

Stroll of Poets Society  
Box 35082, Oliver P.O.  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2R8  
<http://www.ccinet.ab.ca/stroll/>



JANUARY  
2002



### President's Message

January 2002

What a year! The full spectrum of dark, light and all the gossamer threads of strange hues between. At the beginning of a whole new year, I am doing what most people do. Reflecting. Looking back before looking ahead. Stuffing finely sliced cubes of cheddar cheese up my nose when I think no one can see me.

Or maybe it's just me. Or...

Anyway, this is the start of 2002 and I believe it's important to take stock of 2001... and I will do so in a fashion as linear as I can muster. For me, 2001 started with **12 Days of Poetry**. I can't speak for the others (Mary T. McDonald, Gail Sobat, Thomas Trofimuk) but being one of the four favorites chosen to perform on the 12<sup>th</sup> Night at the Sidetrack Café was like surfing naked on national television and knowing your grandmother is at home watching.

Or something like that.

**Poetry Tuesdays** (February – April at La Boheme and the Backroom Vodka Bar) lay there like a limp squid on an anonymous beach. The readings were great but attendance was lower than the year before.

Another **Raving Poets summer open stage series** at the Backroom Vodka Bar (every Tuesday, July and August) was a hit, with a consistently packed house and, like, 400 readers a night! (Joking... but there were a lot!) Having Frame 30 Productions' hour-long TV documentary of the previous summer's series (*Backroom Beat*) air nationally on The Bravo! Network (July 5<sup>th</sup>) certainly helped to spread the word.

The **Stroll 2001 Weekend Walkabout** (Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> at a number of different venues) was well attended and creatively stimulating. The mandate of the "festival" was to marry poetry with other arts such as dance and drama and... well, art. The whole thing culminated in our usual Sunday Stroll, with nearly 150 of our members taking their words to Whyte Avenue. A triumphant day.

The Raving Poets Band's **Peace Talks** series at the Backroom Vodka Bar was not a sanctioned Stroll event, simply a heartfelt response to a post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world. Still, there were many Stroll members who attended, reading passionately. Media attention was strong, with coverage from the Edmonton Journal, A Channel, SEE Magazine, CBC Radio and CJSR-FM 88.5.

The **Stroll of Poets 2001 Anthology** – lovingly edited by Rusti Leahy and jam-packed with inspiring poems – is now available at bookstores. It will also be available during the **12 Days of Poetry** readings throughout January. If you're in the book – and you're in it if you read during the Sunday Stroll on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> – your copy is FREE. If you're not in it or you want to buy an extra copy for a loved one, fork over a small 10 bucks for a major helping of "the Word."

Have fun during the 12 Days this month. Read your hearts out. Listen and be wowed. And try not to think about surfing naked with your grandmother watching when you're one of the audience favorites chosen to read on the 12<sup>th</sup> Night!

Sincerely,  
Mark Kozub (The Alberta Beatnik)  
[abeatnik@telusplanet.net](mailto:abeatnik@telusplanet.net)

*P.S. Thanks to the Board of 2001 (Thomas, Cindy Lou, Gord, Phil, John, Helen and Christina). You guys have been great!*

### Mark Your Calendar



**\*\* Saturday, March 23, 2002 \*\***

### Stroll of Poets AGM

The Stroll of Poets Society Annual General Meeting is booked for Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. in the Heritage Room of Edmonton's City Hall. To ensure the meeting runs smoothly and addresses the most important concerns of the Society's members, the Board requests that you submit any potential "new business" or "policy and program" suggestions for open discussion at the AGM in advance.

Under the **New Business** category would be any motions of a substantial nature affecting the structure or finances of the Stroll of Poets Society. **Policy and Program** items are any topics for open discussion.

Email your discussion items to Stroll President, Mark Kozub before March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002 at [abeatnik@telusplanet.net](mailto:abeatnik@telusplanet.net)

The AGM is your chance to raise issues, concerns, and brave new ideas that may influence the coming year. See you there!

### In This Issue:

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## **12 Days of Poetry Reading Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Readers</b>
January 4	David Huggett	Pierrette Requirer, Gerald St. Maur, Joyce Harries, Richard Davies
January 5	The Alberta Beatnik	Timothy P. Cusack, M. Jennie Frost, Christine Downing, Audrey Shield
January 6	Myrna Garanis	Tom Emmens, Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck, Kathie Sutherland, Louis Munan
January 10	Dean McKenzie	Anna Mioduchowska, Gordon McRae, Adam Dickinson, Andrew Thompson
January 11	Leo Campos	Catherine McLaughlin, Shirley Serviss, Madella A. Runka, Nancy Mackenzie
January 12	John Chalmers	Trevor Dekort, Doug Elves, Paul McLaughlin, Ruth Galloway
January 13	Olga Costopoulos	Marilyn Dumont, Sherrilyn Jahrig, Fay Francis, Pamela Young
January 17	Bert Almon	Darlene Spong Henderson, Sue Marxheimer, John Leppard, Becky Garber-Conrad
January 18	Heather Marshall	Jocko, Jacqueline Bell, Diane Buchanan, Julie Robinson
January 19	Thomas Trofimuk	Rusti Lehay, Naomi McIlwraith, Linda Jennings, Terence Harding
January 20	David Huggett	Anna Marie Sewell, Kathy Fisher, Mark Kozub, Rebecca Schellenberg

**All readings except the 12<sup>th</sup> Day are at Grounds for Coffee, 10247 97 Street at 7:00 p.m. sharp.  
12<sup>th</sup> Day is January 26<sup>th</sup> at the Winspear 9720 102 Avenue. Doors at 7:00 p.m.**

### **12 Days Of Poetry: A Re-Vamping**

At last year's Annual General Meeting, Stroll of Poets Society members expressed concerns about 12 Days of Poetry, the biggest, best attended, and most popular poetry series in Edmonton. One of the biggest issues, every year, is the lack of a level playing field. From night to night during the first 11 days of readings, audiences vary greatly in size. This gives poets performing on well-attended nights an advantage in a competitive series in which, in the past, the four poets with the most votes go on to perform during the 12<sup>th</sup> Night.

This year, the Stroll of Poets Society Board has come up with a solution we hope our members will enjoy, one that eliminates the important of audience size. It also gives *more* 12 Days participants the chance to read... and in front of a bigger audience.

As in the past, audience members vote for their two favorite readers of the night. This year, however, one audience favorite from each of the first 11 Nights of Poetry will be going to the SHOW, the 12th Night on January 26, 2002 at the Winspear Centre Rehearsal Room (a fantastic space once used by The Rolling Stones)!

Votes from each of the 11 nights will be gathered and placed in sealed envelopes, which will in turn be counted by our auditors and announced Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup>.

Add a wild-card reader, drawn from those in attendance at 12th night who were not in the 12 Days, and there will be 12 featured readers on stage. Think of this year's 12<sup>th</sup> Night as an exciting experiment. Moreover, think of it as what it is: a true celebration of the word.



## News and Views

### **Everything you wanted to know about the 12 Days of Poetry selection process but were afraid to ask!**

By Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck

I had the opportunity to be the 12 Days Jury Coordinator this year. I have been part of the Stroll for 10 years, and I always wondered how the 12 Days selection process worked. It was as if the process was a sacred secret.

Throughout the years, some of my poems were chosen, some weren't, and some of them landed me on the by-stander list, where I was called to fill in when a scheduled reader was unable to attend. From the perspective of knowing how it feels to be in and to be out, one thing is for certain: I am not alone on the path. For all of us, this selection process is not about us personally, nor is it about our whole poem portfolio – it's about one of the poems we chose to submit in the hope that it would be selected, giving us the chance to read at the 12 Days of Poetry festival.

And that's what it is really all about, in a democratic way, we all have the chance to be selected. First of all, our names are not included with our submission, thus allowing all of us equal opportunity. Secondly, the jurors are instructed to pick their favorite poem, and that is not so much about what might be the best literary-correct poem, as it is about what the majority of jurors liked best. Thirdly, there are usually 9 jurors chosen. If you get 9 votes you're automatically in, if you get 8 or 7, you are definitely in, if you get 6 or 5 you are mostly likely in, and if you get 4 you have a chance to get in. A wide range of possibilities exist, and yes, luck is one of those possibilities, just as it is in all aspects of our lives.

However, we are all human, and poets at that, making us even more sensitive to, uh, that word as we tend to perceive it: Rejection! Here are 5 ways to battle the discouragement blues:

1. Remember you are unique – your poems are like no others – cherish the fact. Don't waste your creative energy – write a new poem.
2. Think how great it is that Daisy, or Violet, Hickory, or Cedar were able to get in this year, and remember, if your poem was chosen again, they may not have received the opportunity.
3. Be gracious when you do get in – think of your fellow poets' sensitivity. Be glad of your success, but also of others' success. Remember, there is a place for each of us, at one time or another, in the wide spectrum of the poetry world.
4. If you're just stuck in the let-down blues and really just want to vent – imagine black balloons of frustration floating upwards – visualize throwing pins, or swords, or whatever at them. And remember that it really is hard to complain on this earth when we can begin each day and end it with color. That as long as we rise within sunrises and end the day within sunsets, many possibilities open up to us.
5. The sure way out of discouragement is to encourage another. As wise words of wisdom have reminded us for hundreds of years:

"As you refresh others – you too will be refreshed. – Proverbs 11:25. Go out and enjoy the 12 Day readings – be part of the excitement and poetic bond within our community.

And here's another tip: if you're not happy with the jurors chosen – send your ideas for selection to the board. Each year it takes 25+ juror prospects to get our quota of 9. Some of them decline because they do not think they are qualified enough to judge, others are just too busy. So, if you think it's an easy task, including photocopying 9 copies of the 125 plus poems, contacting the jurors, getting the poems to and from the jurors, and all the other details in-between – take on the

challenge – put your name down to be the next 12 Days Juror Coordinator. You will find out that the selection process is a fair game, and not a sacred secret at all.

### **Peace Talks Spread Seeds Nationally**

CBC's Commentary Program aired Sandra Mooney-Ellerbeck's poem: *Safety Net Superstition* on Monday December 10. It was read at the Backroom Vodka Bar during the Peace Talk Series.

### **Peace Talks Require Sensitivity**

By Pamela Young

I have been a member of the Stroll of Poets since 1995. I have always enjoyed my involvement with the society since it connected me with writers who were serious about their craft and willing to help me progress in mine. Therefore, in November and December, I was shocked that a Stroll member had written and the Board had endorsed the release of messages that announced to our membership and the media "The conflict in Afghanistan is nearly over. We made it happen!" "Poets end conflict in Afghanistan and drop their pants."

I realize that the messages were designed to attract media attention and, apparently, they have. But I wondered how Afghani people with relatives and friends still trapped inside their country would respond to the word choice in these announcements. Since I teach at NorQuest College, where approximately twenty Afghani students attend classes, I took the e-mails to school and asked Mohammed, Laila and Fariba, recent Afghani immigrants, to comment on them.

All three students said that the conflict in Afghanistan is "just beginning."

The country is made up of many nationalities that not only speak different official languages, but also have diverse interpretations of Islam. As a result, there are concerns that all factions are not equally represented in the new government. Also, the recently appointed officials face the task of "rebuilding the country from the ground up." Laila pointed out that Afghanistan is currently without an economy. People with education or money left the country years ago. Those who remain are often illiterate and, because they have no way of making a living, are abandoning or selling their children. They have little access to food, doctors, hospitals or medical supplies. Women still face unsafe conditions. "We are safe, we have peace," said Fariba, "but when we hear what is going on in our country, we feel very sad."

I felt sad too as I listened past the students' information about Afghanistan to their personal stories. Leila was in grade 12 when the government closed down the schools in 1993. She left the country for Russia where she faced discrimination because of her nationality. Fariba stayed in Afghanistan for the rest of 1993. During one particularly severe rocket attack, she hid in the basement of her family home with her mother and sister, "waiting to die." Mohammed was in his second year of a medical degree when the Taliban seized control. He was detained and only escaped to India when his father offered a substantial amount of American money to a Taliban official. Some of Mohammed's medical school colleagues may not have been as fortunate. He talked of the woman who had the highest marks in his class for five consecutive semesters. "I don't know what happened to her," he said.

In a December letter to the Stroll membership, Mark Kozub said "there are far greater sins" than "crafting a media release that duly got attention for a truly positive event." While I have no doubt that the Peace Talks poetry nights were positive, I hope that in the future, media releases will be written with the high degree of sensitivity and political awareness I have come to associate with the Stroll of Poets.

PEACE



## Workshops and Courses

### *Inventing the Truth* Shirley Serviss

Discover why "story truth" is sometimes truer than "happening truth." Learn how to turn historical events or personal history into a variety of literary forms. Discover ways to disguise real people, real places and events and discuss the ethics and legalities involved. Play with ways to focus your writing. This weekend workshop will give you permission to invent the "truths" your piece of writing requires.

MacEwan Writing Works  
City Centre Campus  
Sat. & Sun. March 16-17  
9:30-4:00  
\$98  
Call 497-5346 to register

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### *Gina Varty*

*Courses at*  
*At Metro Community College*  
*(call 428-1112 to register):*

**Discovering Your Creative Soul.** (at Harry Ainley Jan 29, Feb 5, 12, 7-9 p.m.). Through writing, drawing, movement and drama games you will be lead through a creative process to connect with your inner voice of wisdom.

**Reading to an Audience.** (at Harry Ainley Feb 27 & Mar 6, 7-9 p.m.). Come explore the keys to lifting words off the printed page. Be more effectively understood through learning techniques to dramatically enhance your delivery.

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### *Workshop Announcements* *Philip Jagger*

*To register, call Philip at 437-5014*  
*or email [avanteagarden@rocketmail.com](mailto:avanteagarden@rocketmail.com)*

**Creating Chapbooks and Self Publishing**  
Saturday Feb 23, 11:00 a.m. Cost is \$10.00  
Registration Deadline is January 31, 2002

This is a hands-on workshop for making your own books. Presenters are: Philip Jagger on the use of Pagemaker 6.5 to make books, Lynnete Bondachuck of the ESPA on small press and the use of a photocopier, Mark Kozub on spoken word CDs and Myrna Garanis on small press publishing.

### **Poetic observation: the fine line between poetry and art**

Saturday, March 9, 1:00 p.m. Cost is \$10.00  
Location: Muttart Conservatory  
Registration Deadline is February 28, 2002

This workshop features Gary Lee, Anna Marie Sewell, Christina Towers and Ruth Anne Donovan. Ruth Anne Donovan and Christina Towers will be giving hands on demonstrations on observations and drawing and art techniques, and how they relate to poetry. Garry Lee and Anna Marie Sewell will be talking on how nature affects the poetic form and how to transform the beauty of the environment into the beauty of the word. If you are interested please call Philip at 437-5014 or email [avanteagarden@rocketmail.com](mailto:avanteagarden@rocketmail.com).

## Hot Off the Presses

### Announcing...

**Gail Sidonie Sobat's**  
**first novel**  
**Inqamald**

just released by Spotted Cow Press  
available now in bookstores and at  
[www.spottedcowpress.ab.ca](http://www.spottedcowpress.ab.ca)

### Grain Magazine

is delighted to announce the creation of

### the Anne Szumigalski Editor's Prize

Your help is required in establishing a poetry prize in honour of this late Canadian poet, who was also Grain's first poetry editor from 1973-1980, Anne Szumigalski. This prize will commemorate her memory and carry on the tradition of the literary generosity she distributed during informal workshop sessions at her home in Saskatoon. Her books include *Voice*, a collaboration with artist Elyse St. George which won the Governor General's Award in 1995, a memoir and a play, "Z," which won the Saskatchewan Book of the Year Award in 1995.

This prize will be an annual award of \$500 for the best poem or group of poems published each year in Grain.

When you donate to Grain's Third Annual *Write Way Up* Donation Campaign, your gift will benefit writers by: 1) enabling us to maintain our contributors' fees at their current higher level, and 2) fund the Anne Szumigalski Editor's Prize. Your donation qualifies for an income tax-deductible receipt.

Glen Sorestad, Saskatchewan's Poet Laureate explains that Anne Szumigalski "influenced many poets across the country through her poetry, her articulate passion for the craft and through her encouragement of young poets."

Your donation, large or small, will help Grain establish this important new prize and keep our contributors' fees among the highest in the country.

Donations may be sent to Grain Magazine, Box 1154, Regina, SK S4P 3B4.

### Attention Strollers!!

This newsletter is a great place to make yourself known.

Please send us your news, reviews, your publications, brag items, pictures, or other items of interest to our membership.



## Strollers in the News

### A Rousing Finish To Peace Talks

December 11 wrapped up the "Peace Talks" open mike nights at the Backroom Vodka Bar with a 7th held-over extra night of poetry and music. Thanks to Glen at the Backroom Vodka Bar for providing the venue, and thanks to the great musicians of the Raving Poets Band for all their fine backup music and hard work -- Mark Kozub, Thomas Trofimuk, Randy Edwards, Mysterio, and Rob Hardy -- with guest appearances by Rebecca Schellenberg and Gordon McRae.

Thanks also to everyone who dropped their pants -- and other clothing -- into the donation boxes for the Bissell Centre. On Dec. 12 the second donation of food and clothing was turned over to the Centre. Thanks also to everyone who donated to the cash bucket, which the Vodka Bar kept out for a week to accept donations. On Dec. 11, in addition to the food and clothing, \$140.07 was given to the Centre.

We have made a difference. A terrific response to the "Peace Talks" by regular, seasoned, and new readers has helped to make the world a better place. Donations by Strollers and friends have helped to make someone else's Christmas a little merrier.

Even if you missed some or all of the seven nights of "Peace Talks", you can still catch the highlights, or if you were there, you can relive the moments. These great nights were recorded and CDs of the events were produced -- one each week! If you would like any or all of them for the low price of only \$10 each, phone Mark Kozub at 490-1414 or email him at [abeatnik@telusplanet.net](mailto:abeatnik@telusplanet.net). If you were a reader, this is your chance to get a copy of your work for posterity!

## Contests and Publications

### New Poetry Magazine Looking for Submissions

**Lynda@Thought Wave Publishing**

Lynda Flagler, Editor, of this new magazine is requesting submissions. Interested poets can e-mail submissions to the editor at [Lynda@can-pass.com](mailto:Lynda@can-pass.com) or send regular mail to 34 Sussex Street South, Lindsay, K9V 3E8, Ontario, Canada. We will respond to all submissions.

### Take the Poetry Route

*(A collaboration of Writers Guild of Alberta, Edmonton Transit and Canada Council for the Arts)*

#### Submission Guidelines

- Max 10 lines (complete poem or stand alone portion)
- Two poems on 8.5 x 11 paper
- Name, address, telephone not on poems, but on separate sheet with name, phone, title of poem and any previous publication info (if published)
- No return of submissions
- Deadline Feb. 15, 2001

Submit to: Take the Poetry Route, Writers Guild of Alberta  
11759 Groat Road, Edmonton, AB T6M 3K3

19 December 2001

### For Immediate Release

#### Poet's Corner And New Muse Awards Add Cash Prize

Joe Blades, publisher of Broken Jaw Press, is pleased to announce the addition of a \$500 cash prize for the winners the New Muse Award.

The annual New Muse Award is given to the author of the book-length fiction manuscript judged to be the best entry. The award consists of a \$500 cash prize plus trade publication of the winning manuscript by Fredericton, N.B., publisher Broken Jaw Press. Past recipients of the New Muse Award include Christina Kilbourne, Uma Parameswaran and Shannon Friesen. The entry deadline for the next New Muse Award is 30 January 2002. Full guidelines are posted at <http://www.brokenjaw.com/newmuse.htm>. Guidelines may also be received by sending a SASE to: New Muse Award, Box 596 Stn A, Fredericton NB E3B 5A6.

**Broken Jaw Press gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and New Brunswick's Arts Development Branch for its publishing programme.**

### September 11th Anthology

With the introduction of anti-terrorist bill C-36 we see the possible curtailment of some of our basic rights and freedoms. Such measures could discourage people from expressing ideas that are not in line with those of our politicians. As any poet would agree, the expression of thoughts, ideas and feelings is not only the great equilibrator of the soul, but the breeding ground for new, original and creative solutions to problems.

I was so impressed by the poetry I heard at the Stroll and the Peace Talks and the wide array of opinions expressed that I thought they should be assembled in one collection. Also, as the political rhetoric becomes polarized and redundant, I feel we need to hear more ideas that deal with the complexity of problems in our world today.

I have already spoken to Rowan Books about this project and they seem interested. Also, they suggested other publishers who might be interested. However, we need to get a book proposal together, establish submission guidelines and do much of the planning, preparation and editing ourselves. If anyone is interested in being on the editorial committee for this project (maximum: five members) please contact me and we will get the ball rolling. As for you poets who have written or are writing about Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> and its aftermath, get those poems polished until they shine.

Christina Tower (Debra Shymoniak in real life) Phone: (780) 425-4343, cell(780) 720-0327. Email [ctower@interbaun.com](mailto:ctower@interbaun.com)



## Fame and Fortune

### ***Anthology Sales***

Thanks go to our new coordinator of anthology sales, Ken Sutton, who took on the job in October, in time to be ready for distribution of the 2001 Stroll Anthology. Ken is working with a number of bookstores to make our Anthology available for purchase. Anyone wishing to get extra copies of the current issue or some of the back issues should call Ken at 482-7654 or e-mail him at [sutton@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca](mailto:sutton@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca).

Also, during the Twelve Nights of Poetry in January, you will be able to pick up copies of the Anthology and our new Stroll Chapbook each night. The Anthology sells for \$10 and has 141 poems by members. The Chapbook is \$5, featuring poems by members and a great interview with Glen Kirkland. Read the interview and you'll be writing better poetry!

The Anthology may be purchased in Edmonton at the following locations:

Orlandos Books at 10123 Whyte Avenue  
Greenwoods Books at 10355 Whyte Avenue  
Athabasca Books just off Whyte Avenue & 105 Street  
Hub Cigar at 10345 Whyte Avenue  
Alhambra Books on at 10309 Whyte Avenue

Second Fiddle 10918 – 88 Ave next to High Level Diner  
Latitude 53 Art Gallery at 10137 - 104 Street  
Art & Design @ the U of A  
Main Bookstore @ Faculty of Extension, U of A

### ***If you are seeking fame...***

Rusti Lehay is announcing her retirement as email coordinator. As of the March 2002, Stroll of Poets AGM, she is handing in her mouse and email keyboard. She has been sending out email announcements for 3+ years for events and poetry related news that just couldn't wait for the quarterly newsletters. Before she began this listserve for the Stroll of Poets, members had to wait for the newsletters (4 x year) or remember to check the website for current events and often missed out on readings or events. If someone is on email almost daily, or at least twice a week, wants fame (without fortune), this is the volunteer position for you. Fame is what you get!

It's been great, folks. Thanks for all your appreciation. You made it all worthwhile.

### ***Robert Kroetsch***

#### ***Reads from The Hornbooks of Rita K***

Edmonton (Audreys Books) January 31st, 2002  
Calgary (Pages on Kensington) February 7th, 2002  
7:30 p.m.

Poet Rita Kleinhardt disappeared from the Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt on June 26, 1992 at age fifty-five. She has not been seen alive since. All that remains of Rita are mounds of poems: finished, unfinished, and unfinishable. But where has Rita gone? Written with wit and playfulness, *The Hornbooks of Rita K* is a welcome new work from one of Canada's leading writers.

...this is a playful, maddening, skeptical, artfully empty, fulfilling maze of words and ideas that only Robert Kroetsch could construct. Harry Vandervlist Quill & Quire (starred review)

For more information, please contact:  
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The University of Alberta Press  
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(t) 780.492.7493  
(e) [jocelyn.stevens@ualberta.ca](mailto:jocelyn.stevens@ualberta.ca)