

The Stroll Scroll

a message from the prez

Hi everybody! I just got a new membership list from Ivan today. Already we have 95 members and 72 people signed up to read in the Stroll. That's many more than this time last year. The message here is "send in your forms (or call Ivan) if you want to stroll!" Remember there are only a limited number of places.

The Stroll of Poets Board is remarkable to me in that almost every motion is passed unanimously (or close to). There is often a lot of discussion before we reach consensus, but the unanimous vote always makes me feel like we've made the right decision. Occasionally, though, we come across issues where we just can't agree.

We've evolved a process for dealing with these thorny issues, however. Once it's clear that we aren't going to be able to decide on way or another, and the discussion starts repeating itself, we usually decide to table the matter until it can go in the newsletter, and the membership can have an opportunity to offer opinions. If no one cares enough to phone me, we vote, and that's that. If there is a large response from the members, we try to work out a compromise based on the opinions of the members. For example, I got a lot of calls about the open stage issue. Based on everybody's opinions, we decided to make it shorter, set it up so we get new readers each week, and next series, schedule one or two nights where open stage is the main show.

This week, we have a new issue. A suggestion has been made that we begin some kind of "poet laureate" program. In my own mind, I've been calling this person the "Big Bard" and visualize him or her dressed in yellow feathers - the idea being that this is supposed to be fun, not a snob-fest. In any case, there are supporters and detractors for this idea, which is at the moment very general. You'll hear from the "supporters and detractors" later in the newsletter.



Once you've considered their views, please call and let me know what you think we should do.

And while you're making your list of things you're going to tell me about, I'd appreciate it if you would revisit the corporate sponsorship issue. Government funding gets sparser every year, and we need to find ways to continue funding our programs. Do you think we should pursue corporate sponsors, boycott them, or limit our sponsors to certain types of companies?

Finally, there's a small change in format in this newsletter. The phone numbers where you can reach people mentioned in the newsletter are grouped together in the "Stroll of Poets Society" sidebar on the back of the front page. That's all for now.

Candace ♦

writer's circles

About half the registrants for this year's Stroll indicated they would be interested in participating in a writer's circle. A writer's circle is a group of poets that meets at a regular time and place to share their work, and to improve their poetry based on the comments and critiques of the other members. Writer's circles are a means for meeting the Society's second goal: to improve the quality of the poetry offered in our community.

Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck and Jacques Benoit are in the process of putting together a writer's circle project. Tentatively, the project will involve a large circle in a central location. Members can split into appropriately sized groups to have their readings, or perhaps, once people have connected, they will want to splinter off into their own group at a different time and place. The Stroll's role in this is to provide a central meeting place that will allow members to meet, socialize, and benefit from each other's knowledge and experience. Our hope is that the circle will serve as a jumping-off point, and evolve into several circles that meet the needs of a wide variety of members.

There will be more about this in the next newsletter. If you have any ideas, or you know of a place that would make a perfect meeting place, please call either Sandra or Jacques. ♦

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The Stroll of Poets Society

The Stroll of Poets Society is a registered non-profit corporation. It was founded in 1991, following the first Stroll of Poets festival. Our main goal is raise the stature of poetry in the community. To that end, we stage two major poetry events in Edmonton each year - the Stroll of Poets Festival in the fall, and the 12 Days of Poetry in December and January. We also organize reading series and workshops throughout the year, and publish an anthology of members' poetry.

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| | |
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The Stroll Scroll

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SUBMISSIONS: The Scroll prints unsolicited announcements and events, reviews, letters to the editor, poems (members only), opinion pieces, writing tips and profiles of poetry societies. Send submissions to:

Newsletter Submissions
Candace Bamber
The Stroll of Poets Society
Box 35082, Oliver Postal Outlet
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world wide **web!** the information superhighway

Thanks to the generosity of the folks at CCINet, the Stroll of Poets Society is going on-line with our own WWW Home Page. A home page is a space, accessible by internet (and Edmonton Freenet) where we can post anything we want about ourselves, and where anyone in the world can look to find out about us. For the initial page, we intend to post:

- An introduction to the Stroll of Poets Society - who we are and what we do
- An event schedule
- Some poems - some very short poems as audio files, and longer poems as text files
- An opportunity to order Stroll stuff like anthologies, calendars and the newsletter.
- Links to other sites that would interest poets and other poetry societies.

I hope everybody will contribute 2 or 3 short to medium length poems for the page. These will be posted on the 'net in random order in strict rotation for one month at a time to showcase our Edmonton talent to the world. Although this is a voluntary program, I want to give space to as many of our poets as possible. I'm hoping everybody will participate.

To submit poems:

1. TYPE poems on new paper (not on the back of something). The poems will be digitized by a scanner with OCR software. For accurate digitization, the copy must be clear. Handwritten submissions **will not** be considered.

NOTE: If you use a computer, use 14 pt type and a clear, *serif* font (like Times, Palatino etc). Please avoid sanserif fonts like Helvetica, Geneva, etc)

NOTE: If you have access to email, send the poems in the body of the message, rather than as attachments.

2. Include your name and phone number on each page.
3. Mail them to the Stroll office, "ATTN: Candace", email them, or

give them to me if you see me at a reading or something.

We will also be recording some very short poems (less than 10 lines) to use as audio files. If you are interested in recording a short poem, please let me know by phone or email. ♦

candace needs **help** why does that come as **no surprise**?

I could use some help answering email and other correspondence inspired by my "Network Project" (see later in the newsletter). I expect even more email once we get our web page up and running.

My ideal "aide" would have an email address, and be able to write friendly letters on my and the society's behalf. I could also use some help composing some form letters and press releases. No more than an hour or two a week (but not every week) would be required.

If you're interested in giving me a hand, please let me know. ♦

new look **news**

You may have noticed that the newsletter has been gradually changing in content, design and size. I have one more change still to come - I would like to print some poems in each issue. I hope that people will either give me permission to print one of their WWW poems (in addition to putting them on the WWW), or that they will simply send me some poems. The selection criteria are simple - I will print one poem from each member who wishes it, again, in strict rotation in the order I receive them. Send short or medium length poems. If you send more than one poem, I will print the one I like best. Please type submissions and send to the Stroll office, "ATTN: Candace."

This issue is a prototype for future newsletters. Please let me know what you think. Also, if you have any ideas for anything else I should include, or if you would like to be a regular contributor, I'd like to hear from you. I'd like to see the newsletter as a bit more of a communal effort. I need someone to write reviews and someone to write one member profile per issue. If you have an idea for your own column, that would be OK too.

Finally, if you take photos at Stroll events, please get in touch with me. I'd like to run pictures occasionally. ♦

the way i **write** by ken wilson

Good poetry is not written. It is rewritten and rewritten. This is how I rewrite poetry. First of all, I never throw a revision away. Instead, I keep them all in the same scribble and number them. Normally, revision #6 is better than revision #2, but not always. Sometimes I go down a certain path only to discover that it leads to a dead end. In that case, I can go back to revision #2 and move in a different direction. A line or word that I took out in revision #2 may find its way back into the poem in revision #7.

Before I write another revision, I go back and read all the revisions I've done before. I'm always amazed by the growth that has taken place. It also gives me some idea about where the poem is going. It has taught me that change for the sake of change is not worthwhile. If I've made ten revisions on a poem and the tenth is no better than the first, I've missed the point. The whole point of revising a poem is to make it better. Sometimes this will mean adding to it. Other times it will mean taking away from it. But I always need to ask these questions; "Is it better?" and "What can I do to make it better?" By keeping every revision and reading them carefully these questions are much easier to answer.

the way i write will feature the philosophy or methods of one Stroll poet each issue.

who's **who** anyway?

This issue's "who's who anyway", is devoted to welcoming new members. If you're a new member that isn't mentioned, please don't feel snubbed - it's only that I phoned people during the May long weekend, and many phones went unanswered. We'll catch you next time.

Welcome to **Lee Elliot**, Public Affair Director at Concordia College. Lee has been taking Bert Almon's poetry class at U of A this year. She's

published a short story, but is now working more on poems.

I believe **Amir Ghahary** is our youngest member, something of an achievement this year, when many of our new members are under 18. Along with Ken Wilson, I had the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of Amir's family and look at Amir's poems this winter. I'm looking forward to hearing him read at the Stroll.

Kim Sedgewick, at 14, has been writing poetry for 2 or 3 years. Welcome Kim.

If we gave out an award for the person who found us the most new members this year, Bert Almon would be in the running. Welcome to **Kim Solga**, who also took Bert's poetry class at U of A this year. Kim is entering her 4th year in the English programme. We won't see Kim this summer, as she is working in England until September - fortunately, she'll be back in time to stroll.

Jocelyne Verret joined us after the Stroll last year, and has jumped in with a vengeance as a member of this year's board of directors. She writes poetry in both French and English and will be launching her new book, *Gens d'ici, gens d'ailleurs/People from Here and Afar* at the end of June.

Newly arrived from Winnipeg, **Jacqueline Williams** has made herself known to many of us as a reader on the Poetry Night in Canada open stage. Another open stage reader, **Royce Andy Hatton**, has also joined us. Welcome Jacqueline and Royce.

Erin Wingert is a student at George H. Primeau Junior High in Morinville. She's been writing poems for about two and a half years, and has published poems in Primeau student newspaper.

I would like to call **Hazel Birt** and **Lauria Slipchuk** to say hello, but we don't have complete records on them. Please write or phone and let us know

a phone number where we get in touch.

"Welcome Backs" are in order for **Candas Jane Dorsey** and **Carol Brodeur Hornby**. Both were Stroll members in 1993, but took 1994 off. Glad to have you back. ♦

world figure **skating**

championships

The Stroll of Poets Society has been invited to participate in the city-wide "Feel the Spirit" Festival to be held in conjunction with the 1996 World Figure Skating Championships, held in Edmonton. We have accepted the invitation and our looking forward to promoting our city and ourselves to an international audience.

But the big question remains. What shall we do? What kind of event or program of events can we put on to really show off what we do and how we do it?

We need two things, really, some ideas and some people. Jocelyne Verret will be coordinating our effort (as well as our correspondence with the Canadian Figure Skating Association and the Feel the Spirit Board) and she'll definitely need some help. If you have any thoughts, please give her a call. ♦

the **big** bard

The "big bard" program is a proposal, brought to the board of directors, that, in its simplest terms, outlines the selection of a poet from our membership once a year to take on a "poet laureate-type" role. Some board members are wildly enthusiastic about the idea, others are passionately against it. Despite being unable to come to a consensus, all board members have expressed a willingness to be led by the will of the membership. So please think about

this and call me (Candace) or any other board member and express your opinion.

The problem the board is having with this issue is philosophical, rather than practical. I'll stay out of it, and simply give the "for" and "against" arguments/reasons. Everyone can first decide whether they believe the arguments, then judge the question for themselves. I have a thought or two which I'll offer at the end.

FOR:

- increase in Stroll's visibility in the community
- increase in funding potential
- the competition will provide impetus for poets to improve the quality of their work
- it will be fun
- give individual poets a chance to improve their stature in the community
- competition is neither good nor bad - it is simply inevitable. Every time we put pen to paper we are competing for an audience. If we're always competing anyway, where's the harm in saying so?

AGAINST:

- will encourage mediocrity
- we are poets, not competitors
- no selection process can possibly be fair
- will cause bad feelings and division in our community
- goes against the democratic spirit of our society

My thoughts: I guess to me, the issue isn't really whether or not we chose a "Big Bard". I think the project could work if we entered into it with a positive attitude. In fact, although the proposal is not mine, I christened it the "Big Bard" project to evoke the image of Big Bird. This is supposed to be something fun, not, as I said in my earlier message, a snob-fest. But

truthfully, I'm not sure if it's possible.

I think the issue is actually something a little more fundamental. What is our purpose as a society? We have one stated goal: to improve the stature of poetry in the community. We also have a second, implied goal: to improve the quality of the poetry available to the community.

So we have underpinning our goals two concepts: *democracy* and *quality*. The Big Bard project is an attempt to get at quality, but it does so at the expense of democracy. When we choose out poets by whatever means and for whatever reason (the 12 Days comes to mind) we lose the democratic "anyone may participate." Yet, in theory, we are choosing out the poets whose poetry has "quality", (this year and according to the tastes of the jury, anyway).

On the other hand, I'm sure there are some who would argue that quality declines "when anyone may participate." If that's the case, then quality is sacrificed for democracy.

My question then, is not really, "should we go ahead with the Big Bard Project", it's more basic: *should be focusing on democracy or quality? Is it possible to encourage both? If so, how?*

I think in theory, it's desirable to have both quality and democracy. But I admit, I'm at a bit of a loss. Thoughts?

networkproject

I've been spending some of my time establishing relationships with different poetry groups in Canada and the US, and have even been corresponding with groups and individuals in the UK and Australia. The purpose of this work is two-fold:

- simply to expand our contact with other poets, purely for the fun of it. I've been exchanging society

newsletters as well as personal mail, and will, from time to time, reprint articles of interest to our membership. The "making connections" column introduces one of these poetry groups to our membership each issue.

- ultimately, I'd like to set-up a "visiting poets" network, where poets who are traveling can contact poets wherever they are going, and arrange to take part in an established reading series as a guest poet. Many of the people I have connected with have extended the invitation: "tell your poets that if they intend to be in --- to give me a call, and we'll try to fit them into our reading series." Many have also said, "we can't fund a special trip, but if you're going to be here anyway..." I'm not just talking about us going places or hosting visitors. Eventually, I'd like to see enough groups connected to each other that if someone were going from Dallas to New Brunswick, the Dallas poet could drum up a reading in New Brunswick.

So far, the response from other groups has been excellent. I get the distinct feeling that the desire to make contact is not reserved to me. I think, once I get my responses and newsletters organized, that contact with the outside world can only benefit the Stroll's members.

I'm talking to these groups primarily by email (some by regular post). If you know of a poetry or writing group that I can contact, please let me know.

making connections

The New Orleans Poetry Forum

The New Orleans Poetry Forum, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1971 to provide a structure for organized readings and workshops. Poets meet weekly in a pleasant atmosphere to critique works presented for the purpose of

improving the writing skills of the presenters.

From its inception, the Forum has sponsored public readings, guest teaching in local schools, and poetry workshops in prisons. For many years the Forum sponsored the publication of the New Laurel review, underwritten by foundation and government grants. The New Orleans Poetry Forum receives and administers grant funds for its activities, and the activities of individual poets.

Meetings are open to the public, and guest presenters are welcome. The meetings generally average ten to fifteen participants, with a core of regulars. A format is followed which assures support for what is good in each poem, as well as suggestions for improvement. In many cases it is possible to trace a poet's developing skill from works presented over time. The group is varied in age ranges, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and styles of writing and experience level of participants. This diversity provides a continuing liveliness and energy in each workshop session.

Many current and past participants are published poets and experienced readers at universities and coffeehouses worldwide. One member, Yosef Komunakaa, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry for 1994. Members have won other distinguished prizes and have taken advanced degrees in creative writing at local and national universities.

Beginning in 1995, The New Orleans Poetry Forum will publish a monthly electronic magazine, Desire Street, for distribution on the Internet and computer bulletin Boards. It is believed that Desire Street will be the first e-zine published by an established group of poets. Our cyberspace chapbook contains poems that have been presented at the weekly workshop meetings, and submitted by members for publication. Publication is in both message and file formats in various locations in cyberspace.

in cyberspace.

Workshops are held every Wednesday from 8:00 pm until 10:30 pm at the Broadmoor Branch of the New Orleans Public Library, 4300 Broad, at Napoleon. Annual Dues of \$10.00 include admission to Forum events and a one-year subscription to the Forum newsletter, Lend Us An Ear. To present, contact us for details and

bring 15 copies of your poem to the workshop.

The mailing address is:

Andrea S. Gereighty, President
New Orleans Poetry Forum
257 Bonnabel Boulevard
Metairie, Louisiana, 70005

a book **review** by Josh LeBeau **Cat in the Hat Funnies**

THE CAT IN THE HAT, BY DR. SEUSS, 61 PAGES. BEGINNER BOOKS, \$3.95

The Cat in the Hat is a hard-hitting novel of prose and poetry in which the author re-examines the dynamic rhyming schemes and bold imagery of some of his earlier works, most notably *Green Eggs and Ham*, *If I Ran the Zoo*, and *Why Can't I Shower With Mommy?* In this novel, Theodore Geisel, writing under the pseudonym Dr. Seuss, pays homage to the great Dr. Sigmund Freud in a nightmarish fantasy of a renegade feline helping two young children understand their own frustrated sexuality.

The story opens with two youngsters, a brother and sister, abandoned by their mother, staring mournfully through the window of their single-family dwelling. In the foreground, a large tree/phallic symbol dances wildly in the wind, taunting the children and encouraging them to succumb to the sexual yearnings they undoubtedly feel for each other. Even to the most unlearned reader, the blatant references to the incestuous relationship the two share set the tone for Seuss' probing examination of the satisfaction of primitive needs. The Cat proceeds to charm the wary youths into engaging in what he so innocently refers to as "tricks." At this point, the fish, an obvious Christ figure who represents the prevailing Christian morality, attempts to warn the children, and thus, in effect, warns all of humanity of the dangers associated with the unleashing of the primal urges. In response to this, the Cat balances the aquatic naysayer on the end of his umbrella, essentially saying, "Down with morality; down with God!"

After poohpooing the righteous rantings of the waterlogged Christ figure, the Cat begins to juggle several icons of Western culture,

most notably two books, representing the Old and New Testaments, and a saucer of lactal fluid, an ironic reference to maternal loss the two children experienced when their mother abandoned them "for the afternoon." Our heroic Id adds to this bold gesture a rake and a toy man, and thus completes the Oedipal triangle.

Later in the novel, Seuss introduces the proverbial Pandora's box, a large red crate out of which the Id releases Thing One, or Freud's concept of Ego, the division of the psyche that serves as the conscious mediator between the person and reality, and Thing Two, the Superego which functions to reward and punish through a system of moral attitudes, conscience, and guilt. Referring to this box, the Cat says, "Now look at this trick. Take a look!" In this, Dr. Seuss uses the children as a brilliant metaphor for the reader, and asks the reader to examine his own inner self.

The children, unable to control the Id, Ego, and Superego, allow these creatures to run free and mess up the house, or more symbolically, control their lives. This rampage continues until the fish, or Christ symbol, warns that the mother is returning to reinstate the Oedipal triangle that existed before her abandonment of the children. At this point, Seuss introduces a many-armed cleaning device, representing the psychoanalytic couch, which puts the two youngsters' lives back in order.

With powerful simplicity, clarity, and drama, Seuss reduces Freud's concepts on the dynamics of the human psyche to an easily understood gesture. Dr. Seuss' poetry and choice of words is equally impressive and serves as a splendid counterpart to his bold symbolism. In all, his style is quick and fluid, making *The Cat in the Hat* impossible to put down. While the novel is 61 pages in length, and one can read it in five minutes or less, it is not until after multiple readings that the genius of this modern master becomes apparent. ♦

poetry **night** in canada

The successful Poetry Night in Canada reading series at Café Soliel will draw to a close in June. Here are the line ups for the last month of readings:

May 30

Jannie Edwards
Alice Major
Russell Johnston
Kath McLean

June 6

Gail Sobat
Virginia Gillese
Christine Weisenthal
Susan Walsh

June 13

John Broomfield
Natasha Nunn
Philip Jagger
Francois Wiley

members **not**
registered
for **festival 95**

The following list contains the names of everybody who IS registered as a member of the society, but who has NOT signed up for the festival. If you have not already called Ivan to let him know one way or the other, please do so.

Yars Balan
Paul Benza
Hazel Birt
Nigel Darbasie
Candas Jane Dorsey
Lee Elliot
Faye Francis
Barbara Fraser
Amir Ghahary
Myriam Hempstock
Cornelia Hoogland

Jean Jorgensen
Elizabeth Kirillo
Rose Mahdiuk
Margaret Marriott
Anita C. Meek
Brenda Meier
Louis Munan
Micheal Penny
Helene Riedyk
Moris Salegio
Jeanette Schouls

Yars Slavutych
Lauria Slipchuk
Sandy Sprinkle

Dress Code (Clothing): the Inside Story

The Fiddlehead's 1995 Writing Contest

Poems and short stories in which an item of clothing, or clothes generally play an important part.

\$300 for best poem (+ publication)

\$300 for best short story
(+ publication)

Submissions: 10 pages maximum
Please type name and address on a separate sheet.

Deadline: December 15, 1995

Judgment: Blind, by writers with impeccable sartorial style (including underwear and toques)

Entry Fee: \$18, includes a year's subscription to *The Fiddlehead*.

Send entry, fee and SASE to:
Dress Code
The Fiddlehead
UNB PO Box 4400
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5A3

The Stroll of Poets Society
congratulates

Jocelyne Verret

on the launch of her new book

*Gens d'ici gens d'ailleurs /
People from Here and Afar*

at Orlando Books

10640 Whyte Ave

on

June 23, 1995 at 7:30 pm

also featuring

Linda Ould, autoharp

Join us for the birth of

Our Fathers

*Poetry and Prose by daughters and sons
from the prairies*

Edited and Selected by

Ivan Sundal

Thursday, June 1, 1995

7:30 pm

Orlando Books Ltd
10640 Whyte Avenue
Edmonton

*published by Rowan Books
an imprint of The Books Collective*

hey guys and GALS!
there's a *poetry workshop* at
the sugarbowl CAFE (on 9th
street by the highlevel
bridge) on **saturday, may 27th**,
from **2 til 6** in the
AFTERNOON ♥ bring a
POEM or **two**, a musician if you
have one, or **instruments** if
you **play** your
SELF ♦ there will
be a *poetry* sweatshop
later. call tracy at
478-7997 for **details**
!