

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORTS EDMONTON STROLL OF POETS



### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Greetings Strollers!

Thank you for your support this past year. Whether you were involved as a board or committee member, mic or door host, or an engaged Haven audience member, your investment was of immeasurable value to our community. I'm pleased to report that it was another successful season in what has become an enduring tradition of excellence for the Edmonton Stroll of Poets. As I reflect on the completion of our twenty-sixth year of operation I am gratefully reminded that what made us still sustains us. We were born to serve poetry and poets in and around Edmonton and we continue to do so.

The Poets' Haven continues to grow in popularity providing new and experienced poets an opportunity to express themselves in a democratic and supportive atmosphere. I am so grateful for the efforts of Janis, Susana, Anne and Marco for their contributions that keep our regular poetry gig running. I'm also thankful for their contributions on the board along with Alice, Naomi and David. I'd like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for Naomi McIlwraith's incredible long service to our board (12 years!) and to David for his contributions this past year. We wish them both the best.

I've always been impressed with how we've been able to hold true to our values and continue to seek ways to innovate and grow. Maintaining relevance and imagining progress, in an evermore-connective world, is a challenge we embrace. As always, it is the strength of our membership that keeps us vital. You're the heart, you're the beat, and you're the thump that keeps us jumping!

Yours in verse,  
John Leppard

### VICE- PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I was honoured to serve as Vice President and work together with the Board to support another positive Stroll season. After celebrating our 25th anniversary last year, this season, for me, was about continuing what's working to serve members and encouraging newcomers, new members and the next generation of poets. We've seen an increase in our Haven attendance again this season, added a couple reading slots to the always popular open mic and saw many new readers share their poetry for the first time.

I wish to thank our departing Board members: Naomi McIlwraith who has served the Board and the Stroll so well in so many roles for so many years; and David Crone for his contributions this year and ongoing support of poetry.

Lastly, a big thank you to our President, John Leppard, for all his work and the spirit of collaboration he always fosters.

I look forward to next year and the work to continue improving and sustaining the Stroll.

Marco Melfi

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

The minutes taken at each Board of Directors' monthly meeting record the discussions and decisions of the Directors. The Secretary then sends round a draft of these minutes to Directors prior to the next Board meeting, so any edits or corrections can be made before the meeting. The minutes form an integral part of the historical record of the Edmonton Stroll of Poets and are kept in the archives at the Writers' Guild of Alberta. Any member wishing to view the minutes is welcome to do so.

It has been my deep honor to serve on the Board of Directors as the Secretary for a few years, and I want to thank Marco Melfi for taking minutes in recent months when I haven't been able to. I am sad to have to leave the Board for this year, but I do hope to return to the Board as soon as I am able.

Naomi McIlwraith

### TREASURER'S REPORT

In the past year, the Stroll's revenues totaled approximately \$15,900 – an increase of about \$700 over the year before. However, our expenses were nearly \$3,000 higher than they had been the year before. As a result, we had a deficit for the year of \$1666, and our accumulated surplus—aka 'the cushion'—is now just over \$3700.

This is not unexpected. In the previous fiscal year, our revenue included ticket sales related to the Founders Feast. However, most of the expenses for the feast weren't paid until later. This accounts for about \$1000 of last year's deficit. The remaining \$600+ is due to higher costs that will be ongoing.

In the past year, we renegotiated our agreement with the Writers Guild of Alberta, which had not changed the amount that it charges us for many years. Our monthly payment for the services provided has now increased to \$585. This means our annual administration costs have increased by about \$1600 since 2016.

We value the administrative assistance provided by the WGA very much – it is certainly worth every penny. Ellen Kartz maintains our membership lists, manages correspondence, looks after our Alberta Registry reports, composes our weekly newsletter, and numerous other ‘duties as required.’ The Guild provides us with our consistent mailing address, phone number and filing space.

However, we do need to find ways to increase our revenues to cover the additional cost. We show that accumulated surplus at year-end (which has historically been around \$4000), but it provides the cushion we need during subsequent months when we don’t have a lot of revenue coming in and bills are lower. We can’t continue to take a bite out of the surplus every year. Therefore, we are considering a modest increase in our charge for the Haven readings (which have been \$5 for over a decade).

Our grant revenue continues at a very stable level. We are very grateful for this support from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Edmonton Arts Council, which keeps us going.

The financial statements do not reflect the large number of volunteer hours – approximately 1200 – that go into keeping the Stroll’s programs going year round. Thanks to all of you who contribute to proofing bees, door hosting, organizing the Blinks and all the other activities that keep us running smoothly.

I would like to thank our auditors, Alida Van Braeden and Richard Davies, for their careful review of our financial records. I would also like to thank our bookkeeping poet, Ivan Sundal, for maintaining the records and producing our annual statement, Haven host Anne Gerard Marshall (and all our volunteer door hosts) for keeping track of the weekly admissions so scrupulously, and our administrative assistant Ellen Kartz for her careful, prompt attention to banking matters. And as always, it has been a great pleasure to work with my fellow Board members – the greatest volunteers around.

Alice Major  
Treasurer.

#### ANTHOLOGY EDITOR’S REPORT

The Stroll of Poets is kicking off its second quarter-century of existence in fine style. This year, 82 poets from amongst the Stroll’s membership submitted their work for inclusion in the anthology. That’s half of its total membership, and nearly three quarters of those who signed up for a reading at either the Upper Crust Café or Audreys Books.

We all know the Stroll depends massively on the help of volunteers, and publication of the anthology simply would not be possible without the help of so many. First and foremost, I am grateful to the Stroll’s Board of Directors, in particular to John Leppard and David Crone, who acted as my board liaisons.

Thanks also to Doug Elves for his support as webmaster, and to Ellen Kartz, the Communications and Partnerships Coordinator of the Writers' Guild of Alberta. Once again, their enthusiastic, professional, and always-immediate assistance added to the joy of my job, and helped iron out the unavoidable glitches that always seem to accompany a project of this sort.

This year's Proofreading Bee was held on Wednesday, February 14, 2017 at the Percy Page Building. A record-breaking 18 volunteers "made poetry their date" on this Valentine's Day. A big bouquet of editorial love goes out to Kenneth Brown, Mary Campbell, Guy Chambers, Carolyn Cordell, Matthew Dekker, Gary Garrison, Jo-Ann Godfrey, Trudy Griener, Gary Gully, Randy Kohan, Anne Gerard Marshall, Lisa Mulrooney, Pierrette Requier, Audrey Seehagen, Janet Smith, Robin Smith, Antoinette Voute Roeder, and Magdalena Witkowski. As well, my thanks to Anne Gerard Marshall and Stefanie Hack, who assisted with reviewing the press proofs before they were sent off for printing.

As per tradition, the Proofreading Bee volunteers chose the anthology cover in a "blind" voting process. Fifteen hopeful entrants sent in 32 submissions between them. The winner was Stroll member Mary Campbell, whose photograph "The Path" was taken at Telford Lake in Leduc.

As we've come to expect, College Copy exercised its usual professionalism and flair to create a stunning cover from the chosen photograph, and to print and bind the book, which was ready well in advance of the Stroll AGM. It's no wonder we cherish our long-standing relationship with Aly Janmohamed, Sarah Woodcroft, and the College Copy staff.

I hope many people will enjoy the work presented in the 2018 anthology. And to the poets, my congratulations for being represented in this year's collection.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Lawson  
Managing Editor, *Stroll of Poets Anthology 2018*

## POETS' HAVEN COORDINATORS' REPORT

### **Introduction**

It's a real pleasure to watch the community at the Stroll of Poets continue to be so supportive and involved! A big bouquet of thank yous to all the volunteers who were mic hosts and door hosts this season.

We'd also like to thank our 10 minute readers and open mic readers, and of course the audience members who came every Sunday at Audrey's and every Monday at the Upper Crust. Each and every one of you makes the success of the Stroll happen!

### Attendance

Average attendance on Monday's increased to **44** people this season from last season's average of **41**. We're currently sitting at 959 people (+ March 12 attendance), which is already up from the 2016-17 season where we had 911 people. I'll send updated numbers after March 12th.

	2017-2018		2016-2017	
	Upper Crust	Audreys	Upper Crust	Audreys
<b>Readings</b>	22	4	22	4
<b>Attendance</b>		63	911	90
<b>Scheduled Readers</b>	81 (of 84)	11 (of 12)	75 (of 80)	12 (of 12)
<b>Open Mic Readers</b>	*186	29	159	16
<b>Mic Hosts</b>	22	4	22	4
<b>Door Hosts</b>	22	n/a	22	n/a

\*Does not include September 18th Launch - *On the Wing*- open mic readers.

### Memberships

We have 19 new members join this year and gave out two complimentary memberships to Ahmed 'Knowmadic' and Grayson Thate, Edmonton's Poets Laureate. Our organization currently sits at 126 members in total.

### Open Mic

The Open Mic remains popular! This season we changed the Open Mic to eight reading slots every night. Previously we had six slots or eight slots depending on how many scheduled readers there were. The changed was received well as the Open Mic spots were consistently filled. We continued to encourage new or first time readers and we appreciate the understanding and patience for those who had already read to step aside and let first time readers go first, as they are always a priority in the open mic series.

The evenings when we were short of scheduled 10-minute readers we accommodated more readers in the open mic. In the fall we welcomed Strathcona High school students to share their poetry at a couple of Havens.

### **Behind the Scenes**

This year our Haven committee worked as a team to cover off for each other and share the tasks that keep the Stroll running smoothly behind the scenes. Our Team consists of John Leppard, Marco Melfi, Susana Chalut and Janis Dow. Additional hurrahs go out to Anne Gerard Marshall who does a bang-up job of keeping track of the money at the door, Doug Elves for website support, Marco for Haven promotion on social media, Ellen Kartz who does wonders with membership renewal (and much more) and John Leppard for Site management. We appreciate the constant support and camaraderie of the staff at the Upper Crust and Audreys Books and the continued use and enjoyment of these venues.

### **Audreys Books**

Audreys saw two themed events- Dead Poets Haven in October and Winterverse in January (both a raving success) with John Leppard and Marco Melfi as hosts or Site managers. The Audreys Havens had their own sign up hosts during regular readings. Sunday attendance continues to vary and while it isn't as strong as Monday evenings, or last year, we appreciate the members who support this alternative Haven opportunity and Audreys Books. Sundays provide an opportunity for Stroll members to read who may not be able to attend Monday Havens, and the Haven Committee will continue to look for ways to improve. A big Thank you to the fine staff and owner of Audreys Books!

As the season draws to a close we want to say how much we enjoyed being part of the reading series in 2017/2018 and we look forward to seeing you next fall!

John, Marco, Susana and Janis

Respectfully submitted by Janis Dow

### POETS' HAVEN DOOR HOST'S REPORT

We have brought about another year of superb poetry. It's also been a good year for new poets joining us. Every one of you is welcome, every one important. Remember, our mic is your mic. The support of the volunteer door hosts is a great help and a pleasure. Thanks to all of you. See you again in the coming year. You are needed.

I've been on the Board and at the door for 9 years now and it just gets better. So here I go for 10.

Submitted by: Anne Gerard Marshall

## SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR'S REPORT

The Social Media portfolio was initiated two seasons ago under Linda Papineau-Couture. The portfolio includes Facebook, Twitter and the website. I spent this year focusing on our Twitter presence from three key areas: promoting the Stroll and Stroll activities, promoting poets and poetry in Edmonton and sharing relevant literary events or news. Next year I look forward to continuing that work on Twitter as well as Facebook. Our website is still an important communication tool for members and non-members to learn about the Stroll, sign up for a reading or hear about events. Thanks to Doug Elves, our webmaster, for the ongoing behind the scenes work to keep the website active. Over the next few months we will be reviewing the website to keep it current, running smoothly and serving our needs to promote the Stroll.

Marco Melfi