

August 1994

The Stroll Scroll

Published by the Stroll of Poets Society, 10523 100 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0A8

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Can it be the end of July already? Only two more months -- a mere eight weeks -- until 105 intrepid poets-of-the-mouth take to the streets of Old Strathcona. I know the day will be great. What I'm not sure of is that we'll get all the work done before the day.

This is my first year on the Board, and my first year as President. In the last five months, I've learned three important things: 1) That wherever the President goes, people appear to hand her \$5 bills and a poem. I'm talking the mall, restaurants, cafes, the street. I find this rather strange, but I think I'm getting used to it. 2) That the Stroll of Poets Society puts on a remarkable number of performances, programs and events: the Stroll, the 12 Days of Poetry, the poetry LIVE! reading series, various workshops, an "explorations" program and an extensive outreach program. This year, we're adding an appearance at the Fringe and a launch for our anthology.

Which brings me to the third thing: 3) It takes a tremendous amount of planning, coordinating and plain old roll-up-your-sleeves hard work to bring everything off. So how about helping out? More volunteers are always needed. There's a call for volunteers later in the newsletter. Please read it and think about what you can contribute.

You may notice something a little different in this newsletter. We've made some space for discussion. We hope to be able to go on featuring some discussion in each newsletter. Most of us have opinions about funding, censorship, aesthetics, the philosophy of the Stroll Society, our responsibilities as writers etc. If there is anyone out there who would like to write a response to this issue's article (which is in favor of pursuing and accepting corporate sponsorship), we'll publish it. Likewise, if you have something else you'd like to say, we'll publish that as well. Call me (Candace) for details about deadlines and length etc. (436-0829).

-- Candace Bamber

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP: BENEFICIAL OR EVIL?

By Ivan Sundal

Each Stroll of Poets Board of Directors since 1991 has debated the ethics of corporate sponsorship. I was, until this year, the chair of these necessary, important, lively debates. Each board has had a majority in favour of seeking assistance from the realm of corporate business. Never unanimity, however. The issue remains alive, and merits more discussion. So here's my opinion.

The Stroll of Poets Society (a non-profit corporation, legally founded to make us eligible for grants) has no political objectives. It has no mandate or directives from its membership to take up any political course of action. We are not a political organization; we are a poetry society. At the founding meeting of this society in the fall of 1991, an important goal was defined and placed into our incorporation papers: to increase the acceptance of poetry. As a society, we do have an objective: to put on the show. We have an obligation to help poetry grow and develop in Edmonton.

Precisely nothing of political consequence would be gained if our poetry society boycotted corporate sponsorship in principle and in total. It would be a feeble, unfocused, ineffective political action -- like staging a protest march on Jasper Avenue at 4 a.m.

"Perhaps nurturing poetry is the only truly radical 'political' act that this poetry society is capable of."

Our sacrifice would have absolutely no effect on the behaviour of large corporations. They wouldn't even be aware of it. Those living in poverty and misery would not be aided or comforted in any way by our protest. Our protest would go unknown. The only real effect would be that we wouldn't have as much potential to pursue our legitimate goal of helping the cause of poetry. Perhaps nurturing poetry is the only truly radical "political" act that this poetry society is capable of.

Our current board has elected to seek sponsorship from any corporations that two-thirds of the board approve of. Nobody on the board will tolerate any crass influences from sponsors (such as calling our festival the "Pepsi Strola"). We want and need some financial assistance, and in return for this, we offer sponsors the opportunity to have their logos appear in the appropriate places along with the logos of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and Canada Council Explorations. That's all there is to it. That's the deal.

I think the board's position is reasonable, except that I believe that the two-thirds majority clause sets a higher standard than probably any of us are willing to live by personally.

If we were to boycott totally the spoils of big business in our personal lives, we would have to be hermits. We'd have to exclude ourselves from Canadian society. The situation is similar

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Corporate Sponsorship: Beneficial or Evil?

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for our poetry society. Such a boycott would hobble our means to bring poetry and audience together. It would be a way of excluding our poetry from the community.

If we are going to work on promoting poetry in the general community, we cannot do it by erecting impossible barriers between \$\$ and our poetry events and works -- festivals, anthologies, reading series, workshops for members and the public, and ventures with artists from other media. These are worthwhile projects that bring poetry and people together, and they require \$\$.

I think the choice is this: Boycott the money and accomplish nothing, except stunting the life of poetry in Edmonton. Or take the money and use it to nurture the growth and development of poetry in our city.

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Jannie Edwards has volunteered to coordinate the community jurors that select the poets for the 12 Days. Last year's jury included a writer, a composer, an actress, a city councillor, a bookseller, a journalist, a library executive, the Old Strathcona foundation president and a romantic languages professor.

Candace Bamber will be this year's host co-ordinator. Hosts liaise with venue management on Stroll day, introduce the poets, and hand out anthologies.

The posts of scheduler and venues co-ordinator have been taken up by Ken Wilson. This year we have some new venues as well as some old favourites -- and yes, we are trying to ensure that the cappuccino machines are shut off during the readings.

Preparing and publishing the anthology is one of our larger undertakings. Thanks to Katherine McKee for taking on the job of editor-in-chief for this year's anthology.

Ivan Sundal, Ken Wilson and Candace Bamber have decided to try a team approach to the Stroll of Poets festival coordinator job. Ivan did it alone last year, and seems to have recovered his breath, but it's a lot of work for one person.

Volunteers Needed:

- Poet/hosts are needed for the Stroll. Call Candace 436-0829.
 - Poetroopers are needed to deliver propaganda to bookstores, bistro, libraries etc. and to put up posters. Poetroopers receive free tickets to the brunch. Call Ivan 421-0227.
 - Envelope stuffers are always needed. This is one of the more fun jobs -- sit and yack with other poets while stuffing. Call Ivan 421-0227.
 - General -- there are lots of one-day jobs that go with events. Call Ken for more info 431-0052.
 - Brunch Co-ordinator -- you get to be in charge of the food. What could be better? Call Candace 436-0829.
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PERFORM YOUR POETRY AT THE FRINGE

Here's something new: A few weeks ago, the Stroll Society was contacted by Read Canada, a non-profit group that runs literacy programs. These are mostly children's programs, but they are getting more and more into adult literacy programs as well. Read Canada has a tent at the Fringe, where they do story-telling and reading during the day and nothing during the evening.

They have very generously offered the Stroll Society the use of their tent to do poetry readings for three nights during the Fringe. This is a marvellous opportu-

nity to raise the profile of the society. Because of Read Canada's focus on children and youth, they have asked for children's/youth poetry (perhaps including children/youth performers) for the early evening, and a more adult focus later on.

So, we are looking for poets to perform at the Fringe. Interested? Call Paul Pearson 438-3992 (after 6 p.m., or leave a message)

VOICE WORKSHOP WITH WALTER KAASA

Once again this year the Strollers will have a chance to hone their performance skills before facing the public in October. The Voice Workshop will be led by Edmonton's golden-voiced Walter Kaasa, and judging by the comments made by last year's participants, it is not an event to be missed. The workshop will begin on the evening of Friday, September 23, and continue through Saturday, September 24th. The cost is \$5, and it's first come first served, so send in your registration as soon as possible.

Voice Workshop Registration:

I wish to register for Walter Kaasa's workshop September 23 and 24.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

I have enclosed my cheque for \$5.00.

MAKE YOUR CHEQUE PAYABLE TO:

THE STROLL OF POETS SOCIETY, 10523-100 AVE., EDMONTON, AB, T5J 0A8

WANTED:

Stroll of Poets Outreach Coordinator

The Stroll of Poets Outreach Program is an opportunity for pairs of poets to undertake a worthwhile service to the community and promote the Stroll by giving writing/performance workshops to various groups.

As the co-ordinator, you will:

- prepare an information/promotion/registration leaflet
- advertise for outreachers
- coordinate and chair a committee to select outreachers
- organize a preparation workshop for outreachers
- keep track of all outreach workshops
- organize and chair a debriefing session
- write a concluding report

To apply: submit a one page letter stating why you want the job, why you think you can do it, and your vision or goals for the outreach program to Doug Elves, Chair, Co-ordinator Selection Sub-committee, c/o The Stroll of Poets Society, Wordworks, 10523 - 100 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5J 0A8 by August 15, 1994

- honorarium available (pending funding approval)

WANTED:

12 Days of Poetry Coordinator

The 12 Days of Poetry is a three week reading series over the Christmas season featuring the Stroll poets chosen from the anthology by the 12 Days community jury. The series culminates with the 12th Day, featuring performances by the 12th Day Poets, chosen from the poets of the previous 11 Days, the Explorations Poets and a party/dance.

As the co-ordinator you will:

- notify the 44 poets
- find venues and hosts for each reading
- schedule the readings
- arrange publicity and advertising
- arrange the 12th Day festivities including venue, host, music, bar, ticket sales, inviting poets
- delegate jobs to volunteers
- organize and chair a debriefing session
- write a concluding report

To apply: submit a one page letter stating why you want the job, why you think you can do it, and your vision or goals for this year's 12 Days of Poetry to Doug Elves, Chair, Co-ordinator Selection Sub-committee, c/o The Stroll of Poets Society, Wordworks, 10523 - 100 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5J 0A8 by August 15, 1994

- honorarium available (pending funding approval)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Poetry LIVE!

The poetry LIVE! reading series at Latte Caffe is on vacation for the summer. Poetry LIVE! will return the second week of September.

Dear Stroll Members,

On July 23, I'm going to Japan to teach English for one year. Having been involved with the Stroll of Poets since its inception, I want to stay in touch.

What we have here in Edmonton is exciting and inspiring. I'd like to share it with people in Japan. So, poets, consider this your invitation to send news and views (& poems too?) around the world.

My address will be:

10-2 Chohata
Kawaito-cho
Ayabe-shi
Kyoto-tu
Japan T622

Please, Stroll friends and friends-to-be, feel free to write! I do not promise any particular response, but there may be aspiring writers there who would like to correspond with Canadians. As well, they may already have similar festivals there. If not, who knows what we could inspire?

All the best,
Anna Marie Sewell

PROOFREAD YOUR OWN ANTHOLOGY SUBMISSION

Saturday, August 20
WordWorks Boardroom
10523 100 Avenue
2 - 4 pm

This is an opportunity to double check the copy of your poem that will be in the Stroll Anthology '94. It will have been carefully proof-read already, but you may wish to look at it before it goes to print.

It is also a chance to have a coffee and chat with some other Stroll members, board members and volunteers.

Please note: You will not be able to substitute a poem or make editorial changes at this point. It is simply a chance to double-check our double-checking!