



Chaparral updrafts

from the
California Federation
of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

serving California poets for over 60 years

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A Passion for Poetry (and Profits)

By Stephen Kinzer, *The New York Times*

When John W. Barr was a teenager, he walked into his family's living room and announced that he had decided to become a poet.

"That's fine," his father replied, "but go to college so people will think you're an eccentric, not just a beach bum."

Barr followed that advice. He studied English literature at Harvard and later earned a business degree, becoming an investment banker and making a fortune on Wall Street. But he never lost his passion for poetry and now finds himself in a job that suits his rare combination of interests.

At 61, Barr has moved to Chicago from New York to become president of the Poetry Foundation, with a challenge perhaps unique in the history of literature: deciding how to make use of a gift worth more than \$100 million. The gift, which came in 2002 from Ruth Lilly, the pharmaceutical heiress, shook the world of American poetry.

For most of the 20th century the Poetry Foundation was a small institution called the Modern Po-

Gerri Doran receives the 2004 Walt Whitman Award

The Academy of American Poets announced on May 5 that Gerri Doran has won the 2004 Walt Whitman Award for her first book-length collection of poems, *Resin*, which will be published in the spring of 2005. The winning manuscript was chosen by Henri Cole from over 1250 entries in an open competition. The Academy of American Poets has awarded Ms. Doran a \$5,000 cash prize and will purchase copies of her book for distribution to its members. She will also receive a one-month residency at the Vermont Studio Center.

On selecting Gerri Doran's manuscript for the award, Henri Cole wrote:

In her remarkable first book, *Resin*, Gerri Doran transforms the viscous substance of life into the amber liquid of poetry. Her poems—intelligent, restrained, sorrowful—appear engraved by a master's hand.

Gerri Doran grew up in northwestern Montana. She received a bachelor's degree from Vassar College and a master of fine arts from the University of Florida and also attended the University of Michigan and

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etry Association. Although it was often on the brink of bankruptcy, its monthly magazine, *Poetry*, with a circulation of about 11,000, emerged as the most important journal of poetry in the United States. In 1915 it published for the first time a poem written in what

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Convention highlights recapped for the record

Developed around the theme of *Flight*, an exciting and enjoyable program of events filled the 2004 CFCP Convention held in the Ontario Airport Marriott April 30 – May 2.

Each participant received a handy 6 1/2 x 9 notebook with snap closure, inscribed with the name of the organization on the outside, a pad of notepaper, numerous pockets, and a pen holder inside. Also included in their "goodie bag" were several magnets, message pads, ball point pens, and other items of interest.

Those who arrived on Friday afternoon participated in a program on the topic of *Favorite Poems Written by Other Poets*. The official opening at 7 pm began with greetings from Edward Cortez, Mayor of the City of Pomona, followed by the reading of the Theme Poem, *ides of winter*, by debbee loyd.

This was followed by *Highlights from CFCP History*, a somewhat informal recollection of anecdotes of past CFCP activities by Pegasus Buchanan, past state president; and concluded by Tumbleweed chapter anecdotes from Anna Mae Johnson "Jonni" Terrell and Elaine Lazzeroni.

Saturday's events began with *Meet the Authors* in the book room, which remained open throughout the day for browsing and discussions. Morning sessions across the hall in Grand Ballroom, Salon 2 included *Everett Ruess: Poet, Artist, Adventurer* by Mary and Wil Hurley, and *Poetry on the Web* by Ursula T. Gibson.

The Poets' Luncheon, held in the lovely 3-story Atrium of the Lobby, included a troubador, Jeremy

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For questions involving membership, either new or renewal, please contact the treasurer.

Be sure to visit our new web site:

<http://www.ChaparralPoets.org>

Convention recalled

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Corr, who serenaded the group during the meal with a selection of his own works and those of other artists.

A program of piano music by Dr. Henry Sheng initiated the afternoon sessions. This was followed by *It Only Hurts When I Laugh*, a discussion of humorous poetry by Dr. Jack Fulbeck, and a two-part session on *Sonnets* by Elaine Lazzeroni. The Youth Contest Awards were presented in late afternoon, and two sessions followed in the evening: a slide and prose poem commentary by Keith Van Vliet; and a two-person *Poetic Dialog* by Richard Thielo and Lee Collins.

As always, the "unscheduled" read-arounds following the last session were highly popular each evening.

The Membership Meeting was well attended with good audience participation. A rather lengthy but essential discussion on CFCP's approach to youth outreach resulted in several good suggestions which will be acted upon in coming months.

Unfortunately, because the discussion consumed most of the morning, the session that had been scheduled to follow was re-scheduled to follow the afternoon Awards program, *Poetry and Music* by Marie Searles, and *Rhyme*

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'Passion for Poetry' drives new director

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was then a new form, free verse. The poem was "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and it had been written a few years earlier by a 23-year-old named T. S. Eliot. Carl Sandburg's "Chicago Poems" and Wallace Stevens's "Sunday Morning" were also first published in *Poetry*.

Ms. Lilly's huge gift threw the organization first into ecstasy and then into confusion. In a move that stunned the tight-knit community of American poets, the magazine's long-time editor, Joseph Parisi, resigned last summer. Some took his departure as a signal that corporate auditors were pushing aside true lovers of literature. But, sitting in his Chicago office, Barr insisted that there would be no conflict between his commitment to good management and his love of poetry. He said Stevens and Eliot "broke a lot of ice for us all" by combining careers in business and poetry.

"In both of these fields you use creativity to find order in a chaotic experience," he said. "Business does that in the external world. Poetry does it internally by way of articulation."

"To me this is a historic opportunity in American poetry," he said. "Poetry helps us live better, helps us understand the human experience. It is with us at the heights and depths of that experience. Our goal is to get it in front of people whose lives it can change for the better. But I'm also very excited about the management opportunities.

"I don't see any reason why a cultural organization can't be run like a good corporation. If we can do that, we'll not only be on the road to success ourselves but may even be able to give some ideas to other arts groups."

His favorite poets range from Yeats to Billy Collins but he adds that he often wonders whether other masters might be working in secret. "I am always haunted by the thought that the poetry of today that will be celebrated a century from now is unknown to us now," he said.

One of Barr's first tasks will be to propose how the Poetry Foundation should use its new wealth. Will it give grants to poets, sponsor public events, publish its own line of books, design poetry courses for high schools and colleges?

"We haven't finished our search for the best ideas," he said. "We need to think of this as our first order of business."

The chairwoman of the foundation's board, Deborah Cummins, said that after receiving Ms. Lilly's huge gift the foundation would change, but that "we've really had to stop, as a group, to consider what needs to be done and what we can now do."

"It's new territory for us," she said. "We've been transformed from a fund-raising board to a management board, and then to a policy-making and guidance board that has to think of a grand vision."

Some poets are concerned about what course the foundation may now follow and especially about the future of *Poetry* magazine. Mr. Parisi, its former editor, declined to comment on his departure, but others were less reticent.

"I was very disconcerted by it, as were most poets in America," David Bottoms, the poet laureate of Georgia, said. "At this point I'd say American poets are a little bit fearful but also hopeful that the eclectic and very high-level quality that Joe represented will be continued. The last few issues under the new editor, Christian Wiman, have been very good, which is reassuring because that magazine is an American institution."

"I'm very heartened that someone would give that kind of money to poetry or to any of the arts, but what they do with it is another question," Mr. Bottoms said.

Tree Swenson, executive director of the Academy of American Poets, based in New York, said Barr was a good choice to lead the Poetry Foundation.

"In a past life I ran an organization that received a large philanthropic gift, and I can tell you that it's really hard to manage change on that level," Ms. Swenson said. "Barr is one of the few people who have that combination, knowing the world of financial management from his business career and also being very knowledgeable not just about contemporary poetry but also about the organizations around this country that are working in the field. There's this notion that poetry and money don't mix, but that's just what it is, a romantic notion."

Mr. Barr has published several books of poetry and has taught poetry at Sarah Lawrence. He said that much of what the foundation did with its new wealth would be aimed at expanding the audience for poetry in the United States, especially among young people.

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Monthly Contest Winners

Caught in Mid-Kiss

Two lithe, intense lovers.
Her hands curl round his head,
his neck, her long slim legs
drape across his lap.

She is far more dedicated
to this kiss than he.
His hands make no contact.
Only his hot, willing mouth.
My eyes linger on the pair
caught by a camera in mid-kiss.

But it's her shoes that remind
take me back to 1969
the same shoes I wore
the year of my Latin love, the year
he said *beautiful, you're beautiful*
a hundred times a day, sang praises
(the first to sing such praises)
to *my* long, slim legs.

For decades I've searched
for those black patent-leather
clunky heeled shoes
with the marquise buckles.
Now I know.
She's wearing them,
that lithe, intense girl in the picture.

Ah, but does that shadow of a man
she so ardently kisses
make love to *her* in Spanish
whenever she asks?

—Phyllis Williams, Cupertino, CA
First Prize, February

Self-Portrait with Pipe and Yellow Smoke Spiraling

Vincent Van Gogh, Arles, January, 1889

Look at the white bandage
wrapped under his chin and around his face.
You are supposed to stare.
His piercing blue eyes insist.
Bundled in green coat and azure hat,
pipe clamped tightly between pale lips,
he tricks you into gaping.

Some of you, diffident, squeamish,
might want to argue whether Vincent
cut off his right ear, or his left.
The summer before, when he bought the mirror
for the little yellow house in Arles,
he affirmed his task was to lay bare his soul,
not set mirrors at angles
so he could see himself as others saw him.

So in this portrait, with greater precision
than the razor slashing across his ear,
Vincent cuts open his heart
and exposes even more of his anguish.

He is shouting at you,
when you forget his bandage,
to remember the spirals of smoke
rising like golden incense from his breast
and consecrating your silent suffering.

—Rose Ann Spaith, Columbus, OH
Second Prize, February

Tumbleweed

A tumbleweed as tall as a car
blew into town,
into the middle of town.

Well,
Our town may be small but
it isn't so small that we
usually see
tumbleweeds
tumbling down
like a rumor through
the middle of town,
a tumbleweed the size of a car,

that new silver car
by the post-office curb,
and we wonder
who,
as we saunter along,
will come to retrieve
the car from the weed,
the tumbleweed measuring
itself by the car, the new silver car,
this tumbleweed stalled in the middle of town,
stopped in its
tumbling,
tumbling down.

—Cleo Griffith, Salida, CA
Third Prize, February

Monthly Contest Winners

Meyer's Candy and Stationary Store

Behind the counter
a young lady who loves me.
I know because she told me so
the first week I went there.

She said I looked like someone
she once knew, someone special.
Oh, an old boyfriend, a lover?
I must be her type.

She showed me a cracked photo,
two fat old men in homburgs,
and side curls.
You see who you are,
the one on the right.
Taken aback, I try not to show it.
This is father.

After that I avoided the store;
but then when I needed some lozenges
she was there of course.
Handed them to me along with a tissue
that's for your runny nose.

She looked me in the eye.
I hear you write poetry.
I nodded, thinking
I'm not coming here anymore.
She put the change in my palm slowly
one coin at a time.
I write too, in my diary;
would you read it sometime
and see all the bad things that happened to me?

—Richard J. Thielo, Upland, CA
First Prize, March

Tonight I'm Coming Home Tired

So I imagine a cat, a companionable cat,
greeting me with her lustrous eyes.

I haven't had a cat for ten years
and Bill has been gone for months.
Sunday evening
and the apartment is empty.

I'll induce the lamp light of my teenage home,
glowing Sunday afternoons
on the thin carpet,
over the black rattan sofa,
bright in the wood grain
of Mother's rocking chair.

Mother will be here with us teenage girls;
we'll have our usual Sunday evening treat:
cinnamon toast, contentment, and tea,
(sometimes Vienna sausages and kippered herring).

We'll listen to music on the radio,
sing *In the Gloaming* — with pathos — in two part
harmony,
wipe away hyper-sentimental tears. And then
laugh at ourselves.

—Norm Kohout, Sacramento, CA
Third Prize, March

Harpoon

I float through the upturned eye
of the sea into the heartbeat
of a whale,
her lung caverns echoing
echoing fear.

The fetus is first
to sliver away
before killing spears
explode the core of her grief
and blood drowns the sun.

I swim up swim up
the crimson throat
of the sea,
my flesh flensing
flensing away.

Only an image stays
like a fossil.

The horizon heaves and turns
heaves and turns

in a whirlpool of upturned eyes
their humanity haunting
haunting

The vanished rim
of the sea
where I dip my raven's wing
in final salute.

—Elizabeth A. Bernstein, Paradise, CA
Second Prize, March

A handy info-page

Here is the page you'll want to have handy when people ask how to join CFCP, or for your own double-checking of the monthly contest categories and rules. Both items are contained in a convenient reference source: one that can be photocopied and given to prospective new members or pinned on the bulletin board above your desk.

And be sure to send in your poems to the monthly contest... it's where many of us first see our names in print! The price is so minimal you can hardly afford to pass up the chance. Notice that many of the categories are open-ended enough to accept almost any type or style or subject. Look through that collection you've been holding back and see if you have something to enter.

Also, the membership year has moved into its third phase, meaning that new members can join for just \$7.50! Please think in terms of making a copy and giving this handy form to an interested friend or acquaintance. It can be completed and returned (along with a check) to your chapter treasurer, who will then send it in to the state.

Make a few copies of this page to carry with you and hand them to your friends and acquaintances. Leave a few copies at your library or on the bulletin board at the local college or university. Let's all recruit a few new members. Get the word out!

CFCP, Inc. Monthly Contests

Except where otherwise indicated, poems are limited to 28 lines

RULES

- JANUARY** — Free Verse
- FEBRUARY** — Poet's Choice
- MARCH** — Any Subject, Any Style
- APRIL** — Light or Humorous Verse
- MAY** — Poet's Choice
- JUNE** — Children, Pets or Places
- JULY** — *no contest*
- AUGUST** — Poet's Choice
- SEPTEMBER** — Any Subject, Any Style
- OCTOBER** — Any Poem 24 Lines or Fewer
- NOVEMBER** — Nature (any style)
- DECEMBER** — *no contest*

Contests are open to all poets in the United States and Canada. Each poem submitted must be typewritten on standard size paper with the contest month in the upper right-hand corner. Send ONE COPY of each poem with author's name and address in the upper left-hand corner of the reverse side. Address labels are acceptable. Multiple entries are especially welcome.

Only UNPUBLISHED POEMS and poems not previously awarded a money prize are eligible. A fee of one dollar (\$1.00) must accompany entry for each poem submitted. Send cash or make checks to CFCP, Inc. DEADLINE is the last day of the contest month. Envelope must be postmarked no later than 12 midnight of that day. *Print contest month on outside of mailing envelope.*

NOTE: *In any month wherein insufficient entries are received, those poems which were submitted will be held over and judged with the entries for the following month.*

1st prize: \$25.00 2nd prize: \$15.00 3rd prize: \$10.00

Poems will be returned only if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Allow one month after closing date of contest before sending poems elsewhere. Winning poems will be printed in the Chaparral Newsletter.

**CALIFORNIA
FEDERATION
OF CHAPARRAL
POETS, INC.**

➔ Pegasus Buchanan
mail contest Monthly Contest Editor, CFCP, Inc.
entries to 1422 Ashland Avenue
Claremont, CA 91711



YES!

I definitely want to be a member of the
California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. for the year 2004.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____

E-MAIL _____

Your membership includes all issues of the newsletter; Updrafts, free entry in the Annual Contest, Monthly Contest information, and Membership Roster every 2 years during the membership period. All memberships renew between 8/1 and 12/31 yearly. Persons joining between February 1 and July 31 will use the pro-rated formula. New memberships received between August 1 and December 31 will be extended for the following full year.

*** Those who desire to continue membership with a chapter, please remit dues to your local chapter treasurer.**

How to Become a Member

check the appropriate item:

- _____ Membership Annual/Renewal \$15⁰⁰
- _____ New Member (February 1 to April 30) \$12⁰⁰
- _____ New Member (May 1 to July 31) \$7⁵⁰
- _____ Spouse (1/2 regular member) \$7⁵⁰, \$6⁰⁰, or \$3⁷⁵
- _____ Junior (under 21; show proof of age) \$3⁰⁰
- _____ Donation (specify amount)

_____ I am interested in joining a Chapter in my area (name of Chapter) _____

_____ I wish to join as a Member-at-Large.

_____ We wish to form a Chapter of our own (5 or more Regular Members are required to form a new Chapter) to be called _____

Members-at-Large: Clip this form and mail along with a check or money order **made payable to CFCP, Inc.** to:
Frances Yordan, Members-at-Large Chairman, 2575 W. San Jose Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711-2733.

All Others: Send this form along with a check or money order **made payable to CFCP, Inc.** to:
CFCP Treasurer, P.O. Box 806, Tujunga, CA 91043-0806.

Convention review

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as a *Classroom Technique* by Anna Mae Johnson "Jonni" Terrell.

The Adult Contest Awards program fit nicely into the three-hour afternoon slot, since it was again an eleven-category event.

Banquet keynote speaker Dr. Timothy Steele, a professor at CSULA, and a poet with many publications to his credit, is a leader in the New Formalist Movement. He shared a delightful series of observations and anecdotes regarding his career, and afterward, stayed to autograph books which had been for sale during the weekend.

C. Joy Haas presented the Beth Martin Haas Award for excellence and service to poets to an unsuspecting but deserving recipient: Norma King Green, chair of the Youth Contest.

The Roadrunnerup Award was presented to Jim Gibson for his poem entitled *Hands*, and the Golden Pegasus Award was presented to Cleo Griffith for *Early Morning Greyhound Bus*.

The local committee carried out the theme with table decorations emphasizing butterflies in vertical vases at the Poets Luncheon, and placing a different but related set of butterflies in vertical arrangements for the Banquet.

Nominations for Poetry Landmarks now solicited

The Academy of American Poets is inviting nominations from the public for poetry

Whitman Award

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Clare College, Cambridge. Most recently, she was a Wallece Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford. She now works for the Djerassi Resident Artists Program in Woodside, California, and lives near the beach in Pacifica. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *New England Review*, *The New Republic*, *TriQuarterly*, *32 Poems*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

Henri Cole was born in Fukuoka, Japan, in 1956 and raised in Virginia. He received his B.A. from the College of William and Mary in 1978, his M.A. from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee in 1980, and his M.F.A. from Columbia University in 1982. His volumes of poetry include: *Middle Earth* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003), *The Visible Man* (1998), *The Look of Things* (1995), *The Zoo Wheel of Knowledge* (1989), and *The Marble Queen* (1986). Cole's awards and honors include the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, the Berlin Prize of the American Academy in Berlin, the Rome Prize in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Amy Lowell Poetry Traveling Scholarship. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. From 1982 until 1988 he was executive director of The Academy of American Poets. Since then he has held many teaching positions and been the artist-in-residence at various institutions, including Brandeis, Columbia, Harvard, and Yale Universities, and Reed College. Cole is currently poet-in-residence at Smith College.

landmarks. "Road Trip! Poetry Landmarks across the U.S.A." will be showcased on the Academy's website, www.poets.org, during August 2004, as part of the Academy's year-long National Poetry Almanac project.

"We hope to have landmark nominations from all fifty states," says the Academy's executive director Tree Swenson. "We want to recognize points on our country's physical landscape that are also important to the cultural landscape." Some of the landmarks already chosen for the National Poetry Almanac include the Berkeley Poetry Walk (Berkeley, CA), the American Poets' Corner at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine (New York, NY), and Frost Place (Franconia, NH).

Landmarks submitted for consideration may be located anywhere in the United States and should be physical sites that are important to the history of American poetry. Ideally, all landmarks will be open to the public with free or low-cost admission. Nominations should include the landmark name, city, state, and a brief description. Nominations will be accepted only by email and should be sent to npm@poets.org. The deadline for submissions is midnight on June 30, 2004.

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nominations requested

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