



Chaparral updrafts

from the
California Federation
of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

Volume 66, No. 9 • December, 2005

serving California poets for over 60 years

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Writers' Conference format for convention

From tips on improving your writing to analyzing the craft, the state CFCP, Inc. Convention April 21–23, 2006 will follow a "Writers' Conference" format, according to Program Chair Dan Saucedo and Convention Chair David Lapierre.

Well-known writers and performers from through the state will present sessions during the 2½-day weekend of events at the Piccadilly Inn Shaw Avenue, in Fresno. Notable among them are Al Young, California Poet Laureate; Dr. Corrinne Clegg Hales, a professor at CSU Fresno; Deborah Edler Brown, a Los Angeles-based author, performer, and workshop leader; Ken Graydon and Phee Sherline, professional balladeers; Chris Nelson, a professor at College of the Desert in Southern California; and Mick Vernon, president of the Monterey Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival.

The customary awards and recognition for contests will be woven into a series of appropriate activities each day.

The Convention will begin at 3 pm with a Round Table discussion on the writing process, in which attendees can join as they arrive throughout the afternoon.

Keynote Speaker Dr. Corrinne Clegg Hales, a Fresno-area poet and professor of creative writing and American literature at CSU Fresno, will speak at 6:30, challenging us to expand our poetic horizons

Piccadilly Inn to be site of 2006 Convention

Located in the heart of Fresno's *Fig Garden*, a lovely residential neighborhood, The Piccadilly Inn West Shaw Hotel features beautifully appointed guest rooms, elegant meeting facilities and a private garden courtyard all nestled in single level bungalows.

The hotel offers a deluxe complimentary continental breakfast daily, an outdoor pool and spa, and all the comforts of home including fresh baked cookies upon arrival. Each guest room features one king, one queen or two queen size beds, and includes a 25" color TV set with pay per view movies, refrigerator, coffee maker, two phones with voice mail, high-speed wireless Internet access, an iron and ironing board and hair dryer.

The Convention rate is \$107.52 inclusive per night per room, with no additional charge for up to

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even as we raise the standards for our writing.

At 7:30 we will be treated to a musical interpretation of the Ballads of California by Ken Graydon and Phee Sherline.

Saturday will follow the tradition of exhibiting the Children's Poetry Fair as well as having members' books and materials on exhibit. Morning sessions

continued on page six: 'Convention'

Board Meeting set for January 28 in Fresno

Plan now to attend the next CFCP, Inc. Board Meeting, scheduled for January 28 at the Piccadilly Inn, 2305 West Shaw Avenue, Fresno, 93711. The telephone number is (559) 226-3850.

Chapter presidents (or their representatives), along with state officers and committee chairs, are voting members at Board meetings, and their input is needed in planning events for the future. In addition, all other CFCP members are welcome to attend, especially members of local area chapters.

The meeting will begin at 11 am, with a break at noon for lunch.

Located in the northwest part of Fresno, the Piccadilly Inn will be the site of the next two conventions. It is also under consideration as a possible central site for all future meetings. Members at the Convention in Oakland agreed to a trial of holding all meetings at the same location. We urge you to show your support by attending!

The January meeting is important, since this is the final meeting to review and approve the numerous details connected with the convention. Although the basic plan of the Convention and contest categories were decided last July, many specific details were still being worked out at the last meeting. And, additional volunteers for the Convention Committee are still needed. Since this is the second year in which the convention has been developed without a local host committee, the Board now recognizes the need for an adequate team of helpers.

In addition to work on the 2006 convention, we

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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.

Be sure to visit our new web site:

<http://www.ChaparralPoets.org>

Did you remember to renew your membership?

Treasurer Roberta Bearden has received dues renewal payments for the coming year from many of you, as well as new memberships from several people, but this is your final reminder of the December 31 deadline for dues, which are still just \$15 annually. If in doubt, check with your chapter treasurer to make certain you've taken care of that little detail.

And, it's equally important that the chapter treasurers make certain they have transmitted those dues to Roberta. The dues payment should be accompanied by a roster listing each member, including the correct spelling of the name, address, and telephone number. We'd also like to have e-mail addresses, to expedite communicating with you throughout the year. If you feel strongly that you prefer to receive your Updrafts in printed form, please note that on the list.

Now is also an excellent time to recruit new members, since they would be eligible to enter the annual contest, which deadline isn't until the end of January.

As usual, chapter dues (even for new members) are paid to the chapter treasurer, and member-at-large dues are paid to the Members-at-Large Chairman, Frances Yordan. You can use the form in this issue.

I've been asked: how to 'read' a poem

People often ask how we can understand what a poem is talking about— what it *means*. We sometimes have the feeling that we *know*, but it's hard to put in words. Here is one man who is doing exactly that. Someone recently directed me to David Biespiel, the editor of *Poetry Northwest*, whose column on poetry appears the first Sunday of each month in *The Oregonian*. Here is his column for Sunday, December 04, 2005.

Remember the acetate-papered pages in the back of your high school biology book with the Da Vinci-shaped human body spread-eagled like the letter X? You'd fold the thin page over the human figure to see the tributaries of the nervous system. Fold over another page, and you'd see the veins and arteries. Fold again, and you'd see the muscle system. In so doing, you'd discover the content of the human body. It can be the same with reading a poem. "The content of a poem," poet Stanley Plumly once said, "includes the ways that all the things in a poem connect, not just its narrative — because there's never just one narrative in a poem."

What are a poem's multiple narratives?

Plot is one, sure. But there's also the narrative of a poem's music — the linkage of sound and sense. Then there's the narrative of a poem's diction. Also, the narrative of its emotion. And behind these, there's the narrative — the imprint — of the poet's mind.

The plot of Peter Campion's poem "Stephanie" could be described in this most rudimentary way: The poet gets a knock at his Inman Square apartment in Cambridge, Mass. (Campion was born in Boston in 1976), sends the knocker away and reflects on the meaning of the experience. But is knowing a poem's plot the best way to understand a poem's content?

Sometimes looking elsewhere — isolating a poem's language, say, or its emotion — helps you get a fresh handle on a poem. And what you understand from entering a poem from one of these junctures is that they connect to all the other things, as well.

For me, an interesting spot in "Stephanie" is the line, "That feeble green. Dim stairs below." It's the transitional point in

Stephanie

This evening a policeman buzzed the door.
His walkie-talkie spittled static.
We weren't the person he was looking for.
But his doubt was automatic.

Barking a woman's name, he glared at me.
When at last he was satisfied
our story checked out, he explained how she
had called in mumbling "suicide."

My meek "wrong number" faltered down the hall:
lost in the glaze from a game show
neighbors were laughing at. And that was all.
That feeble green. Dim stairs below.

But up and pacing now from room to room
as headlights angle in then pass,
as I open the blind, as buildings loom
in tiers of light on this cold glass ...

I see ... it's a sprawl of anonymities.
And not some mere projected screen.
More like a swarm of little creature eyes
spiraling out through street-lamp sheen

And staring across the block (where earlier
that squad car bleeped and peeled away)
I chatter at the air. As if there were
some healing spell for me to say.

Someone would know what name to listen for
and hear the prayer she muttered in doubt
before I jerk closed my blind once more
and watch this light shudder out.

— Peter Campion

(Selected from "Other People," University of Chicago Press, 2005)

the poem's story, for one thing; it's where the poet's meditative response to the plot begins. And it's where other narratives — the narrative of the poem's diction, the narrative of its root sounds — are surfacing, too.

For instance, focusing on the narrative of "Stephanie's" diction, a reader may see that "feeble," while it describes the refracted TV light, also points to the poem's emotional story, namely the poet's apprehension. That he can do little to help. That he, too, is isolated. That he feels the whole experience is to be lamented. That, in fact, everyone seems "feeble" — the policeman, the poet,

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Monthly Contest Winners

on the topic of *California*

Silicon Valley

I never found the valley
Amid the peaks of silicon
Implants of all sizes
Shadowing the walkways
Of the upscale Stanford shopping center
Searching
As I did
Fearless
As I was
For shoes
To walk a mile in
Trying on who, how the other half lives
With plastic surgery
And designer shimmer
For an evening
Hours late
I ran in Cinderella slippers
To the ball
Just before
It dropped
Marking the beginning of the end
For my start up gold rush dreams

—Elizabeth Benson, Danville, CA
First Prize, October

Windsounds

In this new sleek city apartment,
my chest is tightened in the grip
of constant crescendos—
sirens everywhere, howling,
screaming, shrieking their urgent
announcements of catastrophe.

How far removed
from the almost soothing
hum and wail of lonely prairie
sand-wind sliding around
the weathered corners
of that abandoned sun-grayed Mojave
cabin in lasting glissando,
softening the works of men toward
their planned reunion with the earth;

clustering tumbleweeds
against the deep-grooved western wall,
and even rolling some inside, across
the fallen door that lies athwart
the threshold, where its flexed-out
harness leather hinges dropped
it when they pulled their square nails
from the splintered pinewood frame,
and just let go and let the wind.

—Gordon Durham, Modesto, CA
Second Prize, October

Tremolo on the Richter Scale: Phantasmagoria

Andreas,
the aftershocks wrack my nerves.
A neighbor boy practices violin tremolo;
quavers shift from first to third;
fifth position is a stretch
for small hands.

Venetian blinds fan in clammy heat.
On my desk a globe tilts east.

Earth-ambered light declines
in Tang-shan;
the bronze ball falls
into the eighth dragon's mouth—
Convulsions rock cribs.
China seizes Tibet.
Fishes pitch and bank.
Spiders shrivel between phone directories.
Clorox spills.

After the rains
the necks of Stolichnaya bottles
seep up from the earth.

The ancient Chinese used a bronze ball
for predicting and measuring earthquakes.

—Ariel Smart, Saratoga, CA
Third Prize, October

'Multiple narratives' found in analyzing poem

surely the woman.

As for the "Dim stairs below," they lead the officer into the city, yes, but the words also lead us into the process of the poet's meditation, a meditation that begins with a dim notion that more is at stake for the poet than just a mistaken knock at the door.

Then there's the poem's wonderful music: the way "feeble" and "below" echo each other's vowel and consonant sounds and in so doing link up with the poet's oncoming emotional response. Then there's the rhyme of "below" with "show" that connects two very different stories: the policeman exiting "below" as he goes back to his dangerous business and the "show" business of make-believe on the television.

And yet the poet stays behind the apartment "blind," as his own fears come on and

the light shudders out — all of which directs us toward the narrative of the poet's introspection — his mind. Reading this poem through these multiple, linked narratives makes one thing clear: *Campion* is a poet

who knows that what a poet sees is nothing without a mixture of formal prowess and emotional insight.

David Biespiel's most recent book of poetry is "Wild Civility."

Hotel is convenient for Convention-goers

continued from page one

four in a room.

Other amenities include a fitness center with state of the art cardiovascular equipment, a heated spa and a beautiful outdoor swimming pool, and guest laundry facilities. The hotel also offers fax and copy services, express checkout, complimentary airport shuttle service, and complimentary parking.

The West Shaw Avenue address is con-

venient to restaurant, business and shopping centers. It is ten miles from the Fresno Yosemite Airport, seven and one half miles from downtown and the Fresno Convention Center and seven and three fourth miles from the Amtrak Station. Members who wish to use public transportation should let the committee know in advance so that they will be picked up at the designated time and location.

Complete registration forms will be included in the February issue of *Updrafts*.

California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

Serving Poets for Over 60 Years

www.ChaparralPoets.org



• Submit entries to:

Lisabeth Shuman, 2006 Contest Chairperson
California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc.

2521 Meadow Rue Dr, Modesto, CA, 95355-3910

2006 Annual Poetry Contest OPEN TO ALL POETS

Postmarked Deadline:
January 31, 2006

PRIZES: 1st prize: \$60⁰⁰ 2nd prize: \$40⁰⁰ 3rd prize: \$25⁰⁰

Categories	Titles are not counted as part of line limits	Line Limit
1. THEME: <i>Winds of the Chaparral</i> , one first prize only		28 lines
2. Fixed Forms (specify form)		what form requires
3. Short Poem		13 lines
4. Any Subject, any style		28 lines
5. Light or Humorous Poem		24 lines
6. Nature: any aspect		24 lines
7. Science and Technology: any aspect		28 lines
8. Lois Jeannette Dalton Memorial Award: any aspect of <i>Humanity</i>		24 lines
9. Anona McConaghy Memorial Award: any aspect of <i>Friendship</i>		24 lines
10. Roscoe Fortson Memorial Award: <i>Looking Backward</i> (childhood memories in adult voice)		28 lines
11. Executive Board Award: <i>Jumping Ship</i> ; first, second and third prizes only		40 lines

RULES

POSTMARKED DEADLINE: Midnight, January 31, 2006. Members whose dues are not paid by December 31, 2005 will not be eligible for the competition without paying the nonmember entry fees. *Please do not include dues payment with poetry submissions!*

ENTRY FEE: A three dollar (\$3.00) fee is required of nonmembers for each poem entered.

JUDGES: Entries will be judged by non-member professionals from the Western US.

ADVICE and ASSISTANCE: CFCP, Inc. has begun developing a new Education Programs section of its web site. You are encouraged to visit [www.ChaparralPoets.org/education.html] for information, ideas, examples, and answers to your questions.

SUBMISSIONS: All entries must be typewritten on standard white paper, one poem per page. Send 2 (two) copies of each entry. NO CARBONS. On BOTH copies in upper right hand corner, type: number and category name. On 1 (one) copy only, in upper left corner, type: your name, address, and member affiliation (use of mailing labels is acceptable, but designate chapter, member-at-large, etc.). This copy is needed for the printer, program readers and special awards judges. Submit ALL poems in ONE envelope. The Winners List will be posted at the CFCP web site [www.ChaparralPoets.org/winners.html] approximately one month before the CFCP Convention. *This will serve as your official notification!* Those who wish a printed list of winners and letter of notification, please include SASE. Prizewinning and honorable mention poems will be read and awards presented, Sunday, April 23, 2006 at the Piccadilly Inn, 2305 West Shaw Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711. Exact time and location TBA.

EXCLUSIONS: Entries not complying with the rules will be disqualified. Submit only original poems which have never been published, printed or produced in any form, nor awarded a prize in any contest nor submitted to an editor or other contest while being considered for the CFCP awards. Only one poem may be submitted in each category. Do not submit the same poem to more than one category. Winners and honorable mentions are not to appear in publication or be entered in another contest whose awards are announced prior to April 23, 2006.

PUBLICATION: All poems remain the property of the author. However, the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. reserves the right to publish poems which receive recognition in their publications. Keep a copy of your submissions. No manuscripts will be returned.

SPECIAL AWARDS: Special awards are chosen by judges other than the category judges. The **Golden Pegasus Trophy** will be chosen from Member prize winners. The **Roadrunnerup Trophy** will be chosen from poems which received honorable mention. The **Beth Martin Haas Memorial Award** for a Member distinguished by excellence of service to poets and poetry will be selected by the family of Beth Martin Haas. The **Lois Jeannette Dalton Memorial Award** will be selected by Joyce Dalton Wheeler. The **Anona McConaghy and Roscoe Fortson Memorial Awards** will be chosen by judges other than the category judges.

Be sure that you check this page!

The monthly contests for 2005 are concluded but we have ready-and-waiting a list of exciting new topics for 2006. It's not too soon to start on the ones that interest you!

With different categories ten months of the year, there are 30 chances to win recognition. But, of course, it *is* necessary to actually send your poems to the Contest Chair!

Be sure to discard any old versions of this page, so that the poems you submit are for the correct topics and that you have followed the current rules. The rules have changed a bit, to make things clearer and the process smoother to operate. Notice that line length does *not* include the title or blank spaces, and you are asked for *two* copies of each poem.

For your convenience we have included the membership form below. If you still need to renew your own membership, you may fill out this form and send it in with your check, but first, run off a few blank copies to have available for recruitment.

If you have been placing notices of the contest at your library or on the bulletin board at the local college or university along with the membership forms, be sure to update those, as well. And if you haven't been doing that, now would be a great time to start spreading the word!

2006 CFCP, Inc. Monthly Contests

Except where otherwise indicated, poems are limited to 28 lines of text. All forms accepted for all categories.

- JANUARY** — In a Foreign Land
- FEBRUARY** — Chasing Rainbows
- MARCH** — Planes, Trains & Automobiles
- APRIL** — With a Song in My Heart
- MAY** — Tell Me a Story
- JUNE** — Metamorphosis
- JULY** — *no contest*
- AUGUST** — Wine and Food
- SEPTEMBER** — Anthropomorphism
- OCTOBER** — Invitation to a Waltz
- NOVEMBER** — Madcap Moments
(12 lines or fewer)
- DECEMBER** — *no contest*

RULES

Contests are open to all poets in the United States and Canada. Each submission must be typewritten on standard size paper with the contest month in the upper right-hand corner. Send TWO COPIES of each poem with author's name and address in the upper right corner on ONE copy. 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 \$2.00 must accompany each poem submitted (3 for \$5.00). Send cash or make checks to CFCP, Inc. DEADLINE is the last day of the contest month. Envelope must be postmarked no later than 12 midnight of that day. *Print contest month on outside of mailing envelope.*

NOTE: *In any month wherein insufficient entries are received, those poems which were submitted will be held over and judged with the entries for the following month.*

1st prize: \$25.00 2nd prize: \$15.00 3rd prize: \$10.00

Poems will be returned only if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Allow one month after closing date of contest before sending poems elsewhere. Winning poems will be printed in the Chaparral Updrafts newsletter.

**CALIFORNIA
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of CHAPARRAL
POETS, INC.**

➔ Cleo Griffith
mail contest Monthly Contest Chair, CFCP, Inc.
entries to 4409 Diamond Court
Salida, CA 95368-9632
<cleor36@yahoo.com>



YES!

I definitely want to be a member of the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc. for the year 2006.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____

E-MAIL _____

I PREFER TO RECEIVE MY UPDRAFTS NEWSLETTER BY: _____ E-MAIL _____ 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 1 and July 31 will use the pro-rated formula. New memberships received between August 1 and December 31 will be extended for the following full year.

*** Those who desire to continue membership with a chapter, please remit dues to your local chapter treasurer.**

How to Become a Member

check the appropriate item:

- _____ Membership Annual/Renewal\$15⁰⁰
- _____ New Member (February 1 to April 30)\$12⁰⁰
- _____ New Member (May 1 to July 31)\$7⁵⁰
- _____ Spouse (1/2 regular member)..... \$7⁵⁰, \$6⁰⁰, or \$3²⁵
- _____ Junior (under 21; show proof of age)\$3⁰⁰
- _____ Donation (specify amount)

_____ I am interested in joining a Chapter in my area (name of 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 **made payable to CFCP, Inc.** to:
Frances Yordan, Members-at-Large Chairman, 2575 W. San Jose Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711-2733.

All Others: Send this form along with a check or money order **made payable to CFCP, Inc.** to:
CFCP Treasurer, P.O. Box 1750, Empire, CA 95319.

Convention plans show variety of options and opportunities

continued from page one

will include workshops by Deborah Edler Brown, Ken Graydon, and Chris Nelson. The luncheon will be combined with the General Board Meeting.

The afternoon will begin with a craft workshop/lecture geared to junior and senior

high school winners, but appropriate for others, as well, followed by a series of presentations by our new Youth Chapter on how they have organized themselves and what others might do to set up their own groups.

At 3:30 Lindsey Smith, the California Junior Poet Laureate, will speak, after which

the Youth Contest Awards will be presented. This will be followed by a Young Poets Reception for the winners, their parents, and all participants.

The evening will begin at 7 pm with Cowboy Poetry by Mick Vernon. The president of the Monterey Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival and author of a book of original cowboy poetry; he is well known as a performer at numerous venues.

This will be followed at 8 pm by a presentation from Al Young on the craft of writing poetry.

Sunday morning will hold the Annual Poetry Awards, with a workshop by Deborah Edler Brown at 2 pm, and a 4 pm public presentation by Al Young, beginning with a reading of some of his own work, followed by a Q&A session. The evening will host the traditional Golden Pegasus Banquet, with Al Young as the featured speaker.

Each evening will have time and space for the traditional read-around so popular with many participants. So plan to bring along some of your new work, as well as old favorites.

Important Board meeting set for end of January

continued from page one

will discuss plans for the 2007 convention, among several major pieces of business. If you have any items you would like to see discussed, please contact president James Shuman ASAP so they can be included on the agenda. The meeting is expected to conclude by 4:30.

The luncheon menu has been pre-selected and includes rolls and butter, coffee, tea, and dessert. Choose one of the following entrées:

Chef's Traditional Meat Lasagna with garlic bread, salad, and assorted dressings.

Grilled Chicken Ceasar Salad with assorted dressings.

All options are the same price, which is \$16 per person, including service charge and sales tax.

NOTE: Please contact host David Lapierre at <Dalapcrepes@aol.com> or 530-527-0244 or president James Shuman at 209-523-6954 **ASAP** so that reservations will be made for you.

To reach the Piccadilly Inn, those coming from the north and west, take Highway 99 to the Shaw Avenue exit. Turn right (east) on West Shaw Avenue and travel 3 miles to the hotel on the right, at 2305 W. Shaw Avenue.

Those coming from the south, take Highway 99 to the Ashlan Avenue exit. Turn right on West Ashlan Avenue and travel 1 mile. Turn left on North Marks Avenue and travel 1 mile. Turn right on West Shaw Avenue and travel .6 mile to the hotel on the right, at 2305 W. Shaw Avenue.

Board Meeting January 28
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Have you renewed your membership?

• Inside:

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