

January 2, 2008  
Volume 2, Issue 1

# The Poetry Chronicles

The Gulf Coast Poets, a Chapter of the Texas Poetry Society

## Club Member News

Becky Ellisor announces the publication of her first chapbook, *No Rhyme or Reason* by Full Moon Books of Webster, Texas. She dedicated this book to Mary Margaret Carlisle who mentored her, pushed her, taught her and inspired her often enough to finally get a book out of her.



The featured presenter at the Barnes and Noble Open Mic on January 22 will be Oscar Pena. Mary Margaret Carlisle will be the featured presenter at the February 26 Open Mic at Barnes and Noble.

### Seabrook Coffee Oasis Reading

**Series:** 1st Mondays, NASA Parkway at Kirby, 7:00 PM.  
Contact Luis Vázquez: borimex@swbell.net  
2008 Schedule: Feb 4, Oscar Peña and Sam Collins; March 3, Marie Delgado Travis; April 7, Gilbert Benton; May 5, Barbara Youngblood Carr; June 2, Donny Wankan;



## American Life in Poetry

BY TED KOOSER,  
U.S. POET LAUREATE

If one believes television commercials, insomnia, that thief of sleep, torments humans in ever-increasing numbers. Rynn Williams, a poet working in Brooklyn, New York, tries here to identify its causes and find a suitable remedy.

### Insomnia

I try tearing paper into tiny, perfect squares —  
they cut my fingers. Warm milk, perhaps,  
stirred counter-clockwise in a cast iron pan —  
but even then there's burning at the edges,  
angry foam-hiss. I've been told  
to put trumpet flowers under my pillow,  
I do: stamen up, the old crone said.  
But the pollen stains, and there are bees,  
I swear, in those long yellow chambers, echoing,  
the way the house does, mocking, with its longevity —  
each rib creaking and bending where I'm likely to break —

I try floating out along the long O of lone,  
to where it flattens to loss, and just stay there  
disconnecting the dots of my night sky  
as one would take apart a house made of sticks,  
carefully, last addition to first,  
like sheep leaping backward into their pens.

## Happy New Year

The Gulf Coast Poets, a chapter of the Texas Poetry Society, will hold its' January meeting at Barnes and Noble on Bay Area Blvd. at 10:30 AM Saturday January 12, 2007. Gilbert Benton of Alvin Community College will make the presentation. An article about Gilbert is on page 4.

This meeting also includes the annual elections for the Gulf Coast Poets. All previous officers are running for re-election. All members may vote if their dues have been paid before the meeting convenes.

The February meeting's speaker is yet to be announced and the March Speaker will be Scott Wiggerman.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of Poetry magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright (c) 2007 by Rynn Williams, whose most recent book of poetry is "Adonis Garage," University of Nebraska Press, 2005. Poem reprinted from "Columbia Poetry Review," no. 20, Spring 2007, by permission of Rynn Williams. Introduction copyright (c) 2007 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

## Gulf Coast Poets Meeting Minutes



A poet is, before anything else, a person in love with language.

—W H Auden,  
The New York Times, 1960

A good poem is a contribution to reality. The world is never the same once a good poem has been added to it. A good poem helps to change the shape and significance of the universe, helps to extend everyone's knowledge of himself and the world around him.

Dylan Thomas

- A. Call to Order - President Mary Margaret Carlisle called the meeting to order at 10:50 am and welcomed those in attendance.
- B. Minutes were taken by Debi Fairchild, Recording Secretary.
- C. Old Minutes were approved by those present.
- D. Reports
  1. Vice President - Lynne Streeter reported on upcoming speakers
    - a. January - Gilbert Benton, poet and teacher from Alvin Community College
    - b. February - TBD
    - c. March - Scott Wiggerman - Editor of the Texas Poetry Calendar
    - d. Stephen Fromholz - 2007-2008 Poet Laureate of Texas (Month TBD)
  2. Treasurer - Mary Margaret Carlisle reported for Leo Waltz. Beginning balance \$580.63; ending balance \$821.66.
  3. Membership Chair - Rebecca Hatcher Travis - reported that twenty-one members have now renewed. We currently have six lifetime members: Diana D. Buckley, Mary M. Carlisle, David E. Cowen, John Gorman, David Hicks and Peggy Z. Lynch. Four new members recently joined: Sandi Stromberg, Bill Turner, Barbara Carle and Richard Lighthouse. Bill Turner and Richard Lighthouse attended the meeting.
  4. 2008 Elections
    - a. President Carlisle announced current nominations for officers: President - Mary Margaret Carlisle, Vice President - Lynne Streeter, Treasurer - Leo Waltz, Recording Secretary - Debi Fairchild.
    - b. Photographs and biographies from each candidate are needed by the last day of December.
    - c. Oscar Pena made a motion that all officers stay for the next term, Lynne Streeter seconded the motion. The motion was tabled by agreement until the election, when more members will be in attendance.
  5. By-Laws and Constitution - Oscar Pena volunteered to accept the position of committee chair. He requested help. We hope to complete this by May 2008. Lynne Streeter commented that: "We all need to help Oscar with our thoughts and ideas on what we want in our constitution and bylaws."
- E. Announcements
  1. The Weight of Addition: An Anthology of Texas Poetry debut party was held on the evening of December 8. Four Gulf Coast Poets were included in the book: John Gorman, Mary Margaret Carlisle, Sandi Stromberg, and Peggy Zuleika Lynch.
  2. Neither the Webster Barnes and Noble Poetry Reading Series or the Seabrook Coffee Oasis Series met in December. They will resume in January.
  3. Winner of the Gulf Coast Poets November Poetry Competition was new member Bill Turner. The winning poem - It was a Good Year. Bill read his poem to an enthusiastic audience.
- F. Speaker - Lynne Streeter gave a wonderful talk on the poet, Dr. Maya Angelou. Those not present missed an excellent presentation. Advice from the Recording Secretary, "Never leave before the speaker; that's the best part of the meeting."
- G. Door prizes were donated by Sol Magazine Projects.
- H. No Read Around at the meeting.
- I. Next scheduled meeting - January 12, 2008: Elections. Speaker: Gilbert Benton. Place: Webster Barnes & Noble Business Section. Time: 10:30 am.
- J. Meeting adjourned at 11:50 am. Poets retired immediately to the party at Becky Ellisor's house, bringing poems for a Holiday Read Around.

## Notes from the President, Mary Margaret Carlisle

Dear members:

Here are a few notes not read into the minutes at the December meeting, which might be useful to those interested in renewing their dues, or in voting in the January elections.

A. Membership renewals were due by the last day of December.

1. Chapter members: \$15.00.
2. Charter/Founding members: \$10.00. (Those who joined before October 15, 2006, and are current members of the Poetry Society of Texas. Dues for Charter members remained \$10.00 if paid by January 5, 2008; now they become \$15.00.
3. Student members: \$5.00 (When renewing, students over eighteen must provide us with a copy of a current full time student id for our records. Those younger than eighteen must provide for our records a copy of a current student id and a letter granting permission to join from a parent or legal guardian.)
4. All Lifetime Members are exempt from further dues.

B. To vote in the election, you must both attend the January meeting, and have paid your dues or be exempt from paying dues before the meeting is called to order..

## Submissions

## Upcoming GCP Contests

Support the Gulf Coast Poets by entering one of our competitions. Open to all. Fees allow us to offer a small honorarium to our speakers and to take them out to lunch after our monthly meeting. We are looking for new sponsors so we may offer prizes to our winners. Donors may judge the contest they sponsor, if wished. Many thanks go to Leo F. Waltz and Mary Margaret Carlisle for their recent sponsorships.

### January Contest

1. Like a bird on a wire
2. Rivers and Streams
3. My friend, My Enemy
4. Now

Must be postmarked between January 1-24, 2008  
The best poem of each contest will be awarded \$10  
Sponsored by Lynn Streeter.

### February Contest

1. Lucky Thirteen
2. Hesitation
3. Roses or Chocolate
4. Stand Up, Speak Out

Must be postmarked between Feb. 1-22, 2008  
The best poem of each contest will be awarded \$10. Sponsored by Becky Ellisor.

*Be sure to use snail mail to send in your entries. No emails accepted.*

The March and April Contest will be sponsored by William Turner and Adriana and Luis Vazquez.

## The Gulf Coast Poets, a Chapter of the Texas Poetry Society

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### OFFICERS:

*President: Mary Carlisle*  
*V. President: Lynne Streeter*  
*Secretary: Debi Fairchild*  
*Treasurer: Leo Waltz*

### We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.gulfcoastpoets.info](http://www.gulfcoastpoets.info)

## Gilbert Benton, GCP's January Speaker



Gilbert Benton has taught English and Creative Writing for over 30 years at Alvin Community College. As a co-sponsor of the ACC Writers' Club, he helps club members edit and publish WINDOWS, the college's annual literary magazine. The Writers also sponsor a Poetry Workshop each fall and a Writers' Workshop each spring. Benton has spoken to many writers' groups and schools in the Houston area and at the Golden Triangle Writers' Guild Workshop over the years. One of his favorite classes is the

Life-Story Writing class, for senior citizens who want to work on writing memoirs for their children and grandchildren. He is also a co-sponsor of both the ACC History Club and the Baptist Student Ministries at ACC and is a founding member of the faculty singing group called "The Fabulous G-strings," who have performed at faculty workshops as well as other local events each semester for the past few years.



## Submissions

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Gulf Coast Poets newsletter. Members are encouraged to submit articles, poems, photographs and monthly columns for consideration.

Email the editor at [she@BeckyEllisor.com](mailto:she@BeckyEllisor.com)

### The Gulf Coast Poets

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