Skagit River Poetry Festival

MAY 15-18, 2014 Historic Downtown La Conner, Washington
WELCOME
to the eighth biennial
Skagit River Poetry Festival

OUR MISSION
To support lifelong literacy and cultural diversity
through the writing, reading, performing, and teaching of poetry
in Northwest Washington schools and communities.

The Skagit River Poetry Project is a work of love founded in 1998
and sponsored by eight local school districts. A volunteer committee
composed of teachers, school administrators and community members
works together throughout the year to coordinate the project.

The program provides immersion in poetry for teachers,
allowing them to set the stage for poets to visit their classrooms
and helping them prepare students for attendance
at the biennial Skagit River Poetry Festival.

The festival is the capstone public event
to the yearlong appearances by poets in classrooms
throughout Skagit, Island, San Juan and Whatcom counties
and features Northwest, national and internationally known poets.

We are delighted you are here to
celebrate the sharing of poetry with us.

COVER: “Samish Bay Choir” serigraph by F.L. Decker

Bright Scarlet
by Derrick Jackson

Bright scarlet is a special color
Scarlet is as bright
as fire burning
in long, dead grass.
A stop sign is scarlet.
Scarlet is a row of roses in the field.
Scarlet is the heart of love.
Bright scarlet!
PERFORMANCE LOCATIONS

1. Museum of Northwest Art
2. The Loft
3. Maple Hall / Maple Center
4. La Conner Seafood & Prime Rib
5. Methodist Church – Upper
6. Garden Club
7. Gaches Mansion Quilt and Textiles Museum
8. Country Inn Two Forks Room
9. Country Inn Bird’s Nest Room
10. Oddfellows
11. Elementary School

For your consideration…

• There is a hill to climb to reach the Methodist Church, Oddfellows Hall and the Garden Club. The shortest way to get up the hill is to take the steps from South First Street (see map). You’ll find a sturdy bench midway for you to catch your breath, as there are 67 steps. The longer, more gradual ascent would be to use South Second Street on either side of town.

• Tickets & will-call tickets:
  Thursday      Maple center – 4:00 - 6:00 pm
  La Conner Elementary School Gym – 6:30 - 7:30 pm
  Friday        Maple center – 1:00 - 9:30 pm
  Saturday      Maple center – 7:00 am - 8:00 pm

• Please see accompanying map for site performance locations and parking spaces. Wheelchair accessible sites and handicapped parking areas are marked with a star on the map.

• Please do not use flash photography during the sessions.

• All events start on time. Capacities of the sites vary. **We encourage you to have a second choice should you find your first selection full.** There are 30 minutes between sessions. Allow enough time to get to the next event.

• As a consideration to others, please silence all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices.

• MoNA is a no-food and beverage facility. Please finish your lattes prior to attending sessions.

• For Lost and Found and other emergencies contact a Festival Board member at Maple Hall or call 360-840-1452.
Thursday May 15

Poets’ Table Dinner Kick Off Fund Raiser
Maple Hall • 5:30 - 7:30 pm
Join Festival Poets for a sumptuous Northwest dinner featuring local wines and food. Chat with Festival poets at tables set up to promote conversation.

An Evening with Sherman Alexie & Tom Robbins
La Conner Elementary School Gym • 8:00 - 9:30 pm
After dinner we will enjoy an evening of quick wit and inspiring insights with Sherman Alexie and Tom Robbins. Moderator ML Lyke

Friday May 16

Session 1 9:00 - 9:55 am HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY
Poetry Sampler Poets introduce their poetry in readings

Session 2 10:10 - 11:05 am HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY
Family Matters
Nature All Around: Paradise Lost?
Good Poems for Hard Times
Word on the Street
Technology & the Future of Poetry
Creating Poems: Stop Look and Listen
Poetry & Animals
The Mess of Love
Lyrics & Licks
Poetry & Publishing
Poetry & Performance

30 minute Lunch Break and Open Mic

Session 3 11:44 am - 12:35 pm HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY
Going Public with Private Feelings
Craft & Poetry
Bridging Cultures
Beauty and the Violence in the Arts
Slam
Unplugged: Writing While Walking your Dog
Good Grief: Poetry of Grief and Healing
Carhartt Poetry: Poems & Work
Writing to Change the World
Bring a Poem; Consult a Poet
The Earth as Muse

Session 4 12:55 - 1:50 pm HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY
Poetry Sampler Poets introduce their poetry in readings

Dinner Break

Session 5 7:30 - 9:30 pm OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Evening Readings Kwame Dawes, Robert Hass & the Jefferson Rose Band with visual artist Fritha Strand
PHYLIS L. ENNES POETRY CONTEST
judged by Ellen Bass

In Remembrance 1928–2013

As many of you know, long-time educator Phyllis Luvera Ennes believed the arts are essential to a complete education and fought hard to keep them in the curriculum. She directed the Anacortes School District Cultural Education Program from 1974-1992. Additionally, she sat on numerous boards, including the Anacortes Public Library Foundation, Pop ’n’ Art, the Anacortes Arts and Crafts Foundation and the Washington Alliance for Arts Education.

A talented writer, she was a member of the Skagit Valley College Senior English class at the Anacortes Senior Center. She wrote poetry, prose, and short stories. As family historian, she collected and published family stories, a cookbook of her mother’s recipes, and was nearing completion on her father’s memoir.

She was a parent, friend, teacher, scholar, facilitator, lifelong learner and mentor. Her influence has been boundless. In her honor and memory, the Skagit River Poetry Foundation invited poems in all creative forms for the first biennial poetry contest.

Two-hundred-twenty-one poems were submitted to honor the memory of Phyllis. Please join contest winners Patrick Lane, Tina Schumann and Jeannine Gailey at their reading on Saturday.
FRIDAY SESSIONS

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LUNCH: 11:05-11:35 am OPEN MIC AT MAPLE HALL
DINNER: 5:00 - 7:00 pm OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
FESTIVAL WORKSHOPS  Sunday, May 18

Session 1 9:00 am - 12 noon

Ekphrastic Poetry – Jane Alynn
In this workshop *ekphrasis*, a verbal response to the visual or sculptural arts, will provide the spark for good seeing and good poetry, moving beyond description by imaginatively entering into the artwork to create an embodied response. Participants will discuss examples of *ekphrastic* poems, do in-class writing, and visit a museum to respond in language to works of art seen from a stance of entering its frame and space and becoming its textures, gestures, moods, and memories. Please bring writing materials to the workshop.

Singular Obsessions: Invigorating our writing – Oliver de la Paz
Through a series of prompts, exercises, and examples I will demonstrate ways writers can reinvigorate their own writing by looking closer at singular obsessions. We will find the secret door to our experience and open it. Perhaps it’s a door you’ve passed everyday and were afraid to open. Perhaps it’s an empty storefront you’ve seen as you’ve driven through your neighborhood. Yet you’ve imagined yourself opening that door. You’ve seen yourself taking a step and walking in and that image of yourself in relation to that door has obsessed you. We will not be looking for ways out, but for ways in.

Finishing Your Poem: When is it complete? – Blas Falconer
During a recent Q&A, Brazilian poet Adélia Prado was asked how she knows when her poems are finished. Her answer (translated from Portuguese) was: “When they are better than I am.” A poem often falls short because the poet decides that the poem is finished before it is fully realized. In this workshop, we will look closely at poems that resist the easy out and challenge our own expectations as readers. Through this lens, we will then turn to some of your own poems to consider if, why, and how you closed the poem too soon, and how you might push yourself to the very edge of your own limitations. Open to students of all levels. Please bring a copy of one of your own poems.

Finding the Flow – Matt Gano
Early 20th century approaches to writing brought us the exploration and dream language of the Surrealists. Automatic writing, or writing without censorship, opens new landscapes and possibilities for creative expression. Much in the vein of these writers, this workshop will focus on liberating the imagination, freeing language, and expanding your voice. We will explore the concept of automatic writing and discuss the merit of being in the moment and finding your flow. This workshop is open to writers of all abilities. Please bring writing materials.

Putting Up with Nature Preserves – Paul Hunter
In this workshop we will examine the strategies of past poets, how they made use of nature and all but owned it, forming habits of heart and mind that are still with us today. Environmental problems, food concerns, the pace of global climate change—these dense thickets may leave the concerned poet nowhere to stand, nowhere to perch, much less sing. But there may be hope in the practice of poetry, in cultivating what Keats termed Negative Capability, being present as if absent, quieting the self to let things outside and beyond us have their say. We will brainstorm and in writing exercises explore several new ways to help the world find its way out of the current dilemmas, where humans seem to be trampling nature while loving it to death.

The Poet Doctor is In! – Evelyn Lau
Lau, the Poet Laureate of Vancouver, B.C., is offering individual consultations for writers. Sign up for a 20-minute intensive individual critique of one of your poems. Lau will give you feedback in this safe and productive session and provide tips to put the final touches on a poem. Poems must be submitted to Lau one week prior to the workshop. This workshop is limited to eight.

Coaxing Poems from Nature – Tim McNulty
Join naturalist and poet Tim McNulty for a three-hour workshop that will combine venturing outdoors with field journals and writing poems based on observation and engagement with the natural world. Participants will spend a little time indoors. We’ll look closely at some poems drawn from the natural world, discuss working from field journals, and then venture out with journals in hand. We’ll record observations, impressions and images, and we’ll try an exercise that will coax our rough notes into a poem. If time allows, we’ll share our works-in-progress. Bring a notebook or journal — and dress for unexpected weather.

Triggers, Investing and Lineage – Elizabeth Woody
Learning our language often means immersion in oral traditions of our families. Our living literature develops your ear, shows how sight and smell triggers significant memory, memory buoys imagination. Poets carry on in communities as language artists who live on the intellectual level as well as the gut level. We will explore some exercises and exchanges in the class as writing from a common every day level, to the sharpening up of the poem as it reaches the page. Please bring writing instruments, paper, and a good story.
Towards an Impure Poetry: Writing from the Body – Roberto Ascalon

Some say that the body and the poem are one and the same. How do poets reconcile what we are with what we create? How can we craft poems that arise out of the richness of blood, bone and gristle? We will read and write visceral poems that revel in the stuff of the body.

“What should be plump and firm, resisting the touch to give itself in the mouth, is spongy and blistered” – Jeannette Winterson, Written From the Body

Metaphysical Poems, Contemporary Poets – Kelly Davio

The metaphysical period of poetry may have officially ended in the seventeenth century, but there is still room in the literary landscape for the poetics of devotion and doubt, of intellectual challenge and spiritual questioning. In this workshop, we will examine contemporary examples of the metaphysical tradition across religious lines, and explore the ways in which we, as working poets with a wide range of backgrounds, can explore personal conviction in the public context of poetry.

Walking Papers: Footnotes On Writing – Lorraine Ferra

In this workshop we will delve into the practice and importance of getting outside, observing our surroundings, and keeping a notebook as a necessary tool for storing images from our inner and outer landscapes. A portion of our time will be spent walking outside separately and gathering notes, then returning to pursue strategies for writing. We will share our writing and offer comments on each other’s work, our goal being to leave this workshop with a solid draft of a poem or two in the making.

Selfies 19th Century Style – The Poem as Self-Portrait – Susan Rich

We will look at the 19th century self portraits of early women photographers – Myra Albert Wiggins, Hannah Maynard, Frances Benjamin Johnson and Julia Cameron – as a way into personal poetry. Let’s consider psychology, spirituality, and multiple identities as a way to (re)construct our world(s). Bring notebook and pen; open to all.

Not in Line: The Art of the Prose Poem – Charles Goodrich

The line is the most recognizable element of poetry. Why on Earth would anyone want to dispense with it? Some would insist that trying to write poems without lineation is simply perverse. But there are so many fine contemporary poets who sometimes work in the prose poem, and some – Gary Young, Louis Jenkins, and David Shumate come to mind – who write prose poems almost exclusively. What are some of the charms and the pitfalls, the strategies and devices of writing the prose poem? In this workshop, we'll take a brief tour of the history of the prose poem, look at some contemporary masters, then try our hand at composing.

List, O, List the Minor Characters and Unnamed Things, Like, Right Now! – Derek Sheffield

In this encounter with language, we will use poems by Pattiann Rogers, William Stafford, Allen Braden, Christian Wiman, and A.E. Stallings as triggers for our own new work. We will use the energy and attentiveness inspired by the festival to generate as much new work as possible in the time we have. Attendees will need writing materials and must be prepared to experience plenty of onomatopoeia and perhaps even a snippet of synecdoche.

Crazy Making – Emily Warn

Poems like to rebel. If you let them get away and stand on their own, you can discover new ways to create form and meaning. In this workshop, we’ll look at common beliefs about how a poem “means” and then how to identify its accidental turns and meaningful gaps. By the end of the workshop, you’ll see how crazy it is to bestow meaning on poems without their assent. Please bring a really recent poem, one that you have not revised too much. Open to anyone who has written some poems.

Reading the Inarticulate – Publishing Tips from the Editor of Poetry NW – Kevin Craft

In his seminal essay “Feeling Into Words,” Seamus Heaney describes poetic technique as “the discovery of ways to go out of ... normal cognitive bounds and raid the inarticulate.” Indeed, much vibrant poetry exists in the tension between expectation and surprise, oscillating between the inevitable and the ineffable. In this workshop, we’ll explore various practical approaches and methods for “gleaning the unsaid off the palpable” (Heaney’s phrase again), for wresting the unexpected out of thin air and onto the page. We will also discuss the ins and outs of preparing work for publication, and cover tips and best practices when shopping your work around.
Kelly Davio has served as the managing editor of *The Los Angeles Review* and associate editor of the *Fifth Wednesday Journal*. She holds an MFA in Poetry from Northwest Institute of Literary Arts and teaches English as a second language in the Seattle area. Her novel-in-poems, *Jacob Wrestling*, is forthcoming in fall of 2014.

Ghanaian-born Jamaican poet Kwame Dawes is the award-winning author of sixteen books of poetry and numerous books of fiction, non-fiction, criticism, and drama. He is the Glenna Luschei Editor of *Prairie Schooner*, and a Chancellor's Professor of English at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. His book *Duppy Conqueror: New and Selected Poems* was published in 2013.

Oliver de la Paz is the co-editor of *A Face to Meet the Faces: An Anthology of Contemporary Persona Poetry*. He co-chairs the advisory board of Kundiman, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of Asian American Poetry. De la Paz teaches in the MFA Program at Western Washington University in Bellingham.

Mark Doty's *Fire to Fire: New and Selected Poems* won the National Book Award for Poetry in 2008. In addition to eight books of poems, he has published four volumes of nonfiction prose, including *Dog Years*, a New York Times bestseller in 2007. His many awards include the distinguished T.S. Eliot Prize in the U.K. Doty lives with his partner in New York City and in East Hampton.

Blas Falconer is the author of *The Foundling Wheel*, *A Question of Gravity and Light*, and *The Perfect Hour*. His awards include a 2011 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award from Poets & Writers. He teaches at University of Southern California and in the low-residency MFA program at Murray State University.

Lorraine Ferra teaches in schools across the country as a poet-in-residence. She is founder/director of Wordtracks, a nature-based writing program, and author of *A Crow Doesn’t Need A Shadow: A Guide to Writing Poetry from Nature*. Her poems, critical reviews, and translations of Portuguese poetry have appeared in numerous literary journals and anthologies. She lives with her partner in Port Townsend, Washington.
Matt Gano has represented Seattle at the National Poetry Slam multiple years and is the 2008 Seattle Grand-Slam champion. He is author of Suits for the Swarm, a poetry collection from MoonPath Press, and numerous chapbooks. He produced a poetry LP entitled “Music Maker,” and a live recording entitled “A Giant’s Pulse.” Gano is the founder of “The Writing Circle” at Youth Speaks Seattle.

Charles Goodrich is the author of three volumes of poems, including his latest, A Scripture of Crows. He also authored The Practice of Home, a collection of essays about nature, parenting, and the house he and his wife built in Corvallis, Oregon. Goodrich now serves as Director for the Spring Creek Project for Ideas, Nature, and the Written Word at Oregon State.

Jeannine Hall Gailey is the Poet Laureate of Redmond, Washington, and the author of three books of poetry: Becoming the Villainess, Unexplained and She Returns to the Floating World. She volunteers as an editorial consultant for Crab Creek Review, writes book reviews, and teaches at National University’s MFA Program.

Robert Hass, Poet Laureate of the United States from 1995 to 1997, is one of contemporary poetry’s most widely read voices. His books of poetry include Time and Materials (2007), which won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Hass is also author or editor of numerous collections of essays and translations. He lives in California with his wife, poet Brenda Hillman, and teaches at the University of California, Berkeley.

For the past 19 years Paul Hunter has published fine letterpress poetry under the imprint of Wood Works, including 26 books and over 60 broadsides. His first of four collections of farming poems is Breaking Ground. The Seattle author also has a prose book on small-scale, sustainable farming, One Seed to Another.

Skagit Valley poet Georgia Johnson fuels her passion for poetry by teaching culinary arts. She believes in the oral tradition, loves a good open mic, and lives with her family in La Conner, Washington. She is the author of the chapbook Finding Beet Seed, published by Desert Rose Press. Johnson has been selected to be the Robert Sund Poets’ House Trust poet for this year’s biennial festival.

Patrick Lane is one of Canada’s pre-eminent poets and winner of numerous awards, including the Governor General’s Award for Poetry. He is author of twenty-five volumes of poetry as well as award-winning books of fiction and non-fiction. The Vancouver Island poet brings the grit of a hard-lived life and an enduring love of beauty to his captivating writing. He is the winner of the first biennial Phyllis L. Ennes Poetry Contest, judged by poet Ellen Bass.

Evelyn Lau is the 2011-2014 Poet Laureate for Vancouver, Canada. She has published six collections of poetry and her prose books have been translated into a dozen languages. Her first book, Runway: Diary of a Street Kid, published when she was 18, was made into a CBC movie starring Sandra Oh.

M.L. Lyke worked for years as arts and entertainment editor and books reporter at the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, where she published provocative interviews with such literary notables as Toni Morrison, Isabelle Allende, Russell Banks, E. Annie Proulx, E.L. Doctorow, and our own Tom Robbins. Her freelance work has been featured in The Washington Post, national magazines, and university publications. She is at work on a novel about animal activists titled “Wild Thing.”

Michael McGriff has published two poetry collections, Dismantling the Hills and Home Burial, as well as a co-translation of Tomas Tranströmer’s The Sorrow Gondola. His awards include a Stegner Fellowship and a James A. Michener Fellowship. McGriff is co-founder and co-editor of Tavern Books, an independent publisher of poetry in Oregon.

Tim McNulty is a celebrated Northwest poet, essayist, and nature writer. He is the author of three poetry collections: Ascendance, In Blue Mountain Dusk, Pawtracks and seven chapbooks, including the recent Some Ducks. McNulty has authored eleven books of natural history. He lives with his family in the foothills of the Olympic Mountains.

Susan Rich is the author of four collections of poetry including Cloud Pharmacy and The Alchemist’s Kitchen, named a finalist for the Foreword Prize and the Washington State Book Award. She has worked as a staff person for Amnesty International, an electoral supervisor in Bosnia Herzegovina, a human rights trainer in Gaza and the West Bank, and as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Republic of Niger, West Africa. She teaches at Highline Community College in the Seattle area.
Iconic Pacific Northwest writer **Tom Robbins** is often hailed as a comic/ spiritual chronicler of what he calls the “1960s renaissance.” But his nine novels and numerous articles and essays place him in a broader perspective as a futurist and sharp-eyed observer of American aesthetics. His books span a career of more than 35 years, beginning with *Another Roadside Attraction* in 1971. Soon to be released is *Tibetan Peach Pie*, a new book chronicling his life and wild adventures. Robbins married Alexa D’Avalon in 1987 and the couple continues to live in La Conner with their favorite dog, Blini Tomato Titanium.

Vancouver, B.C. poet **Rachel Rose** has won numerous awards for her poetry, fiction, and non-fiction, including the 2013 Pat Lowther Poetry Award in Canada, the 2013 Audre Lorde Poetry Award in the U.S. and a 2013 Pushcart Prize. Her poetry collections include *Giving my Body to Science, Notes on Arrival and Departure*, and *Song & Spectacle*. She also works as a biographer, songwriter, and wrote a libretto for Canada’s first lesbian opera, *When the Sun Comes Out*.

Seattle poet **Tina Schumann** was awarded the Stephen Dunn Poetry Prize in 2010 for her manuscript *As If* and was the recipient of the American Poet Prize from American Poetry Journal. She is editor of the forthcoming anthology *Two-Countries: U.S. Sons and Daughters of Immigrant Parents*. Schumann holds an MFA from Pacific Lutheran University.

**Derek Sheffield**’s first book of poems, *Through the Second Skin* was a finalist for the Walt Whitman Award and runner-up for the Emily Dickinson First Book Award. He teaches poetry and nature writing at Wenatchee Valley College and lives with his family in the eastern foothills of the Cascades.

**Emily Warn**, the Webby Award-winning founding editor of poetryfoundation.org, has published five collections of poetry, including *Shadow Architect* (2008), which explores the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew Alphabet (alef-beit). She divides her time between Seattle and Twisp, Washington.

**Elizabeth Woody**’s collections of poetry include *Luminaries of the Humble* and a winner of the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. She received the William Stafford Memorial Prize for Poetry from the Pacific NW Booksellers Association. An enrolled member of the Confederate Tribes of Warm Springs in Oregon, she is a founding member of the NW Native American Writers Association.

“I hope that everyone has had the experience that I’ve had where you read a poem so deeply that you feel almost as if you’ve written it, when, in fact, you’re only responding to it.”

— Edward Hirsch
BOOK SALES, BROADSIDES & SMALL PRESS PUBLISHERS

Book Sales at Maple Hall

Small Press Publishers at Maple Center, Lower Level
Selling their books and broadsides during the Festival

Black Heron Press
Jerome Gold, Seattle

Copper Canyon Press
Joseph Bednarik, Port Townsend

East Point West Press
Griffith Williams, Kenmore

Egress Studio Press
A.K. Boyle, Bellingham

Floating Bridge Press
Kathleen Flenniken, Seattle

MoonPath Press and Concrete Wolf
Lana H. Ayers, Bellingham

Peasandques Press
Joseph Green, Longview

Rose Alley Press
David Horowitz, Seattle

Wood Works
Paul Hunter, Seattle

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Jerry and Kathleen Willins

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Pacific Rim Tonewoods

Rhode Island Foundation Rose Award

Jubilation Foundation

The Loyd Rockhold Special Children’s Foundation

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Poetry Northwest

Shadow Catcher Entertainment

Anacortes Arts Festival

La Conner Soroptomists

and

the hundreds of individuals who contributed to the
the Skagit River Poetry Foundation’s fund raising campaign

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How Quiet
by Ella Cervantes

How quiet the lovely Northern Lights are in the dark midnight sky.
The colors light up the gentle snow that sits on the ground.
The snow is lonely and thinks that there is no hope.
Until the Aurora Borealis sparkles again.
How quiet!
Perch

Perch on their water-perch hung in the clear Bann River
Near the clay bank in alder-dapple and waver,

Perch we called “grunts,” little flood-slubs, runty and ready,
I saw and I see in the river’s glorified body

That is passable through, but they’re bluntly holding the pass,
Under the water-roof, over the bottom, adoze,

Guzzling the current, against it, all muscle and slur
In the finland of perch, the fenland of alder, on air

That is water, on carpets of Bann stream, on hold
In the everything flows and steady go of the world.

– Seamus Heaney
1939-2013