



# Annual Report

The League of Canadian Poets gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Department of Canadian Heritage, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council and all its Friends of Poetry.



The Canada Council | Le Conseil des Arts  
for the Arts | du Canada

Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

torontodartscouncil  
An arm's length body of the City of Toronto

The League of Canadian Poets  
920 Yonge Street, Toronto, ON M4W 3C7  
Tel: 416-504-1657, Fax: 416-504-0096  
[www.poets.ca](http://www.poets.ca) - [www.youngpoets.ca](http://www.youngpoets.ca)  
[readings@poets.ca](mailto:readings@poets.ca)

**LCP NATIONAL COUNCIL  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

President: Mary Ellen Csamer  
Vice-President and Membership Chair: Maurice Mierau  
Treasurer: Allen Briesmaster  
Co-Past Presidents: Alice Major, Ross Leckie

**REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**

Newfoundland/Nova Scotia: Marian Frances White  
New Brunswick/PEI: Rose Despres  
Quebec/Nunavut: Carolyn Marie Souaid  
Ontario: T. Anders Carson  
Toronto: Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes  
Manitoba: Gloe Cormie  
Saskatchewan: Lynda Monahan  
Alberta: Wendy McGrath  
British Columbia/Yukon: Barbara Pelman  
Associate Members' Representative: Dina E. Cox

**COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Resources Development Committee: Alice Major  
Membership Committee: Maurice Mierau  
Constitution: Alice Major  
Mediation: Glen Sorestad  
International Affairs: Cornelia Hoogland  
Education: Terry Anne Carter  
Resources Development: Alice Major  
Feminist Caucus: Anne Burke  
Freedom of Expression: Norman E. Kester  
Outreach: Dave Margoshes  
Book and Periodical Council: Sharon Singer  
Public Lending Right: Douglas Burnet Smith  
Access Copyright: Maurice Mierau

**STAFF**

Executive Director: Joanna Poblocka  
Readings and Membership Coordinator: Ingel Madrus  
Communications and Promotions Manager: Andrea Thompson

*Mary Ellen Csamer*

This was another challenging year but we come out of it here, celebrating our 40th anniversary, with a promising forecast, both financially and in terms of relationships begun and solidified. We were able to manage our revenues prudently and to stay on top of disbursements more effectively than in previous years. Although cash flow, as is traditional with the League, was very tight throughout December, we were able to continue operations without crisis.

Due to the efforts of outgoing Ontario rep, T. Anders Carson, we received corporate funding from Canada Post to help with National Poetry Month. We hope to increase that funding relationship in the next few years. Having attracted one major player, we feel this may open the door for us to attract others. With the volunteer help of David Ferguson, a retired corporate executive, Joanna Poblocka has put together an action group, meeting monthly to investigate and create opportunities for investment in the League. As all of you can appreciate, fund raising is an essential, tough and time consuming task. This action group will help focus our efforts. The group includes Allan Briesmaster, our retiring Treasurer who will continue service to the League through participation with the group, and Seth Adrian Harris who will stand for Toronto rep this year.

We came extremely close to receiving a \$20,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in 2005. In the end, what held us back was our deficit. We have been assured that we may apply again with the same program model when the deficit lessens. Allan and Joanna will speak more fully about deficit reduction accomplished this year and projected in the budget for 2006-2007. I just want to assure you that our major focus for the upcoming year is to narrow the deficit and insure that our financial house, now put in order, will grow stronger. Success builds on success. This year we planted seeds both in the corporate community and with funding bodies that we are sure will bloom in the future.

To help us reach and exceed our goals we need the continued understanding and support of the membership. I want to thank all of you for your expressions of appreciation and concern during the term of my presidency. As many of you know, I became President rather suddenly, but was able to fulfill the duties of this position because we have had such cohesion and focus in Council over the past two years. We have also had remarkable cooperation and communication between staff and Council which is absolutely essential to the smooth running of any organization. As I end my presidency, I have a real sense of accomplishment and an ever deepening love for the League and its mandate to represent Canadian poetry and poets. As past President I look forward to offering any and all help I can to the new President and Council you will elect tomorrow.

## ***EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE***

*Joanna Poblocka*

This has been indeed a challenging but satisfying year for the League of Canadian Poets. We have accomplished many projects and programmes, and started some new and exciting initiatives. It has been a great year working together with the League's National council, volunteers, and staff, here in the office, Ingel Madrus, our Readings and Membership Coordinator and Andrea Thompson, Communications and Promotions Manager. And our off-site office staff, Shannon Cowan in British Columbia and James MacGregor in New Brunswick. Thank you to everyone for all your hard work and passion; it's always a pleasure to work with you.

This year the League continued to develop the readings programmes (see Readings Report below), and we are working towards our main goal at the moment, which is to stabilize funding and reduce our deficit. In the up-coming year the League will:

- Continue to eliminate the accumulated deficit. We will also be looking for new sources of revenue. This past year we have started an Action Group which main goal is to focus on fundraising. We have done research and will be applying to a certain foundation which seems to be a perfect match for the League. We were also encouraged to re-apply for the Trillium grant as our project was a great fit for their funding. As Mary Ellen mentioned, our deficit was the only holdback.
- We have and will continue to lobby with government, arts councils, and the Canadian Arts Coalition for increased funding for the arts.
- We are continuing to build the Endowment Fund, which now stands at \$116,680.39

### 2005/2006 Accomplishments:

- The League has booked over 400 readings this past year across Canada (for further details regarding readings programmes please see the report below).
- The League has formed new partnerships with AbeBooks.com, the National Film Board of Canada, Literary Press Group and Canada Post. Over 5000 National Poetry Month posters were distributed across Canada. The League has seen a big increase in the Young Poets website participation. There were 88 students participating in the site activities, since then the increase has risen by 500%. Since January of 2004, the youngpoets.ca online poetry forums have attracted 763 registered users who have posted 27,134 articles. 240 of those users have joined this year alone, which demonstrates the gap in literary discussion and expression filled by youngpoets.ca. August has already seen an average of 13,459 hits per day with the top five hits being the youth poetry forums. 35% of all users entered the site through the youth poetry forums, which are more closely tied to the main site through contests, postings, and announcements. Our aim to make the forums more diverse has also been achieved with the opening of two private forums, a spoken word and classics forum, as well as a collaborative poem forum. The

private forums are hosted by volunteer youth moderators with specific areas of interest. The spoken word, classics, and collaborative poem forum are open to all users and invite a wide variety of postings.

- This year marked the second NPM where the League was able to obtain funding to help poets get into schools across the country. The LCP has partnered with writer's organizations across the country to conduct a large-scale program bringing poets into the classrooms of schools across the country - twenty poets have read to students in six provinces. Participating organizations included the Writers' Federation of New Brunswick, Manitoba Writer's Guild, Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, PEI Writers' Guild, Quebec Writers' Federation, Writers Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- The League's website now gets 500,000 hits per month, that's a 34% increase from last year.
- There was an increase in NPM events by another 15% this year, as well as to expanded audiences by another 15%. Also 27 events in new/non-traditional venues across Canada. (See NPM readings report). Our original goal was to have 20 new venues participating.
- League members and staff were featured in a show put on by Symmetry Media called "The Heart of a Poet". The show's thirteen episodes were presented on Bravo Television profiling the lives, inspiration and performances of working Canadian poets.

***READINGS PROGRAMS REPORT 2005-2006***

*Ingel Madrus*

**Canada Poetry Tours- Canada Council for the Arts**

The Canada Poetry Tours program funded 146 readings from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006. This is an increase of 5% compared to last year. \$23,941.21 was spent on travel and \$36,295.00 has been spent on reading fees. A total of \$60,236.21 has been paid out to poets. Over 100 poets participated in this year's program.

Members from all the provinces participated in this program with the highest numbers in British Columbia and Ontario. Readings in Nova Scotia have increased by 62.5%. While we have little control over which hosts in which provinces apply for funding, the distribution is based on several factors: first come, first serve; member's individual limit, host's limit; past track record of the host and 8 (half or full) readings per province (provided applications are submitted).

The breakdown by province:

Province	% of members per province	% of readings per province
BC	15.9	26.2
AB	8.8	9
SK	4.4	4.7
MB	2.8	2.6

ON	48.2	39.3
PQ	6.3	6.8
NB	4.0	5.2
NS	3.6	5.2
PE	0.7	.5
NL	2.1	.5

Readings took place in both classic poetry settings and out of the ordinary venues all across the country. This program facilitated poets' participation in prestigious festivals, literary events, ongoing and new reading series' and readings at universities and libraries from coast to coast. The poet and host reports show very positive feedback and audience attendance from 5 – 250+ people.

Highlights included The Red School House Poetry Primer where League members participated in three days of poetry performances with over 21 poets and musicians from all over Canada. The audience totaled over 200 and were said to be very enthusiastic and receptive. The WordsAloud Festival also had such supportive reports by all the participating poets that it appears to have been a highlight on many poets' festival circuits. Both poetry performances and poetry films were featured to demonstrate the power of literature beyond the written word. One of the poets noted it was "one of the best organized festivals I have been to" while another was amazed by the "impressive community support and attendance at this village-based festival." The 9th annual WordFest: Banff-Calgary International Writers Festival has established itself as the third largest festival of its kind in Canada. Five League members participated and one poet enthusiastically reported "this was a great festival, with very diverse readers. I would love to see it continue to be supported!"

### **Readings in Public Places- Toronto Arts Council**

The Readings in Public Places program is funded through the Toronto Arts Council. With this funding the League distributes readings amongst the electoral wards of Toronto. There were 56 readings this fiscal year.

Breakdown by Toronto area:

<b>Area</b>	<b># of readings</b>
<b>Toronto West</b>	8
<b>Toronto East</b>	3
<b>Downtown Toronto</b>	44
<b>North York</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	56

The League has funded readings at libraries, churches, museums, Universities, cafes, bookstores, pubs, art galleries, community centres, arts councils, festivals and new and established reading series'. The event attendance ranged from 10 – 125 audience members.

Some of the many exciting events sponsored by this program included readings, performances and festivals aimed at increasing awareness of literacy issues. The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy participated in the Word on the Street festival and

created a poetry challenge event to raise money for literacy organizations in Toronto and York region. Another heartening literacy event was The Parkdale/Liberty Economic Development Corporation's "Literacy day". The aim of the organization is to socially and economically develop the areas of Parkdale/Liberty. Their initiative was a farmer's market where they declared one day "Literacy Day" and invited a local Parkdale resident and poet to perform, encourage and promote literacy in this diverse and dynamic west end neighbourhood.

The Readings in Public Places program also proudly sponsored readings that were taped for broadcast as part of the "Heart of the Poet" television series. The episodes followed the poets into the inspired community of the Art Bar Poetry Reading Series, which continues to nurture grassroots talent in the Toronto area. The "Heart of the Poet" series is now airing on Bravo!Canada.

**Poets in the Schools- Ontario Arts Council**

The League of Canadian Poets distributed funds to poets to visits classrooms across the province. There were 52 half days and 47 full days booked this past fiscal year (April 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006).

The total amount spent on the program this past fiscal year (2005/2006) is \$30,032 including fees for Young Poets Week (\$4,600) and Northern Ontario schools (\$3,700). There was participation from all regions of the province with an increase of 270% for Northern schools. This number demonstrates the growing interest among educators and poets and a substantial increase in participation from both schools and poets. The initiative to increase the promotion and participation in the program for Northern Schools began in 2004. It has been highly effective and will continue in the 2006/2007 fiscal year.

Distributed across the province as follows:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Half days</b>	<b>Full days</b>
<b>Metro Toronto</b>	29	16
<b>South Western Ontario</b>	9	16
<b>Eastern/Northern Ontario</b>	14	15
<b>Total</b>	52	47

Audience sizes varied from a classroom of 28 to a library filled with 150 students and teachers in one session. Poets often visit several classrooms in one day and therefore promote poetry and the literary arts to up to 100 students on any given day. Teachers and educators have communicated that this is one of the most exciting and anticipated programs that they offer their students. The teacher, students and other faculty continue to commend the Poets in the Schools program and hope that it will continue in years to come.

With over 150 students in attendance, a teacher from a northern school wrote of a poet's visit; "[The poet's] presentation, his manner, the content as well as the form of his work combined for a unique and remarkable experience for our students. Anyone who can get Grade 12 boys to sing/chant along is obviously someone who relates!" This poets' northern Ontario trip included visits to Ignace, Dryden, Kenora and Oxdrift.

## National Poetry Month

The theme for National Poetry Month 2005 was 'Poetry is Everywhere'. The League received many interesting proposals including readings in taxi cabs, art galleries, provincial parks, city halls, care homes, stores, and cinemas. The total amount that was spent on readings was \$11,000 which covered the costs of 88 readings across Canada. Attendance figures ranged from 5 to 250+ people per event. The average attendance for each venue was 72 people. There were 78 individual poets and a total of 88 reading events.

The breakdown by province:

	<b>YEAR 04/05</b>	<b>YEAR 05/06</b>
Ontario	28	43
Prince Edward Island	0	5
Saskatchewan	0	3
Nova Scotia	6	10
Manitoba	3	9
British Columbia	7	11
Quebec	8	4
Newfoundland	3	3
Total	60	88

Highlights included "Poetry On the Road", where the poets sat in the back of taxi cabs in Deer Lake, NL for two hour periods reading to a number of different passengers. The poets then met for a final reading at the Deer Lake Irving Big Stop, a gas station and restaurant.

"Words Work" took place in the Councilors' Lounge of City Hall in Ottawa in conjunction with Mayworks, the labour arts festival, City Councilor and poet Clive Doucet organized a reading on the theme of work and workers. This was the first time that there had been a poetry reading as part of Mayworks.

Another highlight included the "Silent Slam" at The Drake Hotel in Toronto which celebrated poetry by featuring 8 poets, writing their poetry live onto projected screens. The poets faced-off in 10 minute segments, where one emerged the champion. This was touted as "a fantastic new and original way to experience poetry."

## ***VICE PRESIDENT'S/MEMBERSHIP CHAIR MESSAGE***

*Maurice Mierau*

The membership committees for print and spoken word dealt with a high volume of applications this year both for full and associate members. Thanks to all the committee members for their hard work. There were a few challenges and bumps on the road, and as a result, the print committee has co-written a proposal for revising the by-laws affecting membership. The idea is to make membership a more transparent and efficient process, so there's less work for everyone and also less potential acrimony over committee decisions. This proposal is for discussion at this AGM, with possible motions for revising the bylaws not coming until 2007.



## **Revisions to the Bylaws Governing Membership**

Discussion Paper presented May 2006  
By Membership Committee 2005-2006  
Jennifer Boire, Sharon H. Nelson, Maurice Mierau, Chair

The proposed changes to the Bylaws of the League of Canadian Poets are designed to enable the League to grow as an inclusive organization that respects standards of poetic excellence while reducing acrimony about membership issues and particular applications.

The League acts as a gatekeeper for Canada Council funding for poetry readings and so needs a relatively objective and predictable system to decide who qualifies for membership. The rules that currently govern membership in the League require that the Membership Committee read the work of every applicant for full membership as a print poet. If the Membership Committee votes to reject an applicant, especially an applicant who has had a book published by a recognized literary press, the chances are overwhelming that such an applicant will be admitted on appeal. Situations of this sort, which occur every few years, result in hard feelings because of the initial rejection and a great deal of wasted time because the appeal will overturn the rejection.

To address these issues, we propose two broad changes to the bylaws and some adjustments that would make the bylaws and their wording consistent.

- 1) The Membership Committee should accept applicants who have published a book with a recognized literary or trade press in Canada.

The proposed revision to the bylaw defines a recognized literary press as one with an established publishing program supported by the Canada Council, which covers most but not all publishers of poetry in Canada. The Membership Committee would continue to evaluate the applications of poets whose publishers do not meet this definition.

- 2) Delete Articles 2:7 through 2:9 inclusive, which enable acceptance as a full member on the basis of the sponsorship of a current member, and revise Article 2:10 to make it consistent.

The entry into the League via sponsorship allows personal connections to displace the normal application process.

- 3) Revise Article 2.16 so that the Advisory Council formally consults the Membership Committee about appeals.

A formal process is needed to insure that the Advisory Council is fully cognizant of the reasons for rejection and to safeguard the application process and the work of the Membership Committee.

### **ARTICLE 2: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Membership Criteria**

Membership in the League is open to all practicing and published poets who accept the objects and principles of the League set out in the preamble to this By-Law and who meet the following criteria:

2:1 Canadian citizenship or landed immigrant status in Canada; and

2:2 publication of at least one book of poetry (UNESCO definition of a book, which is at least 48 pages of text not including front matter, acknowledgements, dedications, tables of contents, etc.) as long as the book either is published by a recognized literary or trade press in Canada<sup>1</sup> or, in the opinion of the Membership Committee, displays sufficient poetic achievement to merit membership in the League for its author; or

2:3 publication of at least two chapbooks of poetry (i.e. at least 48 pages of text, the equivalent length of the UNESCO definition of a book, as per 2:2), as long as the chapbooks are published by a recognized literary press in Canada; or

2:4 the publication of at least one book of poetry or two chapbooks (total length equivalent to the UNESCO definition of a book) as long as the book(s), in the opinion of the Membership Committee, display(s) sufficient quality of poetic achievement to merit membership in the League;

2:5 the creation and distribution of poetry records, poetry audiotapes, poetry disks, poetry videos, television broadcasts of poetry or any other material or any other professional dissemination of poetry that, in the opinion of the Membership Committee, is the equivalent of book publication and is of sufficient poetic achievement to merit membership in the League for its author; or

2:6 sufficient publication of poetry in recognized literary periodicals, e-zines and/or anthologies that, in the opinion of the Membership Committee, is the equivalent of book publication and is of sufficient poetic achievement to merit membership in the League for its author.

*Articles 2:7 through 2:9*

#### **Sponsorship of Applicants for Membership**

~~2:7 Persons who apply for membership under 2:2 above do not require sponsorship.~~

~~2:8 Persons who apply for membership otherwise than under 2:2 may elect to supply letters of sponsorship from one or more members of the League. These letters should state in detail why the applicant who does not have a trade book of poetry should be granted membership in the League.~~

~~2:9 Any member of the League may submit the name of a person to the Membership Committee for consideration for membership, with or without the nominee's knowledge.~~

---

<sup>1</sup> A recognized literary press is one that has an established publishing program with Canada Council funding.

~~If the person qualifies for membership under 2:2, the Membership Committee shall invite the nominee to join the League.~~

2:10 In the event of an application from a person who writes poetry in a language other than English or French, it is the responsibility of the applicant to produce at least two letters from ~~members of the League or other~~ recognized authorities who speak and write the language in which the applicant's poetry is written. ~~Such letter shall not be required in the case of an applicant who qualifies under 2:2 above.~~

2:11 All persons who apply for membership are responsible for supplying the national office of the League with their books and any other material requested by the League which will enable the Membership Committee to consider their application.

#### Duties of the Membership Committee

2:12 The Membership Committee shall identify practicing and published poets who are not members of the League but who qualify for membership under 2.2 and on its own initiative shall invite them ~~to apply~~ to join the League.

2:13 In the case of a person ~~being considered or~~ applying for membership under 2:2 through 2:6 above, the Membership Committee shall decide whether an applicant's books are published by a recognized Canadian literary or trade press (see footnote 1) and/or evaluate the quality of and literary achievement evidenced by the material written by the ~~nominee or~~ applicant. It is a duty of the Membership Committee to ensure that this material meets the standards required for membership in the League. Decisions shall be made by a majority of the votes cast by members of the Membership Committee and, in the case of a tie, the Chair of the Membership Committee shall have a second or deciding vote.

2:14 Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be so informed in writing by the Chair of the Membership Committee. An unsuccessful applicant shall be advised that there is a procedure whereby he or she may appeal the Membership Committee's decision.

2:15 In the event that a person is rejected for membership by the Membership Committee, the chair of the Committee shall file a letter to that effect with the national office which will contain a succinct but full statement of the reasons for rejection. An unsuccessful applicant shall be sent a copy of this letter on request.

#### Appeals

2:16 If an unsuccessful applicant for membership considers that she or he has been rejected unfairly, she or he may appeal the Membership Committee's decision by writing to the President and Advisory Committee. The applicant's letter should respond to the reasons given for rejection and offer grounds for reconsideration. ~~Before the Advisory Committee reconsiders an application, it should formally consult with the Membership Committee as to its full rationale for rejecting the application.~~ The Advisory Committee will review the applicant's appeal and may endorse or reverse the decision of the Membership Committee. The Advisory Committee will inform the Membership Committee and the applicant in writing of its decision and its rationale.

## **PROVINCIAL REPORTS:**

### ***Newfoundland and Labrador/Nova Scotia Report***

*Marian Frances White*

Over the past year local audiences have been treated to readings by several poets. Through WANL (Writers Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador) and the League, poets have read in St. John's. They include Alison Pick, Degan Davis, Helen Porter, Robin McGrath, Mary Dalton and Kevin Hehir. The relative isolation of Newfoundland means taking a journey off the beaten track; however, writers are usually fulfilled rather than exhausted by a trip to or around this island.

In October Mary Dalton and Marian Frances White took part in the second *Random Acts of Poetry*. Throughout the week we poemed the city. I also took the opportunity to travel along the coastal region to several communities ending in Bay de Verde where I read in stores, gas stations and entertained a woman and daughter as they decorated their lawn for Halloween. Wendy Morton is to be commended for helping put poetry back into the every day life of Canadians. I hope more poets will come forward next year to take part in RAP 2006.

As the regional rep for two Atlantic Provinces for the past two years, it has not been easy to reach out to members and potential new members spread over a large geographic area. It would be more than beneficial to have a League presence at two annual events that bring poets together. They include *Word on the Street* held in Halifax each September, and *the March Hare* which is a celebration and gathering of poets that begins in St. John's and moves to other areas of the province over a five day period in March. The biggest issue I have had to deal with since I became a League Rep is the ongoing concern in Newfoundland that the LCP does not respect writing coming from this province. This is a direct result of one poet's published book being rejected by the League. That rejection has deep roots. I feel the League will have to address this issue to avoid any further erosion of League members.

On a positive note, the city of St. John's named Agnes Walsh as the very first poet laureate. Agnes will serve in this position for a two year period. In April I hosted a *Poem In My Tea* event that served to celebrate National Poetry Month and the poetics of Geraldine Rubia whose first book of poetry was called *A Poem In My Soup*. Twenty writers attended this afternoon event that found us reading from new works as well as hearing some of Geraldine's early writing. It proved to be a perfect tea where poetry poured from the spout of the tea pot.

I have enjoyed my stint as LCP Rep and hope to support the next rep whether s/he resides in Newfoundland or in Nova Scotia. Thank you for this unique opportunity.

[mfwhite@nl.rogers.com](mailto:mfwhite@nl.rogers.com)

<http://www.geocities.com/mfwhite@nl.rogers.com>

*New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island*  
*Rose Després*

Probably the most outstanding news from the Atlantic region in 2005 is **Anne Compton's** Governor General of Canada award for poetry. The jury states that "Anne Compton's voice is unique – at once passionate and refined. Her poems slip into one's consciousness, a felt presence in a quiet room. *Processional* is a deft and remarkable achievement." Congratulations to Anne for this recognition. The **Side by Side Festival of Literary Translation** hosted "Translation as Creation" in Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton, in September 2005. Among the participants Joe Blades, Robert Hawkes, Pauline Michel, Tony Steele, Jonathan Kaplan, Nela Rio, Herménégilde Chiasson, Robert Dickson and Hugh Hazelton. The 2005 edition of the Northrop Frye International Literary Festival in Moncton, in April, offered a tribute to native cultures. Among distinguished guests, Louise Bernice Halfe, Saskatchewan Poet Laureate, Shirley Bear, NB Tobique First Nation, Marilyn Dumont, from Edmonton, Joan Clark, Newfoundland, Kateri Akiwnzie-Damm, Cape Croker First Nation, Ontario, Kathy Mac, Fredericton NB, Allison Smith, NS. For more info about the festival [www.northropfrye.com](http://www.northropfrye.com) Attic Owl Bookshop in Moncton [eepond@rogers.com](mailto:eepond@rogers.com) hosted poetry readings featuring among others, Julie Berry, Dyane Léger and Sackville poet, Michael Thorpe. Greg Cook published **Songs of the Wounded**, Black Moss Press, a collection of poetry and the biography *Alden Nowlan, One heart, one way, Alden Nowlan: A writer's life*. It has been a privilege and honor to meet, to know and to work with **Joe Sherman** whose absence is felt by so many friends and colleagues. He suggested my name for the NB PEI representative position at last year's AGM. I first met Joe when he recruited me to participate in his Writing on the Wall project which he initiated in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island and brought to Fredericton in 2004. Thank you, Joe, for your consideration, your patience, your numerous insights, your quiet strength, your humanity.

*Quebec report*  
*Carolyn Marie Souaid*

Concrete steps were taken this year to consolidate the liaison with **Maison de la Poésie**, the League's sister-organization for francophone poets in Quebec. This "rapprochement" with our francophone counterparts was something that my predecessor, Jennifer Boire, sought to establish during her mandate. Earlier this year, Isabelle Courteau invited me to take part in two meetings to discuss the concerns of anglophone poets (within the Quebec context) and to provide input on what we would like to see in an official "Maison de la Poésie" (the allocation of a permanent building dedicated to Poetry), a project that the City of Montreal is currently considering.

Quebec witnessed an active poetry scene this year, owing, in part, to Montreal's status as World Book Capital for 2005-2006. Once again, **The Yellow Door** coffee-house reading series (Ilona Martonfi, producer), **Poetry Plus** events at the Arts Bar (John Fretz, producer) and Ian Ferrier's **Words & Music** shows at the trendy Casa del Popolo continue to draw loyal audiences. And January saw the birth of a new multicultural reading series, **Noches de poesia**, organized by the dynamic Élizabéth Robert.

For a small taste of who was where when: Jennifer Boire was busy with appearances at La Sala Rossa (October), Café L'Utopik (March), as well as El Rancho and The Atwater

Library (April). Maxianne Berger read at El Rancho (March) and the Arts Bar (October). Geoffrey Cook was at Zeke's Gallery (October) and at the Yellow Door (March). On March 30, Coach House Books and The Atwater Poetry Project presented Nicole Brossard and Erin Moure at the Atwater Reading Room.

Quebec poets were well-represented at the 8th **Blue Metropolis Festival** in April: Stephanie Bolster, Erin Moure, Jon Paul Fiorentino, Daniel Sloate, Jason Camlot, Mary di Michele, Hugh Hazelton, Kaie Kellough, Catherine Kidd, and Carolyn Marie Souaid were among the 250 authors, translators, performers and publishers participating in this year's international literary event.

**Looking ahead:** On May 11, Carolyn Zonailo, Ian Ferrier, Maxianne Berger, Mohamud Siad Togane, Larissa Andrusyshyn, and Bryan Sentes will be reading at the Yellow Door. As for **milestones**, October 30<sup>th</sup> marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Words & Music Show. A *Poets' Performance Party* was held at La Sala Rossa, and featured Fortner Anderson (who launched his new CD "Six Silk Purses"), Catherine Kidd, Endre Farkas, Jennifer Boire, Luna Allison, Paula Belina, Kaie Kellough, D. Kimm, Geneviève Letarte, Victoria Stanton, Ian Ferrier, Vincent Tinguely and others.

In December, Endre Farkas and I joined Ontario poets Elias Letelier and Jorge Etcheverry to represent Canada at a four-day symposium in Paris, organized by a dedicated group of Turkish people committed to speaking out against the imprisonment of political and cultural activists and the increased application of isolation and torture as a means of suppressing legal and democratic rights opposition, particularly in Turkey. The keynote speaker was none other than former Black Panther activist Angela Davis. We attended seminars during the day and read at cultural events in the evening.

**National Poetry Month:** The second edition of *Circus of Words / Cirque des mots* took place on April 13th at La Sala Rossa. The sold-out cabaret event, produced by Endre Farkas and myself, featured seven performers using poetry as the creative inspiration for music, dance, and theatre pieces for the stage.

A few sad notes this year: In addition to mourning the loss of two respected Montreal poets, Irving Layton and Ruth Taylor, one of our favourite haunts, The Double Hook Book Shop, closed its doors in July after over thirty successful years selling only Canadian-authored books. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, writers, readers, and publishers gathered at the Centaur Theatre in Old Montreal for a celebration hosted by CBC-TV's Dennis Trudeau, which featured short readings and anecdotes reflecting on the Double Hook's exemplary role in nurturing Canadian and Quebec authors (especially local poets).

**Kudos:** To Erin Moure, whose book, *Little Theatres*, was shortlisted for a number of awards this year: The A.M. Klein Award (which she won), the Pat Lowther Award, the Governor General's Award, and the Griffin Prize.

To David McGimpsey who represented Quebec (beating out Susan Elmsley, Susan Gillis, Oana Avasilichioaei, and Jon Paul Fiorentino locally) and took third-place in the national CBC Poetry Face-Off. This year's theme was *irresistible*.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that two of the country's most accomplished spoken word writer/performers, Kaie Kellough and Catherine Kidd, have joined the League as full-members.

### ***Saskatchewan Report***

*Lynda Monahan*

Hello from Saskatchewan! In November of 2005 I replaced Bruce Rice when Bruce decided, to step down as Saskatchewan rep. I have been doing my best to fill his shoes with the Associate Members Work Group. It's been --a busy and productive past few months. We (Dina Cox, Sonja Greckol and myself) have worked towards answering the concerns of associate members.

One of the areas where we've made some positive change includes the New Members Reading which takes place at the AGM and will now include both associate and full members. Discussions will soon be underway regarding a formal mentorship program. We have set up a "buddy system" for the AGM where "first timers" can be paired up with more seasoned members to attend AGM events. We are in the process of compiling lists of resources available to writers in their respective regions. These lists will then be included in each new member's package accordingly. I'm truly excited about all we've accomplished with the Work Group. Also, wearing my Saskatchewan rep hat, I was involved with planning the (W)rites of Spring event for our province in April. We celebrated the League of Canadian Poets 40th Anniversary in fine style on April 28th at The Refinery Arts and Spirit Centre in Saskatoon with a fundraising benefit. Eleven Saskatchewan poets read from their work including two League of Canadian Poets "lifers", Elizabeth Brewster and Glen Sorestad. Elizabeth regaled us with tales of the League's early years. Other poets who read included Steven Ross Smith, Katherine Lawrence, Marie Elyse St.George, Sylvia Legris, Robert Currie, Anne Campbell, Bruce Rice, Shelley Leedahl and myself. There were many terrific door prizes (thanks to Glen) and we raffled off several books including two copies of Margaret Avison's "The Dumbfounding", which was published in 1966, the year the League was born. Following the readings and music by Saskatoon singer/songwriter Mark Carter, we socialized and celebrated. A fun evening !

It has been a great year for Saskatchewan poets. Saskatoon poet Sylvia Legris has been shortlisted for the prestigious Griffin Poetry Prize for 2006 .Steven Ross Smith garnered Book of the Year for his collection "fluttersong book 3:disarray" at the Sask. Book Awards in November. We've had recent books launched by League members Katherine Lawrence (*Lying to Our Mothers*) and Marie Elyse St.George (*Once In A Blue Moon*). Congratulations to all! I look forward to my first visit to Ottawa and to my first AGM this June. Hope to see you there!

### ***Alberta Report***

*Wendy McGrath*

"If you work on it, you can get into trouble for your poetry in this country." So says George Bowering in his book of essays, *Left Hook: A Sideways Look at Canadian Writing*. Though Alberta member poets have not been getting into "trouble" per se, members have certainly been busy this past year!

This past year--my first as Alberta representative on national council--has been punctuated with events aimed at fostering a greater sense of community between members.

In July 2005, Edmonton members got together at a local bookstore to read with Alice Major, Edmonton's first poet laureate and past-president of the League, at her first official reading as poet laureate.

In October 2005, I was Edmonton's official "Random Acts of Poetry" poet and began working on promotion well in advance of the week-long event. As part of the mix, CJSR Radio produced and ran promo spots which featured the readings of local LCP members: Diane Buchanan, Jannie Edwards, Myrna Garanis, Kath MacLean, Alice Major, Michael Penny and I. During RAP week, I also committed a random act of poetry on Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel and Alice Major, one of the highlights of the week. I wound up RAP week with an event at the downtown Stanley A. Milner library which featured enthusiastic readings by local LCP members and students.

We also welcomed two new associate members this year: Jenna Butler and Andy Michaelson. Jenna's newest venture is as co-publisher of Rubicon Press and Andy is already actively involved in the local poetry community.

Indeed, LCP members have been working hard to promote poetry and the League! Kudos to LCP members: Jannie Edwards, Kath MacLean, Alice Major, Wendy McGrath and Andy Michaelson have been conducting volunteer workshops in schools in Edmonton and area. Beginning in November, 2005, I gave a series of master writing classes to a group of students at Victoria School of the Performing and Visual Arts. This culminated with a reading in the school's art gallery, April 18, 2006, in celebration of national poetry month, the launch of a chapbook of students' work, readings by students, and readings by poet laureate Alice Major and me.

Local members also celebrated national poetry month by promoting the League and poetry—I, along with members Kath MacLean and Alice Major, gave volunteer workshops and readings in local schools.

Though members did not "get into trouble" this past year, members certainly got out into the community!

### ***British Columbia Report***

*Barbara Pelman*

#### New publications

Allan Brown: "a penny in the grass", Ekstasis Editions, a collection of haiku

John Donlan: "Spirit Engine" accepted for publication by Brick Books

Wendy Morton: "Shadow Catcher" published by Ekstasis Editions"

"Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast" by emdash books

Jane Munro: "Point No Point" published by McClelland & Stewart

Pam Galloway: "Parallel Lines" published by Ekstasis Editions



Rhona McAdam: "Cartography" published by Oolichan Books  
Catherine Owen: "Shall: ghazals" published by Wolsak and Wynn  
"Cusp/detritus" published by Anvil Press  
Winona Baker: "The Slough: A Prairie Childhood" published by Leaf Press  
Thomas Brown: "Cry Poetry" published by Leaf Press  
Margo Button: "Blue Dahlias" published by Leaf Press

These are only a few of the books and chapbooks published by the 80 or so busy poets in B.C. Poets have been involved in readings, facilitated writers' festivals, have poems included in literary journals and anthologies, are shortlisted for the Gerald Lampman Award (Leanne Averbach), were finalists for the Governor-General's Award (Barbara Nickel) and won the B.C. Book Prize (Barbara Nickel again).

Poetry has hit the streets, the buses, even the cherry trees. Silk scarves were hung from cherry trees during the first Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival. Cheryl Ashley and Winona Baker, banner award winners, had their haikus printed on the silk banners, and other winners' haiku were used as transit posters.

During Random Acts of Poetry Week, Wendy Morton's brainchild, four B.C. poets: Kuldup Gill in Mission, Nancy Holmes in Kelowna, Barbara Pelman and Wendy Morton in Victoria dazzled pedestrians, coffee drinkers, sanitary engineers, recyclers, professors, high school students, bakers, council members, school board trustees by reading them a poem and giving them a book. It is a project of the Victoria READ Society and has been, for the past two years been sponsored by abebooks.

One of the more significant literary battles was fought and thankfully won to save Joy Kogawa's childhood home from demolition. The house in Marpole in Vancouver is featured in her renowned novel, *Obasan*. Through the great generosity of the Land Conservancy of B.C., the home will eventually become a Writer's Centre.

No B.C. report is complete without mentioning the marvelous venue of Mocambo Café in Victoria, where Wendy Morton hosts Mocambopo, a weekly poetry series, which is often called 'the best open mike in Canada', and features poets from across Canada who read to an appreciate audience that packs the small coffee house. This year a few of the poets who were featured :Glen Sorestad, Lorna Crozier, Sheri-D Wilson, Pamela Porter, Susan Stenson, Marty Gervais, Patrick Lane. Three new members of the League are from B.C. and we welcome them: George Sipos, Meredith Quartermain, and Mitchell Parry.

### ***Toronto Report***

*Mary Lou Soutar-Hynes*

The Toronto poetry scene is as diverse as its history and population. This past year has mirrored that diversity through a range of events, book-launches, readings, dub and spoken-word performances across the city. Members have been involved in launching new books, films and CDs, have been the subject of television profiles, spent time at writing retreats and programs, been included in anthologies, been short-listed for and awarded literary prizes and honours.

New venues, such as the refurbished Gladstone Hotel, have opened up and new Literary Reading Series, such as Toronto WordStage, organized by Allan Briesmaster, John Calabro and Luciano Iacobelli are off to a good start.

There is a benefit to having both the League Office and a League Representative in the same city and I wish to thank both Joanna Poblocka and Ingel Madrus for their support this past year. I feel strongly that working together in strategic and authentic ways can only enhance the League's potential to connect with the city's diverse poetry communities and demonstrate the reciprocal value to poets of a supportive, professional home in the League.

As well, while no one person or committee can connect with the same degree of effectiveness with each of Toronto's diverse poetry communities, there is a value-added to the League to be able to include the Toronto Representative in the planning and organization of League events taking place in the city.

The potential to connect/re-connect with present, future and former members of the League in the city is there and I wish our new Toronto Representative and the Council well in the year ahead.

### ***Ontario Report***

*T. Anders Carson*

This past year was a busy one in rural Ontario. National Poetry Month was celebrated in Portland, ON and was expanded to include a fire side reading at the Foley Mountain Conservation Area in Westport, ON. I will say that it was a bit odd to read to stuffed animals (road-kill that has become a taxidermist's dream) but the crowd was appreciative and response was positive. A good turn out at both events.

I had a chance to help launch an anthology of poetry at our local school for a fundraiser. So many times we are forced into selling chocolates, or knick knacks from far away, it was suggested why don't we let all the kids write a poem, (including teachers, principal and custodial staff) and we'll have a contest for artwork on the front and back cover. I had help editing from my 7 year old daughter and the project was a success. Now we have a new generation of poetry lovers.

I had a chance to teach in a couple schools this past year. This is one of those tasks that I get really nervous about before going in but it usually works out just fine. One school had 150 students, while others had 20. I recommend that you try the Reading in the Schools Program through the League. It is highly rewarding and stimulating. We had a modicum of success this past year in getting a corporate sponsor for the Youth Website. Canada Post is now on board and it makes it easier to approach other corporations for helping the League.

My two year term has come to an end and I've learned much during the last two years. It was a difficult time but the clouds can be seen hovering around the horizon. And this time they aren't filled with rain.

Keep creating, getting involved and being poet. It is what we are and it is what we need to be. Don't be afraid; just write, publish, read and explore.

### ***Manitoba Report***

*Gloe Cormie*

We have a vibrant community of poets in Manitoba. A likely factor in this reality is that our long cold winters provide the solitude needed to create poetry. In the other seasons we have a lot of events going on, especially in spring. We had several significant poetry events in the national poetry month of April, especially during Manitoba Book Week (MBW). MBW opened with the launch of the Poetry in Motion project on April 23 in which eight poems by Manitoba poets are selected to appear on city transit buses for about a month. Two of the fine poets selected are league members Di Brandt and Laurie Block. The next day Sarah Klassen launched a new collection of poetry, titled *A Curious Beatitude*, to a full-house audience at McNally Robinson's in Grant Park. The launch was so successful that Sarah's new book sold out completely and several people, including me, were unable to purchase her book that evening. Book Week culminated in the Manitoba Writing and Publishing Awards Gala at the Hotel Fort Garry's Crystal Ballroom on April 29. Winnipeg poet, Lori Cayer, won the John Hirsch Award for Most Promising Writer. (*Stealing Mercury*, 2004) and Nina Berkhout, another local poet, was a finalist. Lori says she is in process of applying for membership in the League.

A highly significant event for Manitoba poets and poetry was the Lyric Café, Cadence and Coffee, April 22, at St. Augustine Church. The Lyric Café is a fundraiser to establish a Manitoba Poetry Award to be presented at the Annual Manitoba Writing and Publishing Awards Gala. This year's event raised \$2,700, a thousand more than the first Lyric Café last April. The Manitoba Poetry endowment aims to have an award for Manitoba Poets within the next two years. Remarkably, we are the only province in Canada without a literary award for poetry. The award is to be named in honour of an internationally recognized Winnipeg-based poet, but you'll have to wait to hear the name until it's officially announced. The café, an exciting and well-attended event, featured Dennis Cooley, Catherine Hunter, K. I. Press and A. J. Levin, who read from their work. Jazz music by The Maurice Mierau Trio added to the festivity. So did a performance of Poor Tree, consisting of two men, who improvised poetry on old typewriters and then read their spontaneous poems to the audience. Classic typewriters, formerly used by eight poets were auctioned off, including signed manuscripts and other souvenirs. The poets participating were: George Amabile, Dennis Cooley, J.R. Leveille, Di Brandt, Catherine Hunter, K.I. Press, A.J. Levin and the late Dorothy Livesay. Livesay's Remington manual carriage typewriter, coupled with an early-signed chapbook, received the highest bid. Two Winnipeg venues have opened for readings. The first one, at Maurice Mierau's home, 43 Dundurn Place, is strictly for poetry. This reading series now called The Dundurn Artist Centre Series, is also known as the We ain't broke yet Café. The inaugural reading in October featured Montréal poet, Carolyn Marie Souaid. The second venue, at Aqua books, called The Free Your Mind reading Series, is open to all genres. Their inaugural reading in April featured three poets, including new League member, Laurie Block.

Winnipeg-based CV 2 Poetry magazine will be featuring a special summer issue to help celebrate the League's 40th anniversary. League Vice-president, Maurice Mierau, coordinated this project. The CV 2 summer issue will feature poems by League members that were written in response to the work of, or inspired by, other Canadian poets. There

will be a tribute to the late league member, Joe Sherman, and interviews with Glen Sorestad and Heidi Greco. Our other main literary magazine, *Prairie Fire*, consistently publishes fine poetry. The poetry published in this year's issues continues that tradition.

What follows are highlights in poetry of a few MB league members. More details on these poets and several others will follow in my regional report for the June email newsletter. Robert Kroetsch gave a reading in February 2006 and participated in two panels at Arizona State University's Creative Writing Conference. Dennis Cooley has a new book of poetry forthcoming, titled, *The Bentleys*. George Amabile has completed a short new book titled, *Night Window and Other Poems*. We also have two Brandon-based league members. The most recent one is Di Brandt, who has returned home to the prairies from Windsor. She now fills the position of Canada Research Chair in Literature and Creative Writing at Brandon University. Laurie Block, a former Winnipegger, has a forthcoming book, titled, *Time Out of Mind*. Walfried Jansen, our most northern league member, is actively practicing poetry in Thompson.

Like several other provinces, we didn't have a (W)rites of Spring this year or last year. With April being national poetry month and featuring Manitoba Book Week, we have a saturation of literary events at this time. I would like to organize a league poetry event in November, a sort of (W)rites of Fall, or Winter, depending on our weather.

As the Manitoba League Representative, I am glad to see significant steps taken to raise the profile of poetry and the appreciation of poetry in Manitoba as well as nationally. Projects such as the LCP Poets in the Schools partnered here with the Manitoba Writers' Guild, and Canada's 2nd Annual Random Acts of Poetry in cities across Canada, including here in Winnipeg, play an important role in raising the level of poetry appreciation in a lively grassroots way.

With the seasoning experience of my first year almost over, I look forward to my second year as the Manitoba League Representative. I also look forward to the AGM in Ottawa where I will meet the people that I've heard in the league teleconferences over the last year. As well, I anticipate meeting members of our national poetry community from across Canada.

### ***Report from the Feminist Caucus***

*Anne Burke*

At the 2005 AGM, it was the desire of the Caucus attendees to launch, in 2006, on Saturday evening, *And No One Knows The Blood We Share*, (Poems Read at the Feminist Caucus), edited by Katerina Fretwell and containing 47 poems by League members. I sent copies to contributors, to the League office, and I will also be bringing additional copies for sale at the Saturday launch.

Join us for the Feminist Caucus Panel on Friday, June 9, at 3:30 p.m. in Room 156. Thank you to Gloria Alvernaz Mulcahy for chairing, setting up the panel on "Our Sisters in Spirit", and being a participant. She was one of *Four Women*: Colleen Thibaudeau, Penn Kemp, Marianne Micros, who were published by Red Kite Press, (Guelph) 1999, ISBN 0920493173. (Amazon.com) With panelists Marianne Micros and Penn Kemp, she states: "We are all women who have shared spaces of / for poetry in performance and in books. We reflect on the meanings of sisters and how our words embody spirit. They move through the spoken word and texts exploring 'liminal' spaces that marginalize and exclude voices, according to gender and race. Acknowledging Aboriginal voices, women

from the past and their dance between borders. Three poets reaching back to those sisters, who came before and forward to a circle of dialogue with participants.”

Our Business Meeting and Reading is scheduled on Saturday, at the same time as the 40th Anniversary Celebrations, so I hope we can get together **over lunch** to plan how to conduct our business and to share our poems. The 2005 panel on “The Muse in Canadian Women’s Poetry” was ably edited by Catherine Owen, who also organized the participants. Susan McCaslin, on “The Feral Muse: An Infused (BeMused) Poetics,” Katerina Fretwell, “A Muse in Progress”, and Kate Braid, “Illuming the Muse: Women’s Poetry in the Age of Disillusionment, or, Looking Behind The Mask of Muse and (Mostly) Keeping My Sanity” were compiled, with an introduction and contribution by Catherine Owen.

Like Katerina’s anthology, this is a title in the Living Archives Series of chapbooks, containing the proceedings and other materials from past panels. Thank you to Jennifer Boire for contributing “Taking notes from Wild Woman” and Ali Riley, who was unable to attend, due to a family emergency. Nevertheless, Ali’s proposal for “The Chango Sutra: Bad Boy as Negative Muse” was illustrated in her latest title, *Tear Down* (Frontenac House Ltd., 2006) In her own words, “My relationship with the real Chango and the man who symbolized Chango to me became intertwined and provided an inspiration that overrode what I considered ‘wasted time’ with an unsuitable lover. Quite simply, it was inspiring on a level not usually found in such attachments.” Further, to present Chango, “the spirit and men who to me represent him—as a challenge to female poets to embrace and *transform* the chaos the negative muse can bring, and to see a way out through the alchemy of what I believed is a *bona fide* (though, perhaps, not sanctioned by Robert Graves) muse.”

Become a matron, patron, or androgyne! Only \$200 will bring you the 12 chapbooks, either published or forthcoming, and credit for a Living Archives Membership. You can catch up on past titles in the Living Archives Series 1982-2005 (Browse the Web Bookstore). Two collections from earlier titles were published, *Silence: Poets on Women, Violence, and Silence*, by Quarry Press, 1998, edited by Sue McMaster and *Imprints and Casualties: poets on women and language, reinventing memory*, Volume 2, by Broken Jaw Press, 2000, edited by me. A third on “Erotics”, Volume 3, is underway, with Cathy Ford.

### ***Associate Members’ Report***

*Dina E. Cox*

This past year has been another landmark year of accomplishments on behalf of Associate Members. At AGM 2005 I was made chair of a Work Group charged with implementation of the Task Force Report drawn up at that time, to implement the recommendations coming out of the Associate Members’ Survey. Several people contributed to the Work Group. Its current members are Sonja Greckol (an Associate Member), Lynda Monahan (Saskatchewan Rep), and myself.

As we examined the Task Force Report, we realized that Communication or the lack of it, was an important issue, and many of the measures we’re recommending to Council at AGM 2006 will hopefully result in improved communication between the League and its

Associate Members, and also with all new members. One initiative in this regard has been our recommendation to Council (“Tips for Regional Reps”) of ways in which the Regional Reps, who are the first line of greeting for new members, can help acclimatize all new members, in their early association with the League.

We’ve set up a Buddy System intended to help Associate Members by matching them with Full Members at the AGM, and are looking into how that might be expanded for mutual benefit, in a broader context.

We’ve recommended the creation of a Quick Facts Broadsheet for insertion into all New Members Packages, and as well, of lists of regional/provincial resources, also to be included in the New Members Packages, as appropriate.

We brought a motion before Council moving that the New Members Reading be revised to include new Associate Members and that the time allocation for each reader be adjusted to reflect the overall number of those wishing to read. This motion passed unanimously. The Work Group also proposed to Council that the New Members Reading be renamed to honour Life Member Joseph Sherman, who died in January 2006.

We have initiated preliminary discussions with a view to setting up a mentoring program focused specifically on Associate Members. As Associate Members’ Rep I will be proposing to Council at AGM 2006 that we create a Task Force to examine how we can access funding for a formal mentoring program. I will also be proposing that we seek alternative sources of funding for Associate Members’ programs in general.

As Associate Members’ Rep I have endeavoured to keep Associate Members informed on relevant issues, mostly through the online Newsletter, and have enjoyed welcoming them to the League, and responding to their emailed concerns and requests. It has been my very real privilege to serve as their representative on National Council.

I would like to extend my thanks to Sonja Greckol and Lynda Monahan for their enthusiasm and unflinching commitment to the Work Group authorized at AGM 2005. And finally, I would like to thank the League’s office staff for their help in so many things, and Council for their ongoing support and encouragement.

### ***Public Lending Right Commission Report***

*Douglas Burnet Smith*

As usual, the major challenge facing the Public Lending Right Commission this year has been program growth; i.e., an increase in the number of titles vs. stagnant funding. I say "as usual" because, as you will remember, since the program began in 1886, it has seen a steady rise in the number of titles eligible for payment: from 40,000 in 1986 to almost 64,000 in 2005. Between 1986 and 1992 that rise in eligible titles was, fortunately, compensated for periodically by significant budget increases. But between 1994 and 1997 the "hit rate" (the amount each title receives when found in a sampled library) went down drastically. At that time, stymied by government stinginess, the Commission proposed to its constituent associations a "Ten Year Plan" to manage growth, whereby after ten years in the program each of an author's titles would begin to receive and continue to receive less money. This plan was ultimately rejected, mainly--but

incorrectly--over concerns that it would have affected senior writers more severely than any other age group.

The problem, of course, did not go away. In fact, the problem of program growth has gotten worse. Much worse. Last year (04/05), the maximum an author could receive for a title if found in every sampled library was \$287.35, the result of a steady decline from 96/97 when that figure was just under \$400. That's a decrease of over \$100 in eight years. At a decrease of around \$12 dollars per year, it doesn't take a genius to see that, a decade from now, we'll be down to \$187, and by 2025 the program will be a program in name only.

So, in 2002 the Commission appointed a committee, of which I am a member, to address the problem of program growth once again. Our intention was to come up with a plan that would treat all writers fairly and equitably. To do so we had to convince government to play its part and increase the budget so that growth management did not bring about impoverishment. From the beginning, Heritage officials liked and approved of the plan, and tied any increase in budget to an implementation of growth management.

The committee decided that it wanted a plan that would allow payments to be restored to the historically high hit rate of \$40 per title. We calculated that, to do so, we would need a budget increase of \$3.5 million. This would see the budget raised to \$12.5 million annually. But we also calculated that, due to the new titles that authors keep producing, it would require an additional \$500,000 annually to maintain the program at the \$40 hit rate level. We knew, and still know, that no government will countenance that kind of unending growth with annual budget increases.

We all want the PLR program to continue in perpetuity. Why shouldn't Canadian authors be receiving payment for their books held in libraries in 2106? Only a growth management plan will guarantee that. If we don't do something now, there won't be a program of any significance in 2026, let alone 2126.

When I presented the idea for the plan to the League at its 2004 AGM in Montréal, the membership voted unanimously to support it in principle. Since that time we have been working with Heritage officials, through PLR Chair Carole David, on a number of scenarios that would allow the Commission to implement a sliding scale.

I'm getting to the projected figures, but please bear with me while I complete the history of this project.

We first presented Heritage with a base increase of \$1.6 million. But two years have passed since those initial discussions, and the number we recently reached, in early May, was \$3.5 million. Without at least that amount, the Commission feels it cannot introduce a fair and effective plan.

Right now, with a new government and a new minister, and a drastic reduction to Canada Council funding from the Liberals' pre-election promise of \$315 million over three years to the Conservatives' \$50 million over two years (the PLRC receives its money as earmarked funding in the Council's overall budget) we are waiting to see how much money Heritage is willing to commit.

The people at Heritage who have been working on this file are definitely behind the plan and, prior to the election, had as much said that they could guarantee that a budget increase was in the offing. But now, who knows?

Anyway, if we get sufficient funding here's how things will go:

Support will be distributed so that recent and new titles will get an INCREASE and higher rate of compensation, returning their payments to the 1986 level or higher. Older titles will receive less money.

What is important to understand here is that the committee's new plan has determined that, with the required budget increase, **MOST AUTHORS WILL RECEIVE HIGHER PAYMENTS.**

However, authors who have not published for many years will experience a decrease in their payment over the years.

N.B. Remember: without a budget increase, tied or not to a growth management plan, payments to all authors will decrease.

THE FORMULA:

-- A top rate (dependent upon the budget) will be established for books registered within the previous five years of the program. (This corresponds to the period of time when books are most often borrowed from libraries.)

--Titles registered within the previous five years to that (6-10 years old) will receive 80% of the top rate.

--Titles registered in the previous five years to that (11-15 years old) will receive 70% of the top rate.

--Titles 16 or more years old will receive an amount based on the remaining budget.

The following table demonstrates the impact the sliding scale would have, with an increased budget of \$3.5 million:

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Max per title (first five yrs)	\$287.35	\$452.20	\$452.20	\$452.20	\$452.20	\$452.20
Max per title (6-10 yrs)	\$287.35	\$361.76	\$361.76	\$361.76	\$361.76	\$361.76
Max per title (11-15 yrs)	\$287.35	\$316.54	\$316.54	\$316.54	\$316.54	\$316.54
All other titles	\$287.35	\$316.54	\$288.40	\$248.15	\$212.45	\$180.60

What we know from this payment scenario is the following:

- 1) An author's age is not necessarily the most important indicator as to how payments would be affected in this sliding scale scenario. It rather depends on the frequency of publication, no matter what the author's age.
- 2) The median payment level (the payment level earned by half the number of registered authors) would show a slight increase over the current system.
- 3) There is a built-in flexibility in the sliding scale plan. Its payment levels could be readily adjusted to accommodate new money at any point.
- 4) The greatest advantage of the sliding scale plan over others that the committee considered is that while payments for a given title do diminish over time, no title would ever lose its PLR payment entirely.

I hope this clarifies anything that you might have wondered about regarding the implementation of a sliding scale plan.

Please remember that all this is still hypothetical until we have "green light" figures from Heritage. The PLRC's AGM precedes ours by one week, so I hope to be able to provide the membership with information on recent developments.

I will be at the League AGM to answer any questions you may have.

See you in Ottawa.



## ***Education Committee Report***

*Terry Ann Carter*

### A Year In Review:

For a second year in a row, Random Acts of Poetry returned to Canada. For one week in October, Canadian poets from twenty six cities, were joined by nine poets from England, Ireland and Scotland. to read poetry “on the streets”. A celebration of poetry and literacy, the poets traveled through their cities randomly reading to strangers in parks, bus stops, schools, cafeterias, cafes, shops, libraries, hair salons, and other everyday places. Lisa Stevens, VP of Marketing at Abebooks ( a sponsor of Random Acts of Poetry) wrote, “We are delighted to help promote poetry and literacy around the world.”

RAP is the brainchild of League member Wendy Morton, West Jet’s “Poet of the Skies”, and author of three collections of poetry. She is also sponsored by Daimier Chrysler who has provided a PT (poetry travels) Cruiser for her poetry and literacy work.

The theme of “poetry everywhere” was carried through to National Poetry Month in April, including youth initiatives and teacher resource packages available on the League website. Young Poets’ Week ran from April 9 – 15, 2006. Teachers who signed on to [www.youngpoets.ca](http://www.youngpoets.ca) teachers’ list serve, received daily messages describing easy and effective ways to celebrate with students. The list serve also includes lesson plans, reading lists, digital history of Canadian poets, on-line discussion groups plus information on editing and publishing. Students in six provinces had the opportunity to meet poets through a series of classroom readings sponsored by the League provincial writers’ associations. Established in Canada in April (1999) by the League, National Poetry Month brings together schools, publishers, booksellers, literacy organizations across the country, to celebrate poetry and its vital place in Canadian communities.

I was privileged to attend both the Chalmers Conference and the Canadian Conference of the Arts “Mapping Canada’s Cultural Policy: Where do we go from here?”

Keynote speaker Alain Gourd addressed this question and more as he outlined a cultural policy framework positioning Canada in a global spectrum by locating existing policies and measures and developing new ones. Other concerns: equitable tax treatment for artists and the arts, support for increased resources for the cultural programs of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the likelihood of new legislation being introduced to further compromise Canadians’ Charter Right to Freedom of Expression Other speakers at the conference included Robert Spickler, (President of CAA) and Paul Hoffert, who founded the CulTech Research Centre at York University.

The League continues to support poets in publishing and performing arts, as well as providing members with benefits and services. The League speaks for poets on many issues: Public Lending Rights and Access Copyright just a few. The League now serves nearly 600 members and plans to continue its educational programs across the wide cultural and regional diversity of this country.

## ***International Affairs Report***

*Cornelia Hoogland*

Dear Colleagues,

I have thought a lot about how to complete the tasks of 1) addressing the state of poetry in Canada, 2) gathering international website materials, 3) providing guiding questions for people who might want to visit those sites, such as what is the fee for submitting my poetry, and 4) and what to say in a letter to the andrews/fife group.

Here are my thoughts:

- 1) I thought of a number of options such as gathering all the available online correspondence surrounding the Solway/Starnino debate, naming authors who represent different forms of poetry as well as regions, and so forth. I decided not to entertain the S/S debate. What follows is a sampling is what I think might represent the state of poetry in Canada.

I would like to create a list of online literary journals located in regions of the country. I would like to represent different forms of poetry as well as cultural groups where possible, but would mostly like to leave that sort of representation up to the journals themselves. I have listed a few of the usual suspects but know that you would be able to add your selections as well. The sites must be online as this will be sent to international addresses as requested. Please send me your suggestions, adding the answers to the following questions regarding each site. 1. Where the journal is located. 2. Is there one line of the mandate that suggests who gets published? 3. Is the poetry online? 4. Please note and provide the web address for any essays of particular interest regarding the state of poetry in Canada.

Malahat Review, Room of One's Own, Grain, Prairie Fire, Descant, Queen's Quarterly, The Fiddlehead, The Antigonish Review, the New Quarterly. We need Quebec representation, Aboriginal, Black, performance and rap, to name a few. Please help me out!

In addition to this I would like to compile a brief sampling of publications of interviews with poets. Tim Bowling's book comes to mind of course, and I need help with other titles.

- 2) gathering international website materials. I have decided not to do this. Most of my searches ended up replicating those already on the league website.
- 3) providing guiding questions for people who might want to visit those sites, such as what is the fee for submitting my poetry. Here are my questions:

### **Questions for Poetry Festival Sites**

How will my poetry be given to the public? (website, publication, oral presentation?)

Is there more than one category for submitting my poetry?

Is there a theme or topic that this festival embraces?

Is there a specific format?

What genre of poetry is accepted?

How much is the fee to enter the contest/festival?

How often does the festival run?

What is the caliber of poets against whom I will be competing?

What is the submission deadline?

What is the application process and how do I pay my fees?

Can I submit my work if it has been previously published?

Is my poem protected my copyright if it appears on your website or within a publication?  
 Will there be a discussion forum about my poetry?  
 When was the website last updated?  
 What do you think? Are these questions naïve? Helpful? Please edit as you see fit.

3) and what to say in a letter to the andrews/fife group. I will write a brief letter that includes the research of #1, offering some background and context.  
 So this is my progress report for the end of Sept. ( a few days late). Please contribute to the discussion.

**Book and Periodical Council (BPC)**

*Sharon Singer*

The Book and Periodical Council continues to fight for a higher profile for Canadian books in a variety of ways, including the support of the Canadian Conference on the Arts and the Canadian Arts Coalition, which seeks to get increased funding for the Canada Council.

Freedom to Read Week was a great success this year, the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the initiative. To keep up to date about this annual February event, check out [www.freedomtoread.ca](http://www.freedomtoread.ca)

BookNet Canada (BNC), the not-for-profit agency set up in 2002, to implement new technologies in bookstores, publishing companies, distributors and wholesalers, is making some of its information available. BNC Sales Data is altering the titles on the bestseller list, by providing more accurate sales figures. This gives publishers an earlier and clearer indication of what is selling, rather than waiting for returns. Each week 600 retail locations, including the chains, independents, higher education, specialty and discount wholesalers are reporting their sales figures. As yet, online booksellers are not included. For more information see Judy Stoffman’s article in the Toronto Star, Feb 19, 2006. Link from BookNet website [www.booknetcanada.com/mambo/](http://www.booknetcanada.com/mambo/)

The Book Summit which takes place on June 9<sup>th</sup> this year, will be over by the time you read these words, but this event, organized by the Book and Periodical Council as part of BookExpo, focuses this year on “Writers to Readers: Linking the Content Creators to the End Users.” Keynote speaker is Michael Cader, one of the preeminent electronic publishers in the world, owner and editor of *Publisher’s Marketplace*. Other panelists include Dan Rose of Amazon.com, Kevin Smokler, author of *Bookmark Now*, and Tom Turvey of Google Print.

A shocking study by the Canada Council discovered that in countries with a similar mandate to the Canada Council for the Arts, per capita spending for total arts grants (Canadian dollars) was as follows:

<b>COUNTRIES WITH ARTS COUNCILS WITH A SIMILAR MANDATE TO CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS</b>			
	<b>Total Arts</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Data Year</b>

	<b>Grants per capita in Can</b>	<b>Budgets* per capita in Can</b>	
<b>ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND</b>	\$22.99	\$24.36	2003-2004
<b>SCOTTISH ARTS COUNCIL</b>	\$20.00	\$22.37	2003-2004
<b>CREATIVE WALES (ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES)</b>	\$17.46	\$19.46	2003-2004
<b>THE ARTS COUNCIL (IRELAND)</b>	\$16.28	\$17.91	2003
<b>ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND - NATIONAL LOTTERY FUND</b>	\$13.62	..	2003-2004
<b>AUSTRALIA COUNCIL</b>	\$6.19	\$6.91	2003-2004
<b>CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND</b>	\$5.64	\$7.01	2003-2004
<b>CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS</b>	<b>\$4.15</b>	<b>\$4.73</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>
<b>NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (US)</b>	\$0.44	\$0.51	2003

Figures are preliminary and are subject to further revision by Canada Council.

Initiatives of BPC members that affect LCP members:

Access Copyright, in partnership with Creative Commons, is working on a Canadian public domain registry, or public domain wiki, which means that Canadian works in the public domain will be more widely accessible by means of a free database.

Access Copyright also provides online Copyright Law courses. For more information, email [education@accesscopyright.ca](mailto:education@accesscopyright.ca) Access Copyright affiliates and licensees can register for the course at no charge.

The Association of Canadian Publishers is planning a “Book Event” for October 2007 with the express purpose of increasing the visibility of Canadian books.

The Periodical Writers Association of Canada (PWAC) has changed its name to the Professional Writers’ Association of Canada.

The Writers Union of Canada (TWUC) is continuing to organize professional-development workshops. I attended the last one and found it extremely worthwhile. TWUC is conducting research into the living conditions of all artists (not only writers) in Canada and beginning work on a resource centre for senior artists. [www.writersunion.ca](http://www.writersunion.ca)

Canadian Book Manufacturers Association

A sad fact is that there are only five book manufacturing companies left in Canada with 90% of the market held by three companies. U of T Press has closed its printing operations and Transcontinental closed in Ontario. There is a paper shortage and a prediction that “paper is dying.” Could the new digital Sony Reader be its replacement?

BPC website: [www.bookandperiodicalcouncil.ca](http://www.bookandperiodicalcouncil.ca)

## ***Financial Report***

We have finished the 2005/2006 fiscal year with great results, as we have improved our budget by \$18,411 this year, thus reducing our deficit to \$80,000. We were able to do so by keeping down our operating costs lower by about \$60,000 less than last year. We haven't received the Trillium grant due to our deficit situation, but were encouraged to re-apply once the reduction is more visible. These were the two major factors affecting this past year's budget:

- We have reduced expenses over \$40,000 in office salaries.
- We have reduced expenses over \$15,000 in office expenses.
- We have received more revenue in operating and projects grants, \$241,955 this year, in comparison to \$229,083 last year. Great to see that we have the on going support from our core funding bodies. This increase included an extra \$3,000 for Networking Activities from the Canada Council.
- We have spent \$7,000 less on other operating expenses as compared to last year, and \$2,000 less in AGM expenses.
- After working with the Department of Heritage, we were able to receive most of the outstanding funds from previous years (2001-2003). The total amount that we have received is \$7,321.36.
- Our fundraising revenue added up to a total of \$17,477 this past year.

We have received less revenue than we hoped for in mainly fundraising. We budgeted for around \$30,000 and received about \$17,477, which is still a good amount, however, we can see why the League must focus on private funding as its main goal for this next fiscal year.

### Projections for 2006/2007

We are projecting another improvement of \$27,000 next year, which will reduce the deficit again to about \$20,000. We are hoping to achieve this by a small increase in government operating revenue, as well as through focusing on our fundraising efforts and applying to foundations for support for our Young Poets projects and youngpoets website. We are continuing to work meet with our group (Communications Action Group), and will be applying for funding to a specific foundation this summer.