would like to say that it has been an honour to serve as your president. I think I fell in love with the Stroll the first time I attended an event. It was definitely love at first mic. Having the opportunity to work with other dedicated leaders these past few years has been very

rewarding. Thank you for placing your trust in me and thank you for being the amazing supportive community you will always be.

Yours in verse,  
John Leppard



## STROLL OF POETS FOUNDERS

*Edited December 31, 2016*

At the anniversary committee meeting we discussed the concept of founder. We determined that it might mean anyone who may have been integral to establishing the foundation of the Stroll. Some significant foundation stones were laid in those early years and we want to honor anyone who may have had an important role in that process.

This list is a work in progress and will be completed following input from those we know were there at the beginning.

### FOUNDERS

Doug Elves  
Ivan Sundal  
Alice Major  
Anna Marie Sewell  
Bert Almon  
Jocko  
Andrew Thomson  
Thomas Trofimuk  
Diane Zinyk  
\* John King Farlowe  
Ken Wilson  
Peter Cole  
Glen Kirkland  
Ruth Anderson Donovan  
Marilyn Dumont  
\* Alberta Cole  
\* Dean Morrison McKenzie  
Myrna Garanis  
Anna Mioduchowska  
Olga Costopulous  
Jannie Edwards  
Jennifer Eagle  
Phillip Jagger  
Richard Davies



## The Edmonton Stroll of Poets Past Board Members

### 1991 – 1992

Charles Mandel  
Karen Peterson  
Alan Demeule  
Mary T McDonald  
Doug Elves  
Glen Kirkland  
Dean M McKenzie  
Nigel Darbasie  
Faye Francis  
Ken Wilson  
Andrew Thompson  
John King-Farlow  
Ruth Donovan  
Marilyn Dumont  
Peter Cole  
Ivan Sundal  
Myrna Garanis

### 1992 – 1993

?

### 1993 – 1994

Ivan Sundal  
Doug Elves  
Katherine McKee  
Merna?  
Andrew Thompson

### 1994 – 1995

President: Candace Bamber  
Treasurer: Doug Elves  
Secretary: Anna Mioduchowska  
Members at large:  
Jacques Benoit  
Annette Cannelle  
Ruth Anderson Donovan  
Paul Matwychuk  
Katherine McKee  
Tracy Murray  
Anna Marie Sewell  
Ivan Sundal  
Andrew Thompson  
Ken Wilson

### 1995 – 1996

Candace Bamber  
Doug Elves  
Jocelyne Verret  
Tracy Murray  
Ivan Sundal  
William Nichols  
Annette Cannell  
Lyle Weiss  
Andrew Thompson

1996 – 1997

Jocelyn Verret  
Sandra Ellerbeck  
Ivan Sundal  
Ruth Donovan  
Lyle Weiss  
Doug Elves  
Geraldine Matus  
Michael Glosel  
Paul Pearson  
Sandy Sprinkle  
Tracy Murray  
Don Butler  
William Nichols  
Andrew Thompson

1997 – 1998

Anna Mioduchowska  
Doug Elves  
Geraldine Matus  
Anna Marie Sewell  
Michael Walters  
Helen Lavender  
Louis Munan  
William Nichols  
Jocelyne Verret

1998 – 1999

President: Anna Mioduchowska  
Vice President: William Nichols  
Treasurer: Gordon McRae  
Workshop Coordinator: Louis Munan  
Newsletter: Nancy Mackenzie  
Secretary: Helen Lavender  
Marilyn Hooper

1999 – 2000

President: Nancy Mackenzie  
Vice-President: Beckie Garber Conrad  
Past President: Anna Mioduchowska  
Treasurer/Webmaster: Gordon McRae  
Secretary: Candyce Neill  
Volunteer Coordinator: Jenine Dumont  
Members at Large:  
Fred Anderson  
Pamela Young  
Jackie Bell

2000 – 2001

President: Mark Kozub  
Vice President: Jocko (Jacques Benoit)  
Treasurer/Webmaster: Gordon McRae  
Past president: Nancy Mackenzie  
Volunteer Coordinator: Thomas Trofimuk  
Secretary: Cindy-Lou Prokopy  
Beckie Garber Conrad  
Ronald Kurr

### 2001 – 2002

President: Mark Kozub  
Vice President: Thomas Trofimuk  
Secretary: Cindy-Lou Prokopy  
Treasurer/Webmaster: Gordon  
McRae  
Volunteer Coordinator: John  
Chalmers  
Past president: Nancy McKenzie  
Helen Lavender  
Ken Sutton  
Christina Tower

### 2002 – 2003

President: Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck  
Past president: Mark Kozub  
Treasurer/webmaster: Doug Elves  
Secretary: Ben Murray  
Volunteer Coordinator: Ivan Sundal  
Workshop Coordinator: John  
Chalmers  
Ken Sutton  
Tom Emmens  
Pierrette Requier

### 2003 – 2004

President: Oswald Meyer  
Past president: Ivan Sundal  
Secretary: TDL Turner  
Webmaster: Doug Elves  
Treasurer: Trevor Dekort  
Tim Cusack  
Michael Appleby  
Andy Michaelson  
Pierrette Requier

### 2004 – 2005

President: Andrew Thompson  
Vice President: Jocko (Jacques  
Benoit)  
Past President: Oswald Meyer  
Treasurer: Angela Dekort  
Secretary:  
Members at Large:  
Phil Jagger  
Naomi McIlwraith  
Sangeeta Zilka

### 2005 – 2006

President: Jocelyne Verret  
Vice President:  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Doug Elves  
Secretary: Julie Robinson  
Members at Large:  
Pierrette Requier  
Ivan Sundal  
Anna Mioduchowska  
Oswald Meyer  
Diane Buchanan

2006 – 2007

President: Jocelyne Verret  
Treasurer: Doug Elves  
Secretary: Julie Robinson  
Members at Large:  
Pierette Requier  
Ivan Sundal  
Anna Mioduchowska  
Oswald Meyer  
Diane Buchanan

2007 – 2008

President: Julie Robinson  
Vice-President: Jo-Ann Godfrey  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Michelle Brandt  
Secretary: Naomi McIlwraith  
Members at Large:  
Ivan Sundal  
Julie Robinson  
Amanda Lopatka

2008 – 2009

President: Gary Garrison  
Vice-President: Michelle Brandt  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Wendy Joy  
Secretary: Naomi McIlwraith  
Members at Large:  
Hank Binnema  
Jo-Ann Godfrey  
Anton Capri  
Lisa Guenther

2009 – 2010

President: Gary Garrison  
Vice-President: Lorraine  
McFaddin  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Sharon Ingraham  
Members at Large:  
Hank Binnema  
Anne Gerard Marshall  
Carlean Fisher  
Marcia O'Connor

2010 – 2011

President: Sharon Ingraham  
Vice President: Lorraine  
McFaddin  
Past President: Gary Garrison  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Ben Chu  
Members at Large:  
Anne Gerard Marshall  
Marcia O'Connor

2011 – 2012

President: Naomi McIlwraith  
Vice President: Anne Gerard  
Marshall  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Marcia O'Connor  
Members at Large:  
Cecelia Hutchinson  
Diane Robitelle  
Allison Akgungor

### 2012 – 2013

President: Naomi McIlwraith  
Vice President: John Leppard  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Marcia O'Connor  
Members at Large:  
Anne Gerard Marshall  
Allison Akgungor  
Mary Campbell  
Diane Robitelle

### 2013 – 2014

President: Naomi McIlwraith  
Vice President: John Leppard  
Past President:  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Marcia O'Connor  
Members at Large:  
Anne Gerard Marshall  
Allison Akgungor  
Mary Campbell  
Diane Robitelle

### 2014 – 2015

President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Diane Robtelle  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Naomi McIlwraith  
Poets Haven: Marco Melfi,  
Anne Gerard Marshall  
Social Media Coordinator:  
Linda  
Papineau-Couture

### 2015 – 2016

President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Marco Melfi  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Naomi McIlwraith  
Directors: Janaan Dekker, Matthew Dekker  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: John Leppard,  
Marco Melfi  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne Gerard Marshall  
Social Media Coordinator: Linda Papineau-  
Couture  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison: Alice Major  
Communications Coordinator: Ellen Kartz  
Webmaster: Doug Elves

### 2016 – 2017

President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Marco Melfi  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Naomi McIlwraith  
Directors: Janaan Dekker, Matthew Dekker  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: Susana Chalut,  
Janis Dow, John Leppard, Marco Melfi  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne Gerard Marshall  
Social Media Coordinator: Linda Papineau-  
Couture  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison: John Leppard  
Communications Coordinator: Ellen Kartz  
Webmaster: Doug Elves

2017 – 2018

President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Marco Melfi  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Naomi McIlwraith  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: Susana  
Chalut, Janis Dow, John Leppard, Marco  
Melfi  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne Gerard  
Marshall  
Social Media Coordinator: Marco Melfi  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison: John  
Leppard, David R Crone  
Communications Coordinator: Ellen Kartz  
Webmaster: Doug Elves

2018 – 2019

President: John Lepperd  
Vice President: Marco Melfi  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Lisa Mulrooney  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: Susana  
Chalut, Janis Dow, John Lepperd, Marco  
Melfi  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne Gerard  
Marshall  
Social Media Coordinator: Marco Melfi,  
Josh Luukkonen  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison: Markus  
Eymann  
Partnership Coordinator, Writers Guild of  
Alberta: Ellen Kartz  
Webmaster: Marco Melfi

2019 – 2020

President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Marco Melfi  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Lisa Mulrooney  
Members at Large:  
Naomi McIlwraith, Anne Gerard  
Marshall, Janis Dow, Markus  
Eymann  
Associate Members:  
Josh Luukkonen, Audrey Brooks,  
Max Vandersteen  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: Janis  
Dow, John Leppard, Marco Melfi  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne Gerard  
Marshall  
Communications Coordinators:  
Marco Melfi, Josh Luukkonen  
Outreach and Development  
Coordinators: Marco Melfi, Josh  
Luukkonen  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison:  
Markus Eymann  
Partnership Coordinator, Writers  
Guild of Alberta: Ellen Kartz  
Webmaster: Marco Melfi

## 2020 – 2021

President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Janis Dow  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Lisa Mulrooney  
Members at Large:  
Markus Eymann, Anne Gerard  
Marshall, Shirley Serviss  
Associate Members:  
Naomi McIlwraith, Audrey  
Brooks, Max Vandersteen  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: Janis  
Dow, John Leppard, Naomi  
McIlwraith  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne  
Gerard Marshall  
Communications Coordinators:  
Josh Luukkonen, Lisa Mulrooney  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison:  
Markus Eymann  
Outreach and Development  
Coordinators: Josh Luukkonen,  
Alice Major, Lisa Mulrooney,  
Shirley Serviss, Max  
Vandersteen  
Partnership Coordinator, Writers  
Guild of Alberta: Ellen Kartz  
Website Management: Ellen  
Kartz, Mike Gravel

## 2021 – 2022

President: Janis Dow  
Past President: John Leppard  
Vice President: Max Vandersteen  
Treasurer: Alice Major  
Secretary: Markus Eymann  
Members at Large:  
Naomi McIlwraith, Anne Gerard  
Marshall, Shirley Serviss, Loren  
Marsden  
Associate Members:  
Audrey Brooks, Thomas Schuelke,  
Leslie Dawson  
Poets' Haven Coordinators: Janis Dow,  
John Leppard, Naomi McIlwraith  
Poets' Haven Hostess: Anne Gerard  
Marshall  
Communications Coordinators: Max  
Vandersteen, Loren Marsden  
Anthology Coordinator/Liaison:  
Markus Eymann  
Outreach and Development  
Coordinators: Alice Major, Shirley  
Serviss, Max Vandersteen  
Partnership Coordinator, Writers Guild  
of Alberta: Ellen Kartz  
Website Management: Ellen Kartz,  
Mike Gravel

## 30 Years of Anthology Editors

1991: Peter J. Cole, Andrew Thompson, Thomas Trifimuk, Ken Wilson  
1992: Peter J. Cole  
1993: Peter J. Cole  
1994: Katherine McKee  
1995: Anna Mioduchowska  
1996: Ivan Sundal  
1997: Nancy Mackenzie  
1998: Nancy Mackenzie  
1999: Nancy Mackenzie  
2000: Linda Dumont, Nancy Mackenzie  
2001: Rusti Lehay  
2002: Doug Elves  
2003: Darcia Dahl  
2004: John J. Chalmers  
2005: (Transitional year; no Anthology published)  
2006: Ivan Sundal  
2007: Julie Robinson  
2008: Anton Z. Capri  
2009: Anna Marie Sewell  
2010: S.E. Ingraham  
2011: Audrey Seehagen  
2012: Audrey Seehagen  
2013: Audrey Seehagen  
2014: Audrey Seehagen  
2015: Deborah Lawson  
2016: Deborah Lawson  
2017: Deborah Lawson  
2018: Deborah Lawson  
2019: Deborah Lawson  
2020: Deborah Lawson  
2021: Deborah Lawson  
2022: Deborah Lawson  
2023: Deborah Lawson



## Deceased Stroll of Poets Members

Douglas Barbour  
Ryan Robert Beauvais  
E.D. Blodgett (2<sup>nd</sup> Poet Laureate of Edmonton)  
Jerry Brown  
Diane Buchanan  
Anton Capri  
Alberta Cole  
Maria Dycha  
John King Farlow  
Maxwell Foster  
Luis Hernandez  
David Huggett  
Melle Huizenga  
Fabian Jennings  
Marline Kalin  
Gordon Kemp  
Glen Kirkland  
Helen Lavender  
Jim Lavers  
Fred Marshall  
Keith Edward Martin  
Mary T. McDonald  
Jean Carmichael McKenzie  
Dean Morrison McKenzie  
Consortia L. Mendoza  
Andy Michaelson  
Joy-Ruth Mickelson  
Isabel Miller  
Louis Munan  
Joyce Pinckney  
Marguerite Redshaw  
Catherine Sewell  
Robin Smith  
Ken Steele  
Vanna Tessier  
Moncrieff Williamson

## **List of Edmonton's Poets Laureate**

2005 – 2007: Alice Major  
2007 – 2009: Ted Blodgett  
2009 – 2011: Roland Pemberton  
2011 – 2013: Anna Marie Sewell  
2013 – 2015: Mary Pinkoski  
2015 – 2017: Pierrette Requier  
2017 – 2019: Ahmed “Knowmadic” Ali  
2019 – 2021: Nisha Patel  
2021 – 2023: Titilope Sonuga



## THE STROLL OF POETS PRESS COVERAGE

Edmonton Examiner, Sunday, October 20, 1991

Call The Talking News

# First poetry stroll ready

By Jeremy Bowers  
Staff Writer

Local writers are planning to wax poetic in Old Strathcona as part of a new festival.

Edmonton's first poetry festival, the Stroll of Poets, will weave its way through the bookstores and bistros of Whyte Avenue Oct. 27.

"It's to expose local poets on a larger scale," says organizing committee member and native poet Peter Cole. "We want to have something for people who are primarily interested in poetry."

The festival will highlight 65 city poets' work, including a special focus on the writing of five native poets, he says.

Readings will begin every hour on the hour between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. beginning at Bjarne's Books, 10005 82 Ave. and winding westward to Edmonton Bookstore, 8530 109 St. The idea is for the public to take in a reading at one venue, and stroll

along Whyte Avenue to the next reading.

Cole says it was something area businesses were excited to get involved with.

"They're quite enthusiastic. I think it was a good idea to connect it to a strip. We tried to make it so people really could stroll."

Another goal of the festival is to bring poets together to see if there is interest in forming a non-profit society which could make the stroll an annual event, says Cole.

"We don't want to make it into some great, massive Fringe thing. We know that there's probably a limited poetry audience."

Organizers are also trying to bring closet poets in the audience out to an open stage reading at 4:30 p.m.

"We think that most people that would come to an event like this are poets themselves."

If you're interested in the open stage, call Ken at 431-0052 or Peter at 436-2488 to register.

# No bards barred from stroll of poets

LYNNE VAN LUVEN  
Journal Staff Writer

Edmonton

Just how big is a "stroll" of poets, anyhow?

According to Bert Almon, one of the organizers of Edmonton's first-ever poetic equivalent to the popular art-gallery walks, Sunday's *Stroll of Poets* will feature about "64 poets, by my count.

"There are 32 male, 32 female," Almon said, "and I'm told the ages range from 19 to 79. Ethnic groups are well-represented. At least four writers are natives.

"The whole enterprise has been democratic and inclusive," Almon said, adding that the poetry festival, co-organized by Doug Elves, Ken Wilson, Peter Cole and Ivan Sundal, has relied on volunteer labor.

Organizers see the event as a way to present the spoken word in an engaging and accessible format.

And just how does a poets stroll work, anyhow?

Starting at 1 p.m. next Sunday, participants can take in the four scores of poets reading their work in 10 South Side coffee shops and bookstores.

Beginning on the hour at 1 p.m. through 4 p.m., groups of four or five participating poets will give 30-minute recitations and readings. In the breaks between, the public may browse in bookstores and grab a coffee before strolling on to the next reading.

The event culminates with a *No Bards Barred Bar* at Yesterday's Lounge in the Renford Inn on Whyte, where musician-poets will perform.

Venues participating in the *Stroll of Poets* are Bjarne's Books, Cafe Mosaics on Whyte, Grabba Jabba, Athabasca Books, Afterwords Books, Aspen Books, Common Woman Books, Varscona Books, Blue Nile Restaurant and Edmonton Bookstore.

Admission to all the readings is free. For more information, call Doug Elves at 426-1751, Ken Wilson at 431-0052 or Ivan Sundal at 421-0227.



Greg Southam *The Journal*

Poets in motion will include, from left, Vasilis Costopoulos and his mother Olga, Riith Donovan, Bert Almon and Doug Elves

Edmonton Journal Monday, October 21, 1991

## Notes to you . . .

You can't keep a good poet down — or at home for that matter.

From the same people who organized the *Stroll of Poets* at the end of October comes *The 12 Days of Poetry*, Dec. 17 through Jan. 4. "The First Day of Poetry" begins Tuesday at the Upper Crust Restaurant, 10909 86th Ave., at 6 p.m. with Beth Goobie, Victor Milo, Alberta Cole, Ken Wilson, Jannie Edwards, and special guest Earl Klein reciting poems by Dylan Thomas.

On Wednesday, again at the Upper Crust at 6 p.m., participating poets will be Ted Blodgett, John King-Farlow, Faye Francis, Doug Elves, Bill Lysak and special guest Dr. Robert Buck reciting Homer.

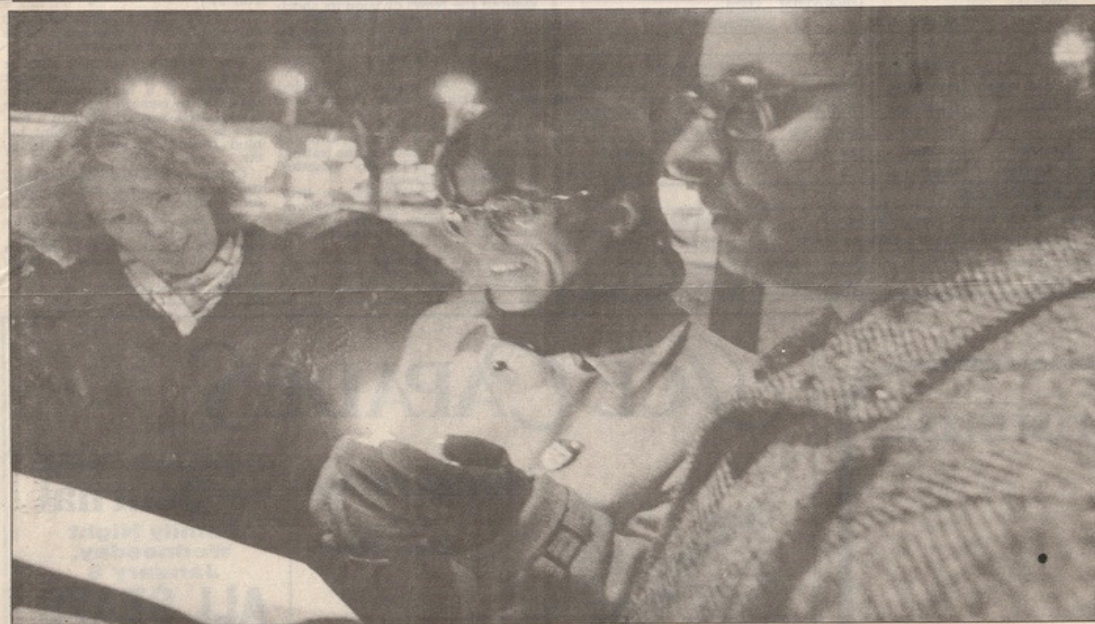
Thursday, "The Third Day of Poetry," sees poets Bert Almon, Olga Costopoulos, Ken Howe, Sally Ito, Alan Richards and Margaret

Almon read at the Upper Crust again at 6 p.m.

On Friday at 8 p.m. at the Grabba Jabba Bistro, 8137 104th St., the performance includes poetry, song, flute and guitar with Mark Holmgren, "Sheela na Gig," Richard Davies, Dean McKenzie and Glen Kirkland.

And on Saturday, Dec. 21, the "Fifth Day of Christmas," features Solstice Poems with Bill Metten, Jennifer Eagle, Scott Wicken, Dianne Linden, Stephen Humphrey, Mary Woodbury and Candas Jane Dorsey at Grabba Jabba at 8 p.m. The festival gives the opportunity for dozens of Edmonton poets to perform "a dozen days of poetry," free of charge in a variety of locations, organizers say. For more information, call 426-1751, 431-0052 or 421-0227.

Edmonton Journal Sunday, December 15, 1991



Edmonton Journal  
December 17, 1991

**A-MUSED** — Candas Jane Dorsey, Michael Cenker and Andrew Thompson were among the local poets who gathered recently at the Gazebo in Old Strathcona to "invoke the Muse," as a kickoff for The 12 Days of Poetry, which begins tonight at 6 p.m. at the Upper Crust Restaurant, 10909 86th Ave. The poetic celebration, featuring scores of Edmonton poets, runs until Jan. 4 at a number of Strathcona and Garneau bistros and restaurants. Further information is available from 426-1751.

# Poets cover all the angles

Readings set atop AGT Tower

LYNNE VAN LUVEN  
Journal Staff Writer



Gerald Hill, Mary Howes and Nigel Darbasie in rehearsal, high above the city

Ed Kaiser The Journal

**Edmonton**  
A storm is brewing in the skies above Edmonton, and the poets are in the thick of it.

On this sultry mid-week evening, they're perched above the concrete and asphalt of the city's downtown core, planning a poetry reading of heightened awareness.

The event, *Poets of the Four Quarters*, a benefit for the Stroll of Poets Society, is set for Thursday, June 18 at 8:15 p.m. in Vista 33, the 33rd Floor observation lounge of the AGT Tower.

Reading their work in the "four corners" of the lounge will be four Edmonton poets: Molly Chisaakay, Nigel Darbasie, Gerald Hill and Mary Howes.

Each will present unique poetry from a different perspective throughout the panoramic readings, which are scheduled to end at sunset — 10:06 p.m.

The idea, explains organizer Ivan Sundal, is that the audience will have the chance to "stroll" from one short reading to another, and listen to poets at four different locations, each with a different scenic backdrop.

And it should be noted that Edmonton is a serene green and charming place when regarded from 33 floors up; you can almost forget about potholes and civic politics.

The idea for the sky-view reading, says Sundal, originated with local poet Doug Elves, one of the forces behind last year's Stroll of Poets, which saw 60 local writers read their works in a variety of bookstores and bistros on a late-October Sunday afternoon.

Money raised by the *Poets of the Four Quarters* readings will go towards the organization of this year's stroll, set for Oct. 4, and to the anthology based upon the readings.

Poet Gerald Hill says his contributions to the *Four Quarters* readings are intended to "deliver something to the audience, they are meant to be heard."

"If they were meant to be read, they'd be different." Hill plans to read three works, *33 Reasons for the 33rd Floor*, *Peter Pocklington Sunset* and *Typical Virgo*.

Mary Howes says she will be reading "some new stuff," in-

cluding work from a new sequence of poems, *The Lost and Found Department*, "about loss and reclamation . . . from the four points of the emotional compass."

Molly Chisaakay will present poems on the environment, social issues and native culture.

And Nigel Darbasie also plans to read from work in progress, including both prose and poetry.

Sundal hopes to sell the full complement of 150 tickets for the June 18 readings.

And, he says, thanks to the community sponsors for the event, organizers hope to keep the benefit's expenses to a minimum.

AGT is donating the space for the reading, and other sponsors include Arden Theatre, Sweetwater Cafe, Confetti's, New Asian Village, Upper Crust Restaurant, Cafe Mosaics and the Alberta College Conservatory of Music.

The \$15 ticket — available at The Gramophone and Athabasca Books — includes food and beverages.

For more information, call 421-0227.

<b>HOT.</b>	<b>NOT.</b>
<b>Some like it HOT!</b>	
SUBSCRIBE NOW FOR AS LITTLE AS \$6.99	

Edmonton Journal, Friday, June 12, 1992

# Notes to you . . .

Strolling poets take note: there's exactly one month left to deadline for submissions to the Stroll of Poets anthology. Poets planning to perform at this fall's stroll, set for Oct. 4., should submit one poem of their own choice or submit two or three works and "let the judges decide." Poets are asked to remember that the anthology is geared to a wide reading audience, says organizer Ivan Sundal. For more submission details, call Sundal at 421-0227; Doug Elves at 426-1751 or Ken Wilson at 431-0052. The 300 anthologies from the 1991 stroll, Edmonton's first, are now collectors items, and the 1992 event is expected to involve even more poets and venues.

Edmonton Journal  
Sunday, July 5, 1992

# Literary postie brings poetry to the people

By CATHERINE GIRCZYC  
Special to Neighbors

Doug Elves believes in bringing poetry to the people.

He's the mastermind behind last year's first Edmonton Stroll of Poets, a very successful series of poetry readings, due to return this fall.

"Poets have to take the audience more seriously, and poetry has to be treated as part of our culture," says Elves. "That's partly one of the benefits of having events that are novel, unusual in themselves. People then see that they can enjoy poetry."

Since the stroll, Elves has helped organize other events to bring poetry to the people in bookstores, bars and bistros.

Elves is "the creator of the stroll and other imaginative events," says Ivan Sandul, chairman of the Stroll Society. "He has a kind of genius for that. The stroll was quite wonderful as a community event. Several hundred people came out in the freezing cold to hear poetry."

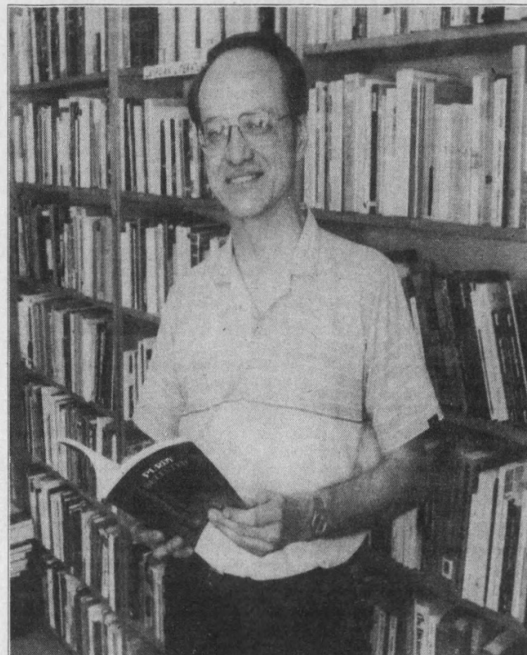
A Canada Post employee, Elves has university degrees in both Classics and Education. His involvement, through work, in the labor movement led him to head the Edmonton Labour Council, a municipal body of the Canadian Labour Congress, for four years. The organizational skills he honed there, he brought to poetry in the city.

He says, "About two or three years ago, when I was trying to renew my interest (in poetry), I'd go to the odd poetry reading. It was hard to get in, and the audience was quite small. We all knew there was no money in poetry, but if there's no audience, you give up."

"Finally, I pulled together a group: Glen Kirkland, Alice Major, myself and others. We spoke to Edmonton Public Library officials about a monthly reading series. For a loonie, you got to hear the poets. It drew about 30 people each time."

The concept of the stroll came to Elves as he was strolling through Whyte Avenue bookstores. "I went into Aspen Books and started chatting with the owner. I got the idea of a Gallery Walk for poets. She liked the idea. Five minutes later, I walked into Athabasca Books and they liked the idea. I tried a few more and got good responses."

His poetry group met Aug. 26 and discussed doing a stroll. Two months and a day later, on Oct. 27, the event drew more than 60 poets and 300 poetry fans to 10 venues. Five venues were open stages, and featured poets from unpublished writ-



Doug Elves is the mastermind behind a number of poetry-promoting local events.

ers to those who have six books in print, says Elves.

Ron Kurt, a local poet and a stroll participant, says, "It was exciting. It was a community gathering. It was a joy meeting other poets, sharing poems, and getting the regular person out there."

Another event, the 12 Days of Poetry at Christmas, poetry in bistros and cafes, grew out of the 1991 stroll and was organized by Elves too. He counted 120 people at one reading alone.

The Poetic Leap, on Feb. 29, was another Elves brainstorm. It featured Mary Woodbury, Candace Jane Dorsey, and others.

In March, Elves organized The Work Poem Contest at Courtney Blake's on Whyte.

Marking the summer solstice, on June 18, the stroll held a benefit, the Poets of the Four Quarters, on the 33rd floor of the AGT Tower. Local poets Mary Howes, Nigel Darbasie, Molly Chisaakay and Gerald Hill, read to an audience including honorary patron, alderman Lillian Storosik.

The funds raised are for printing the second stroll anthology. Elves says of the first anthology, "Twenty-seven days before the event, we had a meeting of the poets and a workshop. Someone brought up the idea

of an anthology (of the poems)." It got done.

He finds great satisfaction in seeing "poetry reach more people. It justifies my faith in the potential of poetry."

Ken Wilson, another stroll organizer, says, "Doug is one of those people who is able to capture your imagination - to be creative, not only on paper, but in the way he presents events and the work he does on them."

"The idea of the stroll, having poetry readings at the same time, was brilliant. He's brought poetry back into popularity just by the way he presents it."

The next stroll is Oct. 4, in Old Strathcona, with each group of poets doing two shows. The audience gets a program to see who's reading and where.

Would-be strollers can submit a poem and short biography for the anthology, by Aug. 5.

For details on the Stroll of Poets, call Ivan Sundal at 421-0227 or write 103, 10826 78 Ave., Edmonton, AB., T6E 1P8.

Last minute joiners can go to Confetti's Restaurant, 7-10 p.m., Aug. 5 to register. Cost is \$5 including a copy of the anthology.

Edmonton Journal Sunday, August 2, 1992

● **Campa On Whyte** hosts readings that will include some poets from the Stroll of Poets, this evening at 7:30 p.m. Other poets are encouraged to attend or participate in future readings. 10760 Whyte Ave.

While we're on the subject of the Stroll of Poets, the deadline for submitting a poem to the Stroll of Poets Anthology '93 is June 1. For information and submission forms, contact Wordworks (10523 100th Ave.) or Athabasca Books (8228 105th St.).

Edmonton Journal Sunday, May 16, 1993

**Launches, signings and readings this week:**

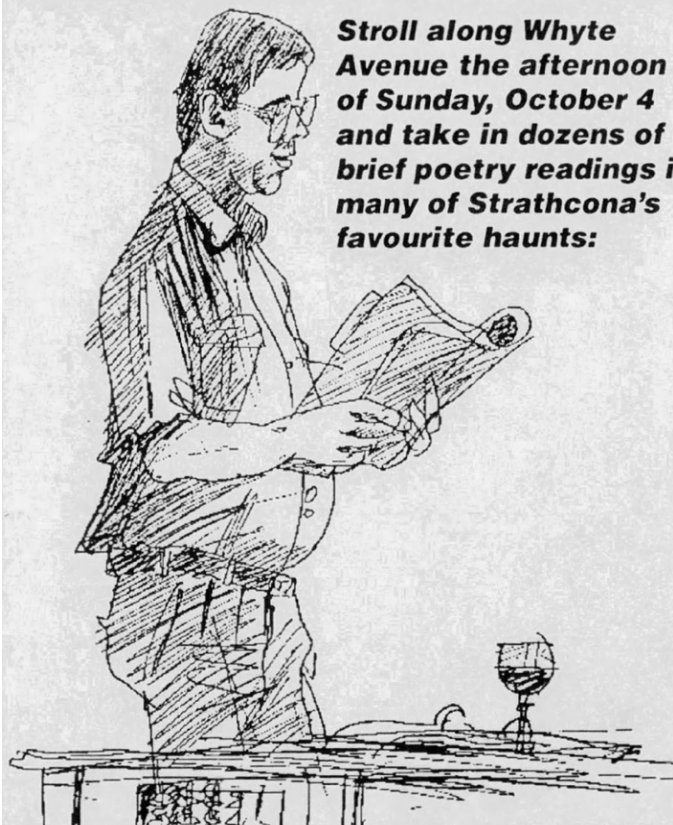
● **Campa On Whyte** hosts readings that will include some poets from the Stroll of Poets, this evening at 7:30 p.m. Featured readers include Philip Jagger, Jay Springbeard and Robin R. Other poets are encouraged to attend or participate in future readings. 10760 Whyte Ave.

While we're on the subject of the Stroll of Poets, the deadline for submitting a poem to the Stroll of Poets Anthology '93 is June 1. For information and submission forms, contact Wordworks (10523 100th Ave.) or Athabasca Books (8228 105th St.).

Edmonton Journal Sunday, May 23, 1993

## The Edmonton Journal invites you to take in the **Stroll of Poets**

**Stroll along Whyte Avenue the afternoon of Sunday, October 4 and take in dozens of brief poetry readings in many of Strathcona's favourite haunts:**



Hanratty's Tea & Pastry Shop, 10341 Whyte	Bjarne's Books, 10533 Whyte
Johann Strauss Coffee House, 8223 - 104 St.	Campa Java, 10760 Whyte
Courtney Blake's Bistro Bar, 10307 Whyte	Cafe Vertigo, 10443 Whyte
Mama's Bistro & Pizzeria, 10507 Whyte	Strathcona Books, 8217 - 104 St.
Le Tastevin Restaurant, 10843 Whyte	Grabba Jabba Bistro, 8137 - 104 St.
Cafe Mosaics Garneau 10844 Whyte	Hugh McColl's Showroom, 10615 Whyte
Earth's General Store, 10832 Whyte	L'Alliance Francaise, 300 - 10318 Whyte
Varscona Books, 2, 10824A Whyte	Stanley Carroll Boutique, 2, 10309 Whyte
Athabasca Books, 8230 - 105 St.	Continental Treat Restaurant, 10560 Whyte

**Schedules of readings will be available at the above locations.**

- **110 local poets will be featured during the festivities from 1 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.**
- **U of A Poet-in-Residence Tom Pow opens the festivities at 11:30 a.m. at an a la carte brunch at Continental Treat**
- **Francophone poets will be featured at L' Alliance Francaise at 1:30 p.m.**
- **Ukrainian readings will be featured at Le Tastevin at 2:30 p.m.**
- **Festivities close at the No Bards Barred Bar with music and poetry fun at Courtney Blake's at 5 :30 p.m.**

The Stroll of Poets Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support provided by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the promotional support provided by The Edmonton Journal and CBC 740. The Stroll of Poets Society supports the aims of the Writers' Guild of Alberta. For more information call 426-1751.

Edmonton Journal Saturday, October 3, 1992

- Vanna Tessier will launch *Beyond Bad Times: An Anthology of North American Poetry* on June 27 at Volume II Bookshop from 2-3:30 p.m. Tessier, the book's editor, will be joined by several of the poets published in the anthology.
- Campa On Whyte hosts readings that will include some poets from the Stroll of Poets, this evening at 7:30 p.m.
- The prose and poetry reading series continues June 28 at Strathcona Books & Coffeebar, 8217 104th St.

Edmonton Journal Sunday, June 27, 1993

author Carol Shields' being named to the Booker Prize shortlist comes a listing in the September issue of the British edition of *Esquire* magazine.

There, in a section called "Smart Books," are descriptions of a pair of Canadian books, including *The Stone Diaries*: "A beautiful, darkly ironic novel of misunderstanding and missed opportunities, detailing the long life of Daisy Goodwill and her clan as they struggle to learn how to love."

The book will be released in Canada in October.

The other book discussed is *We So Seldom Look on Love*, Toronto author Barbara Gowdy's often black — and often misunderstood — short story collection. "Startlingly inventive short stories about necrophilia, Siamese twins and two-headed men that give monstrosity a human face," says *Esquire*.


**The strolling poets of Edmonton:** As Sorento has swallows, so has Edmonton versifiers returning to their natural haunt in Old Strathcona.

The stroll is in its third year, and more than 110 poets will recite their works at an even dozen venues — a full baker's dozen, if you count the opening stroll-brunch buffet with Governor General's Poetry Award-winner Don McKay at the Strathcona Legion, beginning at 11 a.m. on Oct. 3.

The stroll concludes at 5 p.m. back at the No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion, in an evening hosted by CBC's Allan Stein.

And if you simply can't do the Stroll, don't despair: *The Stroll Anthology* is available from Greenwoods' Bookshoppe or Athabasca Books for \$10, and contains one poem by each of the strolling poets.

The Edmonton Journal is proud to sponsor the 3rd Annual



**Stroll of Poets**

On October 3, 1993 a wide range of poets perform short readings in popular Strathcona venues 1 to 5 p.m. Open the Stroll at Brunch with Don McKay, winner of the 1991 Governor-General's Award 11 a.m. at the Strathcona Legion. Brunch buffet ticket \$8 advance until Sept. 29 from Athabasca Books, \$10 thereafter.

Close the stroll at the No Bards Barred Bar. Find the Stroll Schedule in the Sept. 22 - Oct. 5 issue of SEE magazine. Stroll Anthologies available from Athabasca Books and Greenwoods' Bookshoppe. *Stroll of Poets Society* - ph. 424-7764 Tues., Wed., Thurs. 4:30 TO 6:30 pm

Sponsors:  
Alberta Foundation for the Arts  
Canada Council Explorations

The Edmonton Journal

Edmonton Journal Sunday, September 26, 1993

# Poets limber up their stanzas for seasonal stroll

**GORDON MORASH**  
Journal Books Editor

Edmonton

December is the month for countdowns, but poetry lovers might be forgiven for taking the time to do the stroll.

A prime literary event begins this evening with the 12 Days of Christmas, a series of readings that, for the past three years, has been the natural off-shoot of The Stroll of Poets Society.

The reading series, in which four poets entertain nightly at six city restaurants, is the only one in Canada, though festival co-ordinator Anna Mioduchowska says Toronto attempts something similar.

And, she adds, next year Edmontonians face the spectre of competition with Calgary, as that city inau-

gurates its own 12 Nights.

By the conclusion of the Edmonton festival, 44 poets will have strutted their stanzas, with five of the best — as chosen by the audiences — appearing at a gala reading on Jan. 15 at the City Media Club.

"We're trying to get poetry out there in the community," says Mioduchowska, seeing the festival almost as an out-reach project for the society.

Poets for the event have been chosen by a far-ranging panel that includes *See* magazine editor Reg Silvester, city alderman Michael Phair, actor Jan Henderson, Edmonton Public Library director Penny McKee, and *Journal* sports columnist John Short.

"The poets for the 12 nights are chosen from people who take part

in the Stroll of Poets in October," says Mioduchowska. "Anyone can read during the Stroll as long as they pay \$5 to join the society."

To ensure fairness in its selection of 44 poets, the panel was given the unidentified manuscripts of 98 poets from *The 1993 Stroll of Poets Anthology*.

And the ranking doesn't stop there. Each evening, audience members will vote on their favorite poets, to zero in on the selection for the gala.

"Last year, CBC went to all the readings and made the choices, and not everybody was satisfied," says Mioduchowska. "It's supposed to be fun, not a case of life and death."

Venues for readings are the Upper Crust, Asian Village, Hello Deli, 9th Street Bistro, La Boheme, and The Commissary Bistro. Read-

ings begin at 7:30 p.m. (except for the 3 p.m. reading on Dec. 19 at Hello Deli), and no admission is charged; however, "strollers" are encouraged to observe a minimum charge in the restaurants.

Tickets for the 12th night's gala are \$5 and available at Gramophone Records.

A pamphlet detailing the poets' readings is available at bookstores and public library branches.

In the new year, the society — which is funded by a Canada Council Explorations grant, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts — will embark on a series of 10 poetry-writing workshops.

"We go out into the public, show them what we're doing, then see what they're doing, what they want to do, and how they might accomplish it," says Mioduchowska.

Edmonton Journal Thursday, December 16, 1993



# SEE POETRY

## Wholly strolling, or:

### Walking the doggerel

A flock of poets and the propagation of poetry upon Old Strathcona

by Adrian Lackey

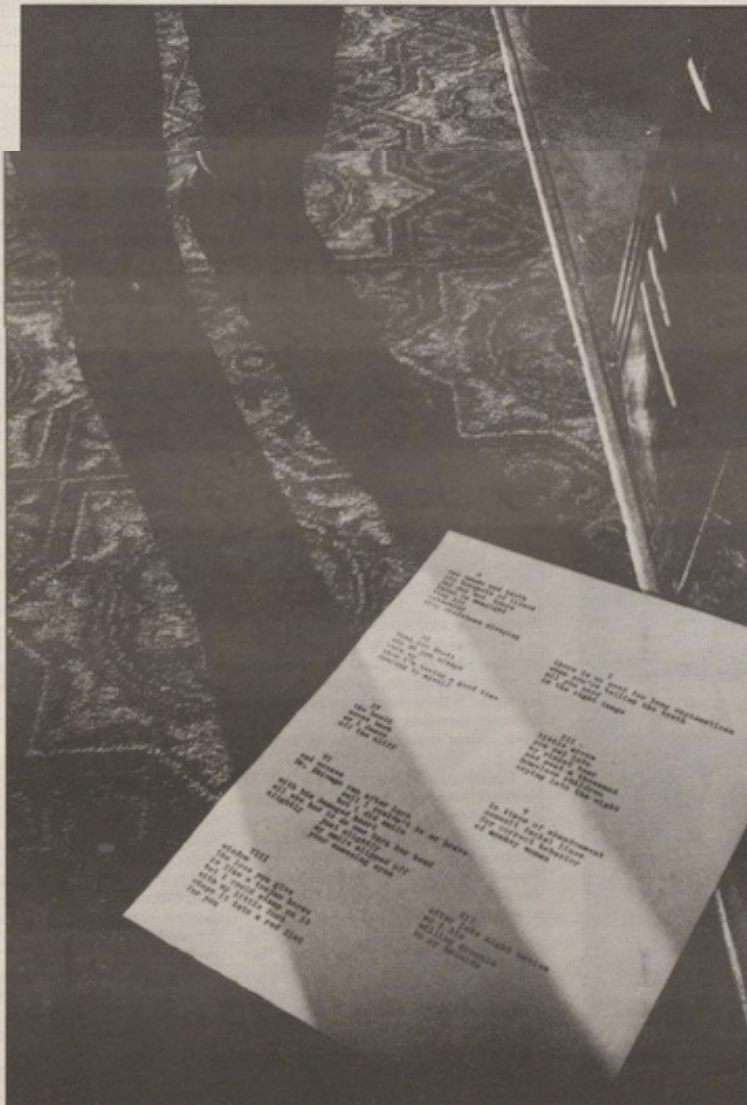


Photo by Peter Sutherland. Thanks to Bonny Bishop

As with poetry itself, the Stroll of Poets arises from inspiration, though the Muse was not directly involved. "We were inspired by the success of the Fringe and Gallery Walk (an annual event in the 124th Street area) to create the event," said Doug Elves, founder of the Stroll and currently treasurer of the Stroll of Poets' Society (A registered society: The annual general meeting is in March).

While the Stroll hasn't matched the success of the Fringe, it, like the world renowned theatre festival, doubled its attendance in the first two years, from 700 to 1,500 people. "It's grown beyond my wildest dreams," exclaimed Elves, a poet who poses as a mild-mannered postal employee by day. "As long as we are gathering an audience further than friends and immediate family, we will consider ourselves a success."

The third annual Stroll of Poets is set to go Oct. 3 with various shops and eateries around Old Strathcona playing host. The format is thus: A series of groups of five poets each will read at each venue for 25 to 30 minutes. Each poet will read for five minutes at two venues. The event's equivalent of a program is The Stroll of Poets Anthology '93. It contains one poem by each of the 110 poets participating in the event, and will be available for \$10 at the venues. They include: Harratty's Tea House, Sunflower Gallery, Black Dog, Athabasca Books, Bjarne's Books, Mama's Bistro, Caffe Latte, Continental Treat, Akashik Books, Greenwood's, Strathcona Legion, and Hugh McColl's Auto Showroom.

Most of the venues seem to be a natural choice. As Elves says, even before the stroll "readings took place in book stores and bistros and those seemed to be the obvious venues, because we don't get 200 people to a

Continued...

## Wholly strolling

Continued from page 1

poetry reading ... not yet."

But what about Hugh McColl's? "They weren't normally open on Sundays. But the sales manager agreed to come in and at least get some paper work done. I mean, the guy was giving up his day off, but he greeted me afterwards with a big smile and told me that he had sold a fairly expensive car as a result of being open that day."

The society hopes that similar benefits will befall all the shops that offer themselves up for use for the Stroll. "It gives people a chance to browse around shops and stores that they might not otherwise know about, or order food at a bistro

### "To promote poetry and make it more accessible to the public. Specifically: the spoken word."

The mission statement for The Stroll of Poets Society (Give or take a few words...)

they've never been in," said Anna Marie Sewel, vice-president of the Stroll.

More than 200 poets have performed

there is a core of poets back for a third time, "there is about a 30-percent turnover of poets each year," stated Elves, without the slightest bit of inflection. To him and the other organizers this is neither good nor bad, it simply is. There will always be an abundant supply of fresh meat, audience members willing to sign up for next year's Stroll, their fire ignited by what they've heard.

#### Begin with brunch

The festival will open with a brunch at the Strathcona Legion (10416-81 Ave.) at 11 a.m. Featured will be a reading by Don McKay, winner of the 1991 Governor

General's Award for poetry and writer in residence at the U of A. This is the only event with an admission fee. All the other readings are free!

Other features of the Stroll are the open stage at Akashik Books (2-4 p.m.) and the No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion at the end of the afternoon. At both of those places, people not listed on the Stroll's official program are encouraged to get up and perform a work of their own. (Or fans can challenge each other to say "No Bards Barred Bar" fast five times after a few pints of their favorite ale.)

Once again, the Poetry Sweatshop, an event where poets are given a topic and a half-hour to produce a poem, will be taped and broadcast on CBC radio's Edmonton PM. Allan Stein, host of the program, recalls last year's Stroll with fondness.

"It was a beautiful day and was rather funny in that the poets were sometimes competing with the hissing of the espresso machines. I found the event to be uplifting not only in the range of performances, but also in how much public support it gets, the people that were just sitting there digging it... Even if I wasn't asked to host,

Stein isn't the only one who acknowledges the range of poetic styles. Nigel Darbasie — a local poet of some note and a veteran of the first two Strolls — notices this trait: "I give the society a lot of credit. While some of the poems are very whimsical some of them are very powerful." Darbasie sees the value of the Stroll as "a great way of keeping this part of the literary arts alive... more accessible."

The Stroll seems to have unified the community of poets, says Doug Elves. "Before the Stroll, there were a number of factions — groups — that kept mostly to themselves, whether by choice or by chance. The thing about the Stroll, in my

## let the ponies out

oh papa, to have you drift up, some part of you drift up through water through

fresh water into the teal plate of sky soaking foothills, papa to have your breath leave, escape you, escape your weight of bone, muscle and organ, escape you to rise up, to loft, you are all breath filling the room rising escaping the white, the white sheets, airborne, taken in a gust of wind and unbridled ponies, let the ponies

out, I would open that gate if I could find it, if there was one to let you go, to drift up into, out, out, of this experiment into the dome of all breath and wind and reappear in the sound of the first year's thunder with Chigayow cutting the clouds over your eyes expanding, wafting, wings of a bird over fields, fat ponies, spruce, birch and poplar, circling wider than that tight square sanitized whiteness you breathed in, if you could just stop breathing you could escape, go anywhere, blow, tumble in the prairie grass bloom in the face of crocuses appear in the smell of cedar dust off a saw in the smell of thick leather in the whistling sounds of the trees in the far off sound of a chainsaw or someone chopping wood in the smooth curve of a felt hat, in unbridled ponies

Marilyn Dumont

opinion, is that it has brought all these pockets of artists into a gathering. I wouldn't say that this is a competitive environment, but it does raise the standard." Ken Wilson, a poet on the Stroll

performance aspect. "It's very much like the jams at the Folk Fest. You have five poets on a stage and one by one they get up and give a solo," he said. "Some poets will bring a quality of performance whether we want them to or not," he mused.

One such member is the society's President, Ivan Sundal, who will also be reading selections of his own work. Sundal is also enthused by the performance aspect: "We had one poet accompanied with a Didgeridoo and slides of his trip of Australia while performing his work." Sundal also assures us that there will be a wide range of styles and influences, "The Dada poet still exists as does the Classical Romantic... There are some that still do Haiku... very poignant work. Very diverse. The only common ingredient is that all poets have to have the courage and desire to express themselves, and to present something to an audience."

#### Audiences make healthy poets

Ivan Sundal, current president of the society, said poets need to be heard. "Having that audience is a form of therapy for some: if they see others taking them seriously, then they — in turn — take their work with a sharper degree of seriousness."

Poetry can improve as a result of audience response, he said. "The audience helps the poet workshop their work with its feedback. Silence from the crowd can be a form of feedback if it's a serious piece. However, if it's a serious piece and the audience is rolling on the floor, that too is powerful feedback."

The Stroll provides poets with another way to improve themselves. The Workshop/Speakshop is a workshop — facilitated by Walter Kaasa — is held in conjunction with the Stroll. "I'm hoping to subvert poets from 'reading' their poems and get them to memorize their text," said Anna Marie Sewel, the workshop's organizer. "This frees them up for the perfor-

mance aspect of their work."

Not that she wants to change everyone's approach. "Reading can be appropriate, too. Shirley Serviss read three different drafts of a letter to a lover who

ing away each draft." Doug Elves supported the workshop's objectives. "I'm really interested in doing things, not just standing and reading poetry, but stretching it and seeing how far it will go."

For a woman who cheerfully tags herself as an aboriginal poet, the stakes for involvement are high and deeply personal for Sewel. "Aboriginal writers and performers that weren't getting recognition are getting a hold of this medium and are becoming very powerful. We've maybe become complacent in a lot of ways, as a society. Being removed from story-telling rituals, we've become a passive people. Everyone just watches," Sewel sighed.

"Poets in other lands will get thousands of people out to one of their readings, because they are raising the voice of their people. We don't speak to our reality and there are a lot of disenfranchised people as a result. Poetry addresses to where your heart and soul are going. In oppressed societies the need to cry out is so there and so obvious. There, 18,000 people will go and hear someone crying their cry."

#### The dream remains

The Stroll of Poets Society is loaded with ambition. In addition to the October Stroll, the society also puts on The Twelve Days of Poetry, a bigger festival with fewer poets during the Christmas holidays. But there can be more. Sundal wants to see outreach programs and frequent workshops — including readings in prisons — and professional development for poets as part of the society's long term growth.

"I want to see City Council conduct all of their business in sonnets," Anna Marie Sewel dreamt aloud.

"Or start Reimer's Rhymers," Doug Elves added.

So what was that line about reach exceeding grasp? It seems to apply.

• Proud to be a sponsor of the Stroll of Poets •

# Sunflower Gallery

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## NO BARDS BARRED

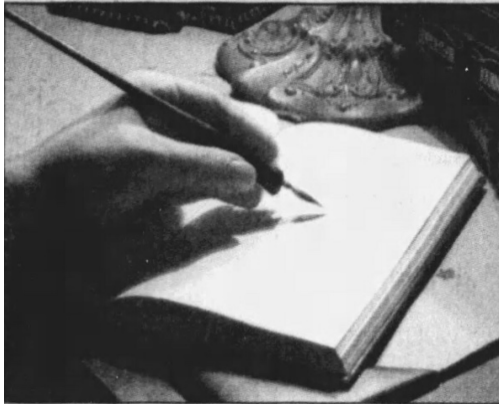
Alberta has more of what per capita than any other region in North America? Poets, of course.

On Sunday, more than 100 Alberta poets will take to the streets of Old Strathcona for the fourth annual **Stroll of Poets Festival**.

The only festival of its kind in the world, the stroll features live poetry readings in a dozen Old Strathcona venues.

Start with brunch at the Strathcona Legion, where Walter Kaasa will read selections from the poets' work. Then join the poets from 1 to 5 p.m.

2



Finally, wrap up at the No Bards Barred Bar from 5 to 10 p.m. back at the Legion.

Tickets for the brunch are \$10 at the door. Everything else is free. Call 436-0829 for more information.

## STROLL OF POETS FESTIVAL

**BOOK LAUNCH** — *The Stroll of Poets Anthology*, Fri., Sept. 30, 7 p.m., Greenwoods' Bookshoppe, free.

**BRUNCH** — Featuring Walter Kaasa performing his selection from the *Stroll Anthology*, Sun., Oct. 2, 11 a.m., Strathcona Legion, 10416 81 Ave., \$10 at the door.

**STROLL OF POETS** — A hundred poets give five-minute readings, Sun., Oct. 2, 1-5 p.m. at these locations: Varscona Books, Sunflower Gallery, Greenwoods' Bookshoppe, Strathcona Books, Blackdog Freehouse, Misty Mountain, Athabasca Books, Mama's Bistro, Hugh McColl's, and Orlando Books (schedules available).

**NO BARDS BARRED BAR** — Sun., Oct. 2, 5-8 p.m., Strathcona Legion, 10416 81 Ave., free. cash bar.

Edmonton Journal Friday, September 30, 1994 Edmonton Journal Friday, September 30, 1994

## What's ON

**FACULTY RECITAL:** Richard Troeger, harpsichord, performs works by Bach, Handel, Fischer, Couperin, Rameau, and Haydn, 4 p.m. in Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building, U of A. Admission \$10, \$5 student/senior.

**STROLL OF POETS FESTIVAL:** The fourth annual festival begins with brunch at the Strathcona Legion, 10416 81st Ave., 11 a.m., with Walter Kaasa reading selected works. Tickets \$10 at the door.

Over 100 poets will give five minute readings at the following locations: Greenwoods Books, Athabasca Books, Hugh McColl's South Park, The Black Dog Pub, Latte Caffe, Sunflower Gallery, Varscona Books, 1912 Block, Misty Mountain Co., Mama's Bistro, Orlando Books, and Strathcona

Books. Complete programs available at these locations. Festival hours 1 to 5 p.m.

**FINALE:** The Citadel Theatre production of *Caesar and Cleopatra* ends today. For ticket info call 425-1820.

Over at Kaasa Theatre, Andy Jones appears in his final performance of *Still Alive* for Workshop West, at 2 p.m. For tickets call 477-5955.

**I MUSICI DE MONTREAL:** Presented by the Edmonton Chamber Music Society, Monday at 8 p.m. in Convocation Hall, Old Arts Building, U of A. Tickets at the Gramophone or the door, \$20, \$12 student/senior. For more info call 433-4532.

*This is a selection of events. For complete listing, consult Friday's What's On pull-out.*

Edmonton Journal Sunday, October 2, 1994

# Stroll of the Poets wins admiration from to sea to sea

Many set to copy Edmonton's event

P icked a peck of pickled poets lately? You might try today in the principality of Old Strathcona, where the 4th annual Stroll of Poets begins its four-hour promenade.

This, along with its family relation the 12 Days of Poetry in December, is one of the festivals for which you almost need insider's information. It gets little of the attention of say, The Fringe or Jazz City, yet it is an Edmonton entity custom-made for export.

Until June of this year, when Calgary inaugurated an off-shoot at the behest of expatriate Edmontonians who had performed in our festival, The Stroll was the only one of its kind in the world.

What's involved is this: 110 poets — most published, some not — read their work at the 11 venues each hour in six-minute spurts, and then rotate to the next venue up the street.

Venues are as follows: Strathcona Legion, Varsona Books, Sunflower Gallery, Greenwood's Bookshope, Strathcona Books, Blackdog Freehouse, Misty Mountain, Athabasca Books, Mama's Bistro, Hugh McColl's, and Orlando Books.

Last year, the one-day leisurely blitz of verse drew 600 people, accounting for a total attendance of 1,500 once you factor in the movement between venues.

The Calgary link is fostered purely because the festival works well in cities the size of Edmonton and the City on the Bow.

"Each year, we've had a person coming up from Calgary to our Stroll,"

says Doug Elves, who conceived the festival after seeing the success of an art gallery walk in the 124th Street area. "Last year, three or four of us went down there."

In fact, one reason Edmonton remains on the poetry map for this verse-on-the-hoof is precisely because of the lay of the land in Old Strathcona,

and the festival image prompted by The Fringe. "This type of event is appropriate to a certain size of city," says Elves. "I really do think it would work in Ottawa, but not Toronto."

For a festival boasting of such success — The Stroll has spawned not only the Calgary edition, but the Twelve Days of Poetry featuring 44 poets in December and January — the annual budget is small: \$5,000-\$6,000 for The Stroll proper, with another \$12,000 for other programs such as writing outreach sessions in prisons and seniors homes, and a bi-weekly reading series.

This past year, for instance, 26 poets from the rolls of the Stroll of Poets Society provided instruction in 13 outreaches, in locations ranging from the Edmonton Penitentiary to the Edmonton Space and Sciences Centre.

"The poets go in pairs to community groups to hold workshops on poetry, to get them to write poetry and to talk



Gordon Morash

Books

about creative writing."

The money for the programs has been provided by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Canada Council Explorations program, but because The Stroll is not officially considered a festival, it has never benefited from an influx of funds that would encourage growth.

"We fall between the niches of festival funding. There's just no program for us there."

Another adjunct to The Stroll is the annual *Stroll of Poets Anthology* containing more than 100 poems by the performing writers; the '94 edition sells for \$10, and had its launch at Greenwood's Bookshope this past Friday, and copies of the book may be found there, at Athabasca Books, Orlando Books, and at today's readings.

The Stroll begins and ends at the Strathcona Legion. The 1 p.m. brunch features veteran actor Walter Kaasa reading selections from the anthology; tickets are \$10 at the door. The No Bards

Barred Bar kicks off at 5 p.m. at the same location with a poetry "sweatshop" hosted by Jennifer Wynne Webber of CBC. No plans have been made yet for the event's fifth birthday, but, says Elves, "We're open to suggestions. There's some interest in a fifth anniversary compilation."

And the flattery of imitation is on the eastern horizon. "The word is slowly getting out," says Elves. "I hear the Saskatchewan writers' guild is interested."

## Words on the air

CBC Radio's *The Arts Tonight*

broadcasts an interview with Robertson Davies next Wednesday evening, Oct. 5 at 6:30 p.m. Davies' new book *The Cunning Man*, features a cameo appearance by Dunstan Ramsay, the narrator of *Fifth Business* in the Deptford Trilogy. The show also has plans for a

retrospective of the work of Alice Munro scheduled this month, the occasion being the publication of her eighth book, *Open Secrets*.



Robertson Davies



(From left) Vasilis Costopoulos and his mother Olga, Rith Donovan, Bert Almon and Doug Elves took part in the Stroll of Poets in recent years

Greg Southern, *The Journal*

## stroll of poets

Seventy-five poets will participate in the first **Calgary Stroll of Poets** today. The poets, all from Calgary and area, will perform in groups of four at 10 different venues along 17th Avenue and 8th Street S.W. The stroll, sponsored by the Writers' Guild of Alberta, will find the poets marching and reading between 1 and 4:30 p.m. Each group will read at two locations.

Venues include Sandpiper Books, Bagels & Buns, Peppers Deli, Mount Royal Village (main floor and lower level), Books 'n' Books, Melrose Cafe, The Croft, Sandcastles and Decadent Desserts. Judy Hamill of CBC 1010 will host a wrap-up party and poetry sweatshop at the Ship & Anchor Pub (534 17th Ave.) starting at 5 p.m.

— Ken McGoogan

Calgary Herald Sunday, June 5, 1994



# Stroll of Poets

Oct. 2, 1994

A hundred poets  
give five-minute readings  
in a dozen Strathcona venues.

Start the Stroll with Brunch,  
Walter Kaasa performing,  
11 a.m., Strathcona Legion.  
Buffet tickets \$8  
at Athabasca Books  
and the Legion till  
Sept. 28. \$10 thereafter.

Finish the Stroll at the  
**No Bards Barred Bar**  
5-8 p.m., the Legion,  
10416-81 Ave.  
**Launch**  
Stroll of Poets Anthology, \$4.  
Selected readings:  
Greenwoods' Bookshoppe,  
Fri., Sept. 30, 7 p.m.

BLACK 1912  
OPEN STATE  
3-4 p.m.  
Hosted by  
Stephan Schrier  
In Pre-Register call  
431-0002  
or Pre-Order at 409

CBC #740  
Greenwoods'  
Bookshoppe

VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE	VENUE							
WINSCONA BOOKS 10306-82 Ave.	SUNFLOWER GALLERY #201, 10324-82 Ave.	GREENWOODS' BOOKSHOPPE 10355 WHITE AVE.	STRATHCONA BOOKS 8217/104 St.	LATTE CAFE 10407 WHITE AVE.	BLACK OBE FRESHHOUSE 10425 WHITE Ave.	MISTY MOUNTAIN 10458B WHITE AVE.	ATHABASCA BOOKS 8223-105 St.	MAJAN'S BISTRO 10507 WHITE AVE.	HUGH MACCULL'S 10515 WHITE AVE.	ORLANDO BOOKS 10510 WHITE AVE.	Myrna Garanis Olya Costopoulos Tom Emmons Alison Nichols Paul Benza	Theresa Shea Lyle Wise Louis Muran Jerrine Dumont Melinda Larroque	Paul Matyushuk Anne La Dessery Lofar A. Krampol Alison Clarke Michele Murphy	William Nichols Mary T. McDonald Guy Tessier Kath MacLean Innorna Byrnes	Dawn Carter Susan Walsh Yvonne Gelsman Peter Cole	Phil Jagger Tammy Dodd Darryl Mackenzie Wendy McGarh Kara Woodruff	Jerrine Edwards Gary Lee Tracy Murray Wilson Barton Scott Hayes	T.D.L. Turner Grand Hill Mackenzie Verna Tessier Carmen Siva Lindsay	Ron Kurt Suzanne Coy Gina Vary Margaret Marriott Francis A. Wiley	Meredith Madrens Hil Cashman Pilar Amel Barbara Fraser Yves Balan	Sandra Mooney Elietbeck Nigel Darboise Ly Perran Shaw Schwab Fae Woodgate	William Nichols Mary T. McDonald Guy Tessier Kath MacLean Innorna Byrnes	Phil Jagger Tammy Dodd Dean Mackenzie Wendy McGarh Kara Woodruff	Dean Hemp Kara Modrowiczka Ver Slawyngh Frances Bernard Jo-Ken Godfrey	Paul Pearson Sherril Ritchie Russell Johnston T. Virginia Galea Marlene Kahn	Gail Scone Sobat Thomas Trofenik Isabel Miller James Thurgood Tess Wilson
1:00-1:30 P.M.	2:00-2:30 P.M.	3:00-3:30 P.M.	4:00-4:30 P.M.																							

\*EACH GROUP PERFORMS TWICE\*

# The Stroll of Poets

Paul Matwychuk

Paul Matwychuk is a poet, short story writer and crossword puzzle constructor originally from Hamilton, Ontario. His poems and stories have appeared in *Secrets from the Orange Couch* and the *Grammaticon*. His crossword puzzles

have appeared in *Dell Champion Crossword Puzzles*, the *New York Times*, and *USA Today*. He knows that a three-letter word for "poetic contraction" is always "o'er," "e'er," or "'tis"

Marilyn Dumont

Marilyn Dumont is a writer, performer and video-maker from Edmonton. She has been publishing for eight years and her forthcoming collection of poetry entitled, *A Really Good Brown Girl*, will be published by Brick Books in the spring of 1995.

Marilyn considers poetry performance an inseparable part of writing, that writing is just the beginning, that performance is one more stage of the poem's completion. Many of the themes in her writing intersect native and women's issues.

## Niagara Falls

(after William Wordsworth's "Nuns Fret Not")

They fret not at their barrels' narrow room  
As they travel over Niagara Falls;  
Nor at how they're thrown against the wooden walls  
And feel the purplish bruises bloom;  
Nor at the way the falling waters boom  
With the sound of a billion bowling balls;  
Nor at any of the blackening squalls  
Which seem poised to speed them to their doom.  
They know no matter how shrill the waters hum,  
No matter how the planks begin to shake,  
Or how high the plunge from lake to lake,  
Or how many leaks they've plugged with chewing gum;  
No matter how near a drowning death they come,  
They know their homemade barrels will not break.

## leather & naughahyde

So, I'm having coffee with this treaty guy from up north and we're laughing at how crazy "the mooniyaw" are in the city and the conversation comes around to where I'm from, as it does in underground languages, in the oblique way it does to find out someone's status without actually asking, and knowing this, I say I'm Metis like it's an apology and he says, "mmh," like he forgives me, like he's got a big heart and mine's pumping diluted blood and his voice has sounded well-fed up 'til this point, but now it goes thin like he's across the room taking another look and when he returns he's got "this look," that says he's leather and I'm naughahyde.

## Pack o' poets

Annual stroll invades Strathcona

BY CHARLES MANDEL  
WITH RESEARCH FROM STEPHEN HUMPHREY



Mary McDonald

Dylan Thomas would have loved it. Poets proclaiming in bars. Poets yelling in bookstores, yowling in cafes, and shrieking in auto showrooms. In fact, more than 100 poets will once again unleash their verbal verse in south Edmonton, when the fourth annual Stroll of Poets takes place on Oct. 2.

Since it first began four years ago, the Stroll has become as much a part of autumn in Edmonton as falling leaves. For one day, the poets crowd together in various restaurants, galleries, shops, and share their past year's output of poetry.

The format, more or less, is five poets read at each venue for half-an-hour and then rotate to the next stage. It creates a kind of happy anarchy in Old Strathcona, with poets pontificating everywhere you walk.

The quality of the poetry is...well, democratic. Some poets have seven books. Others have produced their first seven poems. All are equally eager to read their work.

Taking part in the stroll is easy. Prospective poets sign up in advance. And presto hey, instant audience!

Surprisingly, in an era when not many people take time to read poetry, the Stroll attracts a fair crowd. Last year, close to 1,500 people showed up for the festival. That's more than triple the number who attended the first year.

The Stroll is the creation of poet Doug Elves. Elves took his inspiration from the 124th Street Gallery Walk, an association of art galleries that banded together to attract clientele through their regular group shows.

Elves phoned up poets Ivan Sundl, Bert Almon and Alice Majors, and a festival was born. Well, at least a society was formed. Asked about the society—which has a board, meetings, and procedures—

Elves says: "It's not all that unique, except for the fact it's formed from poets."

Elves stresses, however, that the Stroll is an unusual entity. "No one's doing this kind of thing anywhere. It's a new thing." As such, it also comes complete with its own set of problems.

The Stroll is not recognized by official channels as a festival, and so falls through the government funding net. They receive provincial money, but have yet to sup at the federal coffers. "Still, there's a certain momentum which comes with being a society," says Elves.

For example, the society has a database with the names of some 200 poets in Edmonton. Plus, it continues to fund and publish the annual Stroll of Poets Anthology. The book, a bargain at \$10, coincides with the event every year.

As well, the Stroll tried an outreach program on for size this year. The poets conducted workshops in such diverse places as a penitentiary and in senior's residences.

And come Christmas, there is—what else?—but the Twelve Days of Poetry. The 44 poets who read during the Twelve Days are the favorites from the Stroll, picked by a community jury. To keep things fair, names are removed from the poetry, and the writing is judged on its own merits.

Elves finishes grouching about the Stroll's funding and growth, but concedes: "It's the usual growing pains of an organization."

Even so, Stroll lore has already come into being. Last year, car salesman Hugh McColl offered up his Auto Showroom on Whyte Avenue as a venue. One stroller reported that by the time the whole event was finished, McColl had unloaded a rather pricey vehicle.

To us, that sounds like poetry in motion.

# The fool's journey

Performance poet Phil Jagger works the edges

BY STEPHEN HUMPHREY

On the last Monday of every month there are impromptu poetry sweatshops at Latte Caffe, Whyte Avenue's reigning den of off-the-wall happenings. If you're into that kind of thing, the sweatshop format is familiar: four words stolen from a dictionary are dropped in some would-be poet's lap; it's then that particular victim's job to turn out a poem under a deadline of minutes, and then perform the result for the assorted bobos in the room. The performers are marked on content and performance by the age-old technique of applause measurement. Presiding over all the lunacy is Phil Jagger, the maddest hatter of the bunch. "I'm the reigning champ," gloats Phil.

Of the various sensitive souls at Latte Caffe, Jagger is one of the most familiar — be it as the "raving stage host" for Latte's regular reading series, auteur-organizer of the Cyberdada Tea Party happening, or a retiring tea drinker nestled among manic caffinders. He's cut a figure in the poetry scene for the last couple of years; there hasn't been

a poetry, art, or avant-something event that hasn't been graced by his presence. He's sat on the board of the Stroll of Poets Society, organized readings at Strathcona Books, Cafe La Gare, and, over the last couple of years, has begun organizing his own night of multimedia happenings. Now he's coming out with a book.

Jagger has elicited various reactions over the years, from

bewilderment and annoyance to rounds of applause. Either way, his manic energy is impossible to ignore. Years back, he could be seen (and heard!) screaming his

**"These guys have a big impact. When Kurt Cobain shot himself, it was like Homer died."**

poems from street corners. His multimedia performances have featured him dangerously hurling a trash can, playing a human croquet ball, and — during his most recent Cyberdada appearance in August — he appeared in a gas mask and monk's robes, jerked this way and that by huge puppet-strings.

"It had something to do with the image of control — of being manipulated by words, sounds, fear of my words not being heard in the first place," says Jagger. "I put on the gas mask primarily because I wanted people's attention. The puppet thing happened because one of my assistants needed something to do. I could say it was something profound, but then it'd be lying."

One of Jagger's main concerns is that his readings have an ad hoc, spontaneous energy, something just as important as content in a live context. "At a reading, people are not going to catch every word. That doesn't matter if there's energy there, if there's an emotional impact."

Jagger is pleased with Latte's open atmosphere, with the coffee-quaffing crowds who are both supportive and participatory.

"Bands play in here. You get a different crowd than the book stores. Poetry readings in Edmonton have grown. I think it's gone beyond book stores and little ca-

sit back and consider." Perhaps book literacy increases media awareness. After all, Marshall McLuhan was an English professor.

Jagger's book will have the dual title of "Generation XXXpresso-Cappuccino Angst (one title upside down, the other right side up, depending on how you hold the book)." "Gen XXX-Cap Angst" will cover the territory of "urban myths — describing existence, life, pop culture." Mass media will be the one of the allegorical dragons he'll be taking on.

Mythology has been both fuel and albatross to Jagger, who has the (mis)fortune of myth and allegory as his first language, which he then must work at to make accessible to audiences. "That's just how I think about things. You think of George going to the store; I think of it as 'Once upon a time...'" Adding to

his list of influences are Kurt Cobain, Douglas Coupland, the spectre of media, and the hipster bards of the Beat set, which permeates most of his present work.

"Those guys have just as big an impact. When Kurt Cobain shot himself, it was like Homer died."

"Gen XXX-Cap Angst" will expand on Jagger's expanding personal myth, "The Fool's Journey", which has found its way into his readings, one way or another, for the past



Phil Jagger

couple of years. This allegorically dense epic is a prime example of the personal being the mythical. "The Fool's Journey" is the journey of life. You're wandering around, you fall off a cliff, you get up again, move on, and then you fall off another cliff. That's life." A little bit fairy tale, a little bit Wile E. Coyote, and a lot of hard knocks.

The image is quickly discernable as the tarot card, featuring a merry, clueless traveller about to step over a precipice, a yapping nipping his heels. However, Jagger doesn't want to dwell on the Rider-Waite implications. "It's about me. It's not a meditation on tarot cards; all I can write about is my own life."



## On the Twelfth Day...

### *Twelfth Day of Poetry*

A bunch of poets with

THE ANNA BEAUMONT TRIO

& SIX GUYS NAMED DEB

City Media Club

January 14

review by SFHayes

I showed up late, since the City Media Club has moved from wherever the hell it was before to wherever the hell it is now [6005-103 Street] and I didn't care enough to ask directions. When I did get there, I discovered the place was packed. There were more poets than you could shake a cat at and that's a fact. They handed out free berets and fake goatees at the door, and, as soon as you entered, you were obliged to drink coffee and smoke cigarettes all night long.

I was struck by an overwhelming urge to play shuffleboard.

Of course, the poets were good. My favourites came near the end when Ivan Kundal and Alice Major took the stage. It would not have been poetry without them. They are the masters.

The highlight of the evening, for many, was the Anna Beaumont Trio. For those ignorant few, AB is a local legend: she per-

formed at the closing ceremonies of the '88 Winter Olympics, she toured Canada in the musical *Beehive* and then she became the first, and only, white woman to sing with the fantastic Supremes.

Well, the Stroll of Poets society commissioned Anna to go through the '94 Stroll anthology, and make songs from the poems which jumped out at her. She chose about ten from the 100 or so choices. This in itself was the whole suck'er deal of the night; see, she kept secret the sources of the songs so us scholars would stay to be surprised—dig? We'd spend \$10 for a ticket, and then extra for drinks over the 6 to 7 hours, just to find out if this one woman liked our poems. Amazing.

Well, it goes without saying that my poem was chosen. And why not? My romantic visions translate into timeless words that will transcend all boundaries, physical or social. It was a classy honour. Unfortunately, I thought her version of my poem was too upbeat and that all the songs sounded the same, but yet I am obliged to purchase a tape of the performance.

Afterwards, there was food for the frenzied folks and Six Guys Named Deb played some great dancehall hits for us to groove to.



## Stroll of Poets



1995 Calendar

## • CALGARY STROLL OF POETS

Join sixty **Calgary area poets**, on June 4 from 1-4 p.m. in Calgary's second annual Calgary Stroll of Poets. The poets will walk from cafe to cafe, bookstore to bookstore and other locations along 17th Ave S.W. where they will read from their own work.

Calgary Herald Friday, May 5, 1995

## Forty-four writers a-readin'

Fourth edition of Twelve Days a gift to Edmonton poetry fans



**Gordon Morash**  
Books

Edmonton



**STROLL OF POETS**

**T**here's a pair of mouthy types speed-reading — or perhaps even *screaming* — their way across the Stroll of Poets Society's newly designed logo.

Since the society's inception five years ago, poetry in Edmonton has taken a decidedly free-footed approach. When The Stroll of Poetry kicked off its first one-day festival back in 1991, the idea was to rein in what co-ordinator Jannie Edwards calls the "hub of poetic activity" that constituted Edmonton spoken verse.

"Doug Elves, who originated The Stroll, felt there was poetry going on in the city, but that it was happening in groups. And so you had the academic poets and the coffee house poets," says Edwards, now in the throes of organizing The Stroll's Christmas off-shoot, The Twelve Days of Poetry.

"Doug wanted to bring those groups together. The idea of a stroll is that it is literally a stroll, with a half-hour between readings."

This year's fall festival was spread among 10 Old Strathcona venues, including pubs, book shops, bistros and delis, and the Christmas festival has expanded outside the South Side locations.

Now in its fourth year, The Twelve Days runs Dec. 27 and 29, then continuing into Jan. 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 17.

If you count carefully, you'll see those dates are missing one of the 12. A finale at the Media Club on Jan. 20, brings together poets selected by popular vote from the previous 11 days.

Sounds a bit democratic, right? Well, almost.

There was no campaigning among the society's 140 members for the 44 reading spots in the Christmas festi-

val. Instead, poets were chosen by a disparate 11-member celebrity panel (including librarian Barbara Bulat, restaurateur Ernst Eder, Works Festival artistic director Vincent Gasparie, Celanese Canada human resources director Gary Shury, and the Edmonton Labor Council's Alex Grimaldi).

"Anonymous copies of the poems in *The 1995 Stroll Anthology* were sent to the selection panel," says Edwards. "They were told not to rationalize or prioritize — just pick your favorite 44."

"Sometimes, the results are a bit odd, but that's the way it goes."

This year's Twelve Days will feature such poets as Shirley Serviss, Jocko, Bert Almon, Lyle Weis, Vanna Tessier, Doug Elves and Terence Harding.

Next to the official Stroll, an event that captures listeners from venue to venue, The Twelve Days seems to be the poetry event in town. Bistros tend to draw audiences of 40 to 50 to the no-charge readings. And the 12th Day — the only day carrying an admission charge — easily draws 150 poetry fans. A Celtic Ceilidh featuring High Level-area school principal, poet and musician James Thurgood is scheduled for the current Twelve Days, in addition to readings by the final five.

"We decided to go post-Christmas with the Twelve Days this year. We found we weren't getting as good a turn-out with all the Christmas preparations people are going through."

At the moment, The Twelve Days is the only event of its kind in Canada. However, Winnipeg's Di Brandt, whose *Jerusalem, beloved*

### STROLL ON A ROLL

Journal Staff

Edmonton

The *Stroll of Poets 1995 Anthology* is available at Orlando Books, Greenwood's Bookshoppe, and Audrey's Books.

The \$10 softcover collection contains the work of the 97 poets who participated in the 1995 Stroll, an annual one-day fall event in the fall that originated five years ago in Edmonton.

In 1994, Calgary launched its version of The Stroll, including in its inaugural line-up several Edmonton poets.

Interest in our home-grown festival has also been shown by Victoria, B.C., and Hamilton, Ont.

Upcoming Stroll events are carried on the organization's new Web Home Page. The home page address is: <http://www.ccnnet.ab.ca/stroll>.

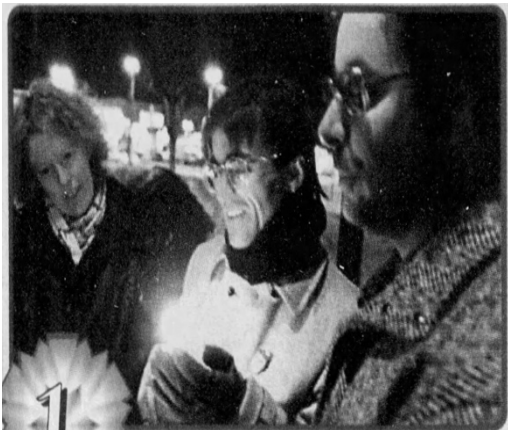
was shortlisted for a Governor General's Award in poetry, is eager to take ideas back to Manitoba at the end of her tour of duty as the University of Alberta writer-in-residence.

So, who knows? The influence of Wild Rose Country could spread afar yet again. Coupled with the recent Exporting Alberta program instigated by the Alberta Branch of the Canadian Authors Association, the moves afoot to market literary culture are becoming as novel as the writers and the works themselves.

Last winter, The Stroll of Poets Society even engaged the ever-so-Canadian sport of hockey in a reading series called Poetry Night in Canada.

"So we're a very unsnooty group," says Edwards, herself a poet who is aware of the sometimes highfalutin image thrust upon poets and literary types in general.

As she likes to describe the after-effects of the image artist Evita McConnell has concocted for the society, "We have big mouths, we like to spout."



1

### A LITTLE NIGHT MUSE-IC

The 12 days of Christmas have wound to a close, but there's still time to take in the **12 Days of Poetry** in Old Strathcona.

Hosted by the Stroll of Poets Society, the event features readings by local poets at coffee shops and bistros and culminates in a finale at the new City Media Club, 6005 103rd St., Jan. 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Poets Theresa Shea, Dean McKenzie, Ivan Sundal and Wendy McGrath will hold a reading tonight at 7 p.m. in The Commissary Bistro, 11750 Jasper Ave. There will also be a reading Sunday at 3 p.m. in the Sugar Bowl Coffee Bar, 10724 124th St., with Jennifer Wynne Webber, Jamie Edwards, Barbara Fraser and Debra Shymoniak.

Admission is free to the first 11 days of poetry, though patrons at the bistro readings are asked to observe a reasonable minimum charge.

Edmonton Journal Friday, January 6, 1995

# STROLL OF POETS



A wide range of poets perform short readings in popular Strathcona venues

Sept. 24, 1995



## Schedule

Brunch: Strathcona Legion 10416 - 81 Ave. 11:00 am

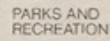
Reading by Di Brandt, U of A Poet-in-Residence

Tickets \$8 in advance at the Legion and Gramophone Records, \$10 at the door

No Cards Barred Bar: Strathcona Legion 5:00 pm. Admission FREE

Open Stage: Café Soliel 10360 Whyte Avenue at 3:00 pm.

	Athabasca Books 8228 105 Street	Greenwood's Bookshope 10355 Whyte Ave.	Misty Mountain Gourmet Coffee Co. 10458B Whyte Ave.	Bjarne's Books (downstairs) 10533 Whyte Ave.	Bagel Tree 10354 Whyte Ave.	Black Dog Freehouse 10425 Whyte Ave.	Mama's Bistro Pizzeria 10507 Whyte Ave.	Varscona (Alhambra) Books 10309 Whyte Ave.	Orlando Books 10640 Whyte Ave.	Princess Theatre Lobby 10337 Whyte Ave.
<b>1 p.m.</b> to <b>1:30</b>	T Virginia Giliese Lorna Huff Russell Johnston Janene Wiener-King Yara Balan	Nichole York Myriam Hempstock Richard Davies Annette Cassell John King-Farlow	Debra Shymoniak Tim Bowling Jean Carmichael McKenzie Philip Jagger Janine Dumont	Anne Le Dessay Stephan Scriber Theresa Shea Pamela Young Julie Coutu	Joyce Plackay Paul Matychuk Anna Mioduchowska Mary T. McDonald T.D.L. Turner	James Thurgood Lee Elliott Peter Cole Candace Bamber Myrna Gatisis	Jacqueline Williams Gerald Hill Jacqueline Bell Barbara Fraser Ken Wilson	Harold Cashman Poet T.B.A. Jennie Edwards Tracy Murray Andrew Thompson	Mina Douglas Marianne Hang Thomas Tafelmuk Madeline Kalin Carol Brodeur-Hansby	Jocelyne Verret Royce Andy Hutton Susan Walsh Barb Williamson Mary Howes
<b>2 p.m.</b> to <b>2:30</b>	Sandy Sprinkle Marianne Sankovics Jocko Wendy McGrath Joanne Wright	Alison Clarke Lorhar A. Krampol Olga Costopoulos Evela McConnell Terrence Harding Beckie Gerber-Conrad	Valdis Golson Sandra Mooney-Elberbeck Ivan Sundal Elin Wingert Jennifer Wynne-Webber	Michelle Murphy Geraldine Mathus Dean Hamp Tanya Mackie Doug Elvess	Rebecca Luce-Kapler Lyle Weiss Barbara Muckalzy Kim Sedgwick Jo-Ann Godfrey	Corren Sylvia Lindsay T.S. Owen Alice Major Paul Pearson Genevieve Boyer	Ron Kurt Sally Ito Anna Marie Sewell William Nichols Alison Nichols	Vanna Tessier Louis Munan Shirley A. Sevisis George Brian Metcalf Tom Emmons	Gina Varty Kathelene McKee Gail Sobat Ruth Anderson-Dosovan Ken Saik	Audrey Whitson Karla Woloshyn Bert Almon Jean Jorgensen Inaanne Ryane
<b>3 p.m.</b> to <b>3:30</b>	Joyce Plackay Paul Matychuk Anna Mioduchowska Mary T. McDonald T.D.L. Turner	Anne Le Dessay Stephan Scriber Theresa Shea Pamela Young Julie Coutu	Nichole York Myriam Hempstock Richard Davies Annette Cassell John King-Farlow	Jocelyne Verret Royce Andy Hutton Susan Walsh Barb Williamson Mary Howes	Harold Cashman Poet T.B.A. Jennie Edwards Tracy Murray Andrew Thompson	Mina Douglas Marianne Hang Thomas Tafelmuk Madeline Kalin Carol Brodeur-Hansby	Virginia Giliese Lorna Huff Russell Johnston Janene Wiener-King Yara Balan	Debra Shymoniak Tim Bowling Jean Carmichael McKenzie Philip Jagger Janine Dumont	Jacqueline Williams Gerald Hill Jacqueline Bell Barbara Fraser Ken Wilson	James Thurgood Lee Elliott Peter Cole Candace Bamber Myrna Gatisis
<b>4 p.m.</b> to <b>4:30</b>	Ron Kurt Sally Ito Anna Marie Sewell William Nichols Alison Nichols	Sandy Sprinkle Marianne Sankovics Jocko Wendy McGrath Joanne Wright	Audrey Whitson Karla Woloshyn Bert Almon Jean Jorgensen Inaanne Ryane	Vanna Tessier Louis Munan Shirley A. Sevisis George Brian Metcalf Tom Emmons	Gina Varty Kathelene McKee Gail Sobat Ruth Anderson-Dosovan Ken Saik	Michelle Murphy Geraldine Mathus Dean Hamp Tanya Mackie Doug Elvess	Rebecca Luce-Kapler Lyle Weiss Barbara Muckalzy Kim Sedgwick Jo-Ann Godfrey	Alison Clarke Lorhar A. Krampol Olga Costopoulos Evela McConnell Elin Wingert Terrence Harding Beckie Gerber-Conrad	Valdis Golson Sandra Mooney-Elberbeck Ivan Sundal Elin Wingert Jennifer Wynne-Webber	Corren Sylvia Lindsay T.S. Owen Alice Major Paul Pearson Genevieve Boyer





# The Stroll Scroll

STROLL OF POETS March 1996

## Fun times, time flies

*By Jocelyn Ferrer  
President*

**H**ow time flies when you're having fun! Our 12 Days series was a roaring success, thanks, in part, to the organizational skills of James Edwards whom I wish to publicly congratulate on a job extremely well done, and also to everyone's participation, in spite of our new legendary cold snap.

**AGM Time Again**  
Here it is AGM time once more. Please come to the Stroll of Poets Society Annual General Meeting to be held at 2 p.m. on March 30 at First Baptist Church, 10031 109 Street. Those present will have a chance to vote for those poets they would like to hear during our next reader's series.

**Figure Skating Readings**  
Stroll poets will read at the Agricon March 21 and 22 from 7 to 9 p.m. during the World Figure Skating Championships. (Look for our booth in Hall C, near Sportschek.) A timetable is included in this newsletter. I have tried to schedule people at the times they requested. It was however not possible in all instances. If you have indicated you wanted to read, please check the schedule. No further notice will be forthcoming. Plan to be at the Agricon by 6:45 p.m. and stay on, if at all possible, to cheer your fellow poets. It is our chance to share with the rest of the world another cultural aspect of our vibrant capital. If you cannot read on the date and at the time indicated on the schedule, please call and leave me a message at 433-0991.

**Planning**  
Your Board has gone through two Saturdays of planning in order to set priorities and timelines for the Stroll's numerous activities. New projects will be presented by the Board members with a notice of motion at a previous meeting. The presenting member will also submit a detailed plan: timeline, venue, cost, financing, etc. This has become necessary in view of the many ideas worthy of development that have come up during the year and the difficulty with implementing some of them when submitted at the last minute.

**Congratulate Ron!**  
Congratulations to Edmonton poet Ron Kerr! Reference West Press launched his chap-book *Clawing the hood on albatross* on March 4 in Victoria, B.C.

*continued on page two*

ZOOT & ZAZA & ZOOT & ZAZA & ZOOT &


Edmonton Journal March 1996

**WORLD SERIES POETRY** — A weekly series presented by the Stroll of Poets Society begins Tuesday, May 14, 7:30 p.m., Persimmon Deli, 10768 Whyte Ave. Starting line-up will feature poets selected by their peers at the 1996 annual general meeting of the Stroll of Poets Society: Alice Major, William Nichols, Moncrieff Williamson and Paul Pearson. Admission is free, but please observe a reasonable minimum charge.

Edmonton Journal Friday, May 10, 1996

• **STROLL WITH CALGARY'S BEST POETS**  
Join other Calgary poets, June 2, 1-4:30 p.m. in Calgary's third annual Calgary **Stroll of Poets**. The poets will walk from cafe to cafe, bookstore to bookstore and other locations along 17th Ave S.W. where they will read from their own work.

Calgary Herald Friday, March 22, 1996



# 5 Stroll of Poets

A bit of poetry is good for the soul. You can expand your mind and stretch out your legs at the Sixth Annual Stroll of Poets in Old Strathcona this Sunday. More than 100 poets will be performing five-minute readings non-stop at a variety of venues; you can stroll from place to place to catch them all.

**Where:** Breadstick Cafe, Alhambra Books, Princess Theatre, Greenwood's Bookshoppe, The Bagel Tree, Strathcona Books, Black Dog Freehouse, Misty Mountain Coffee, Athabasca Books, Mama's Bistro, Bjarne's Books, and Orlando Books.

**When:** From 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Schedules are available at the above locations.

**Tickets:** Free

Also, on Saturday at 8 p.m., you can hear Grenadian poet Merle Collins in the Skylight Room, Strathcona Legion, 10416 81st Ave. Tickets are \$6 at Orlando Books or \$7 at the door.

**STROLL OF POETS**

Edmonton Journal Friday, October 4, 1996

Breadstick Cafe 10159 Whyte Ave	Alhambra Books 10309 Whyte	Princess Theatre 10337 Whyte	Greenwoods Bookshoppe 10347 Whyte	The Bagel Tree 10354 Whyte	Strathcona Books 8217 - 104 St.	Black Dog Freehouse 10425 Whyte	Misty Mountain Coffee 10458B Whyte	Athabasca Books 8228 - 105 St.	Mama's Bistro 10507 Whyte	Bjarne's Books 10533 Whyte	Orlando Books 10640 Whyte
<b>SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 6</b>											
1 P.M.						1 P.M.					
to 1:30						to 1:30					
Jocka Mary Woodbury Linda Jennings Katherine McKee Al Demelle	Lethar Krampol Tom Emmons Joe Rizzuto David Huggett Jacqueline Williams	Lori Emerson Helen Lavender Alice Major Candace Neill Jo-Ann Godfrey	Beckin Garber-Corrad Pritam Alwal Mary McDonald Annamay Ryane Anne LeDressay	Paul Matwychuk Janeen Werner-King Madeleine Schiller Evita McConnell Michael Penny	Michael Walters Lorna Huff Ruth A. Donovan Debra Shymoniak Henry Elliott	Adrienne Campbell Susan Walsh Russell Johnston Ian Birse Faye Francis	Richard Davies Lorna Huff Theresa Shea Marcia O'Connor Margaret Marriott	Anna Marie Sewell Ivan Sundal Ellen Wells Kim Sedgewick Sandra Mooney- Elerbeck	William Lysak Mary Howes John King-Farlow Peter Cole Gina Varty	Barbara Fraser Sally Ilo Tracy Murray Rawn Sider Jacqueline Bell	
2 P.M.						2 P.M.					
to 2:30						to 2:30					
Myrna Garanis Yanna Tessier Nigel Darbasie Virginia Gillesie Brian D'neil	Elaine Gottlieb Karla Woloshyn Maxwell Foster Kath MacLean Doug Eives	Alison Clarke Tim Bowling Audrey Whitson Kathy Fisher Cheryl Chamberlain	Janet Bates Andrew Thompson Yar Slavutych Pamela Young Rusti Leahy	Ken Wilson Barb Williamson Donald Butler Colleen Heffernan Thomas Trefimuk	Valdis Gislason John Paul Flynn Terence Harding Annette Cannell Paul Pearson Susanne Pedersen	Winnie Lai Myriam Hempstock Julia Mamolo Harold Cashman Maria Meneghetti	Geraldine Matus Sophia Gee Sandy Sprinkin Anita Meek Lyle Weis	William Nichols George Metcalf Jr. Louis Munan Wendy McGrath Joyce Pinckney	Toni Owen Taras Toroshenko Martina Laboucan Dennis Cooper Jenine Dumont	Jocelyne Verret Jean Carmichael McKenzie Anna Mioduchowska Pierrette Requier Marilyn Dumont	
<b>EACH GROUP PERFORMS TWICE</b>											
3 P.M.						3 P.M.					
to 3:30						to 3:30					
OPEN STAGE						OPEN STAGE					
at Misty Mountain 3 p.m. to 4:30						at Misty Mountain 3 p.m. to 4:30					
Michael Walters Michael Vaughan Ruth A. Donovan Debra Shymoniak Henry Elliott	Jocka Mary Woodbury Linda Jennings Katherine McKee Al Demelle	Lethar Krampol Tom Emmons Joe Rizzuto David Huggett Jacqueline Williams	Paul Matwychuk Janeen Werner-King Madeleine Schiller Evita McConnell Michael Penny	Adrienne Campbell Susan Walsh Russell Johnston Ian Birse Faye Francis	Lori Emerson Helen Lavender Alice Major Candace Neill Jo-Ann Godfrey	Beckin Garber-Corrad Pritam Alwal Mary McDonald Annamay Ryane Anne LeDressay	Barbara Fraser Sally Ilo Tracy Murray Rawn Sider Jacqueline Bell	William Lysak Mary Howes John King-Farlow Peter Cole Gina Varty	Richard Davies Lorna Huff Theresa Shea Marcia O'Connor Margaret Marriott	Anna Marie Sewell Ivan Sundal Ellen Wells Kim Sedgewick Sandra Mooney- Elerbeck	
4 P.M.						4 P.M.					
to 4:30						to 4:30					
Winnie Lai Myriam Hempstock Julia Mamolo Harold Cashman Maria Meneghetti	Ken Wilson Barb Williamson Donald Butler Colleen Heffernan Thomas Trefimuk	Myrna Garanis Yanna Tessier Nigel Darbasie Virginia Gillesie Brian D'neil	Elaine Gottlieb Karla Woloshyn Maxwell Foster Kath MacLean Doug Eives	Janet Bates Andrew Thompson Yar Slavutych Pamela Young Rusti Leahy	Geraldine Matus Sophia Gee Sandy Sprinkin Anita Meek Lyle Weis	Valdis Gislason John Paul Flynn Terence Harding Annette Cannell Paul Pearson Susanne Pedersen	William Nichols George Metcalf Jr. Louis Munan Wendy McGrath Joyce Pinckney	Toni Owen Taras Toroshenko Shirley Sarvics Dennis Cooper Jenine Dumont	Jocelyne Verret Jean Carmichael McKenzie Anna Mioduchowska Pierrette Requier Marilyn Dumont	Alison Clarke Tim Bowling Audrey Whitson Kathy Fisher Cheryl Chamberlain	

Vue Weekly October 3 – October 9, 1996

Vue Weekly • October 3 - October 9, 1996
COVER
Page 93

# Walk your poet twice a day

## Merle Collins brings her passion for verse to the Stroll of Poets

**COVER**  
BY KEN  
LEICSH

*PreVUE*

**E**xamine this as an appropriate metaphor. The Stroll of Poets is spread out over 12 venues. By doing this people are forced to move, explore and search. The mere act of seeking out poetry during the festival is a suitable image for the life inherent in the medium. It is definitely *more* than just words on a page.

These are some of the ideas which Merle Collins, a poet and teacher, hopes to impart on the people of Edmonton. For lack of a better term, Collins will be headlining the two days of activity. She hopes not only to enrich others but, also, to go home inspired by the people of Edmonton.


"I hope to give a lot and get a lot," says Collins. "Because of the interest in different forms of poetry, meaning poetry on the page and poetry performed, I am hoping, where the Stroll of Poets is concerned, that I can see a lot of what their methods are. Also, from my experience as a writer shaped by the Caribbean experience and by the experiences of living wherever I have in the world, I would have something to give—both in term of the content of the work and in terms of the presentation of it. I suspect that we'll be learning from each other."

Born in Grenada, Collins has experienced much of the world. She's taught in Grenada, St. Lucia, England and is now a professor at the University of Maryland. Although living through out the world affects her work, it is her homeland which remains her key influence.

Collins found passion for poetry during her studies for her first university degree. While studying English and Spanish at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, she was introduced to authors who hit home to her roots. Meeting writers who were expressing themselves in the context of a Caribbean tradition opened her up to the world of creating literature. It was also a time when she began to discover Caribbean literature.

"It's everything that shaped me. I guess it's always important to any writer. A writer who is shaped by the Canadian experience or one in England or one in the United States. The question of origin and the influences that went into shaping the writing is always important to writers, wherever they are."

Collins's poetry uses both English and Creole languages. It smacks of humanity, relations and a



Merle Collins: A dramatic performance poet.

strong tie to her heritage. Content is important to any poet, but Collins also feels presentation should be a key focus. Included in her dramatic experience was six years with the African Dawn, a group which was dedicated to performing dramatized poetry fused with African music.

Some may see a definite gap between poetry, a written form of expression, and performance, a visual medium. Collins sees the division more as evolving correlation between two battling ideals.

"For me, poetry is not only something on the page but also poetry and presentation. Because of that, I lean very heavily towards a sort of performance mode. I use some of my dramatic interests.

"The language that we'd use to analyze perform-

ance is not necessarily the language that we would use to analyze print. There are certainly things that you'd get from print that you wouldn't get from performance and that you'd get from performance that you wouldn't get from print.

"Even while I say it isn't necessary to bridge the gap, it is something that writers are always struggling with. Simply because in some situations, like the class situation, poetry is quite often presented on the page. So writers, even as they're given to performance, find themselves struggling to convey on the page the properties of the performance. I think that struggle is there and perhaps the struggle will continue for a long time as people move towards find forms, other than print, in which to present the poetry. Although the struggle is there and is going to continue, I don't think it's really a question of a gap needing to be bridged. I think what needs to be done is to look for different forms of presentation of the work."

If writing allows Collins to express herself, then it is fair to state that teaching allows her to develop herself. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in creative writing and Caribbean writing. Collins feels it is not only an opportunity to broaden others, but also herself. She has taught since 1972 and finds it a vital part of who she is.

"Teaching has always been an interest. Early on I taught high school in the Caribbean. I taught at the same level as I do now in England. It's been almost a life-long interest. Throughout I've been interested in the way in which language has been used in literature, the use of language and discussing that with students at various levels. I get satisfaction from discussing it with people who are studying it. Also, in a sense, I find when you are teaching you are clarifying all sorts of notions. Not only for the class but for yourself. There's that kind of interchange that happens."

**Stroll of Poets:**  
**Various Venues Around Edmonton**  
**Oct. 5-6**  
**Merle Collins**  
**Lecture**  
**Humanities Lecture #3, U of A**  
**Oct. 4**  
**Performance**  
**Skylight Room, Strathcona Legion**  
**Oct. 5**

**The 6th Annual Stroll of Poets** Oct. 5 & 6

A wide range of poets perform short readings in popular Strathcona venues.

The night before the Stroll, on **Saturday, October 5 at 8 p.m.**, hear



**Merle Collins**

The highlight of the 1993 Toronto Harbourfront International Poetry Festival! Skylight Room, Strathcona Legion, 108 (E. 81 Ave.)

Tickets \$6 at Orlando Books, \$7 at door

Also, Friday, October 6 free lecture by Merle Collins, "Drama & Story: Caribbean Women in Writing and Performance" 4 p.m., Humanities Lecture 3, U of A.

Then on **Sunday, October 6** starting at 1 p.m. (schedule at right), **"The Stroll of Poets"**

Registration to Oct. 6 performances is free, but please observe a reasonable minimum charge in the houses.

Then at 5 p.m. at the Strathcona Legion **"The No Backs Barred Bar"**

Meet the poets at play & rest and join or watch our famous Poetry Sweatshop and hear the acoustic music of "Poets Unplugged"

**Edmonton** **ascott travel**

Visit the Stroll at <http://www.comet.ca/stroll>

**6th Annual Stroll of Poets** presents

**Merle Collins**  
poet of Granada & the wide world

**Saturday, October 5**  
**Strathcona Legion**  
Tickets at Orlando Books or the door

and

**Stroll of Poets**  
**Sunday, October 6**  
on Whyte Avenue

Check October 3  
Vue for times and locations



Internet Centre **ascott travel** The Alberta Foundation for the Arts

**Edmonton** Parks & Recreation  
The U of A Department of English  
Mas Productions  
The Writers Guild of Alberta  
The Centre for International Alternatives

Vue Weekly October 3-9, 1996

## Stroll of Poets welcomes international author

By Lisa Whittington

Merle Collins strolled a long way to perform at Edmonton's sixth annual Stroll of Poets.

Collins' appearance marks the first time the Stroll has featured an out-of-town author.

"I was too intrigued not to come," says Collins.

"I'm excited to see how the festival works and to hear the different poets," she says.

Originally from Grenada, Collins is currently a professor of creative writing and Caribbean literature at the University of Maryland.

Doug Elves, Stroll Society member and treasurer, asked Collins to be part of the Stroll after seeing her perform at the 1993 Toronto Harbourfront International Poetry Festival.

She was the highlight of the Toronto festival, he says.

Collins is the author of two books of poetry, two novels and a book of short stories.

Her writings focus on humanity, post-colonial Caribbean history and a longing to return to one's home or roots.

Collins began her appearance at the Stroll with a lecture on Oct. 4 at the University of Alberta.

She discussed Caribbean women

writers and performers

Increasingly Caribbean women are writing about their experiences and telling their stories on the page, she says.

"The situation has changed dramatically. In the 1960s it would have been hard to find even 10 Caribbean women whose work had been published."

In the 1970s and '80s publishing houses and audiences began to focus more on the writings of Caribbean women, she says.

Collins says ideas for poems or stories usually come to her in the form of images.

She says she usually visualizes a written work before she sets it down on paper.

She stresses the notion of poetry as something beyond written words on a page.

Performing a poem for an audience is just as important as writing it, she says.

Collins performed to a full house in the Skylight Room at the Strathcona Legion on Oct. 5.

She read several of her poems, including *Seduction, The Lesson* and *Neighbor's String*.

The Stroll of Poets was held Oct. 6. It featured over 100 poets at 12 different venues.

**GMCC**

MacEwan Journalist Oct 16/196

Grant MacEwan Community College Journalist  
October 16, 1996

# Battle of the Poets

## THEATRE

**The 12 Days of Poetry**  
featuring 44 poets  
in coffee shops around Edmonton

Math time. Let's see, now... 6 times 12 is 72, which at four poets per day is 288. In its six-year history, *The 12 Days of Poetry* has given voice to 288 local poets. Well, maybe not quite that many—if some of them were repeat performers. But

plethora of poets nonetheless. One may, in fact, begin to wonder if Edmonton even has that many poets...or, perhaps more significantly, if it has enough poetry aficionados to fill all those the coffee houses year after year. Well, if you share such doubts, Marilyn Hooper hastens to dispel them.

The Stroll of Poets Society, which organizes *The 12 Days of Poetry*, has over 200 members. And the crowds? "Standing room only," enthuses Hooper, the coordinator of his unique annual event. "On the first night of the festival [December 27], it was minus 65 degrees...but the Sugar Bowl was just packed." Those present on the first day of poetry enjoyed their lattes in the presence of local poets Linda Jennings, Ellen Wells,

Myrna Garanis and Jacqueline Bell. Each subsequent day has featured four more poets...and the crowds have grown as the days go by.

Hooper explains that *The 12 Days of Poetry* developed as an off-shoot of the *Stroll of Poets*, an itinerant poetic adventure taking place in October. Stroll board member and founder Doug Elves "had this vision of wandering poets in Old Strathcona," Hooper explains.



**STROLL of POETS**

"Someone told him he'd be lucky if he got 20 people." False prophecy. Soon, the Stroll was such a big event that members felt the need to extend it—or, more specifically, to select some of the best Stroll contributors and give them a stationary position from which to read their work.

"Poets submit their works anonymously to a panel of jurors," Hooper says, "which this year included local celebrities such as Jan Reimer, Terry Wickham and Walter Kaasa." The jurors vote on their favourites, and the 44 best poets are invited to take part in *The 12 Days of Poetry*. But that process only marks the end of the semi-finals; "Everyone votes on the best poets in the 12 Days...and the top five get to read on the final day." This rigorous se-

lection process not only guarantees some seriously good poetry by the 12th day; it also assures that the poetry will appeal to a wide range of tastes and sensibilities. All in all, one of the safest bets for poetry this year.

Hooper also stressed that the Stroll of Poets Society offers many opportunities for budding poets to share and stage their works. "After the 12 Days, we're launching

a Tuesday reading series, which will include an open stage." Novice poets who dare to take the stage now may well find themselves strolling along with the best of them come next October...and then, the title of All-Powerful Overlord of Poetry will be...at long last...*within their grasp!*

It's quite a contest. Check it out.

**Scott Sharplin**

# Irish poet and priest tries a U of A retreat

By Bert Almon

When Michael McCarthy, spiritual director of the Ushaw Seminary at the University of Durham, England, talked to his bishop about sabbatical plans, he said he would like to spend the time exploring the connections between spirituality and poetry—by writing poems, a new vocation he had been quietly exploring. The bishop's reply was direct: "Wonderful!" Most such leaves are given to pursue theological or counselling studies. But the bishop was sure that something fruitful would come of this unusual request. For more than six months McCarthy has been at the University of Alberta, writing poetry, taking part in classes and becoming an Edmonton celebrity.

McCarthy, a native of County Cork, Ireland, decided to go far from the British Isles: "I imagined that by crossing geographical frontiers, expanding psychological frontiers would be easier." One place he investigated was the Banff School of Fine Arts. That possibility led him to write Alberta Culture for information about the province. In reply, the director mentioned that Edmonton has a thriving literary scene, with a poetry festival, frequent readings in bookstores and coffeehouses—and a creative writing program at the University. He inquired here and received a letter from Pat Demers, chair of English, offering him office space. "I thought that



Michael McCarthy

was very welcoming," he says, and he decided to come. He has been a welcome guest at the University, where he has been happy to talk about Irish poetry with Douglas Barbour's modern poetry students. He has taken a Faculty of Extension course on "Writing as a Spiritual Practice," from local poet Shirley Serviss. In the first term he participated in my advanced creative writing course, adding a great deal to the class by his wit and insight, and contributing poems that use

dreams, Irish folklore, imagery of rural Ireland, and stories from the Bible to explore the inner life. He has found visits to Ven Begamudré, the writer in residence in the English Department, very helpful in developing his craft. He had planned to go to Washington, D. C. after Christmas to take a course on poetry and spirituality, but decided to stay here and pursue the practice instead of the theory.

In Edmonton he has become a celebrity in the poetry organization, "The Stroll of Poets." He took part in the annual festival in the fall, and was chosen on the basis of his work to take part in a reading in the annual holiday series, "The Twelve Days of Poetry." And by audience choice he was selected for the finale of the "Twelve Days" series, where he was captured on local television reading and singing a song. His readings have a dramatic quality: he uses the full resources of both the English language and his own voice. He has just had a poem accepted by a leading Canadian journal, *Queen's Quarterly*, and his work has been purchased by CBC Radio for the "Alberta Anthology" Series. He has put off his departure from Edmonton several times, but plans to return to England in May, where he wants to take up the life of a parish priest in a Yorkshire village. If on his return he mentions his stay here and anyone asks, "Why Edmonton?" he will have much to say in reply. ■

*Dr. Bert Almon is a professor of English at the University of Alberta and teaches modern literature and creative writing. He is currently on leave to complete research for his upcoming book on writer William Humphrey.*

Folio March 21, 1997

Folio, March 21, 1997

# Poetry's in motion

## The spoken word bounces back in a high-tech world

BY JULIET WILLIAMS

If you think you can only get into the poetry scene in ultra-hot places like New York and L.A., think again. Poetry is hot, and it's sizzling right here in Edmonton. The signs of a poetry Renaissance are everywhere: weekly poetry readings on Whyte Ave., bookstores featuring shelves filled with poetry, CD recordings of spoken word and poetry for sale at local record stores and, of course, Edmonton's own Stroll of Poets.

Poetry is alive and well and it's not just part of English class any more. But why is everyone suddenly jumping on the poetry bandwagon?

Many people claim that in an age when television is the dominant cultural medium and computers run a close second, the social and intellectual stimulation people get from writing and reading poetry is especially important. The discussion and debate at public readings often gives poets greater imaginative power and insight into their own work; it is interaction with other human beings. At its best, poetry feeds the psyche, nurtures the soul and reveals the answers we're searching for. Some practitioners feel the public finds shelter in poetry.

"People are going back to more substantial sorts of inquiries about things," observes local poet Nigel Darbasie. The revival of poetry can be seen as a sort of backlash against the trappings of all things high-tech. Strip our culture to the bones and you'll find words.

"The fact is, what's in the computer has been put there. You've got to write programs, you've got to take books and put them on CD . . . I think people will turn back to older forms: the book and the spoken word. These things will come back, just as there are trends in music. You know, there is technological overkill, technological saturation."

Ted Biodzietze, a local poet and resident of the 1990s

In a sense, poets have taken back poetry. They've retrieved it from the halls of academia, from the ivory towers with their analytical emphasis on rhyme, metre and metaphor. Poetry is again, as it used to be, about expressing the emotions of real life. For many serious poets, that's a relief.

"You'd say the word 'poet' before and you'd have this kind of starchy image of the academic," Ito said.

"I think that people who like to play with words and language don't often think of any formal venues for it. And then all of a sudden there's the Stroll of Poets . . . people play with words and language all the time, but no one ever thinks of it ever being poetry in the sense that they could ever take it anywhere, or perform it. I think the Stroll of Poets kind of opened up the possibility of that. If you are somewhat playful with language, have a knack with words or even phrases, here's a place where you can start trying it out."

### The Stroll

So what is the Stroll of Poets? Many local poets credit it for reinventing, revamping and reviving the local poetry scene. The Stroll, which isn't so much a stroll as it is a gathering, was the brainchild of a few innovative Edmontonians who wanted an outlet for their own poetic expression.



expression is here to stay. Again. If you want poetry, it's there. The age-old means of sometimes poets, reading their works Monday nights poetry. And Orlando Books has two different authors, and worked the Whyte Avenue crowd with his original take on and Iggy's joined the scene. Jazz poet Dean MacKenzie on a Tuesday night, or any of a growing number of coffee stages or its accessibility, poetry is hip again. Whatever you think of The Stroll of Poets or its open an expert in literature to see what works and what doesn't. able to determine who's better than the other person in terms of form or technique or skill. And you don't have to become more and more accustomed to listening, you'll be some people to go out and do such things, but as you per- sonal life and expect it to be greeted as poetry . . . it allows can't go up to a mic and blather out the blues of your per- work at it. There's technique and skill involved and you just embarrassing. I still think that poetry is a craft; you have to go up there and ramble out all their expressions about their love life, or whatever it is. Sometimes it can just be plain quality control. It's not just enough for me to see someone (But) there's another side of me that wants some sort of ing poets.

But open stage venues on The Stroll have their good and bad points, according to some poets.

"What The Stroll of Poets does, basically, is it allows any- body who writes poetry to be able to read it to an audience."

"If you want to read poetry, it's open to everyone who

good enough." We said, we accept all peo- and say "well, your poetry isn't everybody. We didn't judge you organizations who accepted or The Stroll was one of these and they didn't do anything together. there were other groups around a small group at the university and fractionated," Wilson said. "There was bringing poetry back to the people. Before The Stroll, poetry was poetry scene, for writing artists and credit for re-energizing Edmonton's Stroll founder, also gives The Stroll Ken Wilson, another local poet and said Elvess.

ability, but in terms of subject matter." on a poet gets in terms of reading poet- "The more practices, the more partici- better or for worse.

The lack of opportunity and by extension behind The Stroll — a place to recite their work was something poets needed, for

get the opportunity to recite," Elvess recalled.

In pre-Stroll Edmonton, "it was often hard for people to

ple: If you want to read poetry, it's open to everyone who



Poet Mary Howes holds an audience's attention during a reading at the Block 1912.



poetry readings are drawing more attention as the art form, the essence of a communion, enjoys a renaissance.

that's what I want to explore in my poetry."

"For myself, in my own poetry, there is a sacred and spiritual quality to language and the title *Frogs in the Rain Barrel*."

own anthology has been published under that poetry is suited for," said Ito, whose "There is a sacred quality to language all contemplative ways.

Poet Sally Ito feels the revival of the oral tradition is a return to more spiritu- al, contemplative ways.

business and I want to talk about flow- ness. And finally, flowers are not a business. I'm not a business. The function- ing of the organs in my body is not a

really standing up and saying 'I don't you can sort of say they (poets) are Looking at it sort of symbolically, with bottom-line issues.

tion to prevailing preoccupation could be an equal, opposite reac- social physics: poetry's popularity

form may result from the laws of social physics: poetry's popularity could be an equal, opposite reac- tion to prevailing preoccupation

deficits and budgets. Poetry is an escape. Biodzietze Poetry is separate from the laws of and read poetry to other people."

And this is particularly bad I think, in those areas where people usually don't like to confuse what they are doing with business. I think schools are a perfect example of

And this is now considered to be a site of commerce. ground, to all the efforts to get site of

thing that happened in the last five years we've seen an incredible resurgence of poetry.

ing and conservative politics have much to do with the resurgence of poetry. But it was, per- Apoorva: *Woman At a Piano*, claims that "believe- Apoorva (general) Award for English Poetry for his book

# Poetic voices soar northern 'mecca'

**NORM SACUTA**  
Special to The Journal

Edmonton

Do democracy and poetry mix? Is that "elitist" art form many a high school student came to fear and loathe on the final exam actually coming into vogue as the voice of the common people?

Of course, most of the great poets of our modern era have always maintained that poetry is the language of the common person. Everyone from Auden to Eliot, Gertrude Stein to Erin Moure, has claimed affiliation of some sort with the guy and gal on the street.

"Sure, sure," one can hear the engineers and geologists in suburban Edmonton say, "I've heard it all before. Talk to me again when more than 12 people show up at a poetry reading."

Well, oh-ye-of-little-faith, that moment has arrived. Last weekend, more than 350 people shelled out between \$5 and \$8 apiece, and packed the main hall of the Strathcona Legion, to hear the six most popular poets in Edmonton read from their work.



Serviss

This was the finale of The Twelve Days of Poetry, a reading series that is an outgrowth of the much larger Stroll of Poets, the born-in-Edmonton festival held each fall in Old Strathcona bookstores, bistros and coffee houses.

The Twelve Days of Poetry offers the best of that larger one-day festival, with 44 poets chosen to read. For the finale, those 44 are narrowed down to six, determined by audience balloting.

This year's favorites were Tim Bowling, Michael McCarthy, Alice Major, Shirley Serviss, Glen Kirkland and Mary T. McDonald.

"We had complete sell-outs for the first 11 nights," says festival organizer Marilyn Hooper, a board member of the Stroll of Poets Society. "Attendance at the smaller venues totalled over 600 people, even before this finale."

The 44 poets were chosen from The Stroll of Poets Anthology, com-

alive and thriving. And Tim Bowling, originally from Ladner, B.C., says that his book *Low Water Slack* went into a second printing in part because of the sales generated in Edmonton from his exposure through The Stroll.

But what does such praise and the rapid rise of public interest in live readings really mean for poetry in Edmonton? Shirley Serviss, for one, told me she now writes more for the performative aspects of poetry, for how it *sounds*, rather than how it looks on the page.

Is poetry adversely affected by the demands of an audience? Has a voice developed in the local writing community, a set of approaches to language or subject matter, that is recognizable as a movement? On the basis of the finale's six poets, the answer to both questions is, thankfully, no.

Mary T. McDonald, for example, struck me as perhaps the most alive for an Edmonton audience, although not as adventurous stylistically as McCarthy or Bowling.

Her series, the *Aunt Ellen* poems, provide a wonderful historical view of Edmonton in the 1920s and '30s. Her use of colloquialisms and turn-of-phrases that might otherwise be lost ("tiddletarts" and "grass widow," for example) is far more important to our city's living tradition than any of the buildings in Strathcona.

Kirkland and Serviss differ from McDonald in that the poetic ear of each seems tuned more to the ironic in everyday speech. One of Kirkland's poems was a conversation he once had with a plastics salesman in which the man in question is oblivious to the irony of his contention that people "ought to be more like plastic — tough and reliable."

The second half of the evening took on a more philosophical bent, as Bowling, McCarthy and Major tackled the problems associated with the communication, misinterpretation and retelling of histories.

Bowling's *Family Feud* speculated on the lives of his two



Kirkland

## • THE WRITER'S GUILD OF ALBERTA

The Fourth Annual **Stroll of Poets** will be decidedly sedentary compared to past years. Stroll over to Michelangelo's Workshop Cafe located at 1401-11th St. S.W. for a day long celebration of poetry and poets starting at 11 a.m. on June 8. A "Poetry Sweatshop" with Judy Hamill will be held at 4:30 p.m. Call 265-2226.

Calgary Herald Friday, June 6, 1997

# Street poets return with second edition

Aug 24/97  
CC  
E.S.

A poetic movement unique to Edmonton moves into its sophomore year with the release of *Songs of the Street: Volume 2 of Inner City Poetry*.

Few of the poets will be recognized by name, admits Michael Walters, a poet who is the editor of the collection. The works were gleaned from a reading held last November at the Boyle Street Co-op featuring 21 inner city poets.

"The poems in this book are quite strongly indicative of struggle," says Walters. "One of the biggest things this project has done is allow people who have lived through lots of hardship to come out from these emotions and put them down on paper and get them out. It's a therapeutic thing for them."

The \$5 book is marketed through the street vendors of *Our Voice*.

"It'll be around until all of the copies sell," says Walters, adding that last year's 1,500-copy edition sold out before the snow flew. In *Volume 2's* first week on the streets, more than 250 copies were sold.

Next up on Edmonton's poetry circuit is The Stroll of Poets on Oct. 5, a festival that has spawned editions in Calgary and Toronto.

As in the past, venues throughout Old Strathcona will be enlisted in the cause for verse, rhyming, rhythmic and otherwise.

An anthology of works from the festival will also be available through Greenwood's Bookshoppe, Orlando Books and Audreys Books.

— Gordon Morash



## STROLL OF POETS

The eighth annual Stroll of Poets take place Saturday in Old Strathcona starting at 1:30 p.m. Venues hosting poets include Orlando Books, Breadstick Cafe, Alhambra Books, Greenwood's Bookshoppe, The Bagel Tree, Mis On Whyte, Athabasca Books, Travellers Antiques and International Hostel.

To gather energy for the stroll, take in the brunch at 11 a.m. which will feature a performance by guest reader Tim Lander at noon. Tickets are \$8.50 in advance at Orlando Books.

Edmonton Journal Monday, September 28 1997



## Roses are red

Shakespeare and Keats may not have been from Edmonton, but the city's vibrant literary community showcases its local talent at this year's Stroll of Poets. It's a "smorgasbard" of poetry at the annual October stroll this Sunday. Listen to local poets read and perform their works. Sheri-D Wilson, known for her innovative and dramatic performances, will be the special guest poet.

**Where:** A number of venues in Old Strathcona

**When:** Sunday. Wilson performs at Smorgasbard Brunch at 10 a.m. The Stroll goes from 1 to 5 p.m. The festivities continue at the No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion, 10416 81st Ave.

**Cost:** Free. Tickets for the Smorgasbard are \$8 in advance (available at Orlando Books, 10640 Whyte Ave.) and \$10 at the door.

History of the Stroll - Max Vandersteen  
Edmonton Journal Friday, October 3, 1997

# Book time for kids' festivals, Stroll of Poets

October events put readers in touch with writers, storytellers

ROGER LEVESQUE  
Special to The Journal  
Edmonton

Curving up in your favourite armchair with a good book is only one way to commune with the brains behind the words on a page. This month publishers, booksellers and the authors themselves are inviting you to connect in person through a fall festival of words.

It begins tonight when the Young Alberta Book Society holds its annual Celebration Of Authors And Illustrators, focusing on children's literature. That's just a teaser for the group's Chrysalis event (formerly Young Alberta Book Festival, running Oct. 14 to Nov. 8) which puts authors in Alberta schools and libraries to entertain young readers.

On Sunday it's time for the 7th annual Stroll Of Poets, a day-long series of readings in various venues around Old Strathcona that brings a wide cross-section of poets and storytellers in touch with a live listening audience.

And finally, The Word Is Out! (formerly the Alberta Book Fair) hits the Old Strathcona Arts Barn on Oct. 26, expanding the focus to include authors of national and international significance. As these efforts build on past successes, it seems that reading is alive and well in Alberta.

The Celebration Of Authors And Illustrators to be held this evening usually brings out around 200 people, mostly teachers, librarians and parents who meet to share information about children's books. Tonight 20 recent books will be covered with 16 authors or illustrators discussing their work, including veteran authors like Tololwa Mollel and Monica Hughes, and recent newcomers to Edmonton like Kyrsten Brooker.

(It starts at 7 p.m. in the McCauley Chambers, Centre For Education, One Kingsway Ave.; Admission for non-members is \$3.50.)

Marg Stephen knows the joy of bringing good books to children. Apart from having several well-read kids of her own, she's the executive director of the Young Alberta Book Society. Over the past 20 years the non-profit organization has been responsible for encouraging thousands of young readers and writers.

"When you have the opportunity to attend one of these readings and you watch the expressions on the kids' faces, it's just magic," says Stephen. "And the spinoff in reading and writing is just amazing."

While Stephen has noticed an increase in the number of books being published for young readers in Alberta, she is concerned about how the industry is holding up given funding problems. Alberta publishes some of

the most sophisticated works anywhere, from picture books right through to young adult fiction, and it's become apparent that kids also enjoy reading stories that are centred in their own province.

The Chrysalis Festival held later this month will see 40 authors or illustrators visiting over 200 schools or libraries around the province (last year there were 577 readings in over 100 towns or cities around Alberta). Special guest author Kevin Major from St. John's, Nfld., will also appear at the Children's Literature Roundtable here Nov. 5.

The Stroll Of Poets just keeps expanding. In fact the 7th annual afternoon of readings this Sunday will involve 137 authors reading in eight venues around Old Strathcona, all engineered by about 55 volunteers and the society's board.

The authors have ranged from age 14 to senior citizens. Each one gets a ten-minute reading and everybody gets published in an anthology of the festival. Publicist Michael Walters talks about how the connection between authors and listeners has grown:

"It's really become a community in a way and there was a need for that. People enjoy going out to read their stuff and to listen to others read, and it benefits them all. It developed from people's need to express themselves, and performance poetry has become quite popular alongside written poetry. There's an extra dimension there, with more emotion and the body language of the people who wrote it."

Walters says the poems range from occasional take-offs on the beat poets to material inspired by family life, relationships, almost anything.

Poets earn a \$10 honorarium for the readings but attendance is free for the public.

This year internationally known Calgary-born feature poet/playwright/actress Sheri-D Wilson (her recent collection *Girl's Guide To Giving Head* is from Arsenal Pulp Press) kicks off the day at a special brunch in the Strathcona Legion (at 10 a.m.), performance at 11:15; tickets are \$8 in advance from Orlando Books or \$10 at the door).

Stroll Of Poets runs in four sets starting every hour from 1 p.m., with five poets in each set at each of the following venues: Breadstick Cafe, Alhambra Books, The Bagel Tree, Greenwood's Bookshoppe, Athabasca Books, Traveller Antiques and Orlando Books. Misty On Whyte will host an open stage at 3 p.m.

Finally, the No Bards Barred Bar convenes in the Strathcona Legion at 5 p.m., where Dean MacKenzie and the jazzy Jupiter Trio will perform Allen Ginsberg's epic poem *Howl*.

Edmonton Journal Thursday, October 2, 1997

Column: 1; Row: 1

# Smorgasborg of Poets

## PREVIEW

**Stroll of Poets  
at various venues in  
Old Strathcona  
October 5**

by Don Iveson

What better venue for the Annual Stroll of Poets than Edmonton's cultural nexus itself: Old Strathcona? Poets of all shapes and sizes will be reading their work for your entertainment and enlightenment this Sunday. Over 130 poets, young and old, professional and amateur, will take you to places you've never been, and take you back to places you forgot existed with hundreds of original works.

The Stroll of Poets was founded seven years ago as a non-profit society to give local poets an opportunity to perform publicly, and now holds several reading events each year around Edmonton. Also, the society publishes an anthology of poems by Stroll of Poets members, the 1997 edition of which will be available at Whyte Avenue bookstores sometime in December.

The events will kick off at 11 a.m. this Sunday with a brunch at the Strathcona Legion (10461-81 Ave) and a performance by Vancouver poet Sheri D. Wilson. Her third collection of poems — *Girl's Guide to Giving Head* (1996, Arsenal Pulp Press) — has helped to further establish her international status. Stroll organizers are very pleased to have this world-renowned performance poet to open the "poetry party" (just a little bit of alliteration to get you geared up!)


After the brunch, poets will stroll to several venues around Strathcona, includ-

ing the Breadstick, the Bagel Tree, Traveler's Antiques, and Greenwoods, Alhambra, Orlando and Athabasca Bookstores. In addition, there will be an open stage at Misty Mountain Café.

In the evening, the Legion will be mystically transformed into the "No Bards Barred Bar," where Dean Mackenzie will perform Allen Ginsberg's provocative classic "HOWL" accompanied by the Jupiter Trio jazz ensemble.

This year's Stroll promises to be a great opportunity to hear the work of our local poets, as well as a chance for them to share with you. Just remember, an audience is necessary for there to be a true performance, so go Strolling this Sunday!

The Gateway, October 2, 1997

The  7th Annual  
**Stroll**  
 of  
**Poets**

Sunday, October 5  
 in Old Strathcona

A festival of poets reciting in favourite venues :

10 a.m. *Smorgasbord Brunch*

Special guest poet **Sheri-D Wilson**  
 Strathcona Legion Griffin Room, 10416 - 81 Avenue  
 Doors and brunch at 10 a.m., performance at 11:15 a.m.  
 Advance Tickets \$8 available at *Orlando Books, 10640 Whyte Ave.* until October 4. \$10 at the door.



Sheri-D Wilson is a poet, playwright and actress known for her scintillating and poetic presence. She has performed her poetry and one-woman shows across Canada and the U.S. Her most recent book is *Girl's Guide to Giving Head*, Arsenal Pulp Press.

"She acts. She dances. She writes. But it's as a performance poet that Calgary-born Sheri-D Wilson has built her international reputation." - Julia Benne

1 p.m. *The Stroll of Poets as listed below.*

5 p.m. *The No Bards Barred Bar at the Strathcona Legion, 10416 - 81 Avenue. Dean MacKenzie and the Jupiter Trio perform Allen Ginsberg's classic work, H O W L*

Breadstck Cafe 10159 Whyte Ave	Alhambra Books 10309 Whyte	The Bagel Tree 10354 Whyte	Greenwoods' Bookshope 10355 Whyte	Misty On Whyte 10458B Whyte	Athabasca Books 8228 - 105 St.	Traveller Antiques 10533 Whyte	Orlando Books 10640 Whyte
<b>1 P.M.</b>							
to 1:30							
Tom Emmens Jo-anna Godfrey Lyle Weis Susan Lawson Nichole Pikan	Mary Howes Nancy MacKenzie Louis Munan Pamela Young Myriam Hemstock	Geoff Kuziw Sue Marxheimer Linda Dumont Gerry Brown Shirley Serviss	Barbara Fraser Susan Larcombe Tara Toroshenko Dean MacKenzie Audrey Whitson		Pierrette Requier Suzanne Cole Debbie Shymoniak Harold Cashman Anna Mioduchowska	Jocko Phylliss Shuell Kevin Steel Tanya Dion Candycie Neill	Karen Press Madeleine Schiller Jim Short William Coombes Beckie Garber-Conrad
<b>2 P.M.</b>							
to 2:30							
Ken Wilson Michael Walters Paul Wilson Tanya Emons	Jean McKenzie Alice Major Gerry Dotto Cheryl Chamberlain Linda Jennings	Vanna Tessier Andrew Thompson Pritam Atwal Sally Ito David Huggett	Gordon McCrae Darrel Yackulic Jane Smith-Jefferies Mary T. McDonald Paul Matwychuk	Sign up at 2:30 p.m. with host Louis Munan	Ah Mui Cheong Ian Gough Ivan Sundal George Brian Metsalfe Jr.	Joe Rizzuto Janet Hird James Thurgood Anne E. McLellan Faye Francis	Toni Owen Rebecca Schollenberg T. Virginia Gillese Maxwell Foster Myrna Garanis
<b>3 P.M.</b>							
to 3:30							
Ruth Anderson-Donovan Fred Anderson Philip Jagger Geraldine Matus Anne LeDressay	Fabian Jennings Gina Varty Margaret Marriott Doug Elvez Adrienne Campbell	Tara Allen Anna Marie Sewell Rebecca Traquair Doug Schill	John King-Farlow Joyce Harries Jenine Dumont Tracy Murray Karla Woloshyn	OPEN STAGE starts at 3 p.m.	Thomas Xavier Mari Bergen Helen Lavender Kathy Fisher Sandra Mooney -Ellerbeck	Rusti Leahy Wendy McGrath Laurie O'Shaughnessy Jacquie Bell	William Nichols Terence Harding Anne Marshall Pieter de Vos Glenn van Schalkwyk
<b>4 P.M.</b>							
to 4:30							
Joyce Pinckney Annie Wachman Jacob dePeuter Reineke Gardine-Lengle Len Gierach	Thomas Trofimuk Joyce MacDonald Mary Woodbury Sherry Barks Catherine Patrick	Lothar A. Krampol John Zapantis Yelena Brodsky John Clark Marcia O'Connor	Richard Davies Danielle Dalton Donald Butler Marijan Megla Trevor deKort		Carmen Lindsay Annette Cannell Evita McConnell Terry Scorbach Jannie Edwards	Kath McLean Christine Kasiniuk Kim Sedgewick M. Jennie Frost Geraldine Shields	Chris Ballcock Jim Pasnak Jason Olyan Rawn Sidor

## 12 DAYS OF POETRY

The 12 Days of Poetry return during the seventh season of the Stroll of Poets. Between Dec. 27 and Jan. 10, 44 poets selected by a community jury of well-known Edmontonians will give voice to the feelings of us all during The 12 Days of Poetry. Each night four poets recite in a favourite bistro in town. The audience at each of the first 11 days of poetry is asked to cast ballots for the two poets they would most like to hear again. These ballots are tabulated and the five poets who have the most votes are invited to recite again at the 12th Day of Poetry, Jan. 17 at the Hellenic Cultural Centre. This year the poetry will be augmented again by a poets' party with local R&B band, The Rault Brothers Band. Tickets are \$5 in advance at Orlando Books, 10640 Whyte Ave. Tickets at the door \$8. Admission to the first 11 days is free, but please observe a reasonable minimum charge.

**THE 1ST DAY OF POETRY** — Jocko, Jennie Frost, James Thurgood and Anne Le Dressay, Saturday, Dec. 27, 7 p.m., Station X Cafe, 7704 104th St.

**THE 2ND DAY OF POETRY** — Ian Gough, Anne Marshall, Lothar Krampol and Pierrette Requier, Sunday, Dec. 28, 3 p.m., Station X Cafe, 7704 104th St.

**THE 3RD DAY OF POETRY** — Kathy Fisher, Gerry Brown, Pieter de Vos and Mary T. McDonald, Monday, Dec. 29, 7 p.m., Station X Cafe, 7704 104th St.

**THE 4TH DAY OF POETRY** — Joe Rizzuto, Geoff Kuziw, Joyce MacDonald, Ruth Anderson Donovan, Friday, Jan. 2, 7 p.m., Grounds for Coffee, 10247 97th St.

**THE 5TH DAY OF POETRY** — Myrna Garanis, Jenine Dumont, Joyce Pinckney, Geraldine Matus, Saturday, Jan. 3, 7 p.m., Grounds for Coffee, 10247 97th St.

**THE 6TH DAY OF POETRY** — Toni Owen, Phyllis Shuell, Jannie Edwards, Carmen Sylvia Lindsay, Sunday, Jan. 4, 3 p.m., Grounds for Coffee, 10247 97th St.

**THE 7TH DAY OF POETRY** — Linda Jennings, Terence Harding, Thomas Trofimuk, Laurie O'Shaughnessy, Monday, Jan. 5, 7 p.m., La Boheme, 6427 112th Ave.

**THE 8TH DAY OF POETRY** — Mari Bergen, Pamela Young, David Huggett, Richard Davies, Tuesday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m., 6427 112th Ave.

**THE 9TH DAY OF POETRY** — Audrey Whitson, Williams Nichols, Fabian Jennings, Rebecca Schellenberg, Wednesday, Jan. 7, 7 p.m., La Boheme, 6427 112th Ave.

**THE 10TH DAY OF POETRY** — Lyle Weis, Trevor Dekort, Jo-Ann Godfrey, Anna Mioduchowska, Friday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m., Sariena's Cafe, 10158 97th Ave.

**THE 11TH DAY OF POETRY** — Sally Ito, Candyce Neill, Marcia O'Connor, Anna Marie Sewell, Saturday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m., Sariena's Cafe, 10158 97th Ave.

**THE 12TH DAY OF POETRY** — Saturday, Jan. 17, 7 p.m., Hellenic Cultural Centre, 10450 116th St. Featuring five audience favourites of the first

## POETRY

# Wouldn't you know it: here come the poets

## Old Strathcona site of 12 Days of Poetry

GORDON MORASH  
JOURNAL BOOKS EDITOR

Edmonton

It might seem like the Edmonton literary world's Boxing Week sale, but while the goods are priced to move, they are hardly bargain-basement hand-offs.

The "it" is The 12 Days of Poetry, the 7th annual post-Christmas celebration of the written and spoken word that begins today and concludes Jan. 17.

This off-shoot of The Stroll of Poets pulls together 44 poets in five venues, all of them coffee houses or bistros.

The festival is the only one of its kind in Canada and, last year, drew more than 700 people to hear the poets read in 15-minute spurts.

"We keep outgrowing our venues," says Doug Elves, the co-ordinator of the festival.

The finale itself has been moved five times since the festival's inception. Last year's stand at the Strathcona Legion, for instance, drew 250 people. Because Elves expects attendance to rise to more than 300, the event, which features readings as well as a dance with the Rault Brothers, has been moved to the Hellenic Cultural Centre.

The festival is a most egalitarian affair: Poets for The 12 Days are chosen from *The Stroll of Poets Anthology* by a jury of nine artistically sympathetic

## Preview

### The 12 Days of Poetry

**What:** Local poetry festival  
**Featuring:** Poets selected by jury and public ballot  
**Where:** various locations, Old Strathcona  
**When:** Today through Jan. 17

*"The goal is to advance the popular base of poetry."*

— poetry festival co-ordinator  
Doug Elves

citizens — not all of them poets or even writers — with the finale's lineup composed of five poets chosen by audience ballot from the previous 11 days.

Edmonton poetry festival organizers, grouped together as the non-profit Stroll of Poets Society, have seen one of their children fall into the hands of would-be imitators. The Stroll, traditionally held in October, has been embraced by the Calgary arm of the Writers' Guild of Alberta for a summer festival. There also have been enquiries from Halifax and Victoria for alternate Stroll editions.

The 12 Days, however, remains an event unto itself, a homegrown entity that, so far,

has stayed home.

"The goal of the Stroll society is to advance the popular base of poetry," says Elves, agreeing that an expansion to other cities would seem a logical next step. "We'd like to see that happen, but as a volunteer society, we don't really have the resources. At seven years, we're reaching the stage where we're looking at more ambitious activities."

Admission for the first 11 days is free, though festival organizers encourage attendees to honour at least a minimum charge at the venues.

The Jan. 17 finale at is the only ticketed event; tickets are available either in advance (\$5) at Orlando Books, or \$8 at the door.

The anthology, a collection of works from the 132 poets participating in the 1997 Stroll, is available at Greenwood's Bookshoppe, Orlando Books and Audreys Books.

### Day-by-day times:

■ Dec. 27 (7 p.m.), 28 (3 p.m.) and 29 (7 p.m.) at Station X Cafe, 7704 104th St.

■ Jan. 2, 3 (7 p.m.) and 4 (3 p.m.) at Grounds for Coffee, 10247 97th St.

■ Jan. 5, 6 and 7 (7 p.m.) at La Boheme, 6427 112th Ave.

■ Jan. 9 and 10 (7 p.m.) at Sariena's Cafe, 10158 97th Ave.

■ The finale: Jan. 17 (7 p.m.) at Hellenic Cultural Centre, 10450 116th St.

# Poets praise power of the self-published

NORM SACUTA  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL  
Edmonton

It's early evening on a weeknight at Cafe La Gare in Old Strathcona, a place where you're likely to see young men and women at any time sitting with notebooks open, pens poised, waiting for the muse to hit.

There have been times when a cafe I've entered is so full of twenty-somethings with open notebooks I've wondered if merely appearing to be a writer in a public way has superseded the hard, usually private and isolated work necessary to becoming one.

Appearance has become the new hallmark of a generation raised on the visual image over and above the written one. But this doesn't mean that all those young men and women performing their literariness are without talent or undeserving of attention. Nor is change in the way people think and perform limited to artists and writers of the youngest generation.

I've come to La Gare to talk with three well-known local poets about their foray into self-publishing. Out of the local poetry festival, The Stroll of Poets, has emerged a public listening and writing audience for poetry that may be unprecedented anywhere else in the country. Following on this audience has been a chapbook and private publishing explosion that has been feeding that audience.

Anna Mioduchowska, Myrna Garanis and Jacques Benoit have been known to the local poetry scene since well before The Stroll of Poets began. All three writers have been published extensively within the web of small literary magazines across Canada that are funded by the Canada Council.

But with The Stroll of Poets, all three writers' strategies for reaching a wider audience began to change. Along with that change has come a more radical and vociferous insistence on the legitimacy of self-publishing.

"We have a strong, close-knit poetry

community in Edmonton," Mioduchowska says when asked about the affect of The Stroll on her decision to publish her own collection, *Some Souls Do Well in Flowerpots*. "Without the Stroll we'd only have the university and the community based there."

Garanis agrees, and notes that the sales of her book, *I Drive with the evil eye*, are dependent on that audience. "The Stroll is the biggest group of supporters who buy our books."

And it may be, increasingly that claims against self-publishing hold little sway in the case of Canadian poetry in particular. Most poetry presses in Canada have a print-run for their books of 500 copies, and a quick glance at almost any editorial board for a major poetry imprint often reveals significant connections between those being published and those doing the publishing.

In this age of easy access to desktop publishing programs, is Canada Council money the only thing that separates "legitimate" poetry publishing from "self" publishing?

What has led to the increase in self-publishing locally as well, is the inability of most national presses to adequately understand the rise of local markets. Benoit (who writes under the pseudonym Jocko) sent his manuscript, *An Anarchist Dream*, to 34 publishers, all of whom rejected it.

Mioduchowska's rejections came from presses outside Edmonton, presses she says failed to understand the potential for tapping into a local market. Her book did finally catch the attention of local publisher Rowan Books, which plans to bring out a collection of her poems in the fall.

But Mioduchowska, who is originally from Poland, refuses to accept the legitimacy of one form of publishing over another. In Poland, in fact, before the fall of Communism, self-publishing was the only kind that actually offered a real, thinking, alternative voice.

"People are dissidents when they self-publish," she says. "At one time in Poland you could be arrested for even owning a photocopy machine."



John Ulen, The Journal

Self-published poets (from left): Anna Mioduchowski, Myrna Garanis and Jocko swap publishing horror stories at Cafe la Gare

## Distribution the first obstacle

Only a few, select local bookstores carry works of local poets



Because only independent, local bookstores are likely to carry their books, distribution is one problem facing self-published writers.

Jocko's *An Anarchist Dream*, for example, is available from Greenwood's Bookshoppe and Orlando Books.

John King Parlow, a retired University of Alberta philosophy professor and a local poet whose popularity has been firmly established by The Stroll, has been even better at marketing his book, *Words Rise Up Like Fireflies*. In addition to independent bookstores in Old Strathcona, his book is available at the University of Alberta Bookstore and at Coles and SmithBooks in West Edmonton Mall.

Occasionally independent magazine stores such as HUB Cigar will carry self-published titles.

Here are some recent self-published local titles available in Old Strathcona or

from the authors themselves. Look for these authors at readings during The Stroll of Poets in October. This is only a partial list; over the past few years other chapbooks have appeared from Mary MacDonald, Ivan Sundal, Doug Elves and others:

- *The Last Dancing Princess and Other Poems* by Faye Francis
- *Life is a Box of Corn Flakes* by Russell Johnston
- *I Drive with the evil eye* by Myrna Garanis
- *An Anarchist Dream* by Jocko
- *Words Rise Up Like Fireflies* by John King-Parlow
- *Some Souls Do Well in Flowerpots* by Anna Mioduchowska

## STROLL OF POETS

The eighth annual Stroll of Poets take place Saturday in Old Strathcona starting at 1:30 p.m. Venues hosting poets include Orlando Books, Breadstick Cafe, Alhambra Books, Greenwood's Bookshoppe, The Bagel Tree, Mis On Whyte, Athabasca Books, Travellers Antiques and International Hostel.

To gather energy for the stroll, take in the brunch at 11 a.m. which will feature a performance by guest reader Tim Lander at noon. Ticket are \$8.50 in advance at Orlando Books.

Edmonton Journal Monday, September 28, 1998

## Poetry in motion

More than 140 poets will be versifying this Saturday afternoon at the eighth annual Stroll of Poets. Walkers can check out poets who will be reading from their works at venues in Old Strathcona. Before the stroll there will be a brunch featuring Vancouver poet Tim Lander. After the stroll you can wax poetic at the No Bards Barred Bar and Poetry Sweatshop.

**Where:** Brunch and bar at the Strathcona Legion's Griffin Room, 10416 81st St. Readings at Orlando Books, Breadstick Cafe, Alhambra Books, Greenwood's Bookshoppe, the Bagel Tree, Misty on Whyte, Athabasca Books, Traveller Antiques, the International Hostel and an open stage.

**When:** Brunch at 11 a.m., Lander performs at noon. Readings at 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30 p.m. Bar at 5 p.m.

**Cost:** Brunch \$8.50 in advance with tickets available at Orlando Books. Readings are free.



Edmonton Journal Sunday, July 5, 1998

History of the Stroll – Max Vandersteen

Edmonton Journal Monday, October 2, 1998

BY SCOTT LINGLEY

Perhaps you recall this classic post-Yuletide tale: the denizen of a snow-swept northern city awakes from a night of eerie visitations. He runs to his window, throws open the sash and yells to a passer-by below.

"You there, tell me quickly, what day is it?"

"Why, it's the Eighth Day of Poetry, sir," comes the reply.

"Then I haven't missed it! Boy, hail me a cab!"

"Hail your own cab, y'old bastard," says the callow youth.

Okay. Maybe the story isn't that familiar, but it has a moral: lovers of poetry in Edmonton should bear in mind. The fine folks who've brought you the Stroll of Poets to these last eight years are presenting their annual winter event, The 12 Days of Poetry. By the time you read this, there will be fewer than 12 days left, but you'll still have a chance to see some of Edmonton's finest versifiers in action.

It all started back in October during the Stroll of Poets in Old Strathcona, when 144 poets occupied numerous venues on Whyte Ave. to read their original work. Each submitted a single anonymous poem to a panel of judges, who then picked 44 of those poets to read, four a night, in one of four cozy venues starting Dec. 28.

The series continues Thursday, Jan. 7 at La Boheme (6427 - 112

Ave.), starting at 7 p.m., then moves to the Upper Crust (10909 - 86 Ave.) for Jan 11, 12 and 13, also starting at 7 p.m. There's no cover charge, but attendees should respect the minimum charges.

Organizer David Huggett said

used to reading their material, which is a big step for a lot of people to take."

Huggett knows whereof he speaks. Though he isn't reading this time out, he's appeared at the last two 12 Days to test his nerve and his material in front of an audience. Reading makes a poet consider how others will hear a work.

"Every time you write something and you take it out of your own little secure, comfortable place and you stand up . . . and you're the one who's standing there reading it, it forces you to look critically at your own writing. There's nothing worse than getting halfway through something and realizing, hey, this is really a bunch of BS. But that's what reading in public will do for you. It's a very direct way of being accountable for what you do."

For those who dig poetry but can't make the coffee-house scene, the Twelfth Day of Poetry takes place Saturday, Jan 16 at the Strathcona Legion Hall (10416 - 81 Ave.) and features four poets picked from the previous 11 readings as audience favorites. Dale LaDouceur and friends will provide live music; there will be visual art from the Art from the Unknown exhibition and the event is emceed by Srđa Pavlović, a former editor and translator for the

# Poetry by numbers

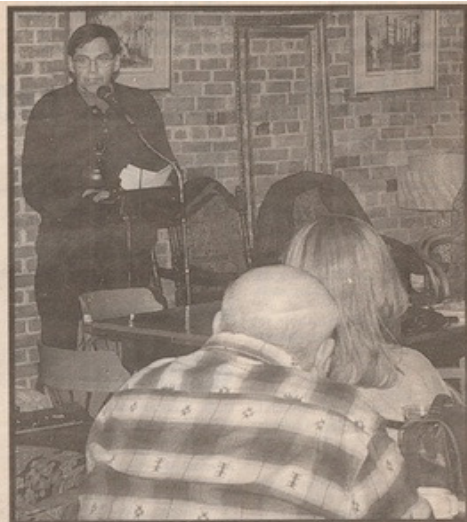
12 Days of Poetry tradition continues

poets selected for the series come from all walks of life, emblematic of the Stroll of Poets' mandate.

"Some of them are academics, some of them are world-renowned, some are high school students — just people who like to put their words on paper," he said. "That's actually the basis of the Stroll, it's a real democratic organization. Anybody can join for five bucks, anybody can read in the fall, no one's sitting there in judgment. It's a way for poets to stand up in public and get

## Preview

The 12 Days of Poetry  
Jan. 7, 11, 12, 13, 16  
various locations



Poet Fred Anderson delivers the goods, reading his own works at Grounds for Coffee Monday night.

respected U.K. poetry journal *Stone Soup*.

Tickets for the event are \$8.50 in advance (from Orlando Books, 10121 - 82 Ave.), \$10 at the door and \$5 for students, seniors and

fixed incomes.

Huggett expects attendees to live up to the art form's age-old reputation for decadence.

"Hey, poets are supposed to have wild parties."

a betrayal of humanity's loftiest attainments. God have mercy on our souls. 1. I stepped over the inert hump of

• SEE Magazine • Jan. 7 - Jan. 13, 1999 • 9

See Magazine January 7-13, 1999

# Poetry hits Edmonton's mass transit



Gordon Morash  
Books

While in London several years ago, I marvelled at the calculated ability of literature to follow me wherever I travelled. Billboards announced new books.

The £10 notes carried the cricket scene from Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*.

Even the Tube carried verse in the cars.

Any attempt to dodge books, reading and hearing about books was met with abject failure.

Next month, poetry hits the streets — or at least the street cars of this city. The Edmonton Arts Council, the Canada Council, Edmonton Transit and the City of Edmonton have conspired to present poetry to the travelling masses in a program called *Take the Poetry Route*.

This is the third program of its kind in Canada, similar endeavours having already hit the roads in Vancouver and Toronto.

Four Edmonton poets will inaugurate the program: Bert Almon, Jacques Benoit (a.k.a. Jocko), Shirley Serviss and Michel Londry. And there is a promise that other poets will be



File photo

Molly Peacock: her prose reflection on childlessness, *Paradise, Piece by Piece*, was highly regarded

featured throughout the year.

Poetry is almost a way of life for many literati in Edmonton. With The Stroll of Poets and The Twelve Days of Poetry originating here, spawning readings and anthologies — and undergoing duplication in several other Canadian centres — it seems somehow right to bring it to the bus routes.

The series will be announced on

Apr. 13 at 11 a.m. in front of City Hall on a bus (naturally!) with former bus driver and present councillor Brian Mason at the wheel, and the poets in attendance.

It will be but one of several events during National Poetry Month, an event that has been on the literary rosters of the United States for years, but a first for Canada.

At this early date, Orlando Books has signed on with poets showcased in five readings: Nancy Mattson and Michael Bartholomew-Biggs (Apr. 9); Dionne Brand (Apr. 14); Pat Jasper and Rajinder S. Pal (Apr. 23, Canada Book Day); Jacqueline Bell, April Miller, Anna Mioduchowska and Pamela Young (Apr. 29); and Paul Wilson and Barbara Klar (Apr. 30).

As well, the Stroll of Poets Society hosts Poetry Tuesdays at La Boheme Restaurant with winners of The Modern-Traditional Poetry Contest (Apr. 6); *The Droll Stroll* featuring open-stage humour poetry (Apr. 13); and *Something Old, Something New* with Nancy MacKenzie, Janice Williamson, Su Croll and Shirley Serviss (Apr. 20).

April is also the month during which McClelland & Stewart releases its high-profile line of poetry, which this year includes works by Governor General's Award-winners Stephanie Bolster (*Two Bowls of Milk*) and Lorna Crozier (*What the Living Won't Let Go*), Susan Musgrave (*Things that Keep and Do Not Change*) and Tim Liland (*To the River*).

Also in April, the publisher will release *How to Read a Poem ... and Start a Poetry Circle*, by Molly Peacock, whose prose reflection on childlessness, *Paradise, Piece by Piece*, was highly regarded.

One of the more interesting projects, however, will emerge from this province in mid-April, as a combined effort between Red Deer College Press and the Omikron Group of Toronto.

*Carnivocal* is a 70-minute CD of sound poetry compiled by Edmontonian Douglas Barbour and Stephen Scobie — sound poets both who perform as Re:Sounding — from 19 Canadian spoken-word artists.

"It's dedicated to bpNichol because he was the progenitor of sound poetry in Canada," says Red Deer College Press publisher Dennis Johnson.

"It has everything but dub and rap. We didn't include that only because we had to draw the line somewhere."

Nichol is included on the CD, along with Scobie, Barbour, bill bissett, Stephen Cain, Michael Dean, Paul Dutton, Claude Gauvreau, Christian Bok, Penn Kemp, Kedrick James, Nobuo Kubota, Steven McCaffery, Susan McMaster, David Penhale, Gerry Shikatani, Steven Ross Smith, W. Mark Sutherland and Richard Truhlar. The price is \$12.95, which in the world of CDs is something of a bargain.

From buses to CD — whoever said that poetry had to stick to the printed page?

Edmonton Journal Sunday, March 21, 1999

# Poetry purposefully strolls with common folk

Democratizing the written word by reading it aloud works for the poet too

GILBERT A. BOUCHARD  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Edmonton

From Dr. Johnson's London coffeehouses, to Kerouac's Beatnik San Francisco, to present-day festival-crazy Edmonton, the institution of the poetry reading has endured, quietly cultivating new audiences generation after generation, democratizing a potentially elitist artform and celebrating the sensual pleasures of spoken verse.

Coffeehouse and nightclub poet extraordinaire Leonard Cohen summed it up so eloquently way back in 1956: "What we're doing is bringing poetry back to where it belongs ... to the hipsters, to the boozers ... back to music and back to an informality, away from the classroom."

Alice Major couldn't agree more and credits Edmonton's strong tradition of poetry readings for having lured her into the perilous life of verse in the first place. "For me, poetry is primarily oral in origins, but we do alternate in our culture between seeing verse on the page and hearing it as a spoken art form," says the prolific Edmonton-based poet and one of the organizers of (W)rites of Spring a major, free-of-charge public poetry reading tonight at 8 p.m. at the Edmonton Art Gallery (EAG) Theatre.

## Preview

### (W)rites of Spring

**Where:** Edmonton Art Gallery Theatre  
**When:** Tonight 8 p.m.  
**Tickets:** Free admission

"A poetry reading is all about making connections and immediacy — vital aspects in an artform that's all about communication."

Sponsored by the EAG and the League of Canadian Poets, (W)rites of Spring features poets from all corners of Canada, including Patrick Friesen, Rhona McAdam and Richard Harrison. "It's a triple-header celebrating National Poetry Month, Canada Book Day and the League's own annual spring reading event," says Major, acclaimed author of several collections of poetry including *Lattice of the Years* which was released this spring.

For Major, poetry readings are not only bred in the bone, having been raised by a father who regularly recited poetry at the dinner table, they are also a vital part of her writing process. "You can always find out what works at a reading, which poems excite the audiences, and which ones don't come off of the page. There's a real rush to reading, hearing when people laugh or when they're still.

*"You can always find out what works at a reading, which poems excite the audiences, and which ones don't come off of the page. There's a real rush to reading, hearing when people laugh or when they're still. And because the creation of poetry is so solitary you need the feedback a reading gives you. It's great to have people come up to you afterwards and tell you that they liked a certain poem you read."*

— poet Alice Major



And because the creation of poetry is so solitary you need the feedback a reading gives you. It's great to have people come up to you afterwards and tell you that they liked a certain poem you read."

Major is quick to point out that many internationally renowned Canlit giants — Margaret Atwood, Milton Acorn, Michael Ondaatje, Al Purdy, Gwendolyn MacEwan, George Bowering, Phyllis Webb, not to mention Edmontonians Doug Barbour and Ted Blodgett — emerged from the fertile fields of Canadian public poetry readings and small press publication.

In particular, Major says Edmonton has not only produced more than its share of recognized poets, but has also created some unique entries into Canadian poetic history in the form of Barbour's exciting performance-oriented sound poetry ("work that really pushed poetry to the max") and the local Stroll of Poets, an annual festival of poetry reading and poetry related performance.

"The Stroll is not only unique to Edmonton, but a real democratizing force that has taken poetry out of the hands of the academia — a very positive thing," she continues.

The impressive relative strength of Edmonton's poetry community is represented at tonight's reading by performances by five local poets (Jocko, Jacqueline Bell, Kath Maclean, Nancy Mackenzie and Anna Mioduchowska), new members all to the League and some of the freshest members of Canlit culture with

recently minted books of poetry under their belts.

As for Major, what are her own personal best and worst memories of public poetic performance? The worst: "Reading a two-page poem and discovering that I didn't have the second page." The best: "Hearing P.K. Page read a single poem at a League of Poets meeting — just one poem — it was so beautiful, so moving, and I don't use the word beautiful lightly."

For fans of emerging verse artists, local poet Suzanne Batten co-ordinates an on-going "Speakeasy" (open-mike poetry reading) every Monday evening at Misty on Whyte.

Not only does the Speakeasy provide a venue for local poets to get their first public exposure, it also strives to create connections between the participating artists, be it poet to poet or connections between local wordsmiths and musicians.

"Poets, like all artists, are influenced by the work of other artists," says Batten, who at 26 has an impressive list of published poetry to her credit. "I can tell by the way the poets in the room are listening, really listening, that something is changing in their viewpoint, in the way that they create their work."

"Reading poetry aloud adds a dimension to work that you can't grasp on the printed page."

Edmonton Journal Friday, April 23, 1999

## POETRY TUESDAYS

Presented by the Edmonton Stroll of Poets. This week's theme: Full is the Moon. Host: Tom Emmens. Poets: Myrna Garanis, Jonathan Meakin, Pierrette Requier and Anne Marshall.

**When:** Tuesday, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Block 1912, 10361 Whyte Ave.

**Admission:** Free.

Edmonton Journal Friday, February 26, 1999

## Poets will stroll in Kensington

More than 25 poets will participate in the 1999 Stroll of Poets slated for Sunday (Sept. 12) in the Kensington (Hillhurst) area.

The Society of Poets, Bards and Storytellers will kick off the event with coffee, croissants and readings at 11 a.m. at Annie's Book Shop, 912 16th Ave. N.W.

Afternoon readings will follow:

- 12:30 p.m. Author Author Bookstore, 223 10th St. N.W.
- 1:30 p.m. Razz Barry's on Kensington, 1136 Kensington Rd. N.W.
- 3:30 p.m. Pages Books on Kensington, 1135 Kensington Rd. N.W.
- 4:30 p.m. Kensington Pub, 207 10a St. N.W.: Wrap-up party ensues.

Calgary Herald  
Saturday,  
September 11,  
1999

# Bus bards aboard! Poetry hops a ride on city transit

Local poets to connect with commuters

PAMELA ANTHONY  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

*"Being in love with you  
is to abandon the piano:*

*it is to take up the castanets,  
the bugle,  
the kettle drum..."*

— from *Aubade* by Michael Londry

It was poetry in motion, punchlines and puns about transit.

Such was the scene Tuesday as a decidedly lively and light-hearted crowd gathered to launch the Poetry Route, an Edmonton Arts Council project which will put the words of 16 poets on city bus "poetry posters" this year.

For anyone who thought poetry was serious, dull or inaccessible, the Poetry Route launch provided proof positive to the contrary. Coun. Brian Mason, a former bus driver, "got things rolling" with obvious glee. Four local poets paid their fare with public readings of their work — and their own share of locomotive puns.

(Poet Shirley Serviss made jokes about the dangers of having poets in the "driver's seat," and Alice Major announced the "next stop" of the project was a call for public entries. Edmonton Arts Council executive director John Mahon, talking about the similarities between the rhythms of poetry and the rhythms of riding the bus, managed the best malapropism of the event when he referred to "public transit readers... I mean riders... Wait, transit readers sounds better.")

Poets, students and word lovers then piled into an Edmonton Transit bus to admire the poetry posters that will be in buses all over the city by next week. The spring series features excerpts of poetry by Michael Londry, Bert Almon, Jocko, and Shirley Serviss.

For poets like Serviss, whose work

## Next Stop: Fame

Yearn to see your poetry in a public forum?

The Poetry Route project is inviting the public to contribute poems to the selection committee.

Eight will be chosen and made into poetry posters.

Published or unpublished poets are welcome to submit up to two poems, or excerpts thereof. Submissions must be a maximum of 10 lines, typed on plain paper. The Canada Council pays a small honorarium for the work.

Committee member Alice Major says that any subject matter or style of poem will be considered, and the committee is looking for "good poetry that is vivid and interesting."

Complete details and guidelines for entry are available from the Edmonton Arts Council (424-2787) and Tix on the Square.

celebrates the poetics of ordinary experiences, publication in the transit system "absolutely" makes sense.

"It's always been my intention to reach people who don't necessarily read poetry," she says. "The bus project is a great way to get poetry back to the people — where it belongs. I think poetry can capture what people are thinking and feeling, and put it into words."

Edmonton is known as a poetry town, says Serviss, who points to the remarkable number of poetry readings, including the successful Stroll of Poets events.

"It's pretty exciting to read in front of 300 poetry fans," she says. "Or go to a restaurant on a cold night and people are sitting on the floor to hear the work of a new poet. There's a lot of interest in Edmonton. Poets are coming out of the woodwork all the time."

Edmonton Transit representative



Edward Parsons, *The Journal*

Poet Jocko (aka Jacques Benoit) reads a poem, *Memo To the Employees of Mother Nature*, on a city transit bus

Pat Waisman was part of the committee that selected the poetry to appear on city buses. She has "always been interested in poetry," but expressed her excitement at finding there were "so many good poets in Edmonton. It made the selection process difficult, but very enjoyable.

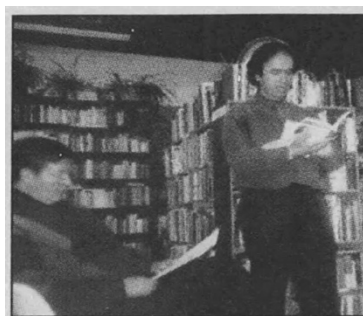
"I think this project will strike a chord with the citizens," she said. "I think people are really interested in poetry right now and I think they'll appreciate seeing poetry on the buses."

Taking poetry public is certainly a popular idea. The Poetry Route was initiated by the Canada Council, which has also helped kick-start successful Poetry Routes in Toronto and Vancouver.

There are similar poetry projects in the transit system of Dublin, Paris and London.

"The Council is always looking for ways to bring the arts in contact with large groups of people," said new Canada Council Board member Susar Ferley, who was in Edmonton for the launch.

"This is a wonderful example of that. It's exciting, recognizing the poets and celebrating their work in a public forum."



## A Poetry Party

Think, laugh, even cry at the ninth annual Stroll of Poets Poetry Festival. The day starts off with a brunch and a reading from Saskatchewan poet Tim Lilburn. Then, more than 100 poets hit the streets and break into, well, poetry in Old Strathcona bookstores and bistros.

**Where:** The festival starts and ends at the Strathcona Legion, at 10416 81 Ave. The stroll takes place with hourly readings in eight different venues on Whyte Avenue.

**When:** Sunday. Brunch starts at 11 a.m. The stroll starts at 1:30 p.m. with readings every hour until 4:30 p.m.

**Cost:** All venue readings are free. Tickets for the brunch are available in advance at Orlando Books for \$8.50 or at the door for \$10.

Edmonton Journal Wednesday, April 14, 1999

Edmonton Journal  
Friday, October 1, 1999



## Go for the Stroll



The powerful play goes on and 44 of Edmonton's finest poets have decided to contribute a verse or two. Drink in the atmosphere of some of the city's most eclectic spots while dripping over the poetic verses of the Stroll of Poets Society as they celebrate their ninth annual 12 Days of Poetry festival.

This weekend marks the fourth, fifth and sixth days of poetry, featuring readings by 16 poets touching on all kinds of topics.

**When:** Today and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday 2 p.m.

**Where:** Grounds For Coffee, 10247 97th St.

**Admission:** Free for the first 11 days but please observe a reasonable minimum charge at the hosting venue.

Edmonton Journal Friday, January 7, 2000

Edmonton Journal Tuesday,  
September 12, 2000

## Tipping poetic chapeau to the Beat generation

Raving Poets definitely not your typical poetry reading

GILBERT A. BOUCHARD  
Special to *The Journal*  
EDMONTON

The first few moments of Liam Kelly's poetry reading are deceptive.

He may start off slow and deliberate, but his verse builds quickly in tempo and energy, winning over the small but appreciative crowd attending a recent *Raving Poets* open-mike reading at the Backroom Vodka Bar deep in Old Strathcona.

With a good head of steam now, Kelly, 24, belts out his intensely referential political verse to beat the band—in this case fellow poet Thomas Trofimuk on keyboards and Randy Edwards on guitar, both straining to keep up.

It's certainly not what most Edmontonians think of when they envision a poetry reading, traditionally an art form associated more with high tea and biscuits than cocktails and bar bands.

"Like I say in one of my own poems: I ain't afraid to shout it out," says Kelly, a University of Alberta Philosophy and English student, of both his populist work and the equally populist summer reading series.

"Some poetry can be elitist — very thick, like philosophy, where you have to dedicate a certain amount of energy to it — but mine is more like rap music. It's the stuff of the street."

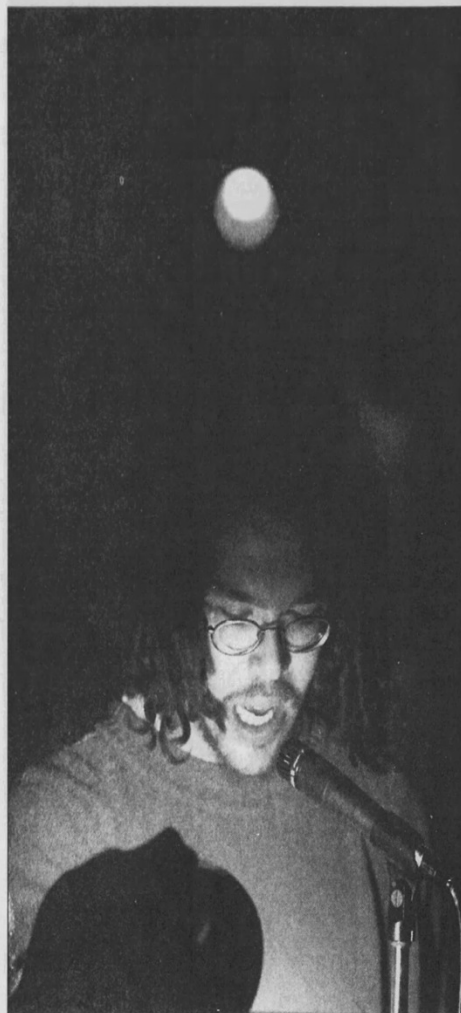
The dreadlocked Kelly is a natural entertainer so perhaps it's no surprise he is one of eight *Raving Poets* chosen by popular demand to hold forth tonight at a special poetry jam at the Backroom — and to be immortalized on a special limited *Raving Poets* CD launching tonight.

Anyone at all curious about poetry should check out the event, starting at 7:30 p.m., says Mark Kozub, poet, musician and organizer of the *Raving Poets* reading series.

Kozub, president of Stroll of Poets Society, adds the CD launch will also serve as the semi-official launch of the 10th anniversary edition of that venerable grassroots literary festival. This year's Stroll of Poets expands beyond its one-day southside poetic blitz and features a week-long series of verse-related happenings that officially kick off Sept. 30.

Be it the larger Stroll celebration or the more spontaneous *Raving Poets* series — created in honour of Beat Poet-era readings — Kozub is thrilled with the sheer range of the work presented, not to mention the range in the poets themselves.

"It's not just mellow verse, of course, but on the other hand it's not all edgy poetry either," he explains. "You can have a 19-year-old juxtaposed with a 50-something poet writing about a mid-life crisis."



RICK MACWILLIAM, THE JOURNAL

Liam Kelly isn't afraid to shout out his intensely referential political verse.

### POETRY PREVIEW

#### Raving Poets

**Where:** Backroom Vodka Bar, 10324 82nd Ave.

**When:** 7:30 p.m. today

While this range has always been a part of the Stroll of Poets, the 2000 edition is the first to reflect that diversity so directly in its events: everything from theatrically oriented Poetry Slam and Poetry Sports events, an evening of triple-X erotic verse, a special kids poetry afternoon, as well as more traditional readings by leading Canadian poets like Jeffrey McDaniel, Sherri-D. Wilson and Susan Musgrave.

Beyond the sheer entertainment, Kozub also hopes the festival will help contribute to a more friendly and invit-

ing community for Edmonton's strong writing community.

"It's the whole idea of getting the writer out of their home office and creating a venue where they can interact with their peers and get some input and network a bit," he continues. "I know I learn so much at readings."

Kozub says one of the biggest motivations behind releasing the *Raving Poets* CD was to help a handful of budding Edmonton verse artists promote themselves. "It's central to the Stroll's mandate — getting the word out to the street about poetry. We already released a print anthology, so it makes sense to release a CD that reaches an audience that might not be into reading poetry," he says.

"Poetry, live or on CD, is totally lifted off of the page when the poet reads the work out loud."

# Perambulating performers make poems popular

Stroll of Poets celebrates tenth year of roamin' and rhymin'

By DANA McNAIRN

For most of us, coma-inducing classes spent studying poetry in high school English were something we promised ourselves we wouldn't endure again. Remember those long afternoons with a droning teacher reciting sonnets and earnest free verse? But what if you were reintroduced to the athleticism of poetry or its raw emotion? A local group is celebrating its 10th anniversary of taking poetry to the streets and giving it back to the people. It might be high time to try poems again.

The Stroll of Poets started out with a simple premise. Too many greybeards in academia, says Thomas Trofimuk, spoiled poetry for the rest of us. "Poetry in schools became a dead thing. We want to make it alive and get it to the people," he says. So Trofimuk and some friends formed a non-profit society, so local poets could perform in public venues. Membership in the society now numbers 150 and encompasses a range of versifiers from teenagers to senior citizens. The Stroll will see poets scattered throughout Old

Strathcona giving readings in bookstores, coffeeshops and even the hostel off Whyte.

## I left my heart in slam Francisco

One of the guest poets invited to the Stroll likes the different venues. "I'd like to see more readings in bars," says Jeffrey McDaniel. "That's where the people are." McDaniel is an acclaimed Los Angeles-based performance poet who has made his mark not only in slam poetry competitions but also on the page. (He has two published collections of his

work to his credit.)

McDaniel agrees that poetry is often considered too highbrow for the average person and thinks the advent of slam poetry started to change all that.

## La Gare est finie

"Doing slam is like being in a punk rock band on tour," he says. McDaniel is a veteran of the scene, having competed in the 1993 National Poetry Slam in San Francisco and doing Lollapalooza in 1994. But McDaniel also thinks the two circles of literary and public poetry are starting to mesh. "It's a shrinking rift between the two worlds," he says. "Slam started out to mock those academic circles and now it's respected." He

adds as further proof of the growing accessibility of poetry the readings he's been commissioned to give in L.A. subways and the success of poetry on buses around the world. "It's no longer inaccessible and disconnected to everyday lives," he says.

Trofimuk says it was that same sentiment that inspired him to start poetry readings at Café La Gare a few years back. The success of that naturally led to the formation of the Stroll of Poets. He explains that part of the beauty and rawness of poetry comes with taking risks with readings—which is why the Stroll features such a mix of newcomers and published poets. (Stroll members can also elect to have their poems considered for inclusion in the annual Stroll anthology.)

## Haiku? You're welcome!

As for Trofimuk, he says he aims for the audiences at his readings to have what he calls a "haiku moment" at the end. "Right after you're done, there's dead silence," he says. "It takes a couple of seconds for everyone's brains to click and then there's the applause." That's how Trofimuk knows he's given a good reading. "Good poetry," he adds, "should be entertaining." ☉

10th Annual Stroll of Poets  
Various Old Strathcona venues •  
Sun, Oct 1

poetry  
preVUE



## Words, words

The Stroll of Poets society kicks off its 10th annual stroll this weekend with a brunch and reading by guest poet Jeffrey McDaniel. Poets will take to the streets and cafes of Old Strathcona for dozens of readings throughout the afternoon and the day ends with a Poetry Sweatshop and music.

**When:** Festival begins Sunday, 10:45 a.m. brunch, poetry readings every hour from 1 to 4 p.m. Poetry Sweatshop and music at 4:30 p.m.

**Where:** Brunch and Sweatshop at Strathcona Legion, 10416 81st Ave. Poetry readings at various venues throughout Old Strathcona.

**Admission:** Free to all events except brunch. Brunch tickets are \$8.50 advance at Orlando Books or \$10 at the door.

Edmonton Journal Friday, September 29, 2000

### PAGES

1135 Kensington Rd. N.W.  
 Thursday, Aug. 30, Nils Thompson.  
 Wednesday, Sept. 5, Kelsang Phutsog.  
 Sunday, Sept. 9, Stroll of Poets.  
 Information, call: 283-6655.

Calgary Herald Thursday, August 30, 2001

## A poet's dozen

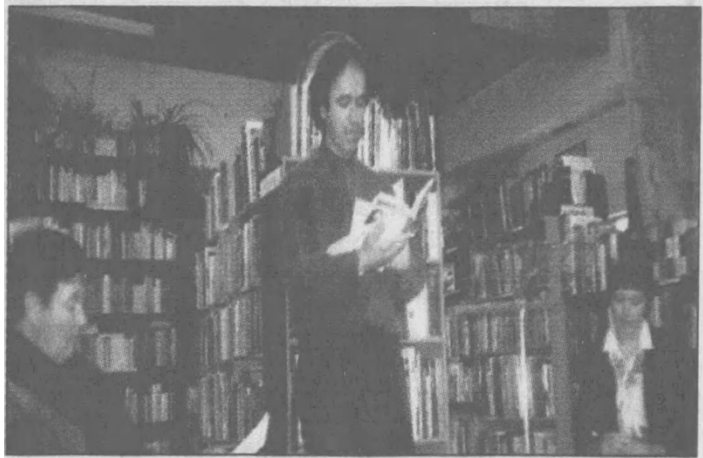
Scribes will gather once again for the 10th annual 12 Days of Poetry for readings by members of the Stroll of Poets Society. This weekend features the sixth day of poetry today, hosted by Fabian Jennings; Saturday is the seventh day, with host Liam Kelly; and Sunday is the eighth day, with host

Michael Walters.

**When:** Today, Saturday and Sunday, 7 p.m. Readings continue throughout the week.

**Where:** Grounds for Coffee and Antiques, 10249 97th St.

**Admission:** Free, but please observe a reasonable minimum charge at the hosting venues.



Edmonton Journal Friday, January 12, 2001

### STROLL OF POETS

Raving Poets Finale. A poetry open stage with music — best poet of the night wins \$350 cash!

**When:** Today, 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Backroom Vodka Bar, 10324 82nd Ave., upstairs.

Edmonton Journal Tuesday, September 12, 2000

# Tonight's a great time for tongues to run off and join the 'circus'

Performance poets invite one and all to recite their best

TODD BABIAK  
Journal Entertainment Writer  
EDMONTON

The relationship between writer and reader is quiet and personal, best located in bathtubs or in bed, at the cabin or on the beach. The conduit between writer and reader is paper, the bound page, marketed and distributed. The relationship begins in a bookstore. Right?

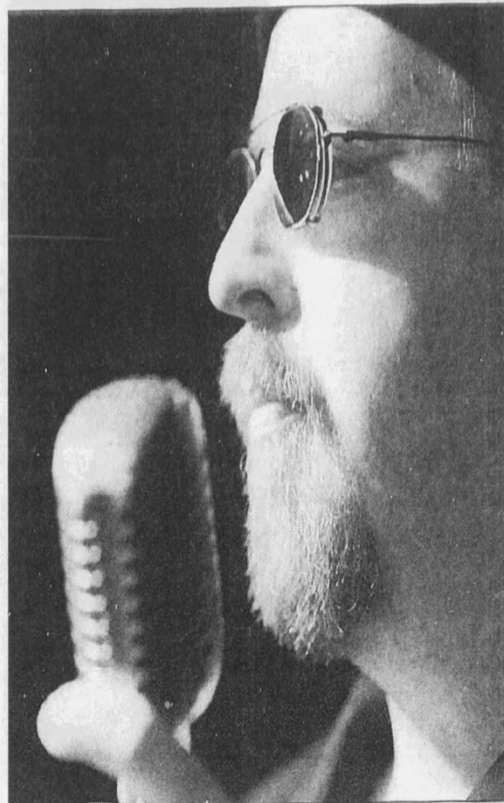
"Performance poetry is different," says Mark Kozub, known in finger-snapping circles as the Alberta Beatnik. "It's not written for the page. This stuff is fundamentally public."

Tonight Kozub hosts Tongue Circus at the Backroom Vodka Bar on Whyte Avenue, celebrating what he calls "Edmonton's world-class word acrobats." The event features performances by some of our city's best performance poets, and serves as a CD release party for local compilations *Tongue Circus Volumes I & II*.

"Spoken word is a very direct form of communication," says Kozub. "In a spoken context, people pay attention. It's really grown in Edmonton over the past year."

"I sometimes can't believe the number of people who are into this. It's like when you go to a fetish show and you realize, wow, there really are a bunch of freaks in this city."

Oral storytelling has a solid basis in world literature, from Homer to Grail legends to First Nations histories. Performance



CANDACE ELLIOTT, THE JOURNAL

The Alberta Beatnik, Mark Kozub, hopes writers will come to his party.

poetry today is considerably more irreverent. "There's an aspect of stand-up comedy, of provocation. Some poetry works really well on paper and bites when you hear it out loud. This stuff doesn't."

Tonight there is a planned lineup, but like all spoken word events, Tongue Circus allows for spontaneous participation. "It's totally informal. If you have something you'd like to read, we absolutely encourage it," Kozub says. "At these events, you have an instant readership."

Most of the performances are backed up by musicians, which adds another dimension to the literature. Poets enjoy the compa-

ny on stage. It can get lonely at the front of the room, naked but for a T-shirt, jeans and some words. "Public speaking is the number one human fear," says Kozub, "higher on the list even than death. We're a bizarre bunch of thrill-seekers."

Kozub is also President of the Stroll of Poets Society, and hopes to coax writers out of their workshops to meet with audiences.

"As a writer it's easy to live in a bubble where you miss out on the feedback."

"Part of our goal is to get these people out in the public. It helps create an artistic community."

The festivities begin tonight at eight. Bring your message.



CANDACE ELLIOTT, THE JOURNAL, FILE

Mark Kozub

## Peace talks and pant-dropping

Poets society's weekly meetings have helped many find inner peace

TODD BABIAK  
Journal Entertainment Writer  
EDMONTON

American and British forces, aided by the Northern Alliance and other military groups, have nearly defeated the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Edmonton's Stroll of Poets Society feels partly responsible.

Their Tuesday night Peace Talks at the Backroom Vodka Bar have been part of a mysterious and intangible force of love and understanding, or so they claim in their press release. "It's really given me hope for mankind," says Stroll President and performer Mark Kozub.

He may or may not be joshing.

"When I first thought of doing this, I expected a lot of 19-year-old lefty university types screaming 'stop the war,'" Kozub says. "But a lot of people are also trying to find inner peace. Since Sept. 11, it's been easy to get extremely down about the direction the world is heading. On the news you see the worst of humanity highlighted. What we're doing on Tuesday nights fulfills a human need to go in the opposite direction, not to be complacent or cynical."

Tonight is the final instalment of *Peace Talks*, a blend of live music and spoken-word poetry. Admission is free, but poets and audience members are encouraged to bring a cash donation or a non-perishable food item for the Bissell Centre. Doors are at 7:30, and potential peacenik poets should arrive early to get on the performance roster.

If poetry, peace and donating food are not enough of an enticement, consider the pants-dropping. Yes, The Stroll of Poets Society asks one and all to take their pants off and hand them over to the Youth Emergency Shelter.

"I don't know how many people will actually take their pants off," says Kozub. "Maybe they'll just bring a pair of pants to donate. But I know I'll be taking my pants off, and I hope others will too. It's a way to get intimate with other poets. We're naked on stage, metaphorically. Why not go all the way?"

Be sure to sport your best underwear.

Edmonton Journal Tuesday, May 1, 2001

Edmonton Journal Tuesday,  
December 4, 2001



### Grace under fire

President Mark Kozub speaks to CFRN-TV, one of the three TV channels that covered the Stroll media launch on Oct. 10 and gave us great coverage on the news. The launch was the first of many collaborations for the Stroll, as we hooked up with "Take the Poetry Route" and the Writer's Guild of Alberta for the kick-off.



# Stroll 2001 "Weekend Walkabout"

photos by John Chalmers except where noted



### West coast flavour

Tim Lander, visiting poet from Vancouver performed at the Yardbird Suite with the Raving Poets band. The fabulous Raving Poets guitarist, Randy Edwards, is in background.



### Heavenly voices

Alice Major, centre, performed at the Yardbird Suite as part of the launch of her new book, *Some Bones and a Story*. She was assisted by Jan Streader, left, and Clarice Eckford, right.



### Edgy collaboration of Poetry and Dance

Dancers at Poetry & Dance night accompany Kevin Solez, right, in his performance at the Paris Market warehouse.



### It was a "SNAP"

Shirley Serviss was one of six Stroll members who read at the Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists (SNAP) gala night to celebrate our collaboration, which will result in a book of poems and prints.

#### PAGES

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Information, call: 283-6655.

Calgary Herald Thursday,  
August 30, 2001

#### SNAP poetry and prints

Tonight at the downtown headquarters of the Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists (SNAP), another multidisciplinary project will be launched at a special poetry reading/print exhibit.

It's a collaboration between six artists (and SNAP members) and six poets (belonging to the Stroll of Poets Society) who've been tossed together and asked to produce work that answers to each other's processes.

After tonight's event, a special limited-edition (25 copies) book will be produced that will enshrine this unique artistic experiment.

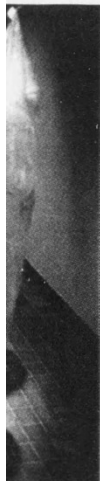
"This has provided a great opportunity for those involved to reconsider the whole process of making art," says Steven Dixon, a local printmaker and one of the project's co-ordinators. "Working this way another approach was always being considered as you created your work."

The finished art books are also being produced on an archaic Vandercook Proofing Press (a hot lead, hand-fed printing press) which not only helps keep the historical typesetting craft alive, it also allows poets and artists access to the rich "history of printed work," says Dixon.

"It reminds us that words are not just blips on our computer screens."

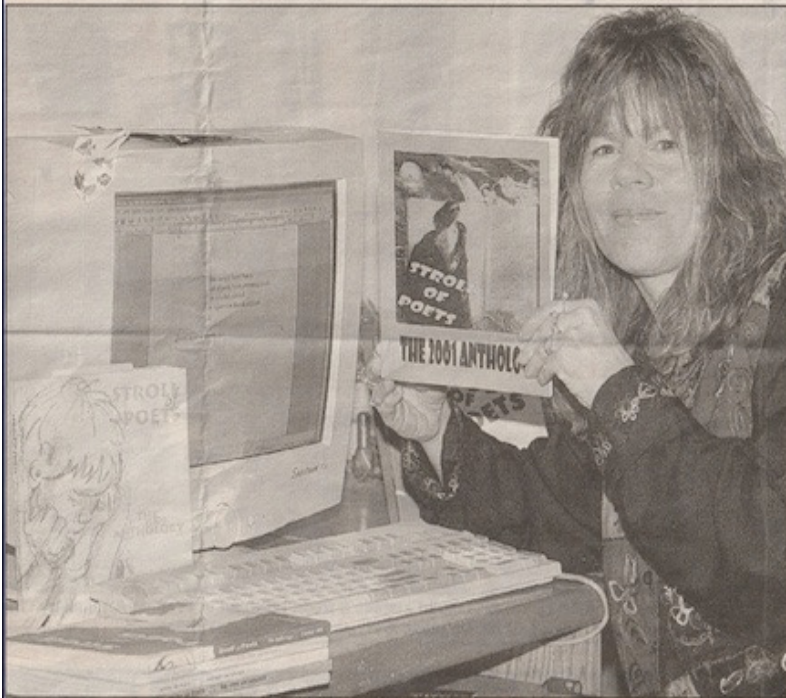
Artists involved in the project include Greig Rasmussen, Sean Caulfield, Akiko Taniguchi and Tomoyo Ihaya.

Gilbert A. Bouchard



SUPPLIED  
Iret Brooks

Edmonton Journal Friday,  
October 12, 2001



Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck is one of two local poets whose work will be featured during the 12 Days of Poetry Festival, which kicked off in Edmonton on Friday.

# St. Albert poets featured at festival

12 Days of Poetry Festival kicks off

By Bev Rudolfsen  
Staff Writer

If you're having trouble letting go of the cheer that came with the 12 days of Christmas, settle in for the 12 Days of Poetry festival in a celebration of the written, rhyming word.

Two local poets are featured in this annual festival, which each year offers the juried work of about 40 writers to all who want to come and listen. This year, *Gazette* columnist Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck and Bon Accord songwriter Trevor Dekort take centre stage, along with 42 other poets in the Edmonton-based event.

The 12 Days of Poetry, which runs to Jan. 20, is organized by the Stroll of Poets Society, a group of writers devoted to presenting local poetry and publishing selections in annual anthologies. Mooney-Ellerbeck joined 10 years ago and has been reading in the 12 Days event on and off for

*"It was written during the happening of it all. It's questioning the action of the terrorists and our reaction to it."*

-Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck  
Poet

eight years. This year she plans to present readings of haiku, a Japanese form of nature-based poetry, as well as a poem she wrote after the terrorist acts in the U.S. last Sept. 11. "It was written during the happening of it all. It's questioning the action of the terrorists and our reaction to it." The poem, *Safety Net Superstition*, was also aired nationally by CBC Radio.

See Poetry, page 22

The St. Albert Gazette,  
Saturday, January 5, 2002

## Poetry

Continued from page 18

Dekort, 30, has been writing poetry since he was 12, and plans to bring a half-dozen pieces to the festival. He focuses his wryly humorous observations on the human condition. "I like to think my poetry is about people, that you can shut your eyes and listen and be able to follow. Poetry should be about people and not about poetry itself."

The first 11 days of poetry Jan. 4 to 19 run at Grounds for Coffee and Antiques, 10247-97 St. in Edmonton at 7 p.m. Admission is free. The final day of poetry Jan. 26 features a grand finale lineup at the Winspear Centre rehearsal hall.

In presenting their work, poets may bring along guitars and singers to express their words, which adds a new level of interest, said Mooney-Ellerbeck. People shouldn't be intimidated or bored by the idea of taking in a poetry performance, she added.

"Poetry speaks to us all because we all have the same feelings and emotions, and poetry evokes those emotions. The majority of us can't express that and poetry can express that for us. When we hear

*"Poetry speaks to us all because we all have the same feelings and emotions."*

-Trevor Dekort  
Poet

the poet express certain feelings, if there's something buried in there it comes up and we're able to look at it in a new way. Poets ponder things others don't necessarily ponder — we ponder it for them and give it to them to look at and to hold. Poetry is a heart-to-hand experience."

Dekort, part of the 12 Days for the last four years, likes the fact that he can offer his work to a live audience, fresh on the hoof. "It's a rare treat to see literature as it's really fresh instead of 15 to 20 years from now in a textbook. This is immediate stuff."

Cover charge for the grand finale Jan. 26 is \$10 per person. Call David Huggett at 414-1534 for information. A 2001 anthology of poetry from The Stroll of Poets will also be for sale.

### Risking Death

my newspaper tells me  
people are dying  
from sitting still too long on  
long-haul flights  
thrombophilia  
the good doctor calls it  
a genetic propensity for the  
blood to clot too easily  
& we don't realize we've got it  
until we push our body to the  
limit

by doing nothing until we stroke  
& i always knew i was a hero  
sitting here on my ass  
risking death day after day  
fashioning poems when others  
were out  
plucking old ladies from burn-  
ing buildings  
or discovering a cure for cancer  
there ain't no cash or fame in  
what i do  
but still  
i put it on the line for you  
no ifs ands or butts  
about it

—Trevor Dekort

### Summer Serenity Search-Haiku

water flowing in  
backyard fountain silences  
city traffic noise  
oil in rain puddle-  
tainted water beautified  
by round rainbow ring  
rain splashed windshield view:  
rainbow arc over mountains —  
water colour art  
in pink sunset calm  
screeching seadoo slaps lake  
waves —  
steals serenity  
sparrow choir sings  
soothing sunrise harmony —  
equalling silence

—Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck

## LITERARY EVENTS

### THE 12 DAYS OF POETRY

Presented by the Stroll of Poets Society, each day will feature readings by four poets.

Audience favourites from the first 11 days of poetry will return for the 12th Day of Poetry.

**5th Day, today:** Catherine McLaughlin, Shirley A. Serviss, Madella A. Runka and Nancy Mackenzie. Hosted by Leo Campos.

**6th Day, Saturday:** Trevor Dekort, Doug Elves, Paul McLaughlin and Ruth Galloway. Hosted by John Chalmers.

**7th Day, Sunday:** Marilyn Dumont, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Faye Francis and Pamela Young. Hosted by Olga Costopoulos.

**8th Day, Jan. 17:** Darlene Spong Henderson, Sue Marxheimer, John Leppard and Becky

Garber-Conrad. Hosted by Bert Almon.

**9th Day, Jan. 19:** Rusti Leahy, Naomi McIlwraith, Linda Jennings and Terence Harding. Hosted by Thomas Trofimuk.

**10th Day, Jan. 20:** Anna Marie Sewell, Kathy Fisher, Mark Kozub and Rebecca Schellenberg. Hosted by David Huggett.

**Where:** Grounds for Coffee & Antiques, 10247 97th St.

**When:** All readings start at 7 p.m. The 12th Day of Poetry will be held Jan. 26, 7 p.m. in the Winspear Centre Rehearsal Hall, tickets \$5 in advance at Grounds for Coffee and Orlando Books, \$7.50 at the door.

**Info:** David Huggett, 414-1534, or Mark Kozub, 490-1414.

Edmonton Journal Friday, January 11, 2002

## Stroll down poetry lane



Join the Stroll of Poets for the 12th Day of Poetry, the grand finale of the society's live poetry showcase. Listen to poetry read by its creators, enjoy refreshments and music by Eddie Patterson and Al Brant.

**When:** Saturday, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Winspear Centre Rehearsal Hall, 9720 102nd Ave.

**Tickets:** \$5 advance, available by calling David Huggett at 414-1534 or from Orlando Books. Tickets at the door are \$7.50.

Edmonton Journal Friday, January 25, 2002

## Stroll among words at weekend festival

*Poets share their witty offerings in leisurely Whyte Ave. event*

**By Bev Rudolfsen**  
Staff Writer

Go for a stroll and learn about the fun side of poetry this weekend as the Edmonton Stroll of Poets Society invites the uninitiated to enjoy the wonder of words.

"Poetry gives us the opportunity to connect people," said Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck, a St. Albert writer and president of the Stroll of Poets Festival. "All you need is some words and the images are painted right there for you. No plug-ins, no batteries."

The Oct. 6 event features 140 poets, including six from St. Albert and Sturgeon County, casually sharing their work with the public.

### 'A storytelling'

Last year's event, on Edmonton's trendy Whyte Avenue, drew about 200 people. "Once the public sees it, they like it," said Mooney-Ellerbeck. "It's just a matter of getting them there. Poetry is an art, a storytelling."

The 12th annual Stroll of Poets Festival kicks off Oct. 5 at the Edmonton Literary Festival at Winspear Centre. A book sale there will be highlighted by guest poet Linda Rogers of Victoria, B.C., an award-winning contemporary writer.

On Sunday, the poets flood various Whyte Avenue sites after a breakfast at 11 a.m. at the Strathcona Legion, to which the public is invited. The free event begins at 1 p.m. At each of seven locations, small groups of poets gather and each read their work for five minutes. They all move onto the next venue



St. Albert's Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck (above) and five other local poets read their work to the public Sunday. Photo by Ken Sutton

lyze poetry is almost to dissect it and the whole inspiration of it is lost. People get turned off on that," said Mooney-Ellerbeck, who has been writing poetry since she was a child. She also teaches poetry and art in schools and occasionally through St. Albert's Profiles Public Art Gallery.

### Pure pleasure

The free-flowing verse offered

work, what jokes work. It's a way to workshop a poem. It helps polish that final product," said Dekort, who's had some of his work published in a magazine.

Dekort, reading at 1 p.m. Sunday at Orlando Books (10123 Whyte Ave.) and Mooney-Ellerbeck, reading at 2 p.m. at the International Hostel (10647-81 Ave.) are joined by other local poets. They are: Dean McKenzie

St. Albert Gazette, Wednesday, October 2, 2002

## LITERARY EVENTS

### POETRY OF VICTORY & DAFEETS

A fundraiser for the Bissell Centre/Our Voice Magazine's Songs of the Street sponsored by The Stroll of Poets Society and the Edmonton Public Library. Local poets, dancers and the Raving Poets Band join forces in a tribute to the poor in spirit.

**When:** Today, 8-10 p.m.

**Where:** Library Theatre, Stanley A. Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq.

**Cost:** A \$5 donation is requested.

Edmonton Journal Friday, April 26, 2002

## Poets take works to street

■ Alberta poets are all around us. This year's Calgary Stroll of Poets features nearly 100 writers ready to read their words to the public this weekend.

On Sunday, amateur and seasoned poets are reading work at bookstores, coffee shops and restaurants in and around Kensington during the free, day-long event, which launches from Annie's Book Store on 912 16th Ave. N.W. at 10:30 a.m.

It's expected about 30 of the poets are travelling from Edmonton, Red Deer, Turner Valley, High River and St. Albert.

The event, which began six years ago with 20 poets, is put on by the Society of Poets, Bards and Storytellers.

Calgary Herald Thursday,  
September 5, 2002

# Stroll of Poets promise to be listener-friendly

MARC HORTON  
Journal Books Editor  
EDMONTON

There might be a John Milton or a T.S. Eliot walking through Old Strathcona this Sunday as 140 poets take to the streets for the 12th annual Stroll of Poets.

However, Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck, who organizes the stroll, wants to make one thing clear: no one will be asked to analyse what he or she has just heard. Unlike high school English, no one is going to ask you to write a thousand words on the imagery in *Paradise Lost*.

"We want everyone to know that the poems they're going to hear will be accessible because they deal with everyday

issues like politics, relationships, the environment, whatever," she says.

"Poetry scares a lot of people, and it shouldn't. A lot of our poets in the stroll are funny, and their poems will make you laugh."

The day begins at 11 a.m. with a brunch at the Strathcona Legion. At noon, award-winning Victoria poet Linda Rogers will present her work. Advance tickets are available at Orlando Books for \$10 and at the door for \$12. If poetry buffs only want to listen to Rogers, admission is \$5.

At 1 p.m., the poets begin their stroll. Venues include the International Youth Hostel on 81st Avenue, Athabasca Books, Orlando Books, Greenwoods, The Naked

Cyber Café on Whyte and 104th Street, Alhambra Books and Traveller Antiques.

At the top of each hour, five poets in each venue will be given five minutes to read their poems before they move on to the next reading. Patrons can stay in a single venue all afternoon or move from one to the other.

At 3 p.m., there will be an open stage hosted by Mark Kozub, who bills himself as the Alberta Beatnik, at the International Hostel. Anyone with a poem will be invited to read.

The stroll ends at 4 p.m. and will be followed at 5 by what Mooney-Ellerbeck calls a poetry sweatshop in the No Bards Barred Bar in the Old Strathcona Legion.  
[mhorton@thejournal.southam.ca](mailto:mhorton@thejournal.southam.ca)

Edmonton Journal Friday, October 4, 2002



# 12th Annual Stroll of Poets

Sunday, October 6



Strollofpoets.Com  
Info: 464-0256

140 poets recite  
in several Strathcona venues

Stroll Brunch

with  
guest  
poet



**Linda Rogers**  
11 am Strathcona Legion  
10416 - 81 Avenue

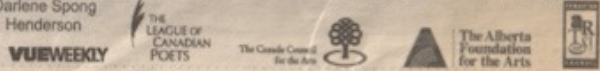
Don't forget the  
**No Bards Barred Bar**  
Poetic fun & games  
at Strathcona Legion  
5 pm

Brunch tickets \$10 advance from Orlando Books, \$12 door  
Performance only (no brunch), 11:45 am, \$5 at the door

All other readings of the day are free of charge

International Hostel 10647-81Ave	AthabascaBooks 8228-105 St	Orlando Books 10123 Whyte Ave	Greenwoods Books 7927-104 St	Naked Cyber Café 10442 Whyte, #201	Alhambra Books 10309 Whyte	Traveller Antiques / Bjarne's Books 10533 Whyte
Timothy Cusack Ruth Galloway Dean McKenzie Ben Murray Jade O'Riley	Doug Elves Jessica Stratton Audrey Whitson Taras Toroshenko Joe Rizzuto	<b>1 PM</b> Myma Garanis Pierrette Requier Drew Jeffries Lance Beswick Trevor Dekort	Nancy Mackenzie Rusti Leahy John Sylvestre Pritam Atwal Bruce Strand	Fabian Jennings Glen Kirkland Tavia Grabas Holly Miller Barbara Janusz	<b>1 PM</b> John Chalmers Kathy Fisher Don Butler Alison Nicholls Joanne Morcom	Sue Manheimer Kathie Sutherland Thomas Trofimuk Peter Ryan Lana Phillips
Sandra Mooney- Ellerbeck B. Garber-Conrad Vanna Tessier Rick Guthrie Sherrilyn Jahrig	Naomi McIlwraith George Metcalf Jr. Tracy Murray Mary T. McDonald Richard Berube	<b>2 PM</b> Jo-Ann Godfrey Louis Munan Oswald Meyer Geraldine Matus Julie Robinson	Kathryn Charr Andrew Thompson Marcia O'Connor Brian Genevieux Catherine McLaughlin	M. Jennie Frost Rebecca Shellenberg Florence McKie Michael Appleby Gina Varty	<b>2 PM</b> Janine Dumont Harold Cashman Kevin Clulaw Joyce Pinckney Andy Michaelson	Ron Kurt Rawn Sidor Gail Sobat Consortia L. Mendoza Mark Kozub
<b>OPEN STAGE</b> Just turn up and sign in.	Ken Sutton Bert Almon Madella A. Runka Amy Williams Dawn Carter	<b>3 PM</b> William Nichols Shirley Serviss Tim Scheybeler Anne Rix Christina Tyschuk	Anna Mioduchowska Ken Wilson Dorothy Ansdell Jalal Barzani Leonard Gierach	Joyce Harries Faye Francis Gerald St. Maur Maxwell Foster Marie Gervais	<b>3 PM</b> David Huggett Michael Kennedy Anne Marshall Hugh McAlary Laurel Tokuda	Audrey Shield Vince Pallier Katie Oppen Christopher Ducharme Henry Victor
Paul McLaughlin Dianne Bennett Ivan Sundal Tom Emmens Fred Anderson	Helen Lavender Tania Kajner Angela Penn Scott Alderson Richard Davies	<b>4 PM</b> Christina Tower Diane Buchanan Gordon Ernest MacLennon Karia Woloshyn Danielle Dalton	Jocko Linda Jennings Barbara Curry Mulcahy Paula Stephenson Darlene Spong Henderson	James Thurgood Ellen Wells Margaret Marriott John Leppard Phil Jagger	<b>4 PM</b> Pamela Young Michelle Lambert Bill Somers Trevor Mulligan Walker Neufeld	Carlean Fisher John Zapanis Carole-Ann Brown Pat Dungan Cliff Theroux

The Stroll of Poets Society acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, The League of Canadian Poets, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Edmonton Arts Council and



ED: [unclear] Op [unclear] Arts Weekly [unclear]

# ARTS WEEKLY

**CBC Presents**  
**The 12 Days of Poetry**  
**STROLL POETS**

January 5 - 25

Poets selected by a community jury perform in favourite and new exciting venues  
 Free admission first 11 Days

**I Sunday, Jan. 5 at 2 pm**  
 La Boheme Restaurant, 6427-112 Ave.  
 Diane Buchanan, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Mary T. McDonald, Dean McKenzie  
 Host: Sandra Mooney Ellerbeck  
*La Boheme serves brunch 10:30-2:00*

**II Tuesday, Jan. 7 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Doug Elves, Jo-Ann Godfrey, Shirley A. Serviss, Gerald St. Maur  
 Host: Marilyn Hoopjer

**III Wednesday, Jan. 8 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Joyce Harnes, Phil Jagger, Barbara Curry Mulcahy, Pierrette Requier  
 Host: John Chalmers

**IV Thursday, Jan. 9 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Michael Appleby, Nancy Mackenzie, William Nichols, Julie Robinson  
 Host: David Huggett

**V Friday, Jan. 10 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Trevor N. Dekori, Carlean Fisher, Taras Torosbenko, Thomas Trofimuk  
 Host: Kathie Sutherland  
*Tea and sweets for sale at City Arts Centre readings*

**VI Sunday, Jan. 12 at 2 pm**  
 Whitemud Crossing Library  
 Shopping Centre, 145, 4211-106 St.  
 Tom Emmans, Concorcia L. Mendoza, Anna Mioduchowska, Joyce Pinckney  
 Host: Myrna Garamis  
*Coffee and desserts sold by Cheesecakes & More*

**VII Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Danielle Dalton, Sue Marxheimer, Paul McLaughlin, Audrey Shield  
 Host: Helen Lavender

**VIII Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Drew Jeffries, Catherine McLaughlin, Louis Moran, Audrey Whitson  
 Host: Rusti Leahy

**IX Thursday, Jan. 16 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Linda Jennings, Geraldine Matus, Andy Michaelson, Jessica Stratton  
 Host: Jocko

**X Friday, Jan. 17 at 7 pm**  
 City Arts Centre, 10943-84 Ave.  
 Tim Cusack, Kathy Fisher, Michelle Lambert, Ben Murray  
 Host: Alice Major

**XI Sunday, Jan. 19 at 2 pm**  
 Whitemud Crossing Library  
 Shopping Centre, 145, 4211-106 St.  
 Tanya Dion, Anne Marshall, Christina Tower, Ken Wilson  
 Host: Faith Fernald  
*Coffee and desserts sold by Cheesecakes & More*

**XII The Grande Finale**  
 Saturday, Jan. 25, 7 pm, door 6:30  
 The Strathcona Legion, 10416-81 Ave.  
 \$8 advance at Greenwoods' Bookshoppe, 7925-104 Street, S12 at the door  
 Eleven performers by audience demand from preceding 11 Days. MCs: Anna Marie Sewell together with CBC Robble Burns Day celebrations: Piping in the haggis, Justin McMurdo; Address to a Haggis, Doug Barrett. A taste of haggis included  
 Hot Cottage - dance out the 12 Days to this legendary band's R&B sounds after the readings, about 9:15

CBC's Poetry Face-Off, February 20, evening, O'Byrne's Irish Pub - some contestants chosen from the 12th Day finalists.

**740 VUEWEEKLY**  
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**VUEWEEKLY JANUARY 2 - JANUARY 8, 2003**

Vue Weekly January 2-8, 2003

EDMONTON JOURNAL B3  
 MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2003  
 CITYPLUS

Photos: Candace Elliot, The Journal



Sherrilyn Jahrig



Diane Buchanan



Dean McKenzie applauds his fellow poets during their readings.



Skye Hyndman and Celeste Eder, both 7, happily listened to poetry readings.

## FOCUS

Local poets kicked off *The 12 Days of Poetry on Sunday at La Boheme restaurant*. The performers have been selected by a community jury to recite their poems in many favourite and new venues around town. The grande finale takes place Jan. 25, at 7 p.m., at the Strathcona Legion, 10416 81 Ave. The First Day of Poetry was hosted by Sandra Mooney Ellerbeck.

Edmonton Journal Monday, January 6, 2003

# 'Mr. McKenzie' finds poetic pulse in daily life



## SADAVA ON SATURDAY

### Former teacher enlists musicians for poetry CD

Call him Edmonton's beat poet. Call him the kid from the village. Or just call him Mister McKenzie.

After a 40-year career as a high school teacher, and in the midst of some serious health problems, Dean McKenzie is enjoying the biggest rush of artistic energy of his life.

He's putting the final touches on his second CD of his poems, done to the aural backdrop of free-form playing by some of the city's most talented musicians.

A stocky man slightly resembling Ronnie Hawkins with that big grey beard, he reads anywhere he can and he's happy if his words can touch five or six souls. He's been a fixture at the Stroll of Poets and can often be heard at bars and coffee houses, reading his words or those of William Butler Yeats, or singing in his big

whisky-cured, Leonard Cohen-like voice a bluegrass song like *Man of Constant Sorrow*.

He writes furiously, sending out poems via e-mail almost like spam. He even had a poem dedicated to Wild Bill Hunter which he read — at Hunter's request — at the great hockey man's recent funeral.

Now 62, McKenzie's at a stage of life when he knows it won't last forever, especially with a kidney transplant and other problems which have plagued him over the last decade.

"Stuff like that is a life-changer, and in my case I put it to a creative end. It's good for the soul and hopefully good for the hereafter, too," he says with a chuckle.

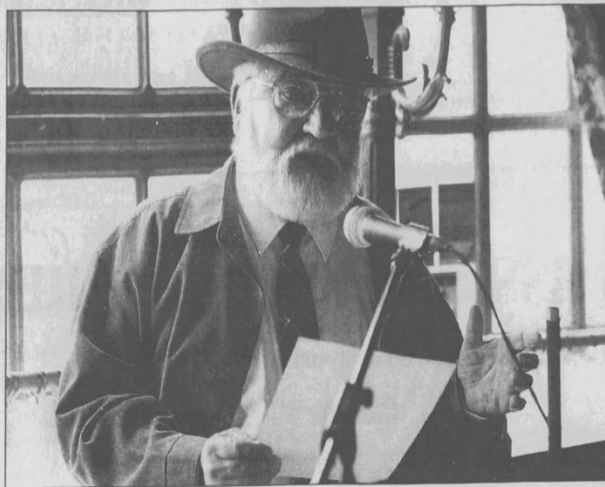
"It's not my morbidity, but my immortality that I'm hoping for."

McKenzie expresses his hope in his poem *Skipping Stone* that his words will make a difference to somebody after he's gone:

*"A touch of protein on your fingertips  
attracts the first minutiae of pond life  
to the stone's lightly silted surface  
And slime begins new on this subtlest of signs  
of your ever having been at all."*

It's beat poetry for the 21st century, often performed with musicians like Kent Sangster or Lester Quitzau, the latter on both discs.

McKenzie had his eyes opened to beat poetry in the '50s, when he travelled to San Francisco after his first year of teaching at the tender age of 18 — teacher training consisted of one year of "nor-



Poet Dean McKenzie reads one of his works.

CANDACE ELLIOTT, THE JOURNAL

mal school" after high school in those days.

It was the heyday of Neal Casady, Ken Kesey and Allen Ginsberg, whom McKenzie regards as the greatest English-language poet of the 20th century.

"They were existentially very self-assured and trying very hard to make a difference to the language and give people a tool to deal with this post-industrial life of ours," he says.

He doesn't think beat poetry is an anachronism. In fact, he says it's more relevant than ever, with

terrorism and the destruction of the World Trade Center creating similar fears and psychic needs that the threat of nuclear holocaust created back then.

Writing was an activity McKenzie didn't have a lot of time for during his teaching career, which included more than 25 years at M.E. Lazerte high school.

McKenzie, who says "the English teacher is the conservatory of the language art," sounds like the English teacher we all wish we had in high school.

He inspired his students to write

poetry, and found some creative approaches to his art classes, which he also taught. For instance, one project had his ethnically diverse class use water colours to match the pigments of their skin, and then they proceeded to paint the composite grad student, who looked far from lily-white.

Former students long into adulthood still call him Mr. McKenzie, and when one of his works runs on CKUA or a commercial with his voice-overs runs on television, he gets calls: "Mr.

McKenzie, was that you?"

The big difference about being an ex-teacher is that he is editing his own words all the time, instead of editing the words of others.

McKenzie edits his words even while he's speaking. He often says something twice, just in case he didn't get the grammar and syntax right in the first place.

He comes by his fascination with the English language honestly — both of his parents were perfectionists about language.

McKenzie says his early years in small-town Saskatchewan probably still affect him more than any other influence on his life.

His father was the local station agent in Hubbard, just west of Melville.

By the age of eight, McKenzie had learned Morse code and typing and by his teens had travelled all over Canada because station agents' families had free access to trains.

The title of his first CD is *Prairie Hejira*, an old Arabic expression meaning a trip to a safe place.

The prairies haunt the images of his poetry and the spirit of William Faulkner haunts its essence.

McKenzie loves to quote Faulkner upon accepting his Nobel Peace Prize in 1950, when he lamented how fear of being blown up was diverting writers from exploring the universal truths of the human spirit.

"His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart, but of the glands."

msadava@thejournal.southam.ca

Edmonton Journal Saturday, January 18, 2003

# Poetry face-off combatant isn't afraid to go into the corners

Edmonton poet a finalist in CBC radio contest

LIANE FAULDER  
Journal Entertainment Writer  
EDMONTON

She's a tiny thing to be competing in full-contact poetry. Nonetheless, at 84, Mary T. McDonald finds herself at centre ice, ready to face off against poets of similar stature, metaphorically speaking, from across the country.

The Edmonton poet, published and proud of it, is one of 12 finalists competing in a CBC radio contest held to commemorate National Poetry Month. The CBC Poetry Face-Off began earlier this year with public displays of prowess by 60 combatants coast to coast, all writing on the theme of escape.

The work of the last ones standing can be heard on the network's Web site (cbc.ca and click on artscanada). The public will decide who walks away with the cup by voting online for their favourite poet by midnight tonight.

McDonald's contribution, *Conformity Be Damned*, was recorded Feb. 20 at O'Byrne's pub. It reflects on her move to a seniors residence two years ago.

"The surrounding formal gardens seemed to be picked from the pages of the Summer Seed Catalogue/circles of nasturtiums/triangles of snapdragons/rows of marigolds, all stood stiffly hemming/the boundaries of the building.



GREG SOUTHAM, THE JOURNAL

Mary T. McDonald

I want wild! Give me a field of bent grasses/with the sharp odour of leaf and earth/where I might discover purple shooting stars/and buttercups; maybe wild violets/and a robin that doesn't fly off the fence/until you get right up to it."

McDonald is pleased to be one of the finalists, just as she was pleased when her first book of poems, *Another End of the Road*, was published in 1999. But the act of creating the poetry is more important than contests or books. That's because the work itself is what makes

her imagination race, her days fly. While she always dabbled at poetry (at 10, she scribbled poems and stuck them under the front door of her neighbour's home), she didn't have time until she retired from teaching to really work at it.

Now, she devotes herself to reading and writing, which has made this part of her life the best ever. Even as her body slows down, she feels her skills sharpening.

"Sometimes it comes quickly, it's an inspiration, and sometimes it isn't," she says, describing her daily routine of writing. "But I'll sit down and do it anyway. It's not easy. It's always hard. But it makes me feel good."

Now she's working on a collection of poems, *Heartwood Manor*, about living in a seniors residence. Here is a taste of one called *The Dinner Hour*:

"Time to put on my floral dress with the lace collar/fasten the front lapels with a brooch, match a necklace and clip earrings/advance to the dining room one foot at a time/trying to stride into my young-woman walk/but finding weights in my shoes/the air grown thick."

She doesn't have many friends at the residence; nobody seems to understand about poetry-writing. Sometimes that feels a little lonely, but McDonald gets out a lot. She's active with Edmonton's Stroll of Poetry and looks forward to monthly meetings of her poetry writers' group. Poetry, she says, is a friend who is always there.

lfaulder@thejournal.canwest.com

# Prepare for strolling poets to stroll . . . and to recite poetry

BILL RANKIN  
Journal Entertainment Writer  
EDMONTON

"How do poets stroll?"

Shani Mootoo leaves her playful question hanging.

She does suggest, though, that the answer may be as wide-ranging as the number of poets who will participate in Sunday's Stroll of Poets event in Old Strathcona. There are 140 of the word-smiths registered.



Mootoo

Mootoo is the guest speaker at the Stroll Brunch, where she won't be doing a poetry reading; she'll be talking about poetry, "a poetry that's off the page."

Like the spoken-word poets, Mootoo, who is also a painter and videographer, believes poetry has to become a more pervasive influence than is currently the case, something everyone can participate in and appreciate.

"It's time to take poetry away from the ivory tower," she says.

She sees the value of an event such as the Stroll of Poets as a way of gathering the larger community together to share their work.

"It brings a real consciousness of poetry, poetry-making and poets as ordinary people who want to read their stuff," she says.

Mootoo was writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta two years ago and is teaching creative writing in the university's English department. She received a Giller Award nomination in 1997 for her novel *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

Following the brunch, the only ticketed event of the day, the poets will stroll, run, skip or scuttle to one of the nine venues in Old Strathcona to give their five-minute readings. The readings begin on the hour between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Tickets for the 11 a.m. brunch at the Strathcona Legion are available at Greenwood's Bookshoppe and at the door. Mootoo speaks at 11:45 a.m. Tickets for the talk only are \$5.

A full schedule of readings was published in the current issue of *Vue Weekly*.

The Stroll of Poets Society was founded in 1991 to promote poetry. The group organizes two annual poetry festivals, publishes an annual anthology, and offers other programs such as reading series and workshops.

It also holds a 12 Days of Poetry festival in January. Poets selected during the Stroll get a chance to read their work again at the January wordfest.

brankin@thejournal.canwest.com

# STROLL of poets

Sunday,  
October 5

with special guest



Shani Mootoo

140 poets  
recite in several  
Strathcona venues

Performing at the  
**Stroll Brunch**

11 a.m.  
Strathcona Legion  
10416 - 81 Ave.



Honouring  
Mary T. McDonald



\$10 adv at Greenwood's Bookshoppe  
\$12 door  
Mootoo performance only (11:45 am) \$5 door

All other performances of the day are free.  
Close the day at the No Bards Barred Bar,  
5 p.m. Strathcona Legion

Final Schedule published in VUE Weekly Oct 2



Alhambra Books 10309 Whyte	Athabasca Books 8228 105 St	B-Scene Studios 8212 104 St	Traveller Antiques & Bjarne's Books 10533 Whyte	Greenwoods' Bookshoppe 7925 104 St	International Hostel 10647 81 Ave	Naked Cyber Cafe 10442 Whyte	O'Byrnes Irish Pub 10616 Whyte
<b>1 PM</b>				<b>1 PM</b>			
Julie Robinson Trevor Dekort Todd Anstead Patti Sinclair Shelley Lawson	Nancy Mackenzie John Zapanis Audrey Whitson Joy Lardner Fred Anderson	M Jennie Frost Adam Dickinson Sandra Mooney -Ellerbeck Francis A Willey	Kath MacLean Len Gierach Vanna Tessier Vince Pallier	Linda Jennings Ben Murray Carlean Fisher Jason Hammond	Anne Marshall Doug Elves Dennis Porsnuk Ruth Galloway Pat Dungan	Geraldine Matus Taras Toroshenko Jo-Ann Godfrey Cathy L Hodgson	John Chalmers Madeleine Shiller Phillip A Jagger Michelle Lambert
<b>2 PM</b>				<b>2 PM</b>			
Rusti Leahy Gerald St. Maur Dennis Rusinak Jacqueline Smith Trisia Eddy	Drew Jeffries Barbara Curry Mulcahy Oswald Meyer Anne Rix	Michael Appleby Sherrilyn Jahrig Anna Mioduchowska Brian Genereux	Ron Kurt Diane Buchanan Cliff Therou Amy Willans	Jocelyne Verret Pritam Atwal Pierrette Requier James Thurgood Mechelle Flynn	Jean Carmichael McKenzie Rique Edgar Brotherston T.D.L. Turner Neil Meili	Thomas Trofimuk Brenda Love Gordon Ernest MacLennon Catherine McLaughlin	Paul McLaughlin Ivan Sundal Deborah Lawson Myriam Hempstock Naomi McIwraith
<b>3 PM</b>				<b>3 PM</b>			
June Smith-Jeffries Louis Munan Derek Newell Jenine Dumont Penny Hutchison	Audrey Shield John Sylvestre Alison Nicholls Monica Rosborough Henry Victor	Rebecca Schellenberg Dean McKenzie John Leppard Margaret MacPherson Beverley Beckley	Faye Francis Anna Rozwadowska Rawn Sidor Karla Woloshyn	Ruth Anderson Donovan Michael Kennedy Mary T McDonald Nicole Harrison	OPEN STAGE Host: Phillip A Jagger	Richard Davies Ken Johnstone Christina Tower Tracy Murray Cheryl Kyle	Ken Wilson Kathy Fisher Wendy Joy Concorcia L Mendoza
<b>4 PM</b>				<b>4 PM</b>			
Andy Michaelson Kathie Sutherland Andrew Thompson Joyce Harries Kevin Clulow	Gina Varty Harold Cashman Marcia O'Connor Sue Manheimer	Tim Cusack Shirley A Serviss Tim Scheybeler Carole-Anne Brown Tanya Dion	Joyce Pinckney Seaneen O'Rourke Jacqueline Bell Darlene Spong Henderson	Tom Emmens Myrna Garanis Kathryn R Charr Don Butler Lana Phillips	David Huggett Darcia Dahl Maxwell Foster Audrey Seehagen Florence McKie	Dianne Bennett Gail Sobat George Metcalf Jr Valerie Zimmel	Adriana Davies Jocko Connie Lloyd Scott Alderson Tavia Grabas

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## Poets stroll to matters of the heart, soul

Annual Whyte Ave. event features several St. Albert writers reading their works

By Bev Betkowski  
 Staff Writer

When she came to Canada from Chile in 1976, Myriam Hempstock knew she was from an oppressed society which was kind to neither the poor nor to women. In Canada she ran into some of the same barriers. Being both poor and female, Hempstock felt it keenly.

For seven precious minutes this Sunday, she'll stand in front of whoever wants to listen and read two poems from her heart, as she and dozens of other everyday people share their work in this year's Stroll of Poets event in Edmonton's Old Strathcona.

Hempstock joins several other St. Albert poets in the come-one-come-all event, including Tim Cusack, Len Gierach, Andy Michaelson, Trevor Dekort, George Metcalf Jr., Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck and Dean McKenzie. Beginning at 1 p.m. Oct. 5, 140 poets hit the streets in assorted free venues in the Whyte Avenue area to give short readings of their compositions.

Hempstock, who marks her 10th year at the Stroll of Poets, began creating poetry after her daughter was born. "I began writ-



Myriam Hempstock will read two poems about womanhood Sunday at Stroll of Poets in Old Strathcona. The St. Albert woman began writing poetry to stave off loneliness. Chuck Full/Gazette

ing heavily in 1990 out of desperation because I was a lonely new mother with no relatives. I raised my child the first year totally scared. It was my only outlet of

being a frustrated housewife."

The two readings she'll do Sunday are about womanhood. As an immigrant trying to make ends meet, Hempstock worked as a

cleaning woman, in a poultry plant and as a bus girl. "My poetry is very personal, but it's also about the struggle of women."

The first poem is a small one about her daughter and "what it is to be an everyday mom." The second one is about the burdens and joys of being a woman. Though her work reflected a darker time of her life, it also contains hope, Hempstock added. "In my poetry at the end, there's always a ray of hope for everybody. I'm on a journey that I am finally coming to



struggles."

**"What everybody else misses in life, poets can corner it and bring it to the public because poets pay attention to the little things and to the insights."**

-Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck  
 Stroll of Poets

The Stroll of Poets allows non-writers to sit back and see, perhaps for the first time, what they don't otherwise notice, said Mooney-Ellerbeck, former president of the society.

"What everybody else misses in life, poets can corner it and bring it to the public because poets pay attention to the little things in life and to the insights," she said.

Mooney-Ellerbeck, who is taking part in her 12th year at the Stroll, will read some Japanese Haiku and a new poem, *Winning Stretch*, an affectionate ode to her old gym suit.

The public can expect most of what each poet offers to be free verse, making it listener-friendly, she said. "The poetry is about contemporary everyday issues people can relate to. It's storytelling."

**See Poets, page 35**

**Continued from page 34**

McKenzie, a longtime musician and poet, plans to read a piece about two tango friends and one he wrote a decade ago about his journey Up The Burke Road. The afternoon event is as much fun for the poets as it is for audiences.

Every year, six or eight new poets join the Stroll "who blow us away."

"This is a bunch of guys whose bathroom closets and sock drawers have been full of poetry for 15 years and now they have a non-threatening way of sharing it."

The Stroll of Poets begins at 11 a.m. at the Strathcona Legion (10416-81 Ave.) with a brunch; tickets are \$12 at the door, or \$5 if you aren't eating, but want to hear the noon performance by special guest poet Shani Mootoo. The poetry readings in the area begin at 1 p.m., with a No Bards Barred bar and poetry sweatshop in the Legion at 5 p.m. Here's a lineup of readings by local poets:

1 p.m. — Trevor Dekort, Alhambra Books (10309 Whyte Ave.), Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck, B-Scene Studios (8212-104 St.), Len Gierach, Traveller Antiques & Bjarne's Books (10522 Whyte).

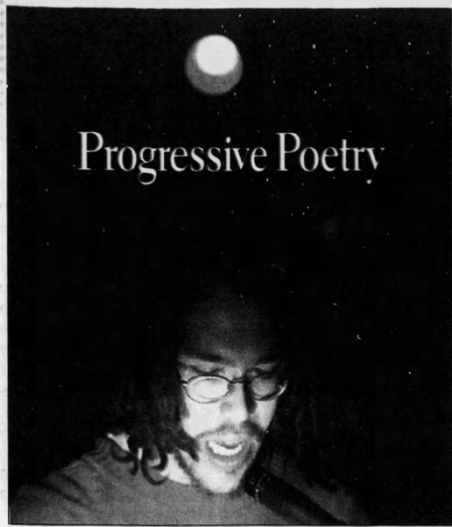
2 p.m. — Myriam Hempstock, O'Byrne's Irish Pub (10616 Whyte).

3 p.m. — Dean McKenzie, B-Scene Studios.

4 p.m. — Andy Michaelson, Alhambra Books, Tim Cusack, B-Scene Studios, George Metcalf Jr., Naked Cyber Cafe (10442 Whyte).

[bbetkowski@stalbert.greatwest.ca](mailto:bbetkowski@stalbert.greatwest.ca)

The St. Albert Gazette, Saturday, October 4,



It's lucky 13 for the Stroll of Poets. The annual event that features a pack of poets and poetry readings at various locations throughout Old Strathcona goes for the 13th year in a row this weekend. More than 140 poets stationed at eight venues will read and perform. Participants will meet for brunch and a performance by guest poet Shani Mootoo in the morning and proceed to the different venues and readings at one-hour intervals.

**When:** Sunday, 11 a.m.

**Where:** Strathcona Legion, 10416 81st Ave.

**Tickets:** \$10 in advance from Greenwood Books, or \$12 at the door.

**Information:** 459-4669, or [www.strollofpoets.com](http://www.strollofpoets.com).

Edmonton Journal Friday, October 3, 2003

**NEWAD**

**THE STROLL OF POETS SOCIETY OF EDMONTON**  
is seeking

a) an Archivist/Organizer/Writer for a short-term, intensive contract to compile archives, consult the membership via focus groups, and write procedural manuals;

b) a Part-time Current Archivist or Executive Secretary who will maintain all financial, membership, meeting and correspondence records of the Society.

Full descriptions are viewable at [strollofpoets.com](http://strollofpoets.com)

Please submit applications to:  
[admin@strollofpoets.com](mailto:admin@strollofpoets.com)  
no later than 5 p.m. Mon. Oct. 27, 2003

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Edmonton Journal Saturday, October 18, 2003

History of the Stroll – Max Vandersteen

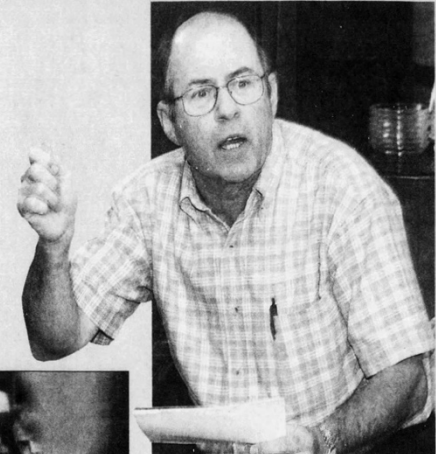


Mary T. McDonald, who was honoured this year at the Stroll of Poets, tries to get a glimpse of the recitals at a packed Greenwoods Books.

**FOCUS**

*Writers recited their works at the 13th annual Stroll of Poets in Old Strathcona on Sunday.*

Photos: Jimmy Jeong, *The Journal*



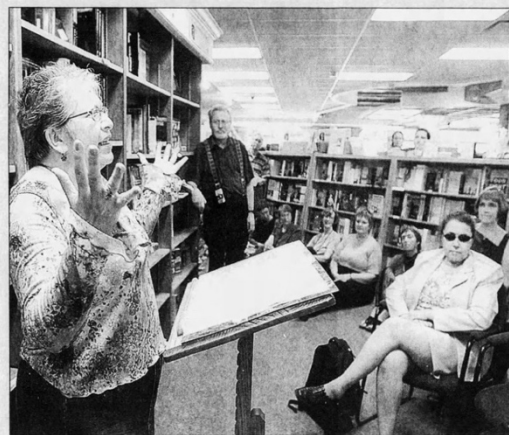
John Chalmers makes a point at O'Byrnes on Whyte.



Audience members, many poets themselves, listen to Shani Mootoo.



Pritam Atwal reads from his work at Greenwoods.



Jocelyne Verrett, above, moves into an expressive phase of her recital. Julie Robinson, left, delivers her lines at Alhambra Books on Whyte.

Edmonton Journal Monday, October 6, 2003

'There is no money in poetry, but then there is no poetry in money, either.' — Robert Graves

# Bringing poetry to the people

So much for the best laid plans of mice and men and freelancers.

I show up 30 minutes early for the Stroll of Poets' The 12 Days of Poetry event, and for the life of me I can't see a vacant seat in the Martini's Bar and Grill main room.

Fortunately, Stroll Society board member Andy Michaelson and 12 Days co-ordinator Tim Cusack have more foresight. The duo arrived even earlier and grabbed us a table towards the back of the pleasant mock-Edwardian downtown pub hosting the tenth of 12 poetry performance days.

"There's a lot of excitement at the readings this year, and we're just packing the venues," says Cusack of the annual January event. "It must be because it's our lucky 13th.

"We've had 55 to 92 people per event and have had to turn people away."

No exaggeration there. The Martini's event pulled in more than 50 poetry fans, overflowing

into the bar's billiards room, and at least a dozen more show up later.

This outpouring of support is no surprise to folks who've been following the growth of the Stroll of Poets.

Both Michaelson and Cusack are quick to underline the accessible, grassroots nature of the group.

It's best known for the titular Stroll of Poets festival that takes place the first Sunday in October across various venues in and at the festival, and get a poem in the annual anthology. (The 2003 edition weighed in at a healthy 135 pages.)

The midwinter 12 Days of Poetry event is organized somewhat differently.



An appreciative audience enjoys a poetry reading during the 12-day competition.

Same for the subject matter.

At the Martini reading, 75-year-old grandmother Joyce Harries reads a series of highly entertaining poems about the sexuality of senior citizens and her fascination with home design TV shows.

Meanwhile, 44-year-old oil-patch electrician Dennis Porsnuk performs a series of narrative poems set in small-town, blue-collar Alberta featuring SUVs and pit-stops at McDonald's.

Befitting a reading in a bar, none of the four poets is overly precious and lean towards humorous, shorter verse for their 10-minute segments.

"We have some very successful readings at libraries during the 12 Days, but readings at bars give you much more of an atmosphere," says Cusack. "It's much more intimate and moves you away from the school-hall vibe and amplifies the energy of the poetry."

According to Michaelson, bar readings reflect the ancient performance origins of poetry, echoing epic poets like Homer who read (or, more likely, semi-sang) their sprawling poems at parties and get-togethers.

"Most poets who write from the Stroll are writing visceral stuff Michaelson.

"This isn't poetry that's about intellectual abstraction. It's about action and feelings."

Gilbert A. Bouchard ■



Poet George Metcalf Jr. gives his best performance to the crowd at Martini's.

In recent weeks, Edmonton's libraries and bars have been ringing with rhyme & verse. It's all part of an annual event by the Stroll of Poets

It's a bird, it's a plane... no, it's a stroll of poets: from left, Dennis Porsnuk, Rebecca Schellenberg, George Metcalf Jr. and Joyce Harries.

tonight at the Hellenic Hall.

In addition to readings from the 11 finalists, the finale features a

performance by the Rault Brothers rhythm-and-blues band, and a Robbie Burns Day presentation by the ever-energetic Cusack, a poet, full-time teacher and member properly kilted.

According to both Michaelson and Cusack, it's the vast breadth of the Stroll membership and their approaches to poetry that make these events so accessible to the general public.

## THE BIG FINISH

- 12 Days of Poetry Grande Finale
- Tonight at 7 p.m.
- The Hellenic Hall, 10450 116 St.
- Tickets are \$12 at the door



weekend



- TOM BRAID, Sun

Stroll of Poets Society members that read on Wednesday night are, left to right, Hane Buchanan, Paul McLaughlin, Seaneen O'Rourke and Andrew Thompson.

# Poetry festival fine, if short on rhymes

By MIKE ROSS  
Staff Writer

I am not a poet and I know it. I am therefore able to come from a place of complete ignorance and clarity while attending one of the 12 Days of Poetry, under way at the Stanley A. Milner Library and other poet-friendly venues.

What kind of crowd attends a poetry reading on a Tuesday night in Edmonton in January? Other poets, mainly. The place is packed. Even Michael Phair can't find a chair. No sooner do I arrive than I meet a very nice woman named Shirley Serviss, who asks, "Are you reading tonight?" All poems are "read" even if poets have memorized their poems. She thinks I'm a poet because I'd been scribbling in my notebook as if hit by sudden poetic inspiration, which turns out to be true. "Turning a deaf ear, turning a blind eye," are the words I just wrote, from a conversation overheard just seconds ago. Eerie.

Serviss is a poet. For how long?

"Oh, all my life," she says.

Of course. Poets are not made. They are born.

I ask: Do you actually write "poet" in the box marked "occupation" on forms?

As a matter of fact, yes, she explains. Serviss is a part time poet at University hospital, dispensing poetry to patients with verses stuffed into pill bottles.

I am surprised to learn that the event is a competition, not just an exhibition. Ballots are handed out. We're instructed to pick our two favourite poets. The poet who gets the most votes will be invited to read at the "12th Night" finale (Jan. 24 at the Hellenic Hall). Serviss says it's all for fun, but I suspect many poets take this very seriously. Poetic justice.

The emcee takes the podium and a hush falls over an already quiet crowd. Unlike the library, ironically, this isn't the ideal place for poetry. Readings are punctuated by clat-

artfully and uses vivid lines like, "Time lurched and skidded past him." That's sort of how I feel.

Applauding poets, I learn, is appropriate. Heckling is not.

Next up is Meshelle Flynn, a newcomer to the poetry scene. An avid traveller who manages to work the words "Regis and Kelly" into one of her stanzas, she reads several poems. They don't rhyme, either. Two deal with her grandmothers, one for each. Sample: "The essence of that day has been woven into me by the golden thread of your heart."

After Flynn takes her leave, a Robbie Burns poem called *The Fornicator* is read, the announcement of the title drawing lusty whoops from a couple of women in the crowd. Hmm ...

The last competing poet of the evening is introduced: Naomi McIlwraith, whose mother is Metis and father Irish. Much of her work here is about learning to speak Cree; I learn something new: nouns in Cree are either "animate" or "inanimate." Female private parts are the former, the male counterpart the latter, McIlwraith says - and here come the whoops again - though a good deal of her poems are in Cree, so I'm not sure.

Since one of the scheduled poets has the flu, an open stage ensues. A poet named Paul reads a poem called *Born To Run* that has nothing to do with Bruce Springsteen. It's an ode to his prize-winning saluki dogs. John, a "new poet," reads a work whose title is longer than the poem itself. It's called *Making Love in the Mid-Afternoon When Time is Short and Circumstances Are Complicated*. Then he reads it: "A quickie is tricky." Whoops yet again. The poetry scene may be wilder than I imagined.

The last reader is Andy Michaelson, who would've written "Alberta Justice spokesman" in the occupation box four years ago and is now a freelance writer and one of the organizers of the 12 Days of Poetry. He has nothing prepared, so he reads a poem by



## The 12 Days of Poetry

January 6 - 24, 2004

Free admission first 11 Days

**I** Tues, Jan 6, 7 pm—O'Byrne's Irish Pub, 10616 - 82 Ave. David Huggett, John Leppard, Tavia Grabas, Joyce Pinckney  
Host: Ozzie Meyer

**II** Wed, Jan 7, 7 pm—O'Byrne's Irish Pub, 10616 - 82 Ave. Linda Jennings, Anne Gerard Marshall, Shirley A. Serviss, Vanna Tessier  
Host: John Chalmers

**III** Thurs, Jan 8, 7 pm—O'Byrne's Irish Pub, 10616 - 82 Ave. Andy Michaelson, Deborah Lawson, Jacqueline Smith, Ronald Kurt  
Host: Tim Cusack

**IV** Fri, Jan 9, 7 pm—Steeps—College Plaza, 11116-82 Ave. Ruth Galloway, Tim Scheybeler, Michael Appleby, Darlene Spong Henderson  
Host: Andy Michaelson

**V** Sunday, Jan 11, 2 pm—Whitemud Crossing Library Shopping Ctr., 145, 4211-106 Street—Ben Murray, John Chalmers, Connie Lloyd, Concorcia L. Mendoza  
Host: Marilyn Hooper

**VI** Tues, Jan 13, 7 pm—Stanley Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square—M. Jennie Frost, Rawn Sidor, Mechelle Flynn, Naomi McIlwraith  
Host: Christina Tower

~ Days 7 to 11 : Check VUE Weekly Jan 8 Issue ~

**XII** Saturday, January 24,—7 pm *The Grande Finale* Hellenic Hall, 10450-116 Street—\$10 advance at Greenwood's Bookshoppe, 7925-104 Street, and Volume II Books, 12433-102 Ave., \$12 door

- Eleven poets chosen by audience from previous Days of Poetry give short readings in two sets.
- Tribute to Robbie Burns, Tim Cusack
- Rault Brothers - outstanding Rhythm and Blues band, long regarded as one of Alberta's finest! Come out and boogie!

VUE WEEKLY



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Edmonton Public Library



EDMONTON ARTS COUNCIL



## The 12 Days of Poetry

January 6 - 24, 2004

Free admission first 11 Days

See last week's VUE or [www.strollofpoets.com](http://www.strollofpoets.com) for first six days

**Day VII** Wed, Jan 14, 7 pm—Stanley Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square—Diane Buchanan, Sue Marchmeier, Andrew Thompson, Paul McLaughlin  
Host: Andy Michaelson

**VIII** Thurs, Jan 15, 7 pm—Stanley Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square—Cliff Therou, Anna Mioduchowska, Faye Francis, Jocko  
Host: Shirley A. Serviss

**IX** Fri, Jan 16, 7 pm—Stanley Milner Library, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Square—Donald G Butler, Oswald Meyer, Michelle Lambert, Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck  
Host: Michael Appleby

**X** Sat, Jan 17, 2 pm—Martini's Bar and Grill, 9910-109 Street—Joyce Harnes, George Metcalf Jr., Rebecca Schellenberg, Dennis Porsnuk  
Host: Audrey Whitson

**XI** Sunday, Jan. 18, 2 pm—Whitemud Crossing Library Shopping Ctr., 145, 4211-106 Street—Gail Sobat, Sherrilyn Jahng, Jo-Ann Godfrey, Valerie Zimmel  
Host: Kathie Sutherland

**Day XII, The Grande Finale**  
Saturday, January 24, 7 pm

Hellenic Hall, 10450-116 Street—\$10 advance at Greenwood's Bookshoppe, 7925-104 Street, and Volume II Books, 12433-102 Ave., \$12 door

- Eleven poets chosen by audience from previous Days of Poetry give short readings in two sets.
- Tribute to Robbie Burns, Tim Cusack
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VUE WEEKLY



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts



Edmonton Public Library



EDMONTON ARTS COUNCIL

The Edmonton Sun January 2004

Vue Weekly January 8-14, 2004

# Stroll is a time for words

*St. Albert writers shine in juried poetry festival*

BY ANNA BOROWIECKI  
Staff Writer

Poetry has long suffered from a stodgy image that can confine it to dry classroom settings, but the Stroll Society is attempting to re-energize poetry into a more electrifying form with performance events such as 12 Days of Poetry.

Two St. Albert writers competed in the 12 Days of Poetry grand finale and revelled in the applause of about 275 fans. Darlene Spong Henderson and Andy Michaelson were two of 11 readers who bared their intimate thoughts, flaws and all, to an enthusiastic crowd at the Hellenic Hall on January 24.

"I felt energized. It was really a great experience. I felt connected and I was getting responses throughout the reading of my poems. It was probably because the poetry comes from my experiences, not something I read in a magazine. It was a very fast-paced and energetic evening," said Henderson.

Both poets were amazed at the variety of reading topics and styles that ranged from life on the prairies

and parental tributes to loving grandchildren and learning Cree.

Henderson chose to read four straight-from-the-heart pieces that included *Homage to Dolene*, a tribute to her mother, and *Lost and Found*, an anguished poem about losing two sisters to cancer. "It had a big effect on people and you could hear them sucking in the air at the brutal parts."

In counterpoint to the darkness, Henderson added two humorous works, *Under the Black Inky Sky* and *Eratos*, a poem written as a rhyming middle-age rap song. "*Eratos*, named after the Greek muse of poetry, is a poem about honouring women as they get older, not discounting them. As I read there were women in the audience nodding their heads."

In contrast, Michaelson sets off on a flight of fancy to the Maritimes, sharing unforgettable impressions and memories of a summer's holiday. *Newfoundland Suite* evokes images of the brawny, yet gentle innkeeper of his bed and breakfast who worried about cod fishing.

And *Better Gift* details an expedi-

tion that took an unexpected turn.

"My wife and I were going to watch the sunrise at Cape Spear — it's on the eastern edge. The sun rises at 5:21 a.m. and just as we got there the fog rolled in. In spite of the fact we couldn't see anything, it was a moving, powerful image and it was a better gift," said Michaelson.

Michaelson's poetic journey ventured outwards to the sea exploring the survivability of Newfoundland. Instead Henderson stayed close to the heart looking inwards at the fragility of the human spirit.


Although different in nature, both types of poetry inspired the audience.

"You go to read as much for support of other poets as to read your own works," said Michaelson.

With Spring Reading Series approaching on the last week of March, Michaelson encourages poets to join the society. For a \$10 annual membership fee, poets receive updates on readings, programs and seminars. Visit their website at [www.strollofpoets.com](http://www.strollofpoets.com) or call 458-9145.

[aborowiecki@stalbert.greatwest.ca](mailto:aborowiecki@stalbert.greatwest.ca)

The St. Albert Gazette Wednesday, February 4, 2004



**Literary excursion**

Join in the launch of the **Stroll of Poets 2004 Anthology**. The 14th edition of the Anthology includes 115 poems, 113 by members of the Stroll, and two guest contributors — Wendy Morton of Victoria, Canada's Poet of the Skies, and Karen Solie, writer-in-residence at the University of Alberta. There will be readings by selected poets. Starts 2 p.m., Sunday in the Edmonton Room of Stanley A. Milner Library.

FILE CHRIS SCHWARZ, THE JOURNAL

Edmonton Journal Saturday, December 11, 2004

# Local poets go for a stroll today in Kensington

ROBERT REMINGTON  
CALGARY HERALD

Meet Scott Alderson, a parent's worst nightmare.

"Mom, Dad, I'm getting married. I'd like you to meet my future husband, Scott."

"Hello, Scott. And what is it you do for a living?"

"I'm a poet."

Alderson has heard the joke before, but admits it's true. As a member and past president of Calgary's Society of Poets, Bards and Storytellers, Alderson says nobody in the organization is getting rich, at least not off poetry. There is, however, one trained oil and gas lawyer, John B. Ballem — Q.C., no less — in this local league of poets. But, for the most part, the roster is pretty much a collection of free spirits.



Scott Alderson is one of the performers in the Stroll of Poets on Sunday in Kensington.

Members of the society include freelance writers, one "pop pacifist," teachers, a registered nurse, one "commander of the yellow submarine that patrols the bottom of Glenmore Reservoir," an "outdoor leisure time expert," a retired rig pig, a former bartender, and one self-described minister of his own finances who "regularly defeats his budgets in motions of non-confidence," according to bios, posted in an anthology of works for this year's Stroll of Poets, which takes place Sunday in Kensington.

Alderson is a bicycle courier by day. The world may need poets, but even poets must eat.

"It's difficult to make it as a poet in Canada," says Alderson, who is part of a two-poet family with partner Karen Freeman, an English teacher.

In preparation for Sunday's Stroll, which will see 80 mostly local poets invade 13 bookstores and coffee houses for free readings in the Kensington area, Alderson and a dozen other straggling Calgary poets warmed up with a reading Wednesday night at McNally Robinson Booksellers on Stephen Avenue.

"Nobody here has given up their day jobs, but we are all very passionate about poetry," says Fenna Schaapman, the society's president, who works as a mentor at Spiritual Directions, a local spiritual development centre. Adds fellow poet

lab technician: "Show me a poet who makes money and I'll show you a musician."

To the uninitiated, the Stroll may seem like a recipe for somnambulism.

Yet, live poetry readings are not the dreary, pretentious affairs many assume them to be. That's because poetry, as promoted by the society, was meant to be heard, not just read, says Schaapman.

"There's something about the cadence, the delivery, the pauses, the space around it," she says. "The original poetry was oral. That was the entertainment."

"You can't get the true feel of the piece until you hear the author read it himself," says MacLennon.

Alderson's own populist style of "poetry for the people" typifies the mandate of the Stroll of Poets.

"We want to get it on the streets and out of the books," says Alderson.

Stroll participants include Red Deer's Leslie Greentree, a 2004 finalist for the Griffin Prize, Canada's top poetry award.

The Stroll of Poets begins at 10:30 a.m. at Annie's Book Company, chosen as the Stroll's traditional starting point as a nod to independent bookstore

port of local writers.

"She's the local writing community's sweetheart," says MacLennon.

"In this day of all the chain stores squeezing out the little guy, if we lose her, we lose a real supporter."

The collected works of this year's Stroll participants are printed in an anthology, *Synthesis*, available for \$10.95 at Stroll venues.

The subject matter is as diverse as the society's membership, with poems about facial zits, winter, the Rwandan genocide, winter, mammography, the tech guy who comes to fix your computer, PMS, the urban rat race, death, the Maple Leafs and that old standby, love.

Some of them even rhyme.

Being restricted in the anthology to 32 lines of Times New Roman didn't agree with some

participants, such as Mariah Loza Kosahn. "She doesn't think creative expression should have any rules. But since Mariah wants to play in your sandbox, she is making a compromise," she says in her Stroll bio.

On behalf of all the writers here at the Herald, Mariah, we feel your pain.

For a full schedule, log on to [www.calgarypoets.com](http://www.calgarypoets.com).

Show me a poet who makes money and I'll show you a musician.

POET GORDON ERNEST MACLENNON

## A way with words

The Stroll of Poets, organizers of The 12 Days of Poetry, present the final two days of readings before the grand finale next weekend. Today at 2 p.m., Beckie Garber-Conrad, Ben Murray, Gail Sidonie Sobat and Gina Vliet take part in the 10th Day of Poetry at Martini's Bar and Grill, 9910 109th St. The 11th Day of Poetry is Sunday at 2 p.m. in Whitemud Crossing Library, 4211 106th St., with Consorcia Mendoza, Kerry Mulholland, Audrey Shield and Thomas Trofimuk reciting their works.

Edmonton Journal Saturday, January 22, 2005

### EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS

Presents the weekly havin' a reading series. Scheduled to read from their original works are local poets Jocelyne Verret, Pierette Requier, Laurie McFayden, and Ron Kurt.

When: Monday, 7 p.m.

Where: Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

Information: 467-3878.

Edmonton Journal Friday, November 4, 2005

The Calgary Herald Sunday, September 12, 2004

# Poetry festival slated for September

RICHARD HELM  
Journal Books Editor  
EDMONTON

A new weeklong Edmonton arts festival plans to bring poetry to the people in a big way this fall.

"We want to do something that will put Edmonton and poetry on the map," explains city poet laureate Alice Major.

The model for the Edmonton Poetry Festival, slated for Sept. 18-24, is the Trois-Rivieres International Poetry Festival, now in its 21st year. That festival now attracts more than 100 poets from around the world, dropping verse at 375 events throughout Trois-Rivieres in art galleries, museums, cafes and bookshops.

"There's no similar literary festival in Western Canada that focuses on poetry," Major says. "The whole community gets involved. There are poetry lawn signs, poetry on the mailboxes. And it brings 40,000 people to that city each year."

Detailed plans are to be revealed Tuesday at City Hall but the Edmonton festival hopes to welcome poet laureates from across the country. Canada's national poet laureate, Pauline Michel, is



ED KAISER, THE JOURNAL, FILE  
Alice Major

expected to attend. The festival will include mentoring for young Edmonton writers, a poetry-on-the-pavement program for kids at Sir Winston Churchill Square and impromptu travelling poetry performances across the city.

Organizers have already cleared one of the hurdles that has repeatedly foiled efforts to get a major book festival up and running in Edmonton. A major corporate sponsor, Telus, has signed on for the inaugural 2006 event. The city's established poetry players, The Stroll of Poets and The Roar Spoken Word Festival, are also on board.

*rhelm@thejournal.  
canwest.com*

Edmonton Journal Sunday, May 28, 2006

## WRITERS GUILD OF ALBERTA

Member night. Celebrate World Poetry Day. Attend a night of readings from members of the Stroll of Poets, Raving Poets, Poets Ink, the League of Canadian Poets and other writing organizations. Open mike — sign up on site. Come listen or share your words. World Poetry Day is March 21.

**When:** Wednesday, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Steeps Tea Lounge on Whyte, 11116 82nd Ave.

Edmonton Journal Friday, March 24, 2006

## STROLL OF POETS

The Stroll of Poets Society opens its first week-long Edmonton Poetry Festival with a fast-paced evening of *Killer Blinks*, poems that take no longer than 30 seconds to perform. Sixty poets will run the time gamut, a capsule preview of the fall *Haven Reading Series*.

**When:** Today, doors at 6, blinks at 7 p.m.

**Where:** City Arts Centre at 10943 84th Avenue.

Edmonton Journal Friday, September 15, 2006

## STROLL OF POETS

The Stroll of Poets Society opens the first ever week-long Edmonton Poetry Festival with a frantic fast-paced evening of *Killer Blinks*, poems which take no longer than 30 seconds to perform. Sixty poets will run the time gamut, a capsule preview of the fall *Haven Reading Series*.

**When:** Monday, doors at 6, blinks at 7 p.m.

**Where:** City Arts Centre, 10943 84th Avenue.

Edmonton Journal Monday, September 18, 2006

### STROLL OF POETS

Annual general meeting and launch of the 16th annual *Stroll of Poets Anthology*.

**When:** Sunday, 1 p.m.

**Where:** Stanley A. Milner Library, Edmonton Room.

**Admission:** Free admission and refreshments.

Edmonton Journal Friday, March 23, 2007

### STROLL OF POETS SOCIETY EDMONTON

The Poets' Haven Reading Series featuring poetry by Audrey Brooks, Myrna Garanis, Lorraine McFadden, Juniper Quin and Harold Cashman.

**When:** Sunday 2-4 p.m.

**Where:** Greenwood's Bookshoppe, 7925 104th St.

Edmonton Journal Friday, October 19, 2007

### POETS' HAVEN

The Stroll of Poets Society present Jalal Barzanji, Edmonton's first writer in exile along with local spoken word artists, Anna Mioduchowska, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Ruth Anderson Donovan and TDL Turner.

**When:** Monday, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

**Tickets:** \$5 at the door.

**Information:** [www.strollofpoets.com](http://www.strollofpoets.com). or call Nic at 422-8216.

Edmonton Journal Friday, January 18, 2008

## WHAT'S ON

**Where:** Fort Edmonton Park.

**Cost:** \$8.25 adults; \$6 youth and seniors.

Advance tickets not required.

### EDMONTON POETRY FESTIVAL

Poetry has the power to connect Edmontonians with themselves, with each other, and with their city. Connections occur through people engaging with poems and the images they evoke, through the shared experience of hearing poetry performed, and through the process of creating and refining work. Activities will be under the direction of Edmonton's first poet laureate, Alice Major.

**When:** Today through Sunday.

**Where:** Various downtown venues

**Information:** 420-1757.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

► **Edmonton Poetry Festival Launch**

Mayor Stephen Mandel declares Edmonton

Poetry Festival Week, with a sneak preview of the week's events. Today, noon at City Hall.

► **Return of the Killer Blinks**

The fast-paced frenzy of "blink" poetry organized by the Stroll of Poets Society. Today, 7 p.m., City Arts Centre, 10943 84th Ave.

► **Poetryworld**

A series of noon-hour special performances, to share the work created in the Honour Songs and Poets Across Borders projects. Tuesday through Thursday at Centre Stage.

► **Hip-Hop Night**

At Grant MacEwan's downtown campus. Wednesday, 7 p.m.

► **Open Your Eyes to the Word**

Video poem night at Metro Cinema. Thursday, 7 p.m.

*This is a selection of events. For complete listing, consult Friday's What's On section.*

Edmonton Journal Monday, September 17, 2007

### THE POETS' HAVEN WEEKLY READING SERIES

The Stroll of Poets Society celebrates the power of the spoken word with Michelle Brandt, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Nancy Mackenzie, Juniper Quinn and Ella Zeltserman.

**When:** Monday, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

Edmonton Journal Friday, November 21, 2008

# City's poetry community is thriving

Re: "Poetic choice," Editorial, May 27.

The only thing embarrassing or controversial about the appointment of Roland Pemberton (Cadence Weapon) as Edmonton's new poet laureate was the way some local media assumed that local poets would be shocked or disappointed.

Edmonton has a vibrant poetry community in which many diverse streams of poetry thrive. The Edmonton Stroll of Poets, Raving Poets and the Edmonton Poetry Festival Society are only some of the active groups.

The Stroll offers a venue for both listeners and performers and promotes poetry to the wider community. Raving Poets features both music and spoken word awesomeness, as poets perform as the Raving Poets band improves behind them. New readers are always welcome.

At the Poetry Festival in April, there were happy poets of all stripes (including — gasp — some hip-hop artists!). The festival was launched with the "Blinks," in which 60-plus poets performed 30-second poems in rapid-fire style. The festival took place over several days and included a poetry slam competition, a zen poetry event, workshops, readings in bars and coffee shops, and a finale featuring many headliners, including CR Avery, a blues singer/spoken word/hip-hop performer from Vancouver. Hundreds of local poets came together at the festival to take part and attend events.

To put it simply, poetry in Edmonton is cool. The appointment of Roland Pemberton as the newest poet laureate is cool, too. Congratulations, Roland.

For more information on poetry in Edmonton, visit [www.strollofpoets.com](http://www.strollofpoets.com), [www.ravingpoets.com](http://www.ravingpoets.com), and [www.edmontonpoetryfestival.com](http://www.edmontonpoetryfestival.com).

*Wendy Joy, Edmonton*

Edmonton Journal Friday, May 9, 2009  
History of the Stroll – Max Vandersteen

## READINGS AT REVELATIONS

Be entertained and intrigued by members of the Stroll of Poets, including Gary Garrison, Neil Meili, Marguerite Redshaw and others.

**When:** Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Revelations Book & Gift Co-op, 144 Whitemud Crossing, 4211 106th St.

**Cost:** Free.

Edmonton Journal Friday, August 7, 2009

## STROLL OF POETS

The Stroll of Poets Society invites you to celebrate the power of the spoken word with The Poets' Haven Weekly Reading Series.

**When:** Today and Sept. 24, 7 p.m.

**Where:** Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

**Admission:** \$5.

**Information:** Nic at 780-422-8174.

Edmonton Journal Friday, September 24, 2010

## LITERARY EVENTS

### STROLL OF POETS

The Stroll of Poets Society invites you to celebrate the power of the spoken word with The Poets' Haven Weekly Reading Series.

**When:** Fridays, 7 p.m., through Dec. 31.

**Where:** Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

**Admission:** \$5.

Edmonton Journal Friday, October 1, 2010

### STROLL OF POETS

The Stroll of Poets Society invites you to celebrate the power of the spoken word with The Poets' Haven Weekly Reading Series.

**When:** Mondays, 7 p.m., through March 21, 2011.

**Where:** Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

**Admission:** \$5.

**Information:** Nic at 780-422-8174, or [strollofpoets.com](http://strollofpoets.com)

Edmonton Journal Friday, October 22, 2010

### STROLL OF POETS: POETS' HAVEN READING AT GREENWOODS

The Stroll of Poets Society invites you to celebrate the power of the spoken word with a special Poets' Haven reading at Greenwood's Bookshoppe.

**When:** Sunday, 2-4 p.m.

**Where:** 7925 104th St.

**Admission:** Free.

**Information:** Call Nic at 780-422-8174 or visit [strollofpoets.com](http://strollofpoets.com)

### STROLL OF POETS

The Stroll of Poets Society invites you to celebrate the power of the spoken word with The Poets' Haven Weekly Reading Series.

**When:** Mondays, 7 p.m., through March 21.

**Where:** Upper Crust Cafe, 10909 86th Ave.

**Admission:** \$5.

Edmonton Journal Friday, January 14, 2011

## Writing community is tight

Re: "Chan closes book as library's writer-in-residence; Author forged creative partnerships during splendid 12-month run," Paula Simons, Dec. 6.

I was pleased to see Marty Chan recognized for his creative approach to the writer-in-residence position.

Chan has done a marvellous job and, as Paula Simons noted, has also promoted other writers and writing organizations during his tenure.

I did, however, object to Simons's description of the Edmonton writing community as "sometimes fractious" and "faction-plagued."

I have been part of this writing community for over 30 years. I have served on the boards of the Writers Guild, the Canadian Authors Association and *Other Voices* magazine and I am currently on the Poetry Festival board. I am also a longtime member of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets and I volunteer at Lit Fest.

Certainly, individual organizations have had their internal challenges, but I would describe the writing community as a whole as supportive and co-operative. The Alberta book awards, for example, are co-hosted by the Writers Guild and the Book Publishers Association.

The Poetry Festival has included events organized by the Canadian Authors Association, the Stroll of Poets and the Raving Poets, among others. *Other Voices* board members have participated in Writers Guild and Get Publishing conferences.

The organizations promote each other's events and there is crossover among their members, attendees and volunteers.

Shirley Serviss, Edmonton

Edmonton Journal Saturday, December 10, 2011



SHAUGHN BUTTS, THE JOURNAL

Anna Marie Sewell, Edmonton's new poet laureate, has been active in the city's poetry community for two decades and also teaches adult literacy.

# Well versed in blending cultures

As city's new poet laureate, Anna Marie Sewell seeks to 'braid together' many creative voices

FISH GRIWKOWSKY  
Journal Staff Writer  
EDMONTON

Anna Marie Sewell, an Edmonton poet of mixed aboriginal and Polish heritage, is Edmonton's fourth poet laureate. She officially takes over duties from 25-year-old hip-hop artist Roland Pemberton III on Canada Day.

Her appointment was announced Wednesday at City Hall.

Among her mandates for the two-year position is "looking at cross-cultural stuff, because that's kind of me — I'm cross-cultural stuff," said Sewell, who is of Mi'kmaq/unishnabe/Polish heritage.

Born in Fredericton, N.B., the 5-year-old has participated in Edmonton's poetry community for the past two decades and is a founding member of Stroll of Poets Society, a gathering of poets. During Edmon-

ton's Cultural Capital year in 2007, Sewell oversaw the Honour Songs project, which underlined the importance of aboriginal communities as part of Edmonton's early history. She also works as an adult literacy instructor.

She also calls herself the Bike-nik Poet during Edmonton's Bikeology festival. "It's kind of a new thing to have poets laureate for the city — I think it's a good thing," she said before the second-floor gathering of poets, family and press began. "I remember a bunch of poet cronies sitting around about 20 years ago joking, 'Yeah, we need to be at city hall.' And here we all are. "And I'm No. 4 — whoo!"

Sewell moved to the city in 1985 to be with her sister shortly before her father died. She was nominated for the poet laureate position by Pamela Anthony, director of Edmonton Winter Lights Festival.



Pemberton

■ Rollie Pemberton passes the torch / C4

The poet's recent work with the Edmonton Public Library involves bringing together aboriginal storytellers and actors to collaborate in stage readings.

"The idea is you can braid together a community of poets and you see the continuity doing it," she explains. "That's a good theme for a lot of things that might come up with this position. If you bring different voices together, you see what are the common threads, and you notice all these neat and interesting things that give it the colour and the shape."

Mayor Stephen Mandel was exuberant in his praise for Sewell and the position he helped create, which pays an honorarium of \$5,000.

"We spend millions and millions

and millions of dollars on LRT, on roads, on recreation centres. And we do not spend enough money on artists and creative people. We need to do a better job in creating a kind of atmosphere for people like Rollie (Pemberton) so they can stay here. They will attract the kind of other people who are so essential to the City of Edmonton."

During his stint as poet laureate, Pemberton relocated to Montreal in pursuit of his music career in which he goes by the name Cadence Weapon.

"I want to thank the honourable Mayor Mandel for taking me on this wild ride," Pemberton said at the podium before tallying his accomplishments in outreach, including performing for large crowds at the Olympics. "My big thing about being poet laureate was I wanted to chronicle events and create hard copy, a concrete document about what it is to be from Edmonton."

Sewell was casual and down-to-earth during her introduction, joking that what she'd really like is a "poet pony." Describing her walks through

the city in beautiful yet critical detail, she noted elements of poetry in chalk messages outside the Remand Centre, sad messages of hope.

She anticipates the interactivity of the position. "I've got some hopes that the things I plan to do will be significant in their own way, build on the work of all the poets laureate before me. It all sets up a nice ground for something hopefully fresh but drawn from the same well of ideas."

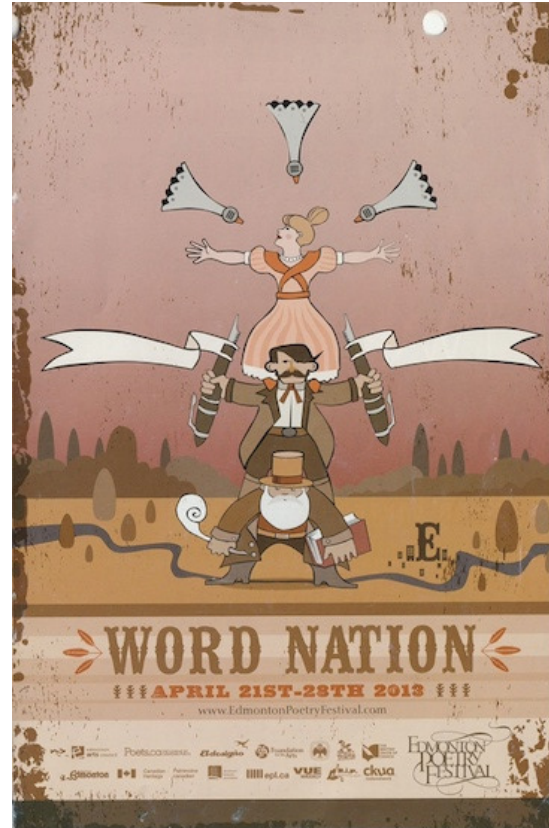
"I want to bring things together to open them up. I work in adult literacy and I've really seen how creative writing is a great tool for people to come into their own. You know how important writing is for our society — you can't function really well without it."

Self-described as an Edmonton "lifer" who "might stray now and then," she pinpoints the city's allure.

"You discover there's all this really interesting stuff going on, and that's what Edmonton's about. Why I still hang around here. You know, it's not the weather."

fgriwkowsky@edmontonjournal.com  
On Twitter @fishseyefoto





WORD NATION					EVENT CALENDAR		
Sunday April 21	Monday April 22	Tuesday April 23	Wednesday April 24	Thursday April 25	Friday April 26	Saturday April 27	Sunday April 28
<b>MORNING</b>							
	11:30 am-1:30 pm: Short Order Poems & Concrete Poetry Churchill Square					10 am: Master Class Stanley Milner Library	
		11:30 am-1:30 pm: Poetry Central Churchill Square				10 am-Noon: Workshops / 1-4 APAAD Performances** Africa Centre	
						10 am: Market Fresh Poetry City Hall	
<b>AFTERNOON</b>							
			Noon: Slam Sampler CBC Centre Stage	Noon: Aboriginal Stories CBC Centre Stage	Noon: African Beats CBC Centre Stage	Noon: APAAD Lunch** Africa Centre	Noon: Youth writing workshop Stanley A. Milner Library
2 pm: Blue, Tried and True Artery			Noon: Lunch with Liz and Fred Sutton Hotel		2 pm: Word Nation: A Cultural Forum City Hall	2 pm: Poetry and Music CKUA	1:30 pm-3:30 pm: Café Readings Three Bananas, L'Espresso, Café Symphony, Normand's.
		4 pm: Literary Cocktails U of A		4 pm: Launch of Great Black North Pavillon Lacerte, Campus Saint-Jean			2:30 pm to 4:00 pm: Youth Café Reading Audrey's Books
<b>EVENING</b>							
6 pm: Al-Mutanabbi Street Harcourt House			6 pm: The Olive Reading Permanent Records	7:30 pm: The Play and The Poem Nina Haggerty Centre	6 pm: Youth Slam Concordia Theatre	7 pm: Map of Canada Gala Rice Theatre	
	7 pm: Blinks Artery	8 pm: Slam Metro Cinema	6:30 pm: Vintage Poetry Event SEESA 8 pm: CR Avery Metro Cinema	6 pm: Symbiotica —Jeffcott Gullible 7 pm: Glass Door Coffee House Koffee Cafe 7 pm: French-Twist Duchess Bakery	8 pm: Canadian Poetry Party CKUA		<i>Bring my kids to the airport</i>

2012 Edmonton Poetry Festival



## STROLL OF POETS LOGOS & BANNERS



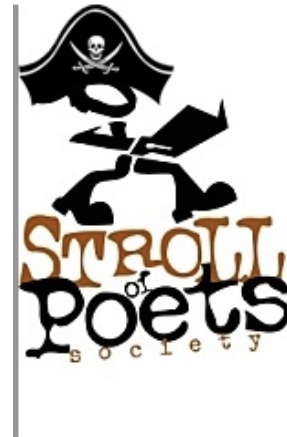
1991



2000



December 2016



May 2018



June 1, 2018



June 29, 2018



Happy Turkey Day!

October 5, 2018



October 26, 2018



November 2018



December 2018



February 2019



December 2019



February 2020



October 2020



**December 2020**

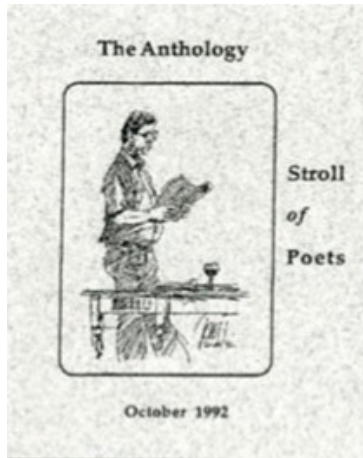


**October 2021**

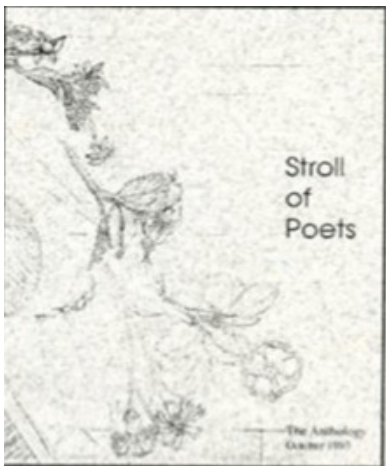
# STROLL OF POETS ANTHOLOGY COVERS



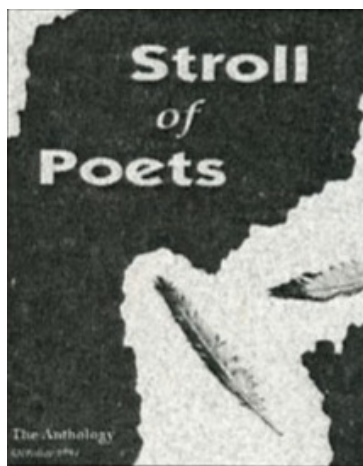
1991



1992



1993



1994



1995



1996



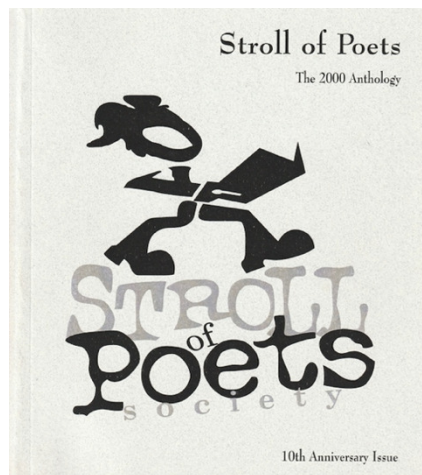
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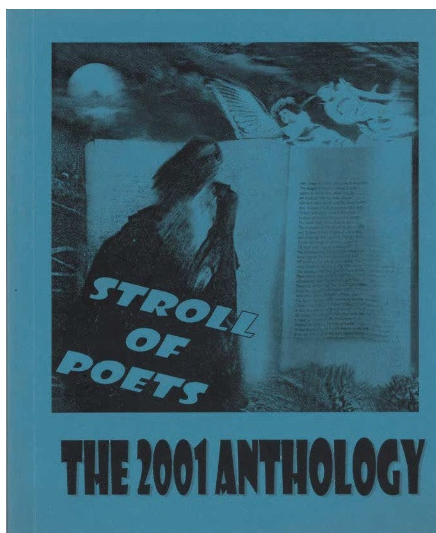
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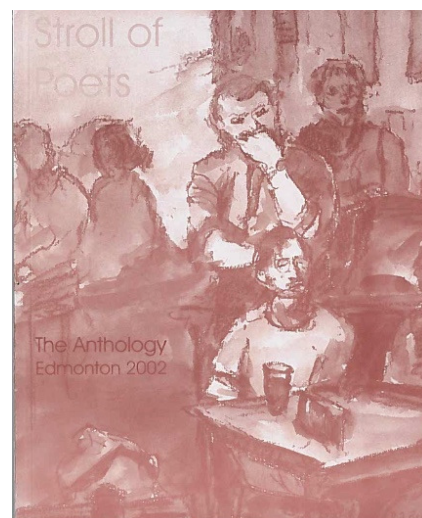
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2000

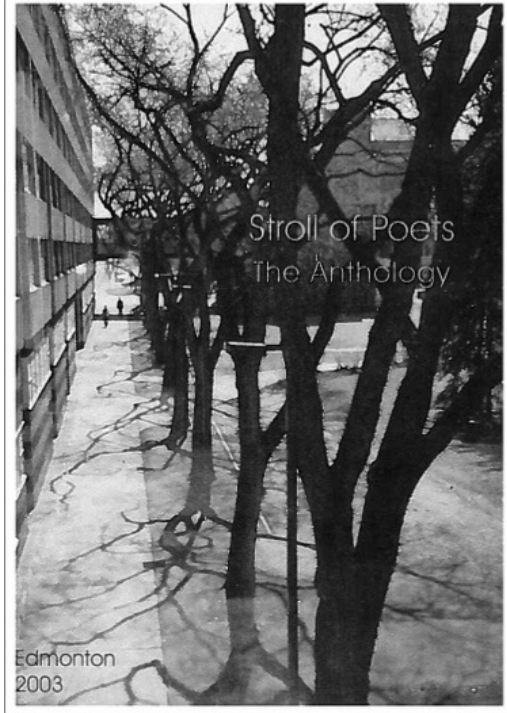


2001

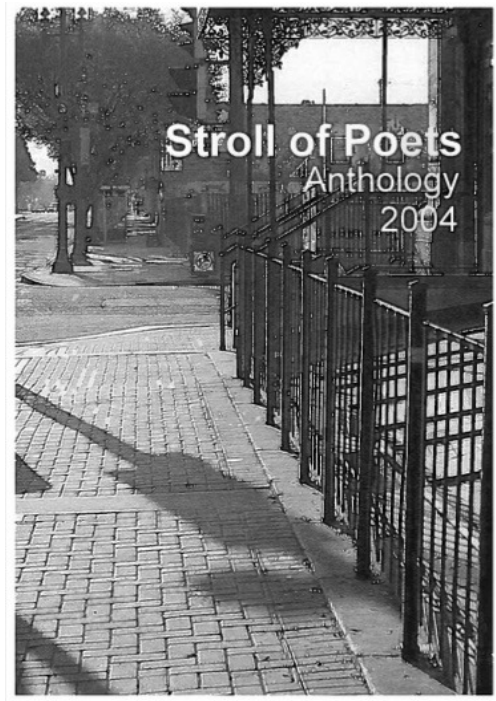


2002

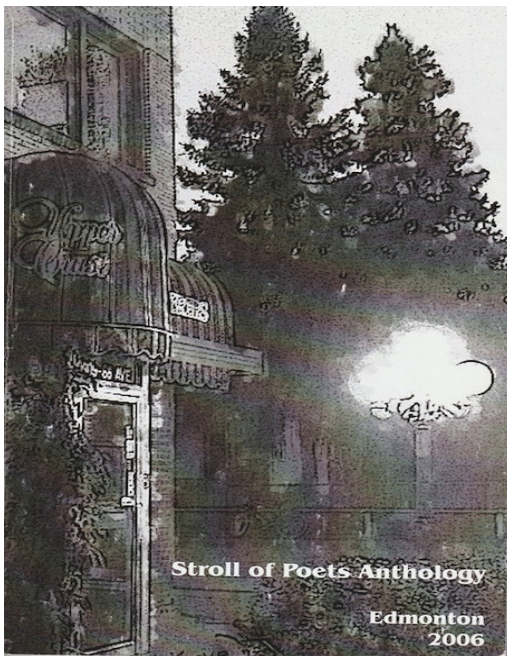




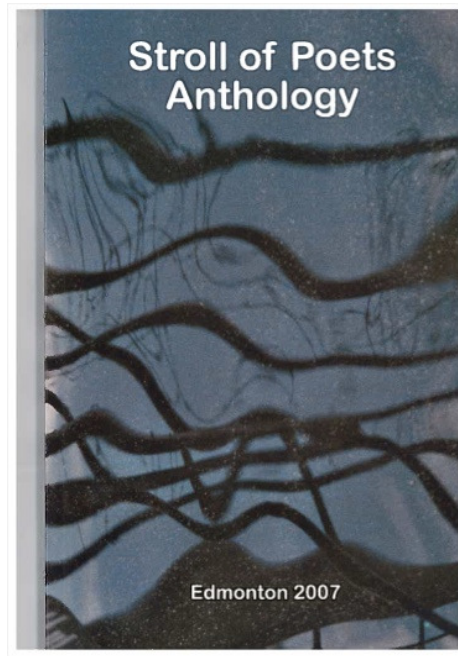
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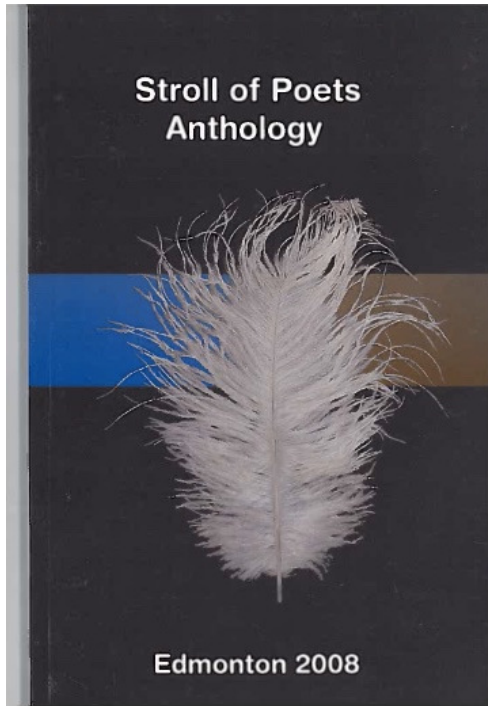
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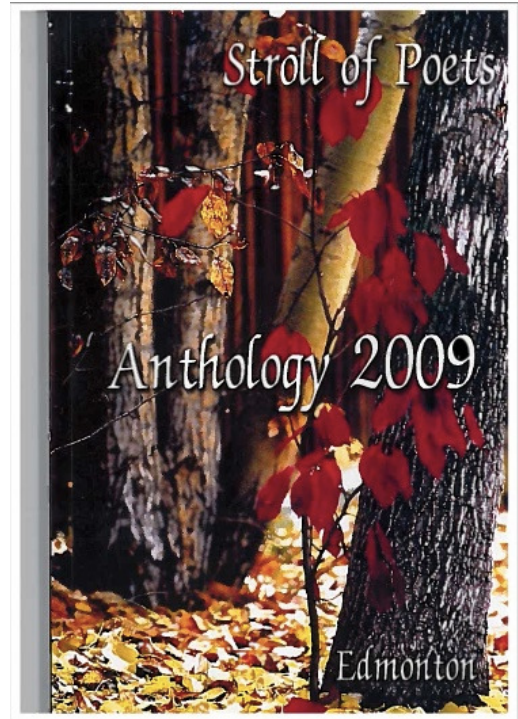
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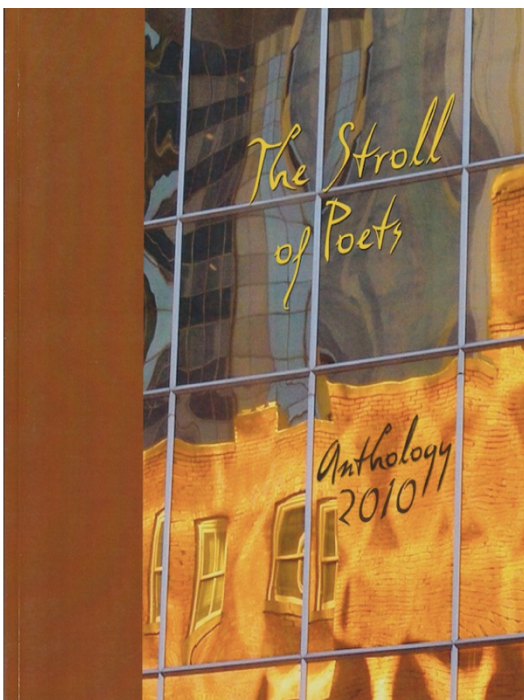
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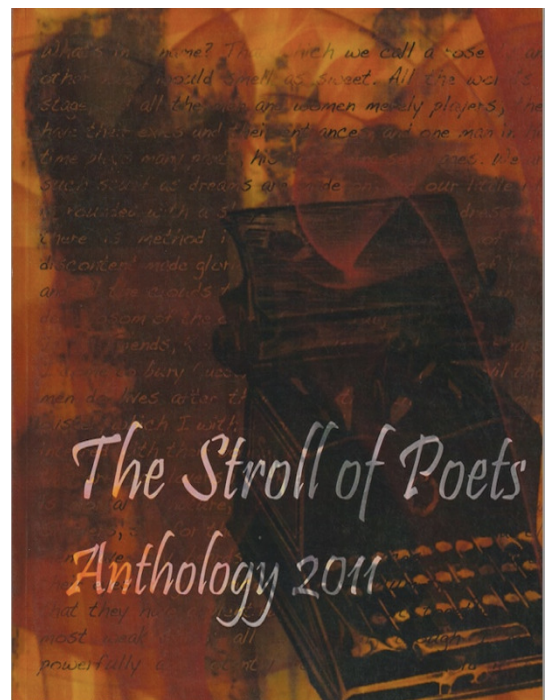
2008



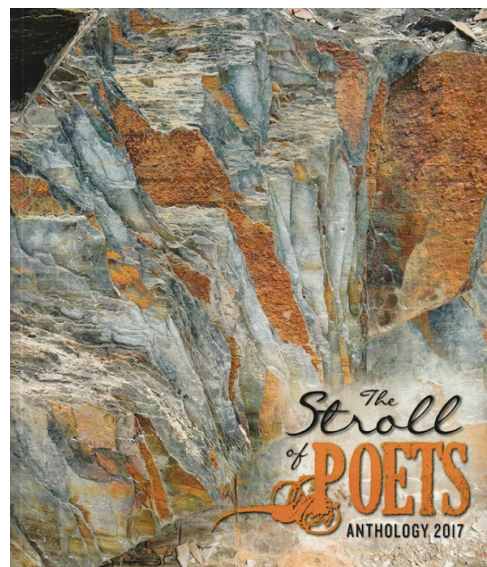
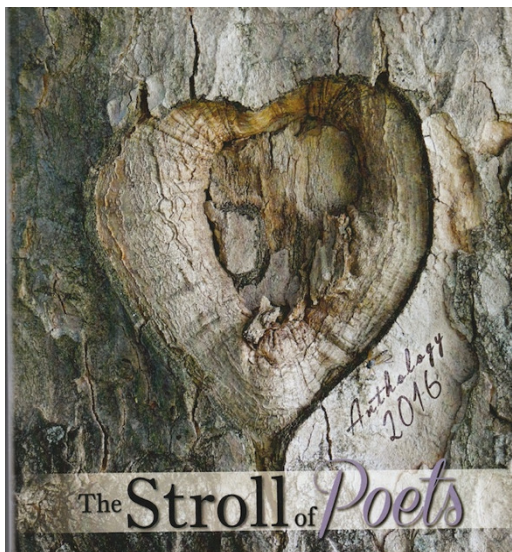
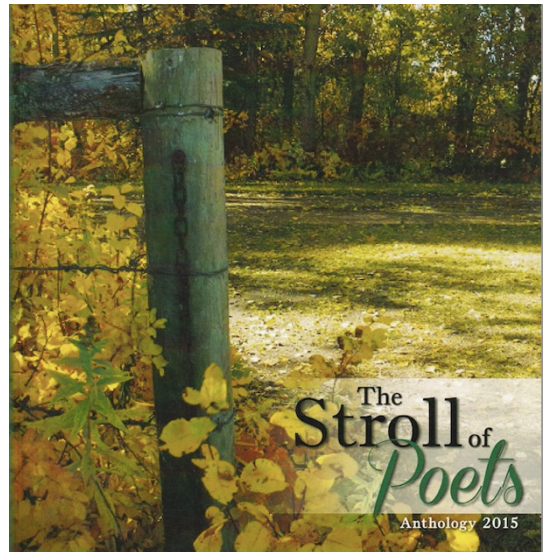
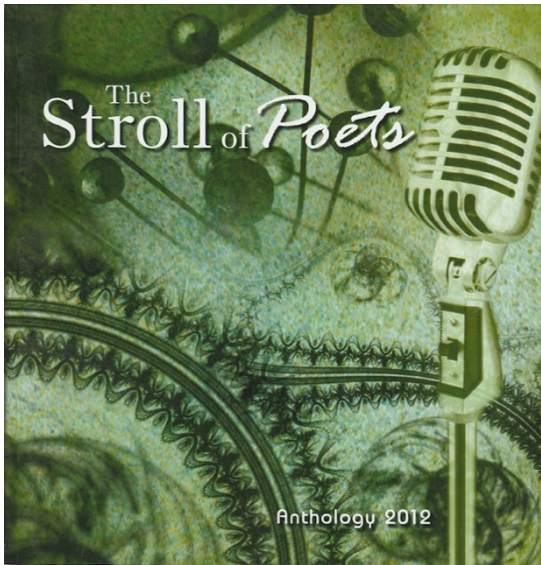
2009

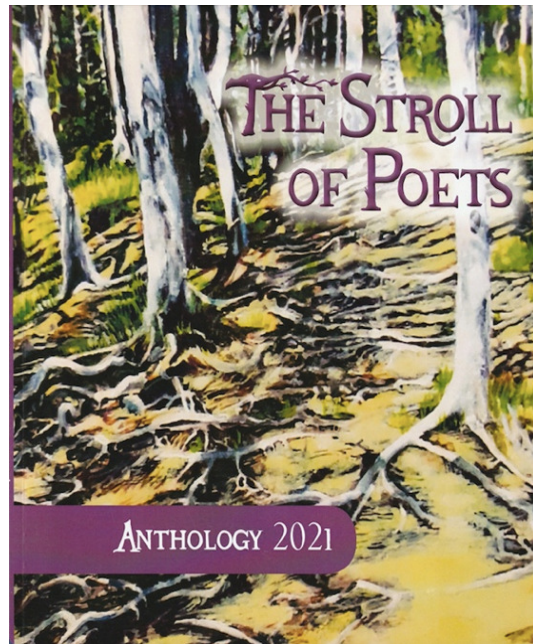
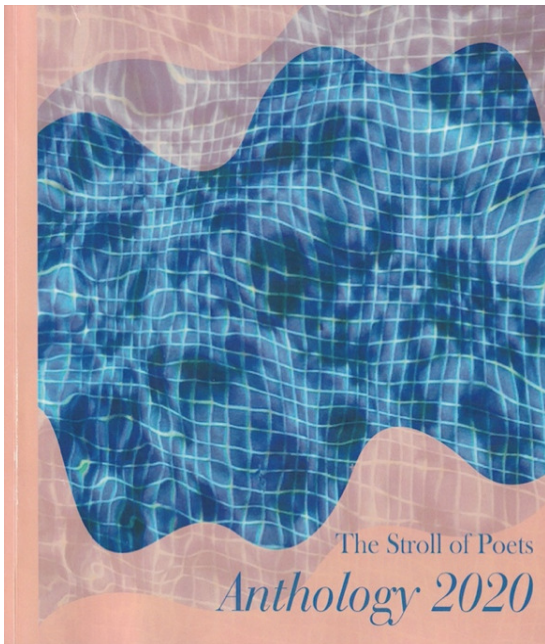
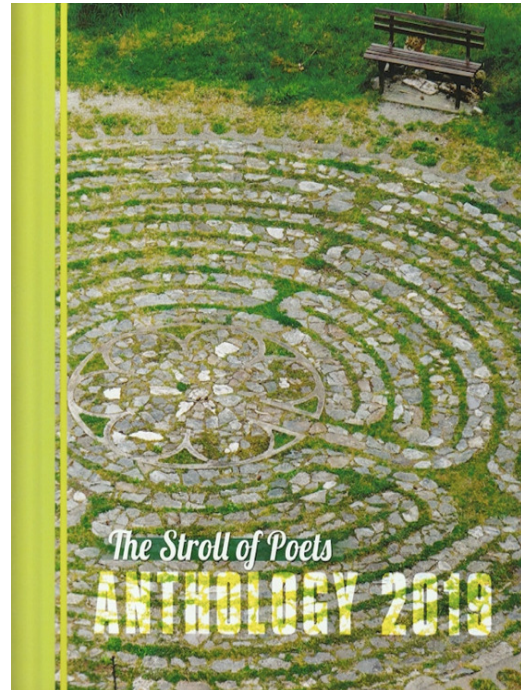
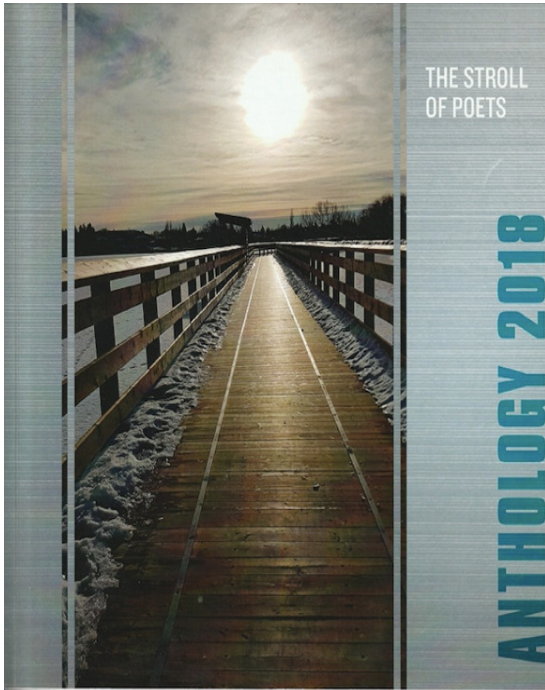


2010

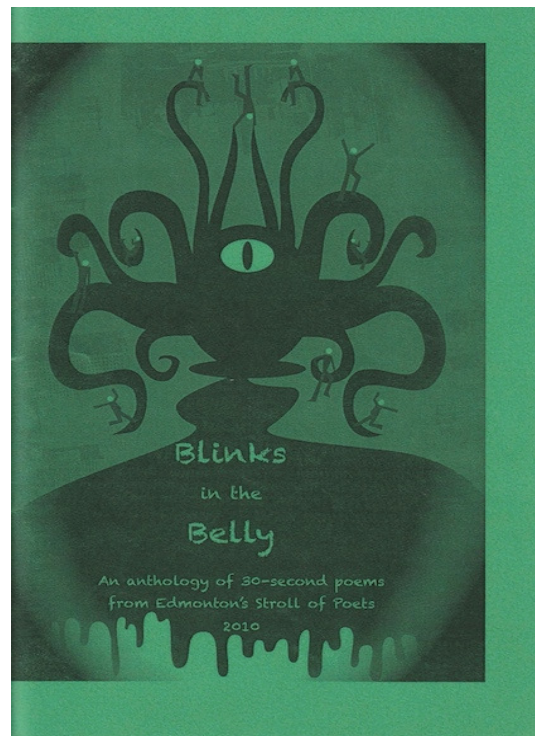
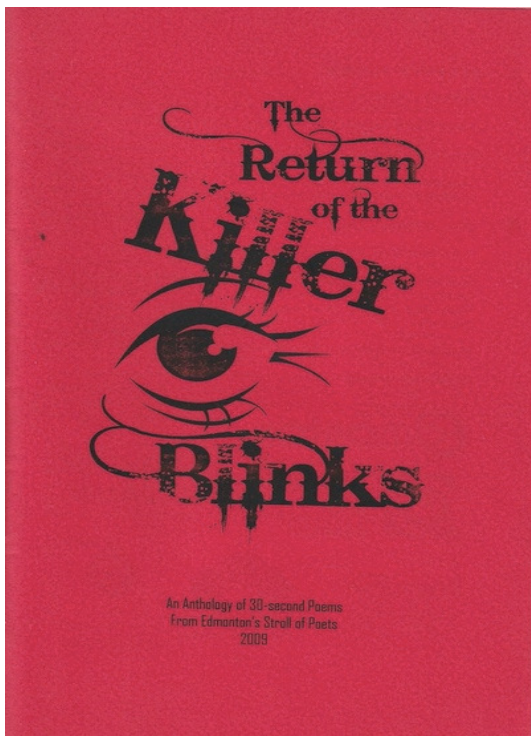
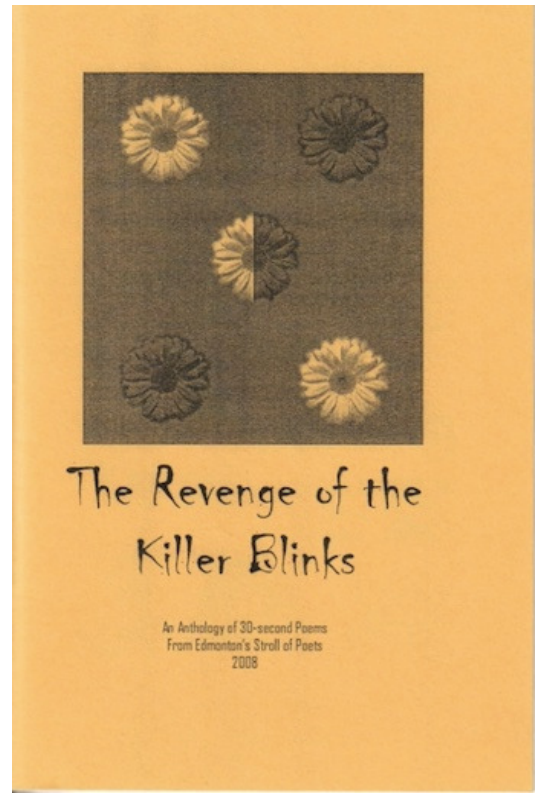
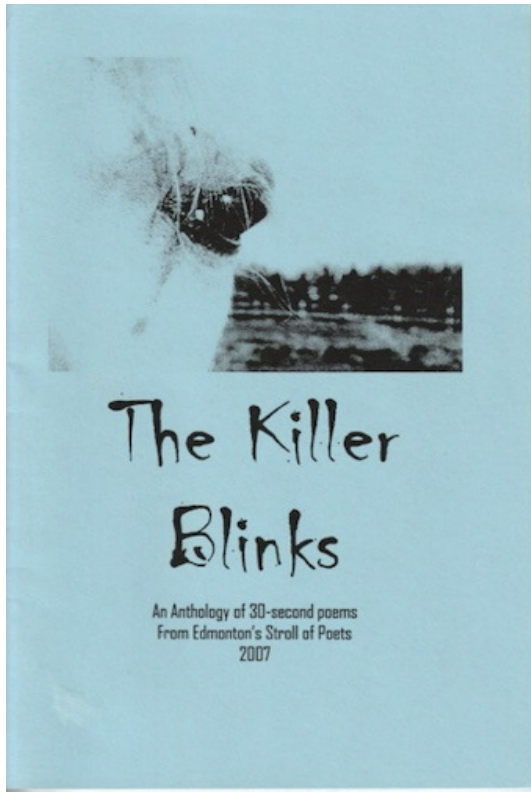


2011





## Stroll of Poets 2007 – 2010 Blinks



2011



## Great Blinks of Fire

Monday April 25, 2011 The Artery (9535 Jasper Ave.), 7 p.m., doors 6:30

Good	Gracious
Ahmed Ali	Michelle Labossiere Brandt
Gereen Anderson	Jim Lavers
Ruth Anderson Donovan	Rusti Lehay
Pritam Atwal	Virginia Lehay
Jennifer Balan	Connie Lloyd
Jalal Barzanji	Brenda Love
Ryan Robert Beauvais	Shona Macdonald
Audrey Brooks	Alice Major
Lyra Brown	Aaron Marko
Diane Buchanan	Anne Gerard Marshall
Trevor Bykowski	Lorraine McFaddin
Ernest Chiasson	Priscilla McGreer
Alison Clarke	Yukari Meldrum
Red Man Dan	Marco Melfi
Adriana Davies	Katrine Nielsen
Leslie Dawson	Marcia O'Connor
Janaan Dekker	Nicole Pakan
Angela Dekort	Patrick Pilarski
Jennifer Eagle	Juniper Quin
Jannie Edwards	Marguerite Redshaw
Douglas Elves	Pierrette Requier
Sheila Firth-Warlund	Julie Robinson
Myrna Garanis	Glenn Robson
Gary Garrison	Phyllis Schuell
Jo-Ann Godfrey	Audrey Seehagen
Joe Gurba	Adam Snider
Joyce Harries	Neha Sonpar
Chris Hartum	Stuart Sparling
Tymofiy Hawrysh	Ivan Sundal
Cecilia Hutchinson	Kathie Sutherland
S. E. Ingraham	Rebecca Traquair
Wendy Joy	Vanda Ulici Petrut
Ellen Kartz	Jocelyne Verret
Therezinha Kennedy	Ella Zeltserman
Chris Krueger	Danielle Zyp

2012  
 THE EDMONTON POETRY FESTIVAL  
 AND THE EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS PRESENTS  
**BLINKS IN THE HEART**

OUR QUEEN OF HEARTS

Anna Marie Sewell

I

OUR KNAVE OF HEARTS

Jem Roles

TRIPLE BYPASS

Audrey Brooks

Melle Huizinga

Marco Melfi

Diane Robitelle

Virginia Leahy

N

BEAT IT

Ernest Chiasson

Jocelyne Veret

Diane Buchanan

Leslie Dawson

Shirley Serviss

YOUR BLINKS PHILHARMONIC

Ivan, Naomi, Wendy and Rusti

T

ATRIAL ARTISTS

Mary Campbell

Scarlett Eyben

Alison Clarke

Katelyn Loshny

Alice Major

SWEET HEARTS

Wolfgang Carstens

Deborah Lawson

Rachael Lindley

David McCargar

Edin Viso

E

HEARTS ON FIRE

Len Geirach

Jannie Edwards

Gary Garrison

Audrey Seehagen

Tymofiy Hawrysh

PACEMAKER BLUES

Richard Mackie

Janet E. Smith

Aaron J. Marko

Sheila Firth-Warlund

Kathie Sutherland

M

THE STENT SHUFFLE

Pierrette Requier

Jairus Biló

Matt Dekker

Liz Maki

Therezina Kennedy

THE INFARCTIONS

Ivan Sundal

Myrna Garanis

Jo-Ann Godfrey

Marguerite Redshaw

Karen-Ann Selzler

I

S

RHAPSODY IN RED

Janaan Dekker

Hugh McAlary

Allison Akgungor

Charissa Vandergrift

Katie McPherson

Katirine Nielsen

VENTRICULAR VIXENS

Rusti Leahy

Magdalen Balan

Virginia Balan

Jennifer Balan

Gereen Anderson

S

I

THE HEART THROBS

Anne Gerard Marshall

Julie Robinson

Cecilia Hutchinson

Pritam Atwal

David Brydges

HEMOGOBLINS

Christine Falk

Ella Zeltserman

Priscilla McGreer

Ryan Willis

Danielle Zyp

Douglas Elves

O

N

2013

THE EDMONTON POETRY FESTIVAL  
AND THE EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS PRESENTS  
BLING IT ON BLINKS!

OUR HONORED GEM

Michael Phair

I

TIFFANYS

Audrey Brooks

Melle Huizinga

Marco Malfi

Diane Robitelle

Cynthia Bale

N

YOUR BLINKS PHILHARMONIC

Ivan, Naomi, Vanda, Gary and Diane

T

CASH FOR GOLD

Anna Marie Sewell

Deborah Lawson

Tallulah Barrett

Anton Capri

Edin Viso

E

R

THE HOPELESS DIAMOND

Harold Cashman

Janet E. Smith

Aaron J. Marko

Dianne Dalley

Adriana Davies

M

THE LUCYS IN THE SKY

Ivan Sundal

Myrna Garanis

Jo-Ann Godfrey

Rayonne Doucet

Karen-Ann Selzler

I

S

CUBIC ZIRCONIAS

Rusti Leahy

Magdalen Balan

Virginia Balan

Jennifer Balan

Kasia Gawlak

S

I

FOOLS GOLD

Anne Gerard Marshall

David Brydges

Vanda Ulici Petrut

Hendrik Slegtenhorst

O

N

OUR 24 K GUEST

SILVER SPURS

Ernest Chiasson

Philip Jagger

Wendy Joy

Leslie Dawson

Efim Konovalov

PINK PANTHERS

Mary Campbell

Scarlett Eyben

Alison Clarke

Jim Lavers

Alice Major

RUBY TUESDAYS

Rachel Marchant

Karen Lumley

Gary Garrison

Audrey Seehagen

Naomi McIlwraith

GOLDFINGERS

Chris Michaud

Jairus Biló

Matt Dekker

Peter Midgley

Therezina Kennedy

GLITTER GULCH GANG

Janaan Dekker

Anna Mioduchowska

Allison Akgungor

Marcia O'Connor

Jenny Olsen



**2014**  
**THE EDMONTON POETRY FESTIVAL**  
**AND THE EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS PRESENTS**  
**IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE**

OUR HONORED BLINKER

Ben Henderson I

OPTICAL ILLUSIONS

Audrey Brooks  
 Melle Huizinga N  
 Marco Melfi  
 Diane Robitelle  
 Morgan Smith

YOUR BLINKS PHILHARMONIC

T

20/20s

Dani Zyp E  
 Deborah Lawson  
 Hank Binnema  
 Doug Elves  
 Kadrush Radogoshi R

TWO BLINKS FOR YES

Harold Cashman  
 Janet E. Smith  
 Emanuel Blosser M  
 Alida Van Braeden  
 Adriana Davies

EYELASH EXTENDERS

Ivan Sundal I  
 Myrna Garanis  
 Jo-Ann Godfrey  
 Rayanne Doucet S  
 Jennifer Olsen

VISINE VIXENS

Rusti Leahy S  
 Gereen Anderson  
 Phyllis Shuell  
 Elisia Snyder  
 Cheryl Luck I

RAPID EYE MOVEMENTS

Anne Gerard Marshall  
 David Brydges O  
 Christine Falk  
 John Leppard  
 Deano Dei N

OPTICIANS

Sharon Ingraham  
 Philip Jagger  
 Wendy Joy  
 Mark Kozub  
 Ruth Anderson Donovan

CLARITIN CREW

Mary Campbell  
 Scarlett Eyben  
 Alison Clarke  
 Madura Katta  
 Alice Major

WINKIN' BLINKINS

Rachel Marchant  
 Brian Breckon  
 Gary Garrison  
 Audrey Seehagen  
 Naomi McIlwraith

CORRECTIVE LENSES

Yukari Meldrum  
 Corrine Jackson  
 Karen Lumley  
 Brian Chan  
 Hugh McAlary

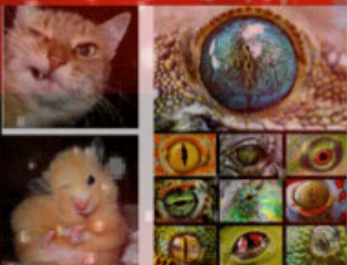
CORNEA KIDS

Pushpa Acharya  
 Anna Mioduchowska  
 Allison Akgungor  
 Marcia O'Connor  
 Katrine Nielsen

**Do not squint.  
Do not avert your gaze.  
Or you just  
might miss the  
Edmonton Stroll of  
Poets proudly  
presenting...**

# **In The Blink Of An Eye**

**Yes, that's how quickly  
a 30 second poem can  
evaporate. Gone, like  
the fleeting after  
image of a stanza, or  
the faint outline of a  
verse. If you turn away  
for a moment, the  
metaphor is gone.  
Please accept our eyes  
wide-open invitation  
to party, poetry-style.  
Focus on the eye chart,  
cover your left eye and  
read the following:**



**In The Blink Of An Eye  
Monday, April 21  
The ARtery, 9535 Jasper Avenue  
Doors open at 6:30 pm,  
Show at 7 pm**

To sign up, send an e-mail to:  
[signup@edmontonpoetryfestival.com](mailto:signup@edmontonpoetryfestival.com)

2015

THE EDMONTON POETRY FESTIVAL  
AND THE EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS PRESENTS  
GONE WITH THE BLINKS

OUR HONORED BLINKER

Joanna Lilley

I

THE MINT JULEPS

Audrey Brooks

Melle Huizinga

Marco Melfi

Diane Robitelle

Mikayla Bortscher

N

YOUR BLINKS PHILHARMONIC

T

THE CRINOLINS

Dani Zyp

Deborah Lawson

Hank Binnema

Doug Elves

Tamara Carlson

E

R

SCARLETT'S LETTERS

Matthew Dekker

Jud Dudley

Emanuel Blosser

Alida Van Braeden

Diana Harrington

M

THE TERRA THEMATICS

Ivan Sundal

Janaan Dekker

Jo-Ann Godfrey

Rayanne Doucet

Jennifer Eagle

I

S

THE CURTAIN ROD KIDS

Rusti Lehay

Joey Jalal

Ellen Kartz

Elisia Snyder

Cheryl McConnell

S

I

O

N

FRANKLY MY DARLINGS

Sharon Ingraham

Philip Jagger

Wendy Joy

Anne Gerard Marshall

John Leppard

ATLANTA FLAMES

Marijan Megla

Scarlett Eyben

Alison Clarke

Madura Katta

Alice Major

CONFEDERATES

Roylin Pico

Janet E. Smith

Gary Garrison

Audrey Seehagen

Naomi McIlwraith

SOUTHERN BELLES

Edin Viso

Anna Mioduchowska

Karen Lumley

Allison Akgungor

Marcia O'Connor

**2016**

**EVERYTHING BUT THE KITCHEN BLINKS**

Pack it in! Bring it all! Load 'er up! We're moving to the Mercury Room for this year's rapid-fire night of 30-second poetry! Poets of every flavor are invited to deliver their best and briefest lines or rhymes of verse and spoken word – whatever they can squeeze into half a minute. Hosted by Pierrette Requier, Edmonton's Poet Laureate and the Blinks Philharmonic.

Bag it, box it, tie it with a string and bring your friends, all of them, everyone, whatever fits for Everything but the Kitchen Blinks!

Sign up at [signup@edmontonpoetryfestival.com](mailto:signup@edmontonpoetryfestival.com) before Friday, April 8!

Co-presented by The Edmonton Poetry Festival and the Stroll of Poets Society.

2017

The Edmonton Poetry Festival  
&  
The Edmonton Stroll of Poets  
Present

## QuickSilver Blinks

Our Most Esteemed Hosts:

David Crone  
& Alice Major

Poets on a Silver Platter

Gary Gully  
Markus Eymann  
Deborah Lawson  
Phyllis Shuell

Mercury Rising

Maxwell Foster  
John Leppard  
Alice Major  
Diane Robitelle

Silver Belles

Ellen Kartz  
Rayanne Doucet  
Wendy Joy  
Naomi McIlwraith  
Diana Herrington

Quicksand

Manny Blosser  
Trudy Griener  
Jo-Ann Godfrey  
Michelle Blance

Silver Tooth Tigers

Janis Dow  
Guy Chambers  
Doug Elves  
Audrey Brooks

**I  
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Knights of Silver

Karen Lumley  
Gary Garrison  
Alison Clark  
S. E. Ingraham

All That Glitters

Randy Wolfert  
Gerald St. Maur  
Mary Campbell  
Ivan Sundal

Silver Plated Poets

Marcia Johnson  
Jennifer Eagle  
Allison Agunkor  
Andy Michaelson  
Adriana Onita

Silver Linings

Seaneen O'Rourke  
Neil Meili  
Marco Melfi  
Roylin Picou

And Finally:

The inspired poems of  
the intermission



**MADE YA BLINK**

*Our most esteemed hosts this evening:  
John Leppard & Janis Dow*

Blinks Reading Groups:

Dust Notes

Trevor Hughes  
Jo-Ann Godfrey  
Doug Elves  
Ivan Sundal  
Jennifer Eagle

Flash Bulbs

Ellen Kartz  
David Brydges  
Manny Blosser  
Maxwell Foster  
Audrey Brooks

Staring Contests

Alida VanBraeden  
Matthew Dekker  
Laurel Sproule  
Mary Campbell  
Jannie Edwards  
Diane Robitelle

KABAMMM!

Stef Guillard  
Kim Mannix  
Edward Martin  
Gary Garrison  
Heather Lueck  
Rayanne Haines

False Lashes

Adriana Onita  
Alice Major  
Trevor Hughes  
Janelle Schmidt  
Anne Gerard Marshall  
Guy Chambers

**Blinks 2018**

*Blinks-themed Intermission Poem Challenge:  
hosted by Alice Major*

Blinks Reading Groups:

Sour Lemons

John Leppard  
Anna Mioduchowska  
Tim Barker  
Destyni DeLuca  
Hailey Stracky

Smoke Gets in Your Eyes

Nicole Fitzpatrick  
Corine Demas  
S.E. Ingram  
Susana Chalut  
Lisa Mulrooney

Tear Jerkers

Kim Blair  
Matthew Stepanic  
Rusti L. Lehay  
Virginia Balan  
Janis Dow

A Flash of Genius

Markus Eymann  
Gary Gully  
Rose Maria Sackela  
Marco Melfi  
Allison Akgungor

Dilated Pupils

Kelsey Kliparchuk  
Michael Gravel  
Rebecca Taquair  
Deborah Lawson  
Seaneen O'Rourke

*Blinks Intermission Challenge Champion announced  
Draw prizes announced*



**Many Thanks:**

*The Stroll of Poets Society,  
The Aviary &  
The Edmonton Poetry Festival*

... and all of the poets  
who risked the wrath  
of The Blinks' Philharmonic!

---

A poster for 'The Blinks' event. The title 'The Blinks' is written in a blue, cursive font at the top. Below the title is a cartoon illustration of a bear wearing a blue shirt. Underneath the bear is a blue-bordered box containing the text 'Winking, Blinking &amp; Naughty'. At the bottom of the poster, the date 'April 22, 2019' and location 'The Aviary' are listed. To the left is the logo for 'STROLL poets SOCIETY' and to the right is the logo for 'EDMONTON POETRY FESTIVAL'. The entire poster is framed by a decorative blue border with a repeating pattern.

The Stroll of Poets Society  
and the Edmonton Poetry Festival  
proudly present

# The Blinks

**Hosts:** Naomi McIlwraith & Ilara Stefaniuk-Gaudet

**Blinks' Philharmonic:**

Rev. Audrey Brooks, Gary Garrison, Ellen Kartz, Diane Robitelle

**The Naughty List (Poets & Teams):**

1. Naughty Nots

Trudy Grienauer  
Tamara Aschenbrenner  
Faryal Memon  
Leslie Dawson  
Carolyn Cordell

2. Wicked Blinks

Hugh McAlary  
Gary Garrison  
Lisa Mulrooney  
Janelle Schmidt  
Devika Short

3. Knotty Normans

Guy Chambers  
Naomi McIlwraith  
Manny Blosser  
Sage

4. Wee Willy Winkles

Stef Gully  
Sarah-Jean Krahl  
Andrew Thompson  
Marco Melfi

5. Winkles in Time

Jennifer Eagle  
Matthew James Weigel  
Don Hamaliuk  
Ellen Kartz  
Rachel Lindley-Maycock

**Intermission**

Poetry Challenge  
hosted by Alice Major

**Poets & Teams (continued):**

6. Blinking Sailors

Diane Robitelle  
Leanne Myggland-Carter  
Kerri Strobl  
Alison Clarke

7. Naughty Officers

Carolyn Woods  
Alida Van Braeden  
Tim Barker  
Philip Lister

8. Witty Winks

Gary Gully  
Joel Brooks  
Lois Hammond  
John Leppard  
Carol Bear

9. Where are your Pants?

Kim Blair  
Hank Binnema  
David Brydges  
Vivian Zenari  
Mary Campbell

10. Winky Blinks

Rev. Audrey Brooks  
Charlotte Cranston  
Alice Major  
Deborah Lawson  
Anne Gerard Marshall

11. Blink & You Miss Them

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

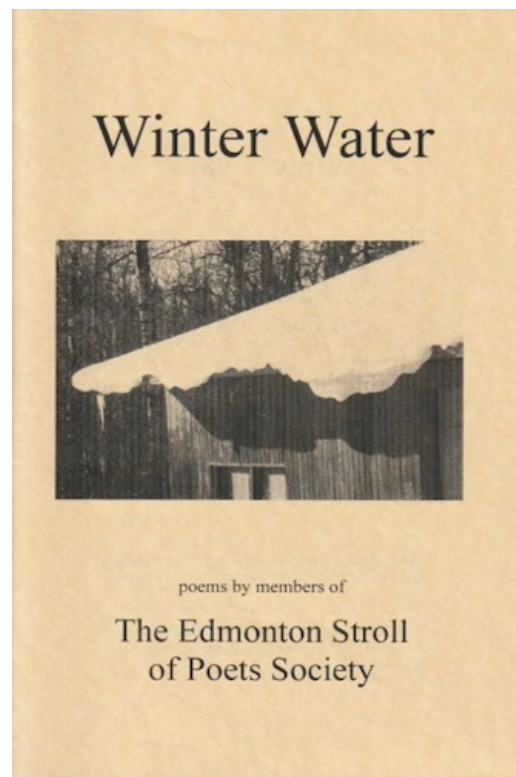
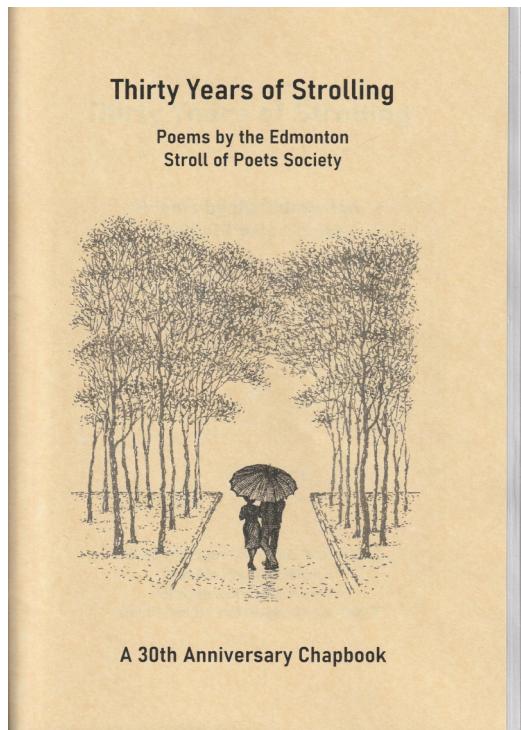
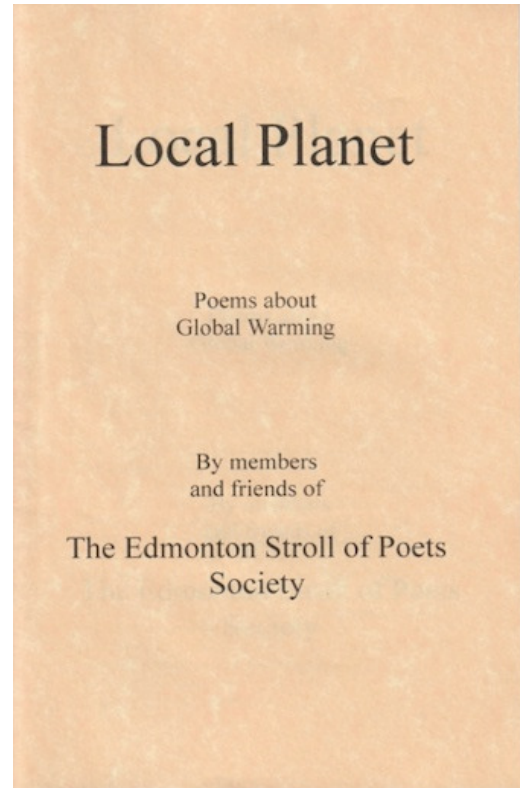
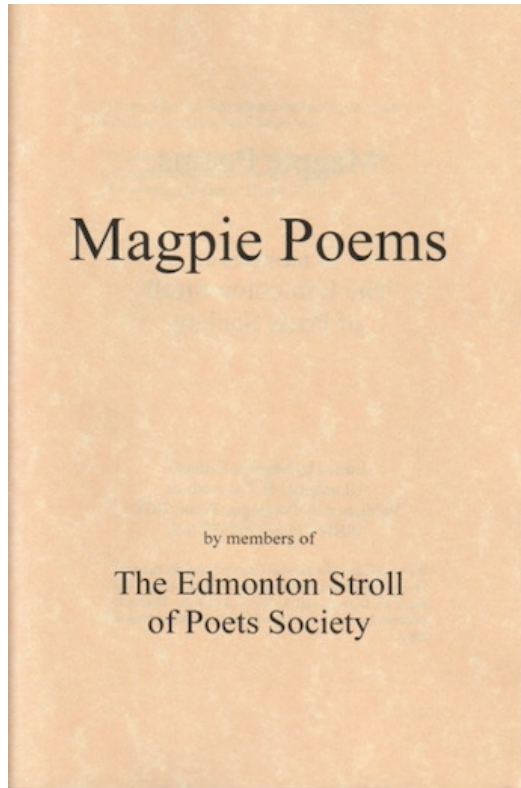
**Awards & Prizes**

Poetry Challenge Winners Announced  
Blinks Special Prize Winners Announced





## Stroll of Poets Society Chapbooks 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021



## STROLL OF POETS SOCIAL MEDIA

### Stroll of Poets Website



### Stroll of Poets Society

A welcoming community of poets since 1991

- [Haven Reading Series](#)expand child menu
- [About the Stroll](#)
- [Stroll of Poets Anthology 2021](#)expand child menu
- [Join the Stroll](#)expand child menu
- [Contact Us](#)expand child menu
- [30 Poems in 30 Days](#)
- [Find Us On Facebook](#)
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**DONATE TO THE STROLL**

## FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

Tweets by @strollofpoet

### About the Stroll

As an art form, poetry is deeply rooted in oral performance and there's nothing like performing a poem to find out what works and what doesn't. The Stroll exists to provide poets with an opportunity to connect with an audience, both through our Haven Reading Series and our annual printed anthology.

We are a warm and friendly grassroots organization, we create a supportive community of artists that welcomes members of all ages and all levels of experience.

To learn more about our past see [The Stroll of Poets Then](#) and ['A Glance Back at the Birth of the Stroll'](#)

### What We Do

The Stroll of Poets offers a weekly reading series called The Poets' Haven Reading Series, running from September to March on most Monday evenings and some Sunday afternoons. Check out the [Haven Reading Series](#) for more details.

The Stroll publishes an annual anthology that showcases the poems of members who have read at a Haven event. All members receive a free copy as part of their membership fee, with extra copies available for purchase. For more details visit [The Stroll Anthology](#).

We host a special event in April called The Blinks that regularly kicks off The Edmonton Poetry Festival. This evening of rapid-fire, 30-second poetry is always a popular attraction.

Additionally, The Stroll of Poets sponsors other special events or collaborations like the The Blinks — an evening of rapid-fire, 30-second poetry to kick off the [Edmonton Poetry Festival](#) — all designed to enhance the poetry experience for our community. Subscribe to our newsletter by visiting the [Contact Us page](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## How We Operate

The Stroll operates with an active volunteer board, elected at the AGM held in March. Directors are elected for a one-year term to:

- Welcome and support new and establish poets
  - Coordinate the weekly Haven Reading Series
  - Publish an annual anthology
  - Coordinate volunteers
  - Ensure fiscal management and securing grant applications
  - Promote the Stroll, poetry, and the writing and arts community
- For more information on board positions and responsibilities see the [Bylaws](#) for the Duties of Board Officers.

The Stroll of Poets also employs a part-time administrative staff member, Ellen Kartz, through an agreement with the [Writers' Guild of Alberta](#). Ellen may be contacted at **780-422-8216** or via her [contact form](#).

The Stroll of Poets is a non-profit organization, duly registered under the Society's Act and governed by a regularly reviewed set of bylaws. View the [Bylaws](#).

The Stroll of Poets is committed to creating a welcoming, respectful, and harassment-free environment for its board, members, and guests. The Stroll's [Discrimination & Harassment Policy](#) is intended to prevent and deal with discrimination and harassment in a fair, effective, and efficient manner to maintain a climate of respect and inclusion.

## THE STROLL OF POETS THEN

During its first 15 years, The Stroll of Poets festival was held on the first Sunday of October. Any Stroll member who signed up by the end of July could perform at the festival. There were generally between one and two hundred poets taking part, in groups of four or five poets, in one of a dozen or so venues in Old Strathcona over the Sunday afternoon — five-minute performances.

Before the readings began, however, there was an annual brunch with a special guest reader to inspire and prime the poets prior to Stroll. This would bring out about a hundred people.

Each scheduled performer at the October festival could submit a poem on the day of the festival for publication in the Stroll of Poets Anthology, and could also enter that submission in a blind contest. The submissions were then judged by a jury of high-profile community members from different walks of life. The judges selected 44 of their favorite poems, and the authors of these poems were then asked to take part in the 12 Days of Poetry, the second annual festival.

Initially a holiday-season series, The 12 Days of Poetry evolved to take place in the middle weeks of January. Four poets performed at each of the first eleven Days of Poetry — ten-minute performances. The audience at each of these shows would then cast ballots on whom they would like to see move on to the next step and perform at the 12th Day of the festival, the grand finale. The eleven poets chosen by audience demand from the first eleven Days give five-minute performances on the 12th Day. The 12th Day was a ticketed event, and it often included such features as Robbie Burns Day celebrations and a wrap-up dance.

## **A Glance Back at the Birth of the Stroll**

As we prepared for another annual Stroll of Poets, a several years ago, I thought back to the first Stroll, to why and how it began; and wondered whether it was still meeting our needs. My needs as I saw them back then likely were similar to those of all poets.

After several years away from poetry, I had begun composing poems again in the late eighties. I looked, too, for outlets: especially public readings. There were a few readings here and there around town. Mostly they were “juried” by what appeared to be very narrow cliques. Getting a spot on the roster of readers seemed a matter of currying friendship and favour with a host. Many other poets appeared to be in the same position as I was: outsiders.

The format of a short series of readings organized by a group of women was the most promising and fairest I had seen: two invited guest poets, augmented by an open stage to a reasonable maximum number. With a break, the entire program reached to two hours. I was grateful to Ruth Donovan, Alice Major, Rhona McAdam and the others for that very pleasant and well-promoted mini-series; so was disappointed to learn that they were not going to continue it. To keep it alive, I contacted them and found myself reconvening an organizing committee. This time it comprised Alice, myself, Diane Zinyk and Glen Kirkland. We held a season of a half- dozen monthly readings in the above format. In general we felt quite good about the series, but the stagnant attendance figures made us wonder whether there might not be something lacking in our format or approach. In June of 1991, that series also came to a close.

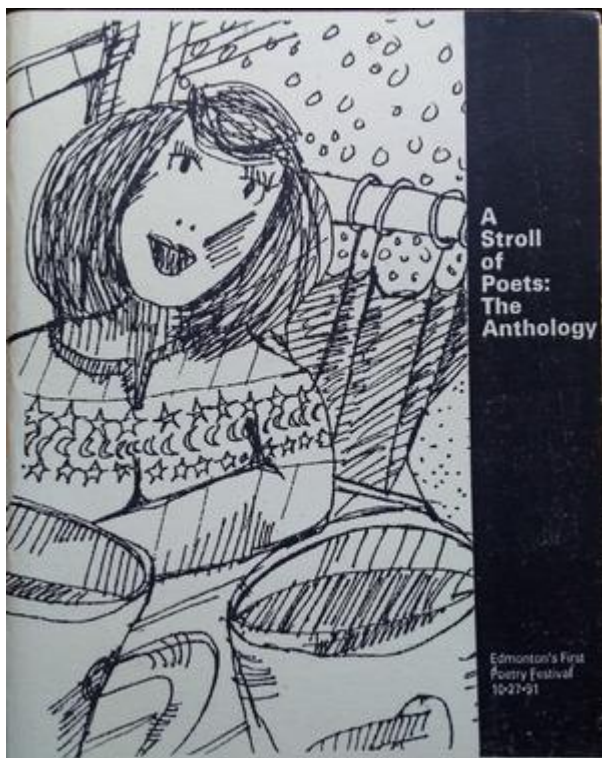
Must poetry accept its status of pauper of the arts? What could be done to give it the weight of public acceptance, and hence an ever-expanding importance? The Fringe brought new audiences to live theatre, and the Gallery Walk drew new patrons into art galleries. But how to do the same for poetry . . . ? I mulled over these questions when chatting with Lori White, proprietor of Afterwords, a second-hand bookshop on Whyte Avenue (long since gone). But of course: there are several venues on Whyte which could lend themselves well to poetry readings: bookshops and bistros. Do it all on the same day: it becomes an ‘event’ then. Lori was intrigued and volunteered her shop. I went around the corner to speak to Margo Cross of Athabasca Books, and she began her long enthusiasm for our event. Down the street to Bjarne’s Books. Bjarne Tokrud liked the idea. At that point I knew it could fly. I called Ivan Sundal, and his enthusiasm told me that poets would go for it. He and I convened a meeting on August 23, 1991.

Glen Kirkland, Alice Major, Bert Almon, Ruth Donovan, Olga Costopoulos, Anna Marie Sewell,

Ken Wilson, Ivan and I and met and set a plan for the first Stroll of Poets exactly two months later. We all worked the phones, contacting every poet we knew.

It was all organized on a shoestring. Most publicity was free; though we charged each venue ten dollars, which gave us a promotional budget of \$110.

Twenty-seven days before the event, we held a general meeting of all the poets, the agenda including the question of whether to form a society. Near the end of the meeting someone asked if an anthology could issue from the event. Logic dictated that there was no time to consider it, but we were poets. Again, several people spread the word by phone to ask poets each to submit a poem to the publication. Lori's bookstore was the "post office" where poems were to be dropped off and picked up. The \$690 printing cost was, I think, fronted



by Tom Trofimuk; and Toni Ford designed the now-familiar page layout of our anthology. With 165 copies printed by Stroll day and another fifty available later, he recouped his money. Most copies were sold to Stroll members themselves, of course. While we have a few copies of subsequent anthologies still available, there are none to be had of this inaugural issue; rare and, within a tiny market, likely quite valuable. Stroll day, October 27, brought a gratifying turnout to hear the sixty or seventy poets despite the early cold snap. The first "No Bards Barred Bar" took place after the event, and all of us felt quite drunk on poetic euphoria even before entering the bar.

In November we applied to register as a society, and spent one Sunday filing slowly through Athabasca Books where a cable TV cameraman recorded dozens of poets, each reciting for the broadcast audiences. Members even reported seeing some clips in subsequent months.

Then came the first “Twelve Days of Poetry,” many of them grouped around themes. Fortunately, our list of poets extended no further than could be accommodated through the twelve days; with the finale just like the other evenings, only bigger. Five or six poets performed; culminating in Mary Howes reciting to the musical background of Guerrilla Welfare. We all got drunk that night too.

Our first Annual General Meeting took place in March, 1992. Ivan Sundal was duly nominated and elected President. Plans were set, structures formed, and we were away.



But growth brings new problems. If we were to fulfill our democratic, inclusive goals, we were going to have to accommodate many more poets than before. Formulas for reading schedules were debated, and the issue resolved. One problem threatened to halt the anthology publication, however; if we were to print an anthology with each poet again given a full page for poem and bio, a new physical format was required. We couldn't saddle staple the binding by volunteer labour, as we had in the first year. The larger size called for "perfect" binding, which meant a much higher cost of publication. How to raise the funds for it? With a mixture of excitement and dread, Ivan and I and a few others launched ourselves into organizing a small fundraiser. "Poets of the Four Quarters" took place on the summer solstice, during which four favourite poets recited in the four corners of the 33rd floor observation level of the AGT Tower. The event was catered with wine and a variety of munchies from our gracious restaurateur supporters, and our poets recited their last lines as the sun set at 10:06 p.m. The profit came to about \$350: not huge, but enough to leverage the credit of our printer of several years, Ali of Scholastic Printing. We had also received our first grant from the Alberta Foundation of the Arts, to be used for other expenses of our season.

The expanding roster of poets created challenges in organizing the Twelve Days of Poetry, as well. The 1992 event was created around eleven poets chosen from the anthology by the producers of CBC Radio literary programming in Edmonton. These eleven poets were then each asked to invite three others to recite on the same evening. The CBD producers attended all eleven events, selected their favourites, and recorded these at the 12th Day of Poetry. Controversy erupted amongst the poets who had not been included, for they felt that you had to be someone's friend to be selected. The point was valid, so the executive came up with the plan that we all know by now: blind judging by jurors drawn from the community, and so on. In retrospect we have often marvelled at how the Stroll year had become a cohesive whole. The all-inclusive Stroll fed poems to the Anthology, the Anthology fed the roster into the 12 Days of Poetry, and the first eleven days created, by audience vote, the shortlist for the finale.

The weekly series arose at some point to fill a further need for poets to recite. Again, we struggled with the issue of democratic selection, and filled the first weekly series roster through a kind of hockey draft. Each weekly series is constructed in a different way, however, reflecting the creativity of the year's executive.



And the writers' circles continue as well. I wish more members took advantage of them. My own experience with them was positive, for we all tried to extend the democratic and peer-support ethic into the round- table discussion.

I wish all Stroll members and executive members much fertility in their imaginations as they work on the Stroll. To new members: put your own stamp on it; just be prepared to adapt to the demands of the membership; for events organized with the same individuals at centre- stage and as arbiters tend to frustrate the poetry community. Better to have a rotating roster of hosts and styles running each reading. - Doug Elves, 2005

## **Help celebrate the Stroll's 30th Anniversary!**





It's been 30 years since the first Stroll in September 2021—what a great opportunity for us to celebrate our remarkable poetry community. During this coming year, we want to recognize the contributions of members past and present, and imagine the future. It's also an opportunity to let more people know about the Stroll.

So we are looking for ideas. How would *you* like to celebrate the Stroll's anniversary? You're invited to submit a proposal that could be implemented during our 30<sup>th</sup> year. Perhaps you'd like to put together a chapbook of "30" poems or do a special project to profile our poetic community. Maybe you can think of new ways we can use technology. Maybe there's a special event, workshop or mentoring idea you'd like to coordinate. (Imagine an actual Stroll afternoon again!)

We hope for great ideas, and know we can't do everything. But we're hoping to pick at least three that are feasible. Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:


- how they meet the goals for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary,
- logistical considerations,
- feasibility
- interest to members and the poetry community

The Stroll's Board will assist with promotion and advertising, liaising between activity/event leaders and interested members. Unfortunately the Stroll can't contribute funds, but will offer in-kind support where possible.

Deadline to submit a proposal is **September 27, 2021**, so you have all summer to polish your proposal and talk to others who might be interested in helping to make it happen. If you have any questions, please contact Shirley Serviss at [sserviss@telus.net](mailto:sserviss@telus.net)

**Submit proposals through THIS FORM online.**  
Posted on [September 9, 2021](#) Author [Chaucer](#)

## Stroll of Poets Facebook Group Page



As I look into my eyes  
I see the truth and a thousand lies.  
I place a finger on my mouth  
To keep the words from falling out.  
The broken nail I can't disguise  
Or kiss the tears from my eyes.  
The mirror breaks with shattered glass  
Like broken bones on my path.  
Mend my nail, dismiss the lies  
Save my soul from its demise.

[www.strollofpoets.com](http://www.strollofpoets.com)  
[mather@writersguild.ab.](mailto:mather@writersguild.ab)  
Find us on Facebook

### About

The Stroll of Poets is a welcoming community of poets. Launched in 1991, we have been a friendly and inviting group for poets of all levels.

The Haven Reading Series is our main event where poetry is shared in front of a supportive audience. The series runs from September to March on Monday evenings at the Upper Crust Café and some Sunday afternoons at Audreys Books. Each Haven features scheduled readers as well as an open mic.

Each year we publish our annual Stroll Anthology that includes poems submitted by members that have read at a Haven.

We also host Fresh Verse, an event dedicated to poets under 25, offer writing workshops and are involved in the Edmonton Poetry Festival.

You can learn more at [strollofpoets.com](http://strollofpoets.com) and follow us on Twitter @strollofpoets.

We hope to see and hear you soon!

Public

Anyone can see who's in the group and what they post.

Visible

Anyone can find this group.

General

## Max Vandersteen Admin



· **September 6 at 6:44 PM** ·

Stroll Haven Launch - Wordy Thirty!

It's the launch of the Stroll's 30th year—three decades of sharing community and words. So we're kicking it off with Wordy Thirty, an all-open-mic Haven at Home on Monday, September 13 at 7 pm.

The 30th anniversary is celebrated with pearls. So open your inner oyster and bring us those glossy lines, well-strung stanzas, pearls of wisdom. What does 30 suggest to you? A deep dive? A treasure chest of memory? Pushing 30? September with its 30 days? Why not string 30 shining syllables or 30 iridescent words into a poem?

We're looking forward to a wordy, wonderful evening!

Wordy Thirty

Haven From Home – Monday, September 13, 2021

Featured Readers: Open mic sign up (on Zoom)

Mic Host: Naomi McIlwraith

Time: 7:00PM Edmonton (Our virtual doors open at 6:30 pm)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82291364741...>

Meeting ID: 822 9136 4741

Passcode: 1234

(This is a recurring meeting link all season)

Dial by your location

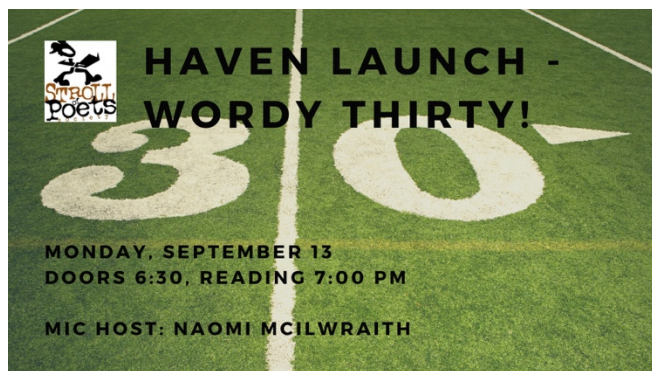
+1 778 907 2071 Canada

+1 204 272 7920 Canada

Meeting ID: 822 9136 4741

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbgdzWP0iQ>

Please note that this invitation is intended for Stroll members only. If you know anyone who would like to join our online reading nights and is not a Stroll member please direct them to [strollquestions@gmail.com](mailto:strollquestions@gmail.com).



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**Like**  
**Comment**  
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## Stroll of Poets Twitter Account

Reason 34: Park poetry

*There are a couple things all parks have in common: fresh air, green grass, tall trees and chirping birds. There's sunshine for the most part, too, unless the park is in Vancouver. (Kidding, B.C. We tease because we love.)*

Author of the article:

**Jennifer Fong**

Publishing date:

Feb 26, 2010 • February 27, 2010 • 2 minute read

Here in Edmonton, we have over 460 parks, each with its own selling points. Some, like Hawrelak and Rundle, have ponds. Others, like Coronation and Victoria, have baseball diamonds. Then there's Louise McKinney Riverfront Park, which has something on all the rest: poetry.

Poems for a Small Park is a public art installation that features 40 poems by the City of Edmonton's former poet laureate, E.D. Blodgett. The verses, written in English, French, Cree, Chinese, and Ukrainian, are etched onto stainless steel rings around the lamp posts that line World Walk and River Promenade.

Each of the poems is just a couple of lines long, but they're linguistic snapshots of the very spots in which they're found.

Blodgett captures the simple beauty of the trees, the grass and the breaking ice on the North Saskatchewan in the spring, putting into words the exact scenes you're strolling past. They add a subtle lyricism to your walk, and at every turn you're offered something new to reflect on.

Louise McKinney's got rhyme — and for all their tennis courts and soccer fields, few parks in the world can boast the same.

[www.twitter.com/jenfong](http://www.twitter.com/jenfong)

## The Stroll of Poets on YouTube

[PoetsHaven - YouTube](#)

In 2011 the Blinks event was published on YouTube in 3 parts



[Stroll of Poets "Great Blinks of Fire", Part 1](#)



[Stroll of Poets "Great Blinks of Fire" , Part 2](#)



[Stroll of Poets "Great Blinks of Fire", Part 3](#)

In 2015 several Stroll poets were recorded while reading poetry and published on YouTube:



[Naomi McIlwraith, Edmonton poet](#)



[Wendy Joy, Edmonton poet](#)



[Rusti Leahy, Edmonton poet](#)





[Vanda Ulici Petrut, Edmonton poet](#)



[Marguerite Redshaw, Edmonton poet](#)



[Kathy Fisher, Edmonton poet](#)



[Gary Garrison, Edmonton Poet](#)

## **National Museum of Canada Archives**

### **Warning: Poetry Can Kill You**

Poetry submitted by members of The Stroll of Poets was submitted and included in these archives for six consecutive years, from October, 1995 until 2001. There are almost 200 pages of poetry from numerous members of the Stroll of Poets. The link to this website of archives is:

<https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/202/300/e-poem/index.html>