



Chaparral *updrafts*

from the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.
serving California poets for 70 years, Volume 70 No. 4, May, 2009

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To all CFCP, Inc., Members,

Thanks to all of you for placing your confidence in me to be your president for this term. As many of you know already, I provided a written statement to the convention, supported and reinforced by my open remarks, about my pride in the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc., and my hopes for the future of the organization. Chaparral abounds in talent and our members share an abiding respect for and love of the place of poetry in our culture, and, as stated in our By-laws, we exist "to further education in the teaching, writing and appreciation of poetry," for a adults as well as the children in our state. We support activities in furtherance of these goals. I personally encourage all our members to read our By-laws, to become more completely aware of who we are, who we have been, and to help in shaping our vision for the future in carrying out our mission.

Your active assistance in pursuit of these goals is not only requested, it is sorely needed. We need your experience as well as your energy and deep commitment. We need to build through the membership at the chapter level as well as at the executive levels.

We very much seek the active voicing of your concerns and opinions as well as active listening. Let the organization be you. Let the fellowship in our organization be seen and heard. It is only in that manner that we will encourage others to join with us.

I will now cover some immediate areas of concern:

Brochures

It has been encouraging to get responses from executive staff and others on brochure materials, including prototypes that have been used in CFCP, Inc., and elsewhere. I will be consulting with copying places shortly on the technicals and will prepare mockups for distribution and for comment to executive staff. While work on the brochure is progressing, it has been necessary to set it temporarily aside to prepare the *Updrafts* and all things connected thereto, including transitioning to new computer procedures, importing mailing lists, etc. My wife, Carol, has been very helpful in that regard.

Winner of the 2009 Pegasus

I Called

just to hear your voice
while I move my bristle brush
in the landscape of the canvas;
criss-crossed lines, swaying strokes,
ochre here, viridian there, this way and that....
Which direction is the wind blowing?

Full moon pulls at the grasses and tawny thistle.
Sharp edges poke—
prickly flower, tough to touch.
But moon draws gentleness out,
bends the golden stalk against an evening blue.
Your words dear friend, are like bright stars
adding highlights to the painting...
diamond white on the blossom,
deep cobalt in the shadows.

Linda Marie Prather

Ontario Convention Planning

Marge Voigt's efforts on the planned Ontario Convention have been ongoing, with excellent progress on all fronts. Elaine Lazzeroni has also been very constructively engaged in the program planning, with a focus on workshops of a specialized nature. I applaud their efforts.

Monthly Contest Chair

Cleo Griffith, our treasured Monthly Contest Chair, has tendered her resignation in order to give more of her attention to important family matters. Her dedication and perseverance have been celebrated throughout CFCP ranks. The entire organization appreciates her service and the warmth and generosity with which she has conducted her office. We wish her and her family the very best.

If anyone wants to be considered for the post of Monthly Contest Chair, please contact me, Laverne Frith, at meta4laverne@aol.com. Cleo is willing to respond to questions about the duties of the Monthly Contest Chair, as well. She has sent us the following list of responsibilities:

Duties of Monthly Contest Chair, CFCP, Inc.

1. **Decide on themes** for the monthly contests. These are to be approved by the CFCP, Inc. Board at the end of each year.
2. **Choose judges.**
3. **Receive entries and document** them. Give each poem a number on both copies. Distribute blind copies to judge 7 – 10 days after deadline. Allow judge about two weeks to respond. E-mail response is best – blind copies do not have to be returned, just the numbers and titles conveyed.
4. When judge sends winners' names, **request checks** be sent by the CFCP, Inc., Treasurer for the First, Second, Third Place. Send winners' list and return all poems for which there are SASEs.
5. **Deliver entry fees** to CFCP, Inc., Treasurer.
6. **Send winning poems** to editor of *Updrafts*.

Youth Contest Chair

We are indeed fortunate that Elsie Whitlow Feliz of New Helvetia Chapter has agreed to be our Youth Contest Chair, pending Executive Board approval. I personally know of Elsie's deep commitment to education and to youth and to the future they represent. I am certain that Elsie can rely on everyone in the organization to support her efforts in this important work.

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we learn of the passing of Alfred D. Hawkins of the Arrowhead Chapter of CFCP, Inc. Mr. Hawkins passed away in San Bernardino County in March of 2009 at the age of seventy nine. He was a loyal and dedicated member of Arrowhead Chapter and served at times as the chapter president, a post of which he was especially proud. I am sure we all stand in empathy at his passing, and our feelings are shared urgently with his family and the Arrowhead Chapter that knew him best.

Transition Business

We are still in the process of setting up accounts, collecting records and consolidating administrative matters. I hope to be able to include a more detailed accounting soon.

Modesto Convention

I would be remiss if I did not remind Chaparral as a whole of the recent successful convention in Modesto, characterized by enthusiastic participative attendance, stimulating Bardic Circles, challenging workshops and, in general, an enjoyable experience for those attending. We were even able to organize an informal ad hoc "Executive Board" of those to be elected in order to get a jump on working together. Kudos to Ed and Roberta Bearden, Jeremy Shuman, and Debbie Loyd and all the other fine people who made this very successful convention possible.

El Camino Poets in the News

Carol Louise Moon reports that her chapter is thriving, with new sign-ups and fresh enthusiasm for the presentations, workshoping opportunities, and the fellowship at their meetings at the Hart Senior Center. In addition to their other activities, I understand that tea is served to the members in real tea cups. A job well done.

Workshopping Alert to All Chapters of CFCP, Inc.

Now is the time for all chapters to review the opportunities for the workshopping of poems. You can begin with the poems submitted to the recent CFCP, Inc., contest. Conduct readings of these poems in chapter meetings to get feedback such as editing hints, misspellings, word usage suggestions, form suggestions, title changes, even ideas for submitting to journals for publication. Oftentimes, even winning poems can be improved.

Each and every feedback item you might receive can be helpful, even if coming from a less experienced poet. The sharing of a couple of poems can become the beginning of a fruitful process. Of course, long-time editors (and I am one of these) know how easy it is for failings in poems to occur. Remember that some of our best-known poets have shared their work with their own students for feedback. These poets know how important it is to get such input. Be open to the audience you must ultimately face.

You, of course, own the poem and you need only take what advice you think will aid the poem. Be thankful that someone cared enough to take a look at your work and tried to be helpful. Take the first steps to a new openness.

Laverne Frith, President, California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

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. Visit our website:
<http://www.ChaparralPoets.org>.

Winner of the 2009 roadrunnerup award

Shadow Man Sonnet

Don't pop-up unexpected, shadow man,
first call, then knock, before you break into
my place so I can glare at my clock's hands
and let you know that I'm not really through.

I'll first hear mantras with my inner ear,
then chant my own sad angry words toward loss.

I'll first hike canyon trails another year,
then pause to pick a fallen rock to toss.

I'll drive that road once more, as forests wave
at passing hours, toward distance dwindling gold.

Then hope you show up friendly, well-behaved,
when midnight stars seem near and twinkle cold.

My eyes can see my clock begin to spin,
those hands tick near when I must let you in.

Lee Collins

William Butler Yeats – Seventieth Anniversary of his Death

To mark the seventieth anniversary of Yeats' death, the Irish Repertory Theater recently produced eight of his plays and performed readings of the remaining eighteen. Yeats' plays are rarely performed now, even though the great Irish nationalist and poet seemed to consider himself first a playwright and only secondarily a poet.

Today, of course, Yeats is justifiably famous as one of the premier high modernist poets of the twentieth century. His political leanings, as well as his plays, have become more or less secondary in the critical evaluation of his work. Interestingly, the poetry that has generated this acclaim for Yeats is largely the output of his later years, especially those poems collected in his book entitled "The Tower," published in 1928.

Some of the most memorable works in this volume include "Among School Children," "The Tower," "Sailing to Byzantium," and "Leda and the Swan," arguably one of the finest modern sonnets ever written. It is inspirational to realize that, although seriously weakened by severe breathing disorders, Yeats continued to surpass himself in his maturity, adding masterpiece after masterpiece to his already distinguished body of work.

This might be a good time to revisit the poetry—and life—of W. B. Yeats. Many collections of Yeats' work have been published. One collection, for example, (focusing exclusively on his poetry) is titled, appropriately enough, "The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats," released through the Wordsworth Poetry Library.

Similarly, various excellent biographical works have been produced, including “Yeats: The Man and the Masks” by Richard Ellmann and “The Life of W. B. Yeats” by Terence Brown (Blackwell Critical Biographies). These titles are available from Amazon.com, or they can be ordered from your local bookseller.

Few poets have surpassed Yeats in exploring “the foul rag and bone shop of the heart” that is the human condition. Consider revisiting this great poet’s work.

APRIL & MAY MONTHLY CONTEST WINNERS

WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT *UPDRAFTS*

JUDGING HAD NOT YET COMPLETED
AT THE TIME THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO READING
THE WINNERS NEXT MONTH.

“The Shadow of Sirius” by W. S. Merwin—and the Joys of Poetry Book Groups

As you probably know, W. S. Merwin was recently awarded his second Pulitzer Prize for his latest book, “The Shadow of Sirius.” Merwin received his first Pulitzer Prize in 1971 for the poetry collection, “The Carrier of Ladders.” He is well known for his lyrically beautiful ecological poetry, charged with emotional content and written in a clean, spare style.

You might want to add a copy of “The Shadow of Sirius” to your poetry library. And should you decide to do that, perhaps you would also like to consider instituting an informal poetry book club. Members of your chapter might be interested in joining such a group. Two or three copies of the selected book can be shared by members until each person has had a chance to read the volume and take appropriate notes. Then arrangements can be made to meet in order to discuss the book.

It is not, of course, necessary to limit book group selections to collections of poetry. Literary handbooks, poetry criticism, and the like make excellent choices for group discussion and the sharing of ideas and concepts. Not only will you enhance your understanding of poetry, you will develop and/or deepen your relationships with the poets who are members of your book group. Should you start a poetry book club, we would be interested in a progress report after you have met two or three times.

A Few Words on Form: the English Madrigal

From time to time, we will reprise a form that we find particularly interesting and satisfying to write. Certainly the versatile English madrigal, developed by Geoffrey Chaucer, is such a form.

At first glance, the rhyme/refrain scheme seems complex and difficult, but once you think it through and begin to write the poem, the madrigal proves to be an extremely flexible and graceful tool for emphasizing imagery and expressing emotion. The key to a successful outcome lies, of course, in the careful choice of refrain lines.

That said, let's take a look at the schematics of the form. English madrigals are written in **iambic pentameter** and consist of **three stanzas: a tercet, a quatrain, and a sestet**. The rhyme/refrain pattern is as follows

Stanza One: A, B1, B2 **Stanza Two: a, b, A, B1** **Stanza Three: a, b, b, A, B1, B2**

The upper case letters represent refrains or repeater lines. As you can see, the whole poem turns on two rhymes, the "a-rhyme" and the "b-rhyme," so take care to enjamb where you can, so that the rhymes aren't too aggressive. Madrigals make wonderful contest poems, because the refrains, when skillfully handled, tend to be memorable. Interested? Try your hand at writing the flexible and beautiful English madrigal.

2009 California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. Monthly Contests

Except where otherwise indicated, poems are limited to 28 lines of text. All forms accepted for all categories. In any month where insufficient entries are received, those poems which were submitted will be held over and judged with the entries for the following month. Poems will be returned only if stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Allow one month from closing date of contest before sending poems elsewhere. Winning poems will be printed in the Chaparral *Updrafts* Newsletter.

JANUARY	Beginnings
FEBRUARY	Love
MARCH	Nature
APRIL	Light, Humorous
MAY	Journeys
JUNE	Vacation
JULY	NO CONTEST
AUGUST	Any subject, any style
SEPTEMBER	Harvest
OCTOBER	Portraits
NOVEMBER	Holidays
DECEMBER	NO CONTEST

1st Place: \$25.00

2nd Place: \$15.00

3rd Place: \$10.00

Rules

Contests are open to all poets in the United States and Canada. Each submission must be typewritten on standard-sized paper with the contest month in the upper right-hand corner. Send TWO COPIES of each poem with the author's name and address in the upper right corner on ONE copy only. Put no identification on the second copy. Address labels are acceptable; multiple entries are welcome.

Only UNPUBLISHED POEMS and poems not previously awarded a money prize are eligible. A fee of \$2 must accompany each poem submitted (3 for \$5). Make checks payable to CFCP, Inc. DEADLINE is the last day of the contest month. The envelope must be postmarked by midnight of that day. *Print the contest month on outside of envelope.*

Mail Contest Entries to: Cleo Griffith, Monthly Contest Chair, CFCP, Inc., 4409 Diamond Court, Salida, CA 95368-0632, cleor@yahoo.com

Membership Application

Yes _____ I definitely want to be a member of the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc., for the year 2009.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ Fax () _____

E-Mail _____

I prefer to receive my *Updrafts* Newsletter by _____ e-mail _____ US mail. **Please add \$5 to your check if you get your *Updrafts* by US 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 1st and July 31st will use the pro-rated formula. New memberships received between August 1 and December 31 will be extended for the following full year.

How to Become a Member

Check the appropriate item.

- ___ Membership Annual/Renewal \$20.00
- ___ New Member (2/1 – 4/30) \$15.00
- ___ New Member (5/1 – 7/31) \$10.00
- ___ Spouse (1/2 regular member) \$10.00, \$7.50, or \$5.00
- ___ Junior (under 21 show proof of age) \$3.00
- ___ Donation (specify amount) _____
- ___ I am interested in joining a chapter in my area (name of chapter) _____
- ___ I already belong to 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 payable to CFCP, Inc. to: Frances Yordan, Members-at-Large Chairperson, 2575 W. San Jose Ave., Fresno, CA 93711-2733. All others: Send this form along with check or money order payable to CFCP, Inc., to: CFCP Treasurer, Don Feliz, 7386 Cranston Way, Sacramento, CA 95822-4733.

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