

## Innovation and Tradition 2011 Events at NHWP

by George L. Geers

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE WRITERS' PROJECT will be busy this year!

Of course, we will offer **Writers' Day** on **March 5** and our usual full calendar of **workshops**, **Writers' Nights Out**, **Book Clubs for Writers**, and **discussions**. (See "What's Coming Up?" on page 4.)

This year, too, the Writers' Project is sponsoring the biennial **New Hampshire Literary Awards**. We will honor writers in the following categories: Outstanding Book of Nonfiction, Outstanding Book of Fiction, Outstanding Work of Children's Literature, Outstanding Book of Poetry, the Donald M. Murray Award for Outstanding Journalism, and the Lifetime Achievement Award. The Writers' Project has penciled in Saturday evening, **November 5**, for our **awards ceremony**.

Details on submitting books for the New Hampshire Literary Awards will be posted on [www.nhwritersproject.org](http://www.nhwritersproject.org) and in *NH Writer*. In addition, we'll announce the guidelines in an e-mail burst to members.

The Writers' Project will be a part of two new festivals this year, the **White Mountains Cultural Festival** and the **New Hampshire Book Festival**.

The **White Mountains Cultural Festival** is timed to honor the hundredth anniversary of the federal legislation that allowed the U.S. Forest Service to purchase land and turn it into the great public forest that today includes



Photo courtesy of the Frost Place

the White Mountain National Forest. The Writers' Project is partnering with the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire, the Frost Place in Franconia, and the Northern Forest Heritage Park in Berlin to bring literary events to the North Country. At press time, four daylong events were being planned by the Writers' Project and its partners: workshops, readings, book

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## Digital Poetry

### Q&A with Mary Ann Sullivan

by Dawn Coutu

*Mary Ann Sullivan led the Pioneering Poetry in Pictures: Elements of Digital Poetry session at Writers' Day 2011. In her own work with digital poetry, Sullivan experiments with insights and images to get people thinking.*

**Q:** What is digital poetry?

**A:** There are many forms of poetry, all of them unique and necessary, including traditional poetry. Digital poetry is a new form that frees language from the restrictions of the page. It can take advantage of animation, in this regard. Words can be set into motion. Digital poems have audio, and so offer audible words of the poet . . . and other sounds. These types of poems do not have to be read from



Mary Ann Sullivan

the top down as we've been taught; there is no declared starting point. Quite often digital poets do not think in a linear fashion, one sentence at a time. Instead, a poem emerges all at once. A digital poet might attempt to present the inspiration the way it emerged. If you want to try creating digital poetry, you have to trust your own voice. Use new interactive tools, but don't try to imitate anyone for long. This is a whole new form that aches for expression through discovery.

**Q:** How did you get started with digital poetry?

**A:** I was already interested in digital poetry when I was up for a position as founder at the Digital Poetry Center at Franklin Pierce University, so I started researching the genre on my own. Ten years ago, the BBC was one of the only places that published digital poetry. Few online journals had the equipment or the know-how to put my digital work online, so finding publishers has not always been easy. Now, journals that publish digital poetry are commonplace.

**Q:** What comes first: the poem or the audiovisual concept?

**A:** In the beginning, I started with the poem, then adapted it visually. Now, the poem and the visual concept come

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## Scholarship to Honor Lynn Safford



A SCHOLARSHIP is being established to honor **Lynn Heywood Safford**, who died in November. An NHWP member and alumna of UNH, Safford also was a member of the first graduating class of the Southern New Hampshire University MFA Program in

Fiction and Nonfiction. The memorial scholarship set up in her name will benefit the MFA program.

“The annual Lynn Safford Prize and Scholarship,” says director Robert Begiebing, “is to go to the MFA student who best exemplifies Lynn’s work ethic and unifying community spirit.” A member of the family will come to the annual summer graduation ceremony on campus and present the prize. Anyone interested in contributing should donate to the Lynn Safford Scholarship Fund at the SNHU Office of Institutional Advancement, 2500 North River Road, Manchester, NH 03106. For more information, call (603) 645-9799.

## NH Writer

*NH Writer* is published by the  
New Hampshire Writers’ Project,  
2500 North River Road, Manchester, NH 03106

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*NH Writer* Committee: Martha Carlson-Bradley, Dawn Coutu, Michele Filgate,  
and Carla Gericke

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NHWP is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster the literary arts  
community in the Granite State. Its goals are to serve as a resource for and about  
New Hampshire writers; to support the development of individual writers; and  
to encourage an audience for literature in New Hampshire.

We publish nonfiction articles on writing and publishing, notices from editors  
and publishers requesting manuscripts, a calendar of readings and literary  
events, a bulletin board for NHWP members, and requests from librarians and  
others who seek specific literary information. We welcome letters from readers  
and will publish them as space permits. Send to *NH Writer*, NHWP, 2500  
North River Road, Manchester, NH 03106.

**Deadlines:** Feb. 1 for spring issue; May 1 for summer issue; Aug. 1 for fall issue;  
Nov. 1 for winter issue. Please send new ads two weeks before the deadline.  
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## Innovation and Tradition 2011 Events at NHWP

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sales, and a Writers’ Block party at the Heritage Park in Berlin; a celebration, with the Frost Place, of the poetry of Robert Frost and his impact on today’s poets; a look at the literature of White Mountains, past and present, as seen through the eyes of summer visitors and writers who call the North Country home; and, lastly (breathe that fresh air), talks about the world of the White Mountains as seen by writers, editors, and publishers of outdoor, hiking, and travel books.

The Writers’ Project intends to continue its partnerships with other organizations for four additional events. At press time, scheduling was still being worked out for these extra programs, but they will be held in July and August.

This October, the first **New Hampshire Book Festival** will be a Writers’ Project signature event, with the theme of **Poetry AND Politics**. The timing is ideal for the festival because the New Hampshire primary will be in full swing, and there will be plenty to write (and read) about. NHWP is planning four chapters to the festival:

- the presentation of the second Donald Hall/Jane Kenyon Prize in Poetry;
- diverse programming with our Concord partners, a relationship that began last fall with the Concord Literary Festival;
- poetry events, with New Hampshire Poet Laureate Walter E. Butts extending an invitation to all the states’ poets laureate to come to New Hampshire to read at venues across the state and to hold a conference on the poet’s view of politics;
- an invitation to political candidates who have written books and those pundits and historians who have written about the state’s primary, today and yesterday, with programming to include a look at the 1972 race and all of the intrigue that went with it;

We’ll also be taking a sneak peek at 2012 and the second New Hampshire Book Festival: the theme will be Murder in New Hampshire.

So NHWP is celebrating its traditional events and launching new ones in 2011. It will be a very good year. Members of the Writers’ Project interested in further information are encouraged to keep an eye on the website, [www.nhwritersproject.org](http://www.nhwritersproject.org). Those interested in planning or volunteering at an event can contact George Geers at [ggeers@nhwritersproject.org](mailto:ggeers@nhwritersproject.org).

*George Geers is executive director of the New Hampshire Writers’ Project.*

## Digital Poetry

### Q&A with Mary Ann Sullivan

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simultaneously. Words are concepts. But we forget that. So I move between image and word to express the poem with a primitive yet advanced form of language.

**Q:** How do you decide what type of media (photo, video clip, or drawing) best serves the stanza or page?

**A:** A person must be introduced to what type of media exists so far to know which will serve the digital poem best. More forms might be possible ten years from now. Being open to learning about new forms of media is helpful for someone who creates digital poetry to do or make whatever they want. A familiarity with Photoshop, Flash, and video editing software may help, in addition to a basic knowledge of audio editing software.

**Q:** How did you implement your own style in Apollinaire's poem "Il Pleut" ([www.towerjournal.com/il\\_pleut.html](http://www.towerjournal.com/il_pleut.html))?

**A:** I collaborated with Gregory Vincent St. Thomasino on "Il Pleut," and we decided to create animated text over the scanned original. I could get into a rut if I didn't collaborate or study other people's works. It's helpful to imitate other people's skills to improve your own style. When studying Apollinaire, I learned about his fascination with radio waves. He predicted

poets would be able to write by using words that pass through space. This has come true. We have radio waves around us in the form of cell phones, music, radios. We are used to reading left to right, from the top down, but Apollinaire formed words into circles, which defied being read from the top down. In this way, he animated words in a time when he did not have the resources we have now. Apollinaire had the idea to give the poem sound and movement, which is evident in his poem "Lettre-Océan." I simply did him a favor by adding a sound dynamic to his work.

**Q:** When you create interactive poetry, such as "Shaking the Spiders Out" ([www.bbc.co.uk/arts/poetry/ondisplay](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/poetry/ondisplay)), what programs do you use to create the artwork?

**A:** For some of my projects, I write the code in ActionScript and then put it in Adobe Flash, or I'll use Adobe Photoshop, as I did for "Spiders." I have to put as much work into the poem (the words, and the images) as into the code itself. Digital work is just positive and negative charges; a magnet could go near it and it could be erased. I have to remind myself that I am not writing to be archived. I am writing because I want to expand this new media—because I must.

*Dawn Coutu, publications assistant at NHWP, interviews professors at New England College, where she writes for the magazine Today. One of her recent poetry performances is available at Tygerburning, the blog of the MFA program at NEC: <http://tygerburning.blogspot.com>.*

## Poetry Out Loud 2011 Final Competition on March 17

MARCH MADNESS is not just for basketball championships! Beginning March 7, New Hampshire high school students will showcase their recitation skills at a series of 2011 **New Hampshire Poetry Out Loud** regional competitions. New Hampshire Poetry Out Loud, a program of the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts (NHSCA) and National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), encourages youth to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance. The program helps high school students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage. Competitors memorize and recite poems from a selection chosen by the NEA and are scored on presentation and accuracy.

More than ten thousand students from thirty-five New Hampshire high schools have participated in the program this year. Each high school's champion heads to a regional competition to compete for one of the twelve slots at the state championship, which takes place at **Representatives Hall in the New Hampshire State House in Concord on March 17 at 7 p.m.** The champion will advance to the Poetry Out Loud National Finals in late April, where \$50,000 in scholarships and school prizes will be awarded.

Regional competition will take place across the Granite State:

- **Regional 1:** Walker Auditorium in Robert Frost Hall, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, March 7 at 7 p.m. (Snow date: March 15 at 7 p.m.)
- **Regional 2:** Centennial Hall in the new Alumni Center, Keene State College, March 8 at 7 p.m. (Snow date: March 9 at 7 p.m.)
- **Regional 3:** Currier Museum of Arts, Manchester, March 10 at 6:30 p.m. Galleries will be open at no charge to visitors from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. (Snow date: March 11 at 11 a.m.)
- **Regional 4:** Simon Center, New England College, Henniker, March 11, at 7 p.m. (Snow date March 12 at 1 p.m.)

Attendance at all events is free and open to the public, although seating is limited and early arrival is recommended.

The NHSCA is the NEA's major partner for the state's Poetry Out Loud Contest. Other partners include the Poetry Foundation, the Badger Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the New Hampshire Writers' Project, the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire, Caitan Kerry Press, the Frost Place, the Poetry Society of New Hampshire, the NHWP Book Shop, Badger Works, and the Seaside Bank of Walpole. To learn more about the NHWP Poetry Out Loud Contest, call (603) 271-0795 or visit [www.nhscanet.org](http://www.nhscanet.org). For the calendar of high school competition dates, or find out how