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## Scots appoint first poet laureate

by Matthew Taylor for *The Guardian*

Glasgow-born Morgan was “the obvious choice”, said Scotland’s first minister.

Scotland created its first poet laureate February 16, breaking with 336 years of tradition. Edwin Morgan was appointed the Scots makar (poet) by the first minister, Jack McConnell, who said the Glasgow-born poet was the obvious choice.

“This position will symbolise the success of Scottish poets in the past and the potential of Scottish poetry in the future,” he said. “I hope that the Scots makar will inspire young Scots to enjoy, and indeed to write, poetry.”

Prof. Morgan’s work spans six decades and some of his best known poems, such as *The Second Life* (1968) and *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973), have been taught in Scottish schools.

In the *Times* he admitted that his new position would be “a kind of rival post” to Britain’s poet laureate, Andrew Motion.

“[Mr. Motion’s] post is officially for the United Kingdom but essentially it’s an English post. It has never been held by any Welsh, Irish or Scottish poet, so this is a good thing.

“It will possibly make the English think about their

own poet laureate and their relation to Scotland and other parts of the UK,” he said.

Mr. Motion said: “I see it as a sign that at last people are wanting to demonstrate that they want to have poetry as a part of a cultural map.”

The unpaid position will last for three years.

*Edwin Morgan’s poem, “Strawberries” is on page 2*

## Convention plans detailed

Developed around the theme of *Flight*, an exciting and enjoyable program of events awaits us at the Convention in the Ontario Airport Marriott April 30 – May 2. Registration forms for the convention and for hotel lodging are included in this issue.

Those who have attended past conventions can attest to the enthusiasm that envelops participants as they have opportunities to meet and share with other poets from through-out the state. Newcomers are encouraged to bring their notebooks, binders, journals — wherever they keep their treasured compositions — so that they will be prepared to read from their own work as they attend the nightly read-arounds throughout the weekend.

The Registration Table will open at 3 pm on Friday, April 30, and an afternoon audience-participation program will be offered on the topic, *Favorite Poems Written by Other Poets*. For this activity, members are asked to bring books or other printed copies of poems by other authors that they would like to share.

The official opening is scheduled for 7 pm, with a greeting from local city officials, followed by anecdotes of past CFCP activities to challenge the historians among us, concluded naturally by the ever-popular read-arounds. Convention Chair Marjorie Voigt has her eye on a lovely spot on the third floor above the lobby, where there is plenty of room, a variety of types of seating, pleasant lighting, and an open atmosphere.

Saturday will begin with *Meet the Authors* in the

## SF Poetry Center flourishing

**Within its walls are the sounds of Auden, Ginsberg and Walker. Their words still echo at the Poetry Center, 50 years after its birth.**

by Heidi Benson, *Chronicle* Staff Writer

There are at least two versions of the Poetry Center’s creation myth, and both involve Dylan Thomas.

In the most oft-told tale, the seed was planted by the wild Welshman on a 1951 visit hosted by San Francisco State Professor Ruth Witt-Diamant.

Reportedly the poet declaimed, “There’s a lot of nasty ideas you poets out here have. You should have a poetry center.”

In another version, the story starts in Wales. As Mark Linenthal, director of the Poetry Center from 1966-72, recalls it, “Ruth was visiting Thomas, and he was drunk most of the time at the bar.”

Apparently, this left her plenty of time for contemplation.

“She was wondering what she should do for po-

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# Chaparral updrafts

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*Please send news and information items to the editor one month in advance of intended publication date.*

*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 plans announced

*continued from page one*

book room, with sessions across the hall in one of the large ballroom salons, while upstairs a day-long Youth Poetry Festival will be underway.

The Poets' Luncheon will be held in the 3-story Atrium of the Lobby, concluded with a program of piano music by Dr. Henry Sheng. Further sessions will be presented in the afternoon and evening, followed, of course, by a read-around.

Main sessions will include *Everett Ruess: Poet, Artist, Adventurer; Poetry on the Web, It Only Hurts When I Laugh*; a two-part session on *Sonnets*; a slide and prose poem commentary; and a two-person *Poetic Dialog*.

The Annual Board Meeting will open the Sunday program, followed by a morning seminar. Winners in the Annual Contest will be presented beginning at 1 pm, and the Golden Pegasus Banquet will begin at 7 pm. Dr. Timothy Steele, UCLA professor and poet, and leader of the New Formalist Movement, will be the guest speaker. Truly committed participants will no doubt stay for one more session of read-arounds. In past years this informal session has sometimes been known to run into the wee hours.

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## Poetry Center in San Francisco a rare experience

*continued from page one*

etry in San Francisco when she got back, so she gathered ideas from all the locals about what a poetry center should be," Linenthal says.

The tenacious Witt-Diamant gained the institution's support and founded the Poetry Center in 1954 — that everyone agrees on.

And the author of "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night," who died in '53 at just 39, has a permanent place in the legend.

But since those events weren't recorded, the definitive story will never be known.

In a clear case of poetic justice, the center — now called the Poetry Center & American Poetry Archives at San Francisco State University — has become one of the most important repositories of poetry recordings in the nation.

That feat is ripe for celebration this week, as the center marks its 50th anniversary — at a time when preservation of these pieces of history is urgent.

Festivities begin with a benefit event Saturday night featuring Adrienne Rich, Ishmael Reed, Michael McClure, Robin Blaser and Etel Adnan, plus "rare voices from the American Poetry Archives collection."

There was a time not so long ago when space was so tight that the collection — stored between a boiler room and a photo lab — was nearly thrown out. The university came to the rescue: In 1995, a new Humanities building included climate-controlled rooms for the tapes.

The collection represents the evolution of magnetic tape from the '50s on — not a pretty history, since manufacturers were experimenting with new, often failed, technologies.

By the time the collection was moved to its new home, some tapes were disintegrating and many were too brittle to play without damaging them. A 1998 NEA grant provided two new computers to speed the process of digitizing the tapes, but progress is slow.

The three-person staff includes business manager Elise Ficarra. There's director Steve Dickson — who develops all the programming and teaches a course based on each year's season of visiting poets (this year's 15-week season includes 18 poetry programs). And there's tech-whiz Jiri Veskrna, whose job as videographer and archives manager is funded for just two-thirds time.

Poetry on tape? Priceless.

One of the "rare voices" from the Poetry Ar-

chives collection is that of Theodore Roethke, who gave the inaugural reading at the Poetry Center in February 1954.

"Very soon after, he got the Pulitzer Prize, and Ruth thought, 'We must be doing something right,'" Linenthal recalls.

That reading wasn't tape recorded, but — as Dickson surmises — it's likely that Kenneth Rexroth, the poet who helped found KPFA-FM, lured Roethke into the studio at the radio station. The clue: Roethke reading the same poems from that event is audiotape is #1 — the very first — in the Poetry Center archives.

*continued next issue*

## Strawberries

There were never strawberries  
like the ones we had  
that sultry afternoon  
sitting on the step  
of the open french window  
facing each other  
your knees held in mine  
the blue plates in our laps  
the strawberries glistening  
in the hot sunlight  
we dipped them in sugar  
looking at each other  
not hurrying the feast  
for one to come  
the empty plates  
laid on the stone together  
with the two forks crossed  
and I bent towards you  
sweet in that air  
in my arms  
abandoned like a child  
from your eager mouth  
the taste of strawberries  
in my memory  
lean back again  
let me love you

let the sun beat  
on our forgetfulness  
one hour of all  
the heat intense  
and summer lightning  
on the Kilpatrick hills

let the storm wash the plates

—Edwin Morgan

## 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 second phase, meaning that new members can join for just \$12! 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  
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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 ..... \$15<sup>00</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ New Member (February 1 to April 30) ..... \$12<sup>00</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ New Member (May 1 to July 31) ..... \$7<sup>50</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse (1/2 regular member) ..... \$7<sup>50</sup>, \$6<sup>00</sup>, or \$3<sup>75</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ Junior (under 21; show proof of age) ..... \$3<sup>00</sup>
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 plans

*continued from page two*

Among those slated to present during the weekend are Pegasus Buchanan, Lee Collins, Dr. Jack Fulbeck, Ursula Gibson, Mary and Wil Hurley, Elaine Lazzeroni, Marie Searles, Anna Mae Johnson Terrell, Keith Van Vliet, and Richard Thielo.

Poets are encouraged to bring copies of their recent publications and place them for sale in the book room. Anyone needing a space reserved in the book room needs to contact Convention Chair Marjorie Voigt in advance to make the appropriate arrangements.

## Apprentice to the Flower Poet Z

by Debra Weinstein. (Random House, \$23.95.)

A deliciously nasty first novel set in a geography that precisely evokes New York University and features a great fraud of a poet (Z.) who seeks perfection of the life, leaving her work to be done by the book's true heroine, Annabelle Goldsmith, Z.'s apprentice and dogsbody. Annabelle researches Z.'s poems and soon enough even writes them; the author, herself a real poet, amply provides appropriate verses.

## Hotel guest room space at a premium

Members who have not yet made their reservations at the Marriott may find their choices limited. Due to a scheduling change on the part of another organization, a heavy demand has been placed on rooms for the weekend of the convention, and some members have reported being told nothing was available.

That group will still be using the hotel's guest rooms on Friday night, and some of them may stay on Saturday. Marjorie Voigt, Convention Chair, and the hotel manager, Clay Miale, are working through this. He assures us that the Marriott staff will do everything possible to help us secure rooms at the special rate, but Friday night is almost sold out. He feels they will be able to accommodate all of us, but we may have to put our names on a waiting list for a few days before receiving a confirmation. The April 9 deadline is still good.

So... please go ahead and call or send in your reservations. ***It is important to contact the hotel immediately if you intend to make a reservation.*** Make sure the person you speak with understands you are reserving a room for the CFCP (Chaparral) Convention, and emphasize that we have been assured we will be accommodated, and you are willing to wait a few days for a confirmation, but you want your name and room

request on the list. Mention the manager, Clay Miale, and the Convention Chair, Marge Voight.

If you have already made reservations but were not booked for Friday night — and you want to be — ***please do not wait until you arrive to make the changes.*** You should also contact the hotel as soon as possible and follow the above procedure. Make certain that the clerk understands you are requesting a modification to your existing reservation.

## Poetry Foundation Update

Christian Wiman recently replaced Joseph Parisi as editor of *Poetry*, the 91-year-old monthly literary magazine published by the Chicago-based Poetry Foundation, formerly known as the Modern Poetry Association. Last June the organization expanded its mission to include book publishing—under the Poetry Press imprint—and summer teachers' institutes designed to provide educators with training in presenting poetry to their students. Parisi, editor of the magazine for 20 years, was named the foundation's executive director of publications and programs. In January the Foundation named John Barr as its president. Barr, a founder and managing director of SG Barr Devlin Associates, an investment banking firm in New York City, is also a published poet and a president emeritus of the nonprofit Poetry Society of America.

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