

# *The Quill*

The Monthly Newsletter of the Monadnock Writers' Group

February 1, 2026

*Supporting Writers Since 1984*

The Monadnock Writers' Group is a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

PO Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458

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## POETRY IN THE PINES

**The fourth *Poetry in the Pines* competition is open for submissions.** Entries should be submitted to [monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com). Three winning poems will be selected by this year's judge, Brian Evans-Jones, and will be read by the authors at a reception in the meeting hall of Cathedral of the Pines. The judge will also read a poem at that time. All MWG members, especially poets, along with members of the public, are encouraged to attend the event. Attendees will have time to discuss poetry during an informal session.

After the reception, everyone will be invited to walk the nearby trail to view the poems, which will be displayed on wooden plaques. Winning poets will read their pieces once again in this special setting. Attendees will have an opportunity to view the winning poems from previous years, which continue to be displayed on an adjacent trail.



Submission guideline: Poems may be up to six lines in length and must convey an appreciation of nature.

The reception will begin at 10:00 on Saturday April 11. Cathedral of the Pines is located at 10 Hale Street Road in Rindge. [Cathedral of the Pines](#) | [Honor Celebrate Reflect](#)

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

***Smoky Quartz*** is open for submissions from **January 15th - March 1st** for the **Spring 2026 Issue**. They are seeking poetry, prose, art, and photography. Please note that the team at *Smoky Quartz* welcomes submissions from new, emerging, and established writers and artists with ties to New Hampshire. Please visit their website for complete guidelines: [www.smokyquartz.org/submissions](http://www.smokyquartz.org/submissions)

**Poetry Wales Summer 2026 | Poetry.** The submissions portal is open until Saturday 28 February for **essays, interviews and poetry** to feature in the Summer 2026 issue. As always, any and all themes are welcome; for Summer 2026, the team wants to explore the meeting point between poetry and teaching. Poets who teach within any subject or setting support creativity in ways sometimes overlooked within education and lifelong learning. They foster curiosity, strengthen critical thinking, nurture social connections, and offer a language for learners to express their inner lives. They also have a general call for poetry which may include non-teachers and/or on non-teaching topics. **Please note that the team will be capping the poetry portal at 550 submissions, to allow their editor time to give each poem the attention it deserves.** Before you submit, please make sure you have read the guidelines [here](#).

**The Poets Corner Chapbook Competition.** Please do not put your name or any identification on the pages of your manuscript, so that all entries can be considered anonymously. Identifying information will automatically disqualify your submission from consideration. Enter via [Submittable](#).

Only one manuscript per entry. Submissions open on January 2, 2026 and close at 11:59 EST on February 29, 2026, unless the Submission Cap of 250 is reached before that date.

Manuscripts must be **no more than 28 pages**. The winner will receive a \$1,000 prize, 20 copies of the printed chapbook, and a reading on The Poets Corner on Zoom on June 14, 2026, hosted by Aimee Nezhukumatathil. Two Honorable Mentions will receive awards of \$250 each. The winner will be announced at the Camden Festival of Poetry on May 16, 2026, and all poets who have submitted will be notified after that announcement. Honorable Mentions and the remaining finalists will be invited to read on The Poets Corner on zoom on July 12, 2026. Toad Hall Editions will design, print, and publish the winning chapbook in an edition of 250. Toad Hall Editions retains North American rights for publication.

There will be the opportunity for feedback on your chapbook from one of our established reading poet/editors after the contest selections have been made for an additional fee of \$75.00. If interested, you may contact [thepoetscornermaine@gmail.com](mailto:thepoetscornermaine@gmail.com).

**Just Buffalo Literary Center** invites adult poets of all ages and stages of their career to apply for the 2026 Poetry Fellowship. The winner, chosen on the merit of their work, will receive a \$2,000 honorarium; a month-long residency in Buffalo, NY in August 2026; and the opportunity to read at Just Buffalo's Silo City Reading Series. Applicants must submit the following items:

- Brief cover letter including a biographical statement
- CV or résumé (2 pages maximum)
- Writing sample (up to 10 pages), with NO identifying information in the file or file name

Applications must be submitted by 11:59 PM EST on February 28, 2026. The winner will be notified by mid-April, and the winner and up to five finalists will be announced publicly by the end of April. **Fee waiver:** Fee waiver applications can be filled out at this [Submittable Form](#) (Capped at 20 submissions.) If you have additional questions please email [info@justbuffalo.org](mailto:info@justbuffalo.org) with the subject line "Poetry Fellowship Fee Waiver."

**Raz-Shumaker Prairie Schooner Book Prize Series Fiction Submission** for a short story collection, and manuscripts should be at least 150 pages long. Novels are not considered; one novella along with short stories will be considered as a collection, but single novellas or a collection of novellas are not eligible. Ends on Mon, Mar 16, 2026 1:00 AM. For more information, visit the submission page on [Submittable](#).

**Sweet is thrilled to announce its annual Poetry Contest.** Generally, the team appreciates accessible poems that build towards a powerful ending, and you can always read published poems in previous *Sweet* issues on their website. They look forward to reading your work! **Submissions Open:** February 1st - February 28th **Award:** The Poetry Contest winners will receive \$500 for first place, 2nd place \$100, and 3rd place \$50 and all to be published in *Sweet Lit*. All other entries will be considered for a special issue publication in *Sweet*. For guidelines, visit the [Submittable](#) page.

**Short Fiction Submission for Prime Number Magazine, Issue 283, May-Aug 20.** Submission period: January 1 – February 28, 2026, midnight Eastern time (or until they reach 199 submissions). Publication Date: May 1, 2026. For more information, visit Press 53 on [Submittable](#).

**Stillhouse Press is open for nonfiction submissions (memoir, essay collections)** through March 10, 2026. Stillhouse Press publishes surprising, gutsy fiction, nonfiction, and poetry that can't or doesn't want to find a home in big publishing. The publishing team there is drawn to the strange, the unconventional, the transcendent, the risky. They're looking for work that pushes boundaries. Stillhouse is a nationally distributed press that offers a competitive royalty-based compensation structure: authors earn 20% of net revenue from standard online and bookstore sales, Stillhouse website sales, and direct sales. They publish a limited number of titles each year to offer more personalized support and attention to their authors. Collaboration is paramount: they partner with their authors to build awareness of their work through review and award submissions, endorsements, newsletter campaigns, and social media promotion. For more, visit [Submittable](#).

**Violet Winding Stars is accepting submissions.** They are interested in poetry, literary fiction, nonfiction/memoir, and historical fiction. Learn more on [Submittable](#).

## **PUBLISHERS ACCEPTING UNAGENTED SUBMISSIONS**

Abbeville Press ([www.abbeville.com/](http://www.abbeville.com/))  
Academy Chicago Publishers  
([www.chicagoreviewpress.com](http://www.chicagoreviewpress.com))  
Addicus Books ([www.addicusbooks.com](http://www.addicusbooks.com))  
Aethon Books ([aethonbooks.com](http://aethonbooks.com))  
Alcove Press ([alcovepress.com](http://alcovepress.com))  
Annick Press ([annickpress.com](http://annickpress.com))  
Bancroft Press ([bancroftpress.com](http://bancroftpress.com))  
Beacon Press ([www.beacon.org](http://www.beacon.org))

Bella Books ([bellabooks.com](http://bellabooks.com))  
Blue Moose Books ([bluemoosebooks.com](http://bluemoosebooks.com))  
Breakaway Books  
([www.breakawaybooks.com](http://www.breakawaybooks.com))  
Hard Case Crime  
([www.hardcasecrime.com/](http://www.hardcasecrime.com/))  
HellBound Books Publishing  
([www.hellboundbooks.com](http://www.hellboundbooks.com))  
Harlequin ([www.earlequin.com](http://www.earlequin.com))

Greenwood Press ([www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com))  
Kensington Publishing  
([www.kensingtonbooks.com](http://www.kensingtonbooks.com))  
Legend Press ([www.legendpress.co.uk](http://www.legendpress.co.uk))  
Nef House ([www.nefhousepublishing.com](http://www.nefhousepublishing.com))  
No Starch Press ([www.nostarch.com](http://www.nostarch.com))

Potomac Books  
([www.potomacbooksinc.com](http://www.potomacbooksinc.com))  
Skyhorse Publishing  
([skyhorsepublishing.com](http://skyhorsepublishing.com))  
Three Rooms Press ([threeroomspress.com/](http://threeroomspress.com/))  
Tilbury House Publishers  
([www.tilburyhouse.com/](http://www.tilburyhouse.com/))

## JANUARY MEETING

**MWG Welcomed Betsy Small on January 17 at the Peterborough Library.** Pedro Sandlin



opened the January meeting with his ten-minute reading, after which a large audience welcomed speaker Betsy Small to speak. Revisiting journals and photos from her Peace Corps days between 1984 and 1987 inspired Betsy Small's memoir *Before Before: A Story of*

*Discovery and Loss in Sierra Leone*. In 1988, Small worked for the Peace Corps in Washington, D.C. and



subsequently traveled to Africa



to support a farming cooperative in Ghana. During her visit, Small hoped to visit with dear friends in Sierra Leone. Instead, the government of Ghana mistakenly accused her of belonging to a subversive group, which led to her arrest, detention, and deportation. Kirkus Reviews called Small's *Before Before* "A powerful commentary and memoir that challenge Western narratives of Sierra Leone."

## REMINDER: 2025-2026 MEETING & SPEAKER SCHEDULE

**February 21 at the Peterborough Library: Sebastian Lockwood.** Storyteller and podcaster Sebastian Lockwood tells the great epics: Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Caesar, Beowulf and Monkey.

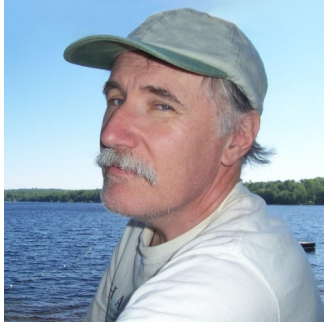
His studies in Classics and Anthropology at Boston University and Cambridge University in the UK laid the foundation for bringing these great tales into performance. Lockwood's performances are designed to take complex texts and make them accessible and exciting for audiences from 5 to 95. Lockwood has tutored and taught classes in higher education for 25 years. Lockwood launched two storytelling podcasts in 2022: *Blowing Up Stumps- tales from New and Old England* (with Maine storyteller Matt Gile), and *Monkey- the Journey to the West*. He now concentrates on





performance, podcasting, workshops, and audiobook narration. Lockwood lives under Crotched Mountain in a 1792 house with his wife, jazz singer and LUX Lifestyle founder, Nanette Perrotte.

**March 21 at the Peterborough Library: Ken Sheldon** is a novelist, composer, playwright and performer. Formerly the West Coast bureau chief for *Byte Magazine*, his writing has appeared in publications ranging from *Acoustic Guitar* to *Yankee Magazine*. He writes music for children and adults and created the bestselling *Sing Along and Learn* series published by Scholastic. His writings appear under his own name, and also as suspense novelist Michael Manley and Yankee humorist Fred Marple.



Michael Manley is the pen name of the late Stanley Michael Miastkowski and Kenneth Manley Sheldon. Stan was a search and rescue worker who participated in dozens of rescue and recovery operations, including operations following the September 11 attacks in New York. He was a broadcast and print journalist for nearly 35 years, including stints as a columnist for *Esquire*, *PC World* and *Byte Magazine*. Stan passed away in 2009.



**April 18 at the Peterborough Library: Brian Evans-Jones** is a poet and teacher who has lived in South Berwick since 2014. He was born in Britain, where he was Poet Laureate of the Hampshire region for 2012-13. In 2017, he won the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award from Poets & Writers in New York City. His poems have appeared in competitions, magazines, and art events in America and the United Kingdom, and he has taught poetry in schools across Maine and New Hampshire, as well as in England. He publishes free poetry learning resources at [The Poetry Place](#).



**May 16 at the Peterborough Library: Member Read-Around.** Please come, share your writing, and try to keep your selection to ten minutes so everyone will have a chance to share!

**June 20 at the Peterborough Library: Lorraine Ash's** journalistic life led her to the White



House, homeless shelters, disaster zones, psychiatric wards, forests, caves, and castles. Ash has interviewed astronauts, Olympians, economic gurus, politicians, doctors, artists and, perhaps most importantly, ordinary people. Her articles, which won twenty-six writing awards over the years, appeared in newspapers nationwide, including *USA Today*. A love of American history led to penning three historical plays about American presidents—

*Tyler, Monroe, and Jackson*—published by The History Project. Ash had produced numerous short stories and essays for literary journals and anthologies. These include *Tiferet, Cairn, Journeys, Ducts, Recovering the Self: A Journal of Hope and Healing*, and *Steeped in the World of Tea*. In midlife a significant event changed Ash: her daughter, her only child, was stillborn in June 1999. Suddenly she understood the importance of telling stories from the inside out. Subsequently, she wrote *Life Touches Life: A Mother's Story of Stillbirth and Healing* (NewSage Press), a memoir that has reached stillbirth mothers in the United States, the Middle East, Australia, Europe, China, Canada, and Mexico. Next came the spiritual midlife memoir, *Self and Soul: On Creating a Meaningful Life* (Cape House Books). Ash has worked one-on-one with more than sixty writers to either ghostwrite, edit, or coach their book manuscripts into existence. Her mission is to facilitate quality storytelling.



## EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

**Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP).** Runs March 4-7, 2026, Baltimore, MD. The AWP Conference & Bookfair is the essential gathering for writers, teachers, students, editors, and publishers. Join thousands of attendees, explore hundreds of events and exhibitors, and immerse in four days of vital literary community and celebration in Baltimore! [registration@awpwriter.org](mailto:registration@awpwriter.org)

**Lorraine Ash Returns to The Center at Mariandale for a Memoir Writing Retreat.** Writing a Braided Memoir: A classical memoir tells a single, linear story. A braided memoir—beloved in today's marketplace—yields a more complex story by interweaving multiple themes and narrative threads. We'll explore how to infuse your memoir, making it both a compelling story and a way for readers to rethink socially significant issues. Perfect for writers at all levels. Come ready to write. For more information, [email Karen Bernard](mailto:karen.bernard@centeratmariandale.org) or [contact Lorraine](mailto:lorraine.ash@centeratmariandale.org).

- 4-day option: 5 p.m. Thursday through 1 p.m. Sunday, March 29, 2026  
\$435 (includes all meals and lodging)
- 6-day option: 5 p.m. Thursday through 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 31, 2026  
\$685 (includes all meals and lodging)

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## ALL ABOUT MWG

**Welcome to the Monadnock Writers' Group!** Since 1984, the MWG has provided community, inspiration, and support to the writers of the Monadnock region. All are welcome! Our membership includes writers of every variety: from poets to journalists, from mystery writers to playwrights, and from career writers to those just getting started. We meet on the third Saturday morning of each month, September through June, at the Peterborough Town Library, unless otherwise noted. Monthly meetings start at 9:45 a.m. and go to about 11:30 a.m., but times can vary. Meetings include a 15-minute meet-and-greet, announcements, a ten-minute reading from a member, and a main speaker sharing professional writing experience and answering questions. Coffee and light refreshments are provided. Our monthly Speaker Series is open to the public and free of charge. Our speakers are instructive and inspirational for writers of all literary forms, genres, and levels of experience. For more information, please go to our website at [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org), or join our Monadnock Writers' Group Facebook page.

Website: [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters](http://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters)

Email: [monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com)

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**Membership Renewal.** It's that time of year, as membership runs from September through June. Membership fees for one year are as follows:

Regular - \$30  
Student/Senior - \$25  
Patron - \$50  
Benefactor - \$100  
Corporate Sponsor - \$250

If you pay by check, please click [here](#) for a membership form that you can print. Write your check to Monadnock Writers' Group and mail it to:

Monadnock Writers' Group, P.O. Box 3071, Peterborough, NH 03458

• **Submit your bio as a member of MWG.** Are you a member? If you would like your bio added to the [About Our Members](#) page on the MWG website, please send it to Mary Marchese at [mwgwebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:mwgwebmaster@gmail.com). Bio: Maximum 200 words, 3rd person, feel free to include links to your website, most recent publication, or listing on Amazon, and social media.

• **Volunteer!** If you would be interested in bringing refreshments, being our ten-minute reader or have ideas for speakers or events, please let us know at [monadnockwriters@gmail.com](mailto:monadnockwriters@gmail.com).

• **Send your writing news or announcements to The Quill.** If you would like to submit to our monthly newsletter, please contact Jess at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) at least a week before the end of the month. As a member, you may include your author events and announcements.

- **Who are we at MWG?** Established in 1984, the primary mission of the Monadnock Writers' Group is to offer fellowship and support to professional writers and to those actively engaged in developing their writing skills. To learn more: [www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us](http://www.monadnockwriters.org/about-us)

- **Please explore MWG online.** Visit our website, [www.monadnockwriters.org](http://www.monadnockwriters.org), for news, member profiles, speakers series information, contests, publications, and more. Find us on Facebook under Monadnock Writers' Group: [www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/monadnockwriters/)

- **Monadnock Writers' Group membership information:**

- Annual membership fees are \$30, or \$25 for students and seniors, \$50 for Patrons, \$100 for Benefactor, and \$250 for a Corporate membership.
- Individual members are encouraged to announce their own projects such as workshops, social gatherings, group support sessions, or whatever the writing-related endeavor. Feel free to take the floor at the monthly meeting, or contact the newsletter editor at [mwg.quill@gmail.com](mailto:mwg.quill@gmail.com) to send an announcement to the membership in the monthly newsletter.
- Bring a friend to one of our monthly meetings, and if they join MWG, you will receive a \$20 gift certificate for the Toadstool Bookshop!

### **The MWG 2025-2026 Board of Directors**

President: Jesseca Timmons; Vice President: Rodger Martin; Treasurer: Carl Mabbs-Zeno; Secretary: Susan Gebo; Members at Large: Tori Haring-Smith, Maura MacNeil, Mary Marchese, Ronnie McIntyre, and Karen-Marie Scolforo