

June 1, 2008

Volume 2, Issue 4

# The Poetry Chronicles

The Gulf Coast Poets, a Chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas

## Club Member News

Seven GCP members had poems accepted into the Texas Poetry Calendar 2009:

**Lynne Streeter**  
**Donny Wankan**  
**John Gorman**  
**Oscar Pena**  
**Mary M. Carlisle**  
**Stevie McHugh**  
**Kelly Ellis**

Diana Dettling Buckley flew home to Edmonton in April, to greet newest granddaughter, Alexa Patricia on April 16th at 3:50am weighing 7lbs 4oz 20.5 inches long, a sister for Ava Elizabeth.

Later in May she met her parents in Amsterdam. Her father fought on the front lines during the liberation of Holland and even marched in the original liberation day parade. He had not been back to Amsterdam since 1961. Her mother, who is Dutch, had not been home in 40 years. Her Mom's 90 year old sister, was delighted to see them back in the old country again.



## Summertime is here

The Gulf Coast Poets, a chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas, will hold its June meeting at Barnes and Noble on Bay Area Blvd. at 10:30 am on Saturday, June 14, 2008. **John Thornberg** will be the featured speaker at this meeting. There is an interesting article about him on page 6.



Last issue's front page picture of a peacock inspired this excellent poem about a male peacock's strut.

### That's Mister Peacock to You

He flips open his tail  
The girls keep on pecking at the dirt  
He turns, angling his umbrella of emerald so they can better see his handsome profile  
Maybe it will look better like this, or maybe like that  
The females start preening their feathers, pointedly aiming their ocher and sienna colored bottoms his way  
Oh, that's a good sign, his male ego perks up  
He tenses tail muscles and the feathers of his plumy curtain quiver and clatter against one another  
He steps in place, turning slowly in a circle  
A king in his throne room, richly draped before the ladies of the court  
Demure, discreet, they make no move either toward or away from him, busily they pluck the underlying downy feathers from beneath, then wipe their beaks from side to side on whatever convenient branch they find nearby to dislodge the fuzz  
Though they feign boredom, they actually care about his opinion, crave his attention, and his adoration, but, to a girl, they pretend they could care less  
Finally, all the strutting tires him out  
He has a sudden urge to preen his feathers, too  
So he collapses his parasol, with a shudder it closes on itself  
All the blue, green, and yellow Argus eyes snap shut  
He begins the slow, laborious process of grooming each long fuzzy needle flocked with green, sliding them through his golden beak, one by one  
This could take all day

By **Ivy Kaminski**, GCP

## Gulf Coast Poets Minutes of the Meeting - May 10, 2008

- A. President Mary Carlisle called the meeting to order at 10:50 am and welcomed those in attendance.
  - a. Minutes taken by Debi Fairchild, Recording Secretary
  - b. Old minutes approved by those present.
  - c. Newsletter missing this month due to Becky Ellisor's being out of pocket.
  - d. Our official e-mail address works for incoming mail, but not outgoing mail, so don't be surprised to receive notes from a g-mail address.
- B. Reports
  - a. Vice President-Lynne Streeter reported upcoming speakers and events.
    - 1. June-John Thornburg
    - 2. July-A field trip to the Poetry Society of Texas Conference in Houston, hosted by Poets Northwest.
    - 3. August-No meeting (we are on vacation, except the board will meet.)
    - 4. September-Marie Delgado Travis
    - 5. October-Houston Poetry Fest and their Workshop.
    - 6. November-Ken Jones
    - 7. December-Mary Thompson or Alan Birkelbach
    - 8. January-John Gorman
    - 9. February-TBA
    - 10. May Open Mic at the Webster Barnes and Noble features Debi Fairchild.
  - b. Treasurer's report given by Mary Carlisle for Leo Waltz.
    - 1. Beginning balance: \$1,176.27
    - 2. Ending balance: \$1,348.91
  - c. Hospitality Chair-Ann Fogelman reported one guest and one new member: Norma Reyes (new member) and Melinda Creech.
- C. Announcements
  - a. Mary Carlisle will present a workshop on US Poets Laureate at the Poetry Society of Texas July Poetry Conference, sponsored by Poets Northwest. Everyone is invited to attend, not only the conference, but also the workshop. There will be a room set up for book sales by PST members during the conference. For more information, visit our website: <http://GulfCoastPoets.info>
  - b. If you are a member of the Poetry Society of Texas, you are reminded to pay your annual dues of \$25.00, by the end of June. Gulf Coast Poets membership will not be due until December 2008.
  - c. Oscar Pena received an honorable mention for his poetry at the Forrest Fest. The Director of the fest is Connie Williams, who is a cousin of one of our members, Sandi Stromberg. FMI, visit [www.forrestfest.com](http://www.forrestfest.com)
- D. Speaker-Sybil P. Estess read her wonderful poetry. She has a couple of books out: *Blue Candle in January Sun*, *Labyrinth*, and an upcoming book, *No Complications Please*.
- E. Door prizes included the book *Grammatically Correct* (which may be found at Half Price Books or Barnes & Noble) won by Becky Travis; some lovely handmade journals brought back from Europe by Bill Turner and Sandi Stromberg; and Mary Carlisle passed out ice cream cone coupons for Baskin Robbins. Members were asked to bring poems about ice cream to the next meeting.
- F. Gulf Coast Poets Contest winners for March:
  - Mary Ann Goodwin-Xenophobe
  - Rebecca Hatcher Travis-Whisper in the Dark, read by Rebecca
  - Sandi Stromberg-Love, Janis, read by SandiGulf Coast Contest winners for April:
  - Mary Ann Goodwin-Here There
  - Margo Davis-Thin VisionCheck online or read the agenda handout for the Gulf Coast Poetry Competitions every month. Contest Tips from our President, Mary Carlisle: Don't send poems right away or too close to the deadline, but somewhere in between. If editors want to make a small change in a poem, go with it. Poems with too-long lines may irritate editors.
- G. Read-A-Round Poets, Mary Carlisle-Coracle Moon; Bill Turner-Do you know Jack? Lynne Streeter-Seeking Love in all the Wrong Places. Sandi Stromberg-Where Ten Thousand Poppies Bloom. Ivy Kaminsky-Green Balloons
- H. Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm. Some members went to Dimassi's Buffet, the restaurant next to the Webster Barnes and Noble, for lunch and book-signing opportunity with the speaker.

**GULF COAST POETS *May's Monthly Contest Winners***

**"Support your Local Poet"**

**First Place ~ Mary Ann Goodwin, La Marque, Texas**

Sponsored by Lynne Streeter

**Byways**

Unearthing a poem disturbs the psyche  
traversing treacherous trails  
hacking through underbrush  
pitching head first into pits  
stumbling on steep mountains  
groping fool's gold  
ignoring the mother lode

Scavenging the poem roller-coasts emotions  
shock stalking the unforeseen  
frustration following misdirection  
self-doubt annotating failures  
satisfaction revenging absurdity  
awe rewarding revelation  
humility embracing survival

Exhibiting the poem acknowledges hope  
expectation extinguishing exasperation  
understanding annihilating antagonism  
beauty trouncing brutality  
perseverance chastising chaos  
compassion engendering healing  
heart touching heart

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**"Ode to the Housecat"**

**First Place ~ Denise Amodeo Miller, Kenmore, NY**

**Vittles and Tea**

feline creature of habit  
russet striped and spotted white  
with emotion  
social above all  
but you say  
no cuddling for you  
since you are  
too confident in your fur  
of days knowing warmth and  
an incessant rumbling



run to get your snack

treading upon ceramic tiles  
in your loving home  
only because I entered the room  
you think it time to dine  
and so I give in  
and watch you as you  
shake off that sticky morsel  
that doesn't sit quite right on your tongue

we both listen as it falls on the floor  
with a tap tap tap  
you glance at it with golden eyes  
and decide it is now somehow tainted  
so just continue within your feastbowls  
of vittles and tea

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**"It's Not the Thought that Counts"**  
First Place ~ Ivy Kaminsky, Houston, Texas  
Sponsored by Becky Ellisor

Idiotic Idioms

If you give a mouse a cookie, you'll wind up with a whole lot of baby mice

On the other hand, if you give a dog a cookie, you'll end up with a friend for life

If you give a cat a cookie, he'll just look at you like you're crazy

You can give a cat a bath but your tongue will get awfully furry

Words speak louder than actions

Words can break bones

A sleeping stone gathers much moss

It's easier to get the hairspray out of the can than to get it back in

If bees made money instead of honey then money might grow on trees

The truth is like shooting skeet, a moving target

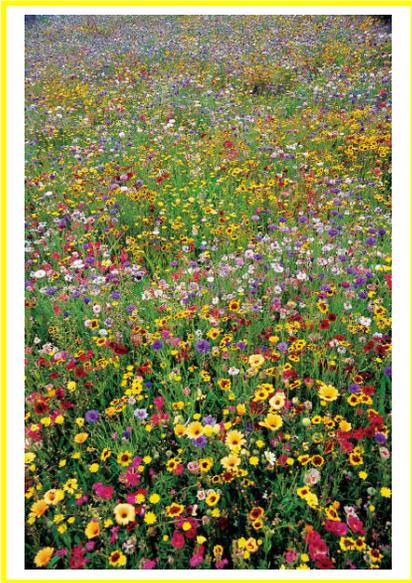
One man's funny is another man's pain

It only hurts if you can't laugh at yourself

You are the only person who truly appreciates your sense of humor

© 2008 Ivy Kaminsky





No price is set on the lavish summer; June may be had by the poorest comer.

— James Russell Lowell

### Nothing like Tara

You can see the hole over there  
in the second-floor balcony  
where a squatter fell through  
and crashed on the porch.

Some of the doorways  
are black and charred  
from smoke and flames  
where cookfires burned.

This home lived through slavery  
and Yankee infestation,  
it's falling now  
to termites and cockroaches.

But, the flowers are still  
In the field  
full of life  
vitality and brilliant colors.

By **Kate Sanger**, GCP



Photo taken by Jan Bernstein and featured in the last newsletter. It piqued Kate's imagination. Let one of the photo's in this newsletter pique yours and send it in by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month to get it published here,

## American Life in Poetry

BY TED KOOSER, U.S. POET LAUREATE, 2004-2006

I've mentioned how important close observation is in composing a vivid poem. In this scene by Arizona poet, Steve Orlen, the details not only help us to see the girls clearly, but the last detail is loaded with suggestion. The poem closes with the car door shutting, and we readers are shut out of what will happen, though we can guess.

Three Teenage Girls: 1956

Three teenage girls in tight red sleeveless blouses and black Capri pants  
And colorful headscarves secured in a knot to their chins  
Are walking down the hill, chatting, laughing,  
Cupping their cigarettes against the light rain,  
The closest to the road with her left thumb stuck out  
Not looking at the cars going past.

Every Friday night to the dance, and wet or dry  
They get where they're going, walk two miles or get a ride,  
And now the two-door 1950 Dodge, dark green  
Darkening as evening falls, stops, they nudge  
Each other, peer in, shrug, two scramble into the back seat,  
And the third, the boldest, famous  
For twice running away from home, slides in front with the man  
Who reaches across her body and pulls the door shut.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright (c) 2006 by Steve Orlen. Reprinted from "The Elephant's Child: New & Selected Poems 1978-2005" by Steve Orlen, Ausable Press, 2006, by permission of the author and publisher. Introduction copyright (c) 2008 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.



A flower is the poetry of reproduction. It is an example of the eternal seductiveness of life.

— Jean Giraudoux

## John Thornburg, Featured speaker at June 14 Meeting of Gulf Coast Poets



Professor John N. Thornburg E-mail: john.thornburg@sjcd.edu  
Telephone: 281.476.1501 Ext. 1554

Office: Room E212C, G. C. McCollum Administration Building.

- B.A. English and Psychology (Double Majors) Purdue University
- M.A. English Creative Writing (Concentration)  
Teaching College English Composition (Graduate Minor)
- M.A. Thesis THE LION'S TAMER (A PLAY) Indiana University
- M.A. for Teachers English, Indiana University

Additional Graduate Studies: University of Leeds, England; University of Houston, Clear Lake

Honors: National Endowment for the Humanities Grant for Notre Dame Seminar on Pascal's Pensées.

John Thornburg is a playwright and formalist poet. He has taught English and Creative Writing at San Jacinto College, Central Campus, Pasadena, Texas, as a full-time and appointed faculty member since August 1990. He lives in Taylor Lake Village with his wife Jane, who teaches English and French, and their daughter Ellen, fifteen, who is homeschooled, interested in screenwriting, and active in local theater.

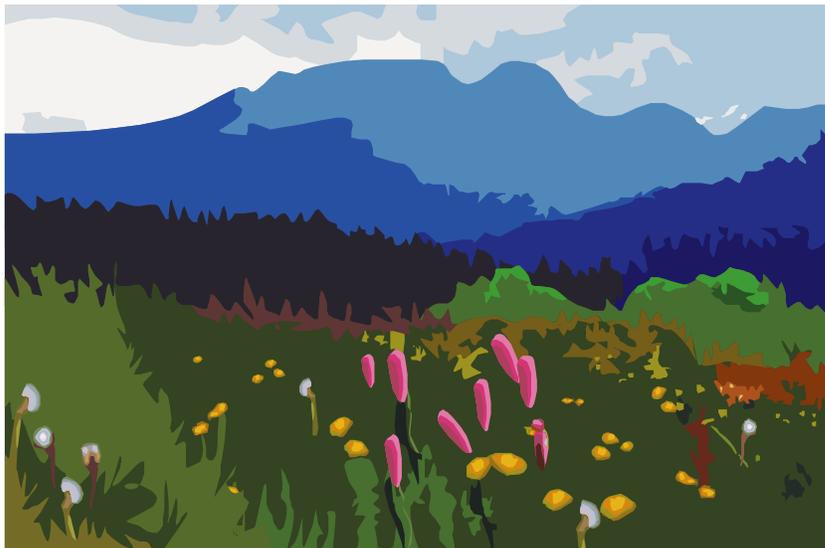
### **Officers of the Gulf Coast Poets**

**Mary Margaret Carlisle** *President*  
**Lynne Streeter** *Vice President*  
**Debi Fairchild** *Secretary*  
**Leo Waltz** *Treasurer*

**Website:** [www.gulfcoastpoets.info](http://www.gulfcoastpoets.info)

**Kay Cox's** poem, "*Monster Monday*," was accepted for publication in the 2008 anthology, *Tapestries, an Anthology of Adult Learners Writing* by Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner, MA.

### **Your poem could go hear next time instead of mine... The Editor**



### ***The best time of year***

*Heat*  
*Crowds*  
*Parades*  
*Beaches*  
*Swimming*  
*Vacations*  
*Baseball*  
*Camping*  
*Flowers*  
*Gardens*  
*Itchy grass*  
*Naps in the afternoon*  
*Games of Red Rover*  
*The sounds of kids playing*

*Is Summertime*

*By Becky Ellisor*