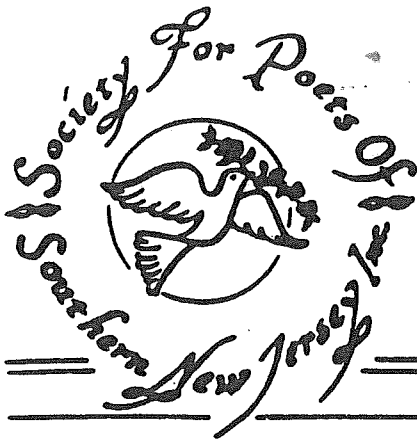


HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, SFPOSNJ!!!



The Voice Of The Turtle



FEBRUARY 2008

NEXT MEETING/ANNIVERSARY DINNER

In 1980:

The hair was darker
The waist was thinner
I was 19, but knew
This group was a winner

In 2008:

Welcome all members:
Charter members, beginners
Leap day is our
Anniversary dinner

Yes, you poetry-writing cats and chicks, our happening scene will play itself out on February 29th. On "Leap Day"

we'll party away,
toasting our 28th anniversa-ray.

(Boy, I really leaned hard on the old "poetic license" for that last rhyme.)

We hope you good people can make it to the Woodbury Friends Meeting House (124 North Broad Street/Route 45 - across from Charlie Brown's) by 6:00 with a nice contribution to our potluck dinner in hand. (Actually, it would probably be better to have it in pot, in bowl, or on plate than "in hand.")

Ideally, we'll commence the feast at 6:30 and the poetry meeting by 7:30-ish. (Also ideally, there would be no more war or starvation; unfortunately, that probably won't happen, either.) But, **PLEASE** do try to be punctual.

Happy birthday, Society for Poets of Southern New Jersey! Live long and prosper.



POETRY WORKSHOP AND READING

Poetry month approacheth. On Monday, April 28th, our group will have a poetry workshop and reading at the lovely Logan Library. It'll be a 7 to 8:45 affair. Call Hostess Librarian/Society President Lynette at 423-3762 for more info.

DUE: DUES ("American Idol" Edition)

Yo, Dawg, your poetry is way fly...I really dig it! I hope you renew your dues and survive the next cut.

You're wonderful! If you promise to pay your \$15 dues for 2008, I'll flirt with you and we can go drinking.

I was ready to loathe you and chase you off the stage, but your performance was smashing! I think you have what it takes to continue on with us... 15 dollars. You can renew or join at any Society for Poets Idol function or mail it to the treasurer.

You could be the next Society Idol!



POETIC HISTORY (A Hopeful Pebble)

The time: the late 70's
Woodbury was the town
David knew Tim, whose buds: Joe and
Anthony
Would often hang around

The four would chat, play tunes
And they read stuff they wrote and did know
They discovered common ground
A seed in Dave's mind began to grow

A shiny idea
A fanciful notion
A hopeful pebble
Cast into the ocean

"If we all dig poetry
There must be others, too.
Let's call the poets out of the closets!"
And that's just what he did do

David did the legwork
David paved the way
The planets aligned in 1980
Feb. 22nd was the day

The founding four,
Erv Bilsky, and Betty Solof, too
Were there to welcome history
The start of something new

Then the late, great Mg,
Lynette, and Virginia joined the fold
And now for 28 years
So many words rhymed and stories told

So many wonderful people
So many wonderful times
So many smiles, laughs, and tears
exchanged
So many funny and meaningful rhymes

A shiny idea
A fanciful notion
A hopeful pebble
Cast into the ocean

I can't imagine my life without it
What a dreadful void there would be
Without the Society for Poets
Of Southern New Jersey



(Full names referenced: David Steinberg,
Tim Baldwin, Joe Valentino, Anthony Milanese,
Mg Merlanti, Lynette "Kean" Milanese,
Virginia Fleming)

BIRTHDAY BARDS

Charter member and all-around cool guy Erv Bilsky celebrated a birthday on February 4th. Barbara Festa had a Festa-val on the 6th. Beloved member and former president Robert Hawthorne cut the cake on the 8th.

March's only birthday bard is Lynn Stock, who celebrates on "The Ides of March:" March 15.

Happy Birthday, y'all!

\$ POET

Kathy Mohrman's "Christmas Train," a Pollyanna poem she penned for Sy Perlmutter, was voted as our favorite poem from January's spectacular edition of The Voice of the Turtle. She gets 2008's first super deluxe \$10 Prize Package! She can choose from our five available anthologies (worth \$5 each): Windows of the Spirit (IV), We the Poets (V), Flowers in a Crannied Wall (VI), VIIIB (VIII), and Mosaic (IX), but I know she has some of them. And I'm pretty sure she has Georgia Wurster's and Anthony and Lynette's books. She could also get one or two \$5 SFPOSNJ pins. She can also get her reward in the form of currency or in any combo totaling \$10.

Thanks to the exceedingly generous Karen Springer, all our \$ Poet winners up to August will win \$10.

HOPKINS HOUSE HAPPENING

The next "Poetry in the Park" happening will be on March 10th. Former SFPOSNJ member Linda DiFeterici will be in the spotlight that evening from 6 to 9PM.

Every second Monday, a different poet is featured at the Hopkins House (250 South Park Drive, Haddon Township).

Visit <http://arts.camden.Lib.nj.us> or call 858-0040 for more info on these fine Camden County Cultural & Heritage Commission events.

Go see Linda, she's a great poet! (You can find her on line, too...she's got a "My Space" profile.)

NOTHING'S BETTER THAN A NICE LETTER

Some of our beloved members send nice cards, letters, or notes with their dues payments. Here are a few from three nice ladies, Betty Solof, Theresa McGinnis, and Penny Bilsky:

Hi Anthony & Lynette,

Hope all is well!
Here is my dues check.
I will try to come to the next meeting. Lots to do since my father passed away. Hope your father is o.k. This is rough times for all involved, but the final crossing brings much peace. Miss everyone!

Love,
Theresa



Hi:

Congratulations! you took a spark of an idea of "wishful" poets and meshroomed it into the talented present group who so artfully apply their talents.

I am proud to be part of that small "wishful" group.

You have all done a wonderful job. I thoroughly enjoy your newsletter.

Keep up the good work. I am one of your fans!

Fondly,

Betty Solof

Dear Anthony,

I'm enclosing my dues for 2008 for Society for Poets of Southern New Jersey.

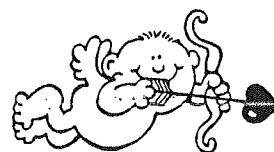
May the new year bring you and your family good health and happiness, peace and love.

Best regards,

Penny Bilsky

FIRST FRIDAY SING/POTLUCK

The first Friday of each month is the First Friday Sing/Potluck gathering that Bob and Meed Barnett help run. They start at 6 PM, and it'll be on March 7th next month. They change locations, so, if interested, e-mail at bob@westjersey.org or call at 965-5347.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"The heart of the problem
is the problem of the heart."*
- Max Lucado



ESPRESSO POETRY

March 21st will be the next coffeehouse poetry gig at the King Street Espresso Bar in Gloucester City. You can call this hip venue (at 28 North King Street) at (856) 456-4408. It's every third Friday at 7:30. Check 'em out!

Their "fancy thinking box" address is www.kingstreetespresso.com.

Society for Poets of Southern New Jersey

Minutes – January 25, 2008
Poetry Reading & Variety Show



In attendance: Anthony & Lynette Milanese (our regards to Kenny), Bob & Meed Barnett, Virginia Fleming, Hank Urbanek, David Steinberg, Lynn Stock, Joe Valentino, Wendy Stocker and me (Linda Richards).

Surprisingly, Lynette started off with "In the Tropics," a departure from the winter poems that we all know and love. She couldn't resist in a later round and read "The Snow." She also sang. Anthony sang another Dan Fogelberg tribute, wished Lynette (and Giovanni) Happy Birthday, brought out a cake and admitted that his family cheats at scrabble; his nephew being able to form "I Love You Uncle Anthony" with only seven letters.

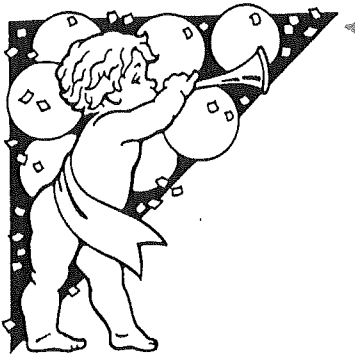
Ironically, Wendy read a poem about aging. She may have been the youngest person in the room. The rest of us could relate times ten. Pollyanna poems were read or, in Joe's case, sung – "Jazzy Joanne." Virginia Fleming turned in her homework (assigned by Lynette some time ago). I'm sure we all agree that extra credit was well deserved. A Walt Whitman poem, "I Hear America Sing," was customized by her and renamed "I Hear America Cry," with quite profound and timely effect. David read a love poem that I subtitled "This One's Not for Cindy." His follow-ups, "Happy but Lame" and "When You Feel Lonely & Blue" may be consolation to him if Cindy reads this. "Lonely" was converted into Braille as a gift to a blind person—very noble, David.

Bob, although quiet at first, discussed the last person enslaved in New Jersey (including lineage which according to my notes is way over my head), sang and made bird calls. He continues to amaze us with his range of talent. Meed's mother would've been proud of her (no Dutch cleanser required today) and told a story and read poetry. Her first poem certainly could not be categorized as the work of a beginner. Bob & Meed sang a duet.

Lynn read a series of poems written by the animals on the Ark as well as "Christmas Train," written by a human (Kathleen Mohrman, whose physical presence was missed as well as that of other "regulars.").

My notebook was missing (my daughter "borrowed" it). Being weeks old, I do not remember significance of some key words and phrases I wrote down with enough clarity to incorporate them into these minutes. Hopefully, they will be meaningful to the readers and attendees: a letter from Joy Frederick, My Ugly Twin, The Big Bed Raft, Tucson, Lucky, and MLK tribute. I also wrote that David was cryptic but can't remember why.

Have fun at the next meeting. See you in February.



Poetry Corner



OPEN YOURSELF TO ME

by Theresa Tull McGinnis
(from her Live & Learn)

Open your mind to me
like a special diary
that I may read all
the private pages
of your secret thoughts.

Open your heart to me
like a sudden flurry
of butterflies
rising out of the meadow
that I may catch a glimpse
of your secret beauty.

Open your soul to me:
like a satiny soft
billowy cloud
that I may touch
your secret sensitivity.

Open your gates to me
like a castle bridge
and welcome me:
into your secret world
that I may love you forever.

TWILIGHT WORLD

by Frances Stiles
(from her Rogues' Gallery)

Soft twilight
Eases the necessity
For accuracy
Relaxes the degree
Of clarity needed
To complete the duties
Of the daylight hours.
Diffusing the rough edges
I slip smoothly
Through the jagged pieces
Of your life.
Graced by advantage
Of the fading light
We can join together
In that ancient dance
Of new discovery
Shrouded by advancing night
Neither seen nor heard
We make our love in silence
Sharing the illusion
Before you disappear again
In twilight

VALENTINE TOWN

by Helene Layton

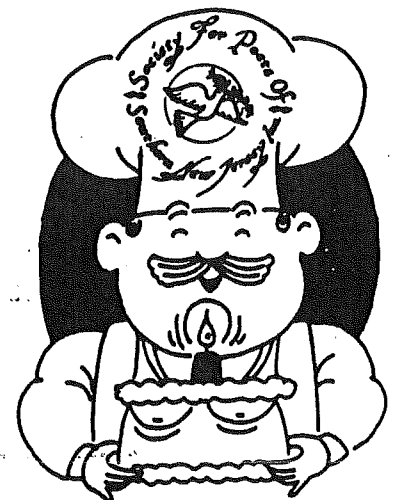
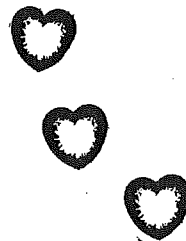
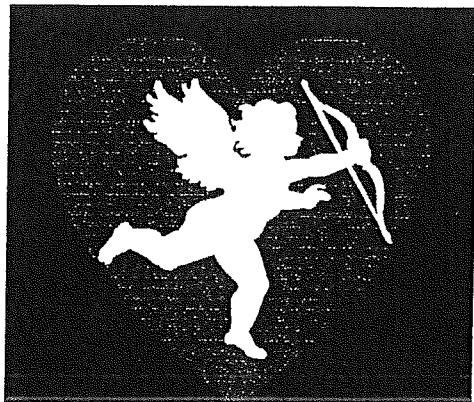
There should be a place
called Valentine Town,
A petite place, a sweet place,
Where each resident wears a crown
For living a life so fine.

For each day in this spot
called Valentine Town
Would be blessed, for on a crest,
The whole population would be found
Stopping the tolling of time.

Oh, we'd hold the rolling of time,
we would.

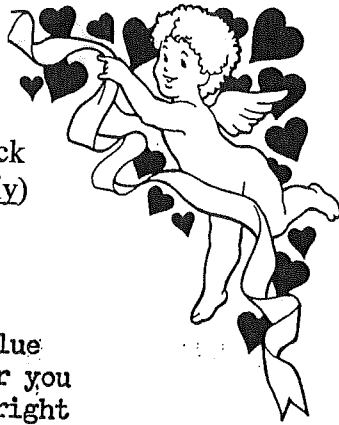
Each day is Valentine's Day.
We'd hug and we'd kiss
As much as we could,
And then you'd hear me say:

This spot where I stand on sunlit ground,
With such sweet spice, so awfully nice,
Would always be my Valentine Town
If you would choose to be mine,
As my lifetime Valentine.



FANTASY WINGS

by Joy Dorman Frederick
(from her Touch Love Gently)



I'd write you a love song
Then sing it for you
I'd paint you a sky
That would always be blue
I'd wish upon the stars for you
Make sure they shine bright
I'd tell you that I love you
I'd hold you tight
I'd talk to the bluebird
Ask him to bring happiness your way
I'd pick you a four-leaf clover
For luck each day
I'd whisper softly in your ear
Kiss your lips of fire
I'd cover you with a blanket of warmth
When from after
love's contentment, we tire
I'd write you a love song
Then sing it for you
If only,
I could find you



AERO-PLANE

by Dr. P. Raghavan

Nineteen thirties saw the birth of a new mode
Namely the aero-plane with a different engine
Next to railways in importance as a successor.

Wheel enabled the design of a bullock cart earlier
Wheel also enabled the structure of horse-carriage
Wheel with a steam engine energized the railways.

Aero-plane is an altogether different mode in the style
Aero-plane floats in air while others move on grounds
Aero-planes and automobiles revolutionized transport.

Men of intelligence & foresight mentioned in epics
Men of twentieth century made it possible in civics
Men of 21st century may fly due growth in science.

A journey in air is a real wonder for humans
A journey in air by birds a wonder for angels
A journey in water slow but a pleasure for us.

Salute the brains that made float possible in the air
Salute the hands that designed the craft in hardware
Salute the heads that may colonize planets in future.

GIOVANNI'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT

by Anthony Milanese

Party for my nephew's
sixth birthday
screaming kids, cake,
presents, and play
winding down, early evening
we're the last guests still there
adults getting sleepy
lounging on chairs

we played Junior Scrabble
then just played with the letters
names and happy words
in cardboard squares together

Giovanni was carefully working
he had an *I*, *L*, *O*, and a *V*
as one long word, with
an *A*, *F*, *N*, and a *C*

I figured it was "I love" – something
(he's still learning to spell)
There was an *O*, another *E*, and more
what it said, I couldn't tell

"What does that say?" asked my wife
he smiled, pointed, and said,
"I love Uncle Anthony"
I felt blood rush to my head

I managed an "I love you, too"
from my humbled surprise
simple drops of sweetness
cornered my eyes

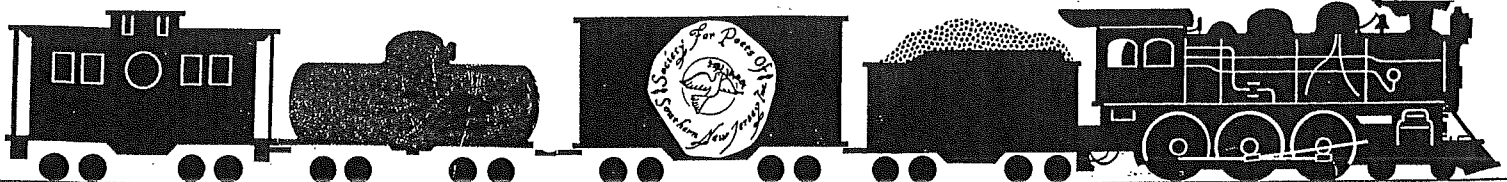
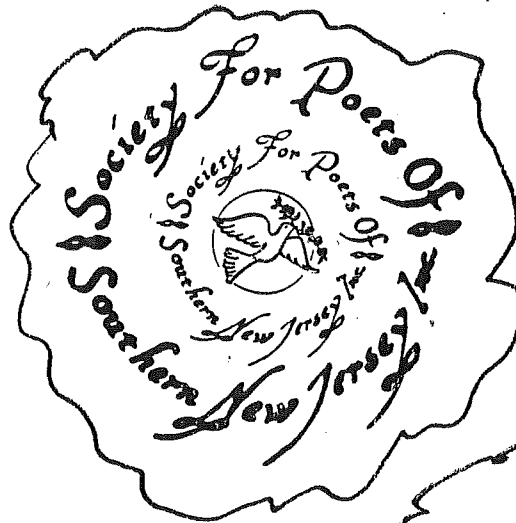
All my inefficiencies and short-comings
melted away
And I knew I received
the best present, that day

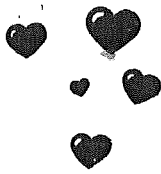
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT

by Lorraine Ranieri

TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN YOU TOOK MY HAND,
AND I FELT YOUR FIRST KISS...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
OUR FIRST CHILD WAS BORN,
AND ALL THAT MATTERED,
HE WAS WHOLE AND BLESSED...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
OUR SECOND BLESSING CAME.
SHE WAS NOT SO STRONG,
BUT GOD SOMEHOW PULLED HER THROUGH,
BECAUSE SHE HAD YOU AND ME...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN I THOUGHT I COULDN'T WIN
AT THE GAME OF LIFE,
AND DYING WAS A SIN...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
I THOUGHT I HAD HAD ENOUGH
OF PLAYING HOUSE...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
YOU COULDN'T UNDERSTAND
THE THINGS MY HEART WAS SAYING,
BECAUSE GOD GAVE ME A CHOICE,
BE A WOMAN, MOTHER,
AND LOVE ONLY ONE MAN...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN I SAID I'M NOT SO STRONG,
AND YOU KEPT SAYING,
THIS IS WHERE YOU BELONG....
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
GOD SAID TO ME,
CHOOSE YOUR OWN WAY OUT,
BUT REMEMBER THE CONSEQUENCES.
AND I LAUGHED,
AND SAID THAT MAKES NO SENSE....
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN YOU LOOKED AT ME,
AND I SAID,
JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE,
I'LL BE GONE...
AND YOU THEN STARTED THAT SAD SONG.
THE SONG WAS BEAUTIFUL,
BUT I COULDN'T GET THE MEANING

OF THE WORDS...
SO I THOUGHT IT DIDN'T MATTER,
OH, HOW SO WRONG I WAS...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN YOU SAID GOOD-BYE.
YOU HAD HAD ENOUGH,
AND YOU SAID WE WERE THROUGH.
AGAIN YOU STARTED
THAT SAME SAD SONG...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN I REALIZED
GOD WAS STILL PLAYING OUR GAME,
WHO WILL WIN, WHO WILL LOSE?
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
GOD CAME TO US AND SAID,
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH.
HE KNEW MY UPS AND DOWNS BETTER THAN ME...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
WHEN I REALIZED
YOU AND I DIDN'T MATTER.
ALL THE WORRIES WERE GONE...
TENDER WAS THE MOMENT,
I KNEW THE MEANING OF THAT SAD SONG.
IT WAS NOT FOR YOU OR ME
IT'S WHERE GOD BELONGED





FRILLS by Betty Solof
(from The Wonder of Wandering/Anthology I)

Designer jeans--with the blouse namebrand too.
Bedecked in fashions--the image is new.
The tresses of red add to the allure.
A fresh made-up face--one could not ignore.
A dieter's delight--trimmed to size five.
Heads turn in envy--so pert, so alive.
How could one know that this streamlined packing
Is but a layer of outside wrapping.
The hollow inside that houses a soul
Lies tarnished, unused--with nary a goal.
The heart does not beat to ease others care--
Constantly obsessed with her own welfare.
This decorative package--all gaily tied--
Lovely to look at--but empty inside.

THE FIRST POET by Kay Bunt
(from The Wonder of Wandering)

The verse began with just a word:
"In the beginning was the word"
thought or uttered before a bird
sang a single note, a tone unheard
by human ears, or a breeze had stirred
in the universe undeterred
by towering buildings; landscape blurred
by polluting emissions man conferred.
When man was new and gazed upon it
he nourished the word into a sonnet.
Our very first poet was Father Adam
but women were silenced; was the poet his madam?



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(Hey, it's only fair.)*



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