

2023 State Finals

March 11, 2023 | Grandstreet Theatre | Helena, Montana



# MARCH 11, 2023 GRANDSTREET THEATRE HELENA, MT

#### 10:00 AM

Welcome and Introductions Calibration Round

### 10:15 - 11:30 AM

Semi-Final Round One | First Poem

# 11:30 - 12:30 PM

Semi-Final Round Two | Second Poem Announcement of Finalists

### 12:30 PM

Lunch Break

# 1:30 PM

Final Round Three | Third Poem (top eight finalists recite)

### 2:15 - 2:45 PM

Recitations by Guest Judges

# 2:45 PM

Closing Remarks and Awards Presentation

# 3:00 PM

Reception + Photos



COVER PHOTO: Eric Heidle

01	Ellette Whitcomb
•	Songs for the People by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

- **Ryan Tiet**"Where did the handsome beloved go?" by Jalal Al-Din Rumi
- **Gracie Watson**I Remember, I Remember *by Thomas Hood*
- Maya Dare
  Love Song by Dorothy Parker
- 05 **Rio Thelen** Wind, Water, Stone *by Octavio Paz*
- O6 **Lily Johnson** Semi-Splendid *by Tracy K. Smith*
- Mack Williams
  The World is too Much With Us by William Wordsworth
- O8 Gabriella Shaw
  I Remember, I Remember by Thomas Hood
- Osabelle Bennett American Smooth by Rita Dove



- **Taryn Lodge**The Arrow and the Song *by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*
- 11 **Peyton Waters** Y2K by Therese Lloyd
- 12 **Wica-ta-wi Brown**"No, I wasn't meant to love and be loved" by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib
- Hannah Ruth Davidson
  Pineapple by Ishwar Gupta
- 14 **Isobel Sturges**Poetry *by Marianne Moore*
- 15 **Robby Holman**After working 60 hours again for what reason *by Bob Hicok*
- 16 **Kenna Anderson**The Properly Scholarly Attitude *by Adelaide Crapsey*
- 17 **Olivia King**The Star by Ann Taylor and Jane Taylor
- 18 Lucy Johnstone Tomorrow by Dennis O'Driscoll



- 1 Ellette Whitcomb
  How Dark the Beginning by Maggie Smith
- **Ryan Tiet**Translations from the English *by George Starbuck*
- Gracie Watson Another Antipastoral by Vievee Francis
- Maya Dare Life Cycle of Common Man by Howard Nemerov
- 05 **Rio Thelen**Brother, I've seen some *by Kabir*
- Of Lily Johnson
  The Affliction of Richard by Robert Bridges
- Mack Williams
  A Locked House by W.D. Snodgrass
- **Gabriella Shaw**I Find No Peace by Sir Thomas Wyatt
- 19 **Isabelle Bennett**The Ragged and the Beautiful *by Safiya Sinclair*



# **Taryn Lodge**The American Soldier *by Philip Freneau*

# 11 **Peyton Waters**The Affliction of Richard *by Robert Bridges*

# 12 **Wica-ta-wi Brown**Abecedarian Requiring Further Examination of Anglikan Seraphym Subjugation of a Wild Indian Rezervation *by Natalie Diaz*

# 13 Hannah Ruth Davidson In Praise of My Bed by Meredith Holmes

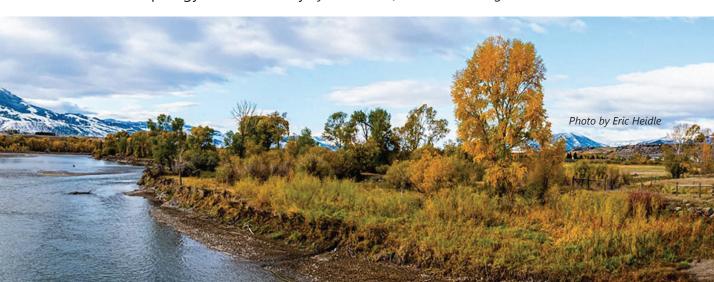
# 14 Isobel Sturges Dawn by Ella Higginson

# 15 **Robby Holman** Epilogue *by Robert Browning*

# 16 **Kenna Anderson** Ikebana *by Cathy Song*

# 17 Olivia King Envy by Mary Lamb

# Lucy Johnstone An Apology For Her Poetry by Duchess of Newcastle Margaret Cavendish



# PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES



**Ellette Whitcomb** 

Ellette is in the 9th grade at Hellgate High School in Missoula and is a fan of the author Adrienne Young and the broadway musical *Hamilton*. Her

plans beyond high school are to attend college out of state and study creative writing, dance, music, and theater, with a possible pursuit of environmental studies.



**Ryan Tiet** 

Ryan is in his senior year at Flathead High School. As a person who loves the art of storytelling, he plans to become a script writer and director in the

future and lives by the motto "the audience is king!" always believing that what he does as a performer or storyteller is for the sake of the audience's enjoyment and rarely personal gain.



**Gracie Thiel-Watson** 

Gracie attends Belt High School and is currently in the 10th grade. She is considering studying medicine beyond high school to pursue an in-

terest in the field of radiology.



**Maya Dare** 

A junior at Butte High School and college bound, Maya's favorite film is *Spirited Away*, due to its exceptionally beautiful animation and

storytelling, and follows Dr. Seuss' saying as her motto: "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened."





#### **Rio Thelen**

Rio is in the 9th grade at Missoula's Hellgate High School and plans to pursue college beyond high school and eventually become an author of

fiction novels. In addition to that, he wants to direct or have a role in movies based on the books, so that they could be "accurate moving representations of what my readers had read." Rio's favorite quote comes from the great Stan Lee's Spider-Man: "With great power comes great responsibility."



# **Lily Johnson**

Lily is a Simms sophomore who includes among her favorite books, the poetry collection *Honey and Glass* by Savannah Lynn Thom-

as. Lily's post-high school plans include studies in Nursing and Psychology. She is inspired by the Ralph Waldo Emerson quote: "It is not length of life, but the depth of life."



#### **Mack Williams**

Mack is a Butte High School sophomore who is compelled by the message of his favorite movie, *The Perks Of Be*ing A Wallflower, that the

audience should rise up and act for themselves before anyone else, lest they experience emotional and mental damage. He is also inspired by the John Keating quote "Carpe Diem; seize the day boys, make your life extraordinary."



#### **Gabriella Shaw**

Gabriella is a junior at Chrysalis School and a huge fan of the works of author Dan Brown. Her favorite film is the classic The Conjuring and the

*Witch*. Her future plans include the desire to pursue post-high school studies in gemology.





#### **Isabelle Bennett**

Isabelle is a junior at Flathead High School and considering a gap year before college in order to travel with possible studies in stage en-

gineering to follow. She lives by a personal motto: "whatever happens, happens."



# **Taryn Lodge**

Taryn is a senior at Belt High School and a fan of the excellent fantasy fiction of Brandon Sanderson and the musical Hamilton for its mixture

of history and drama. She would like to go to law school and become an attorney.





Peyton is a Butte High School junior and a fan of Stephen King's writing, Mr. Harrigan's Phone in particular, as well as the film adaptation of his work, Misery. She is guid-

ed by the mantra "expect the unexpected."



#### Wica-ta-wi Brown

Wica-ta-wi currently attends Polson High School with a future plan of studying at Dartmouth, with an intention of following a pathway

into the House of Representatives—to be a voice, and to be heard. Wica-ta-wi admires the work of, and has been personally changed by, the important writings of Angie Thomas.



# Hannah Ruth Davidson

Hannah Ruth is a Flathead High School student with a love of Charles Dickens and the artful film adaptation of

Anne of Green Gables. She has plans to be a nurse, perhaps in pediatrics or surgery, and lives by the adage "everything in moderation."





**Isobel Sturges** 

Isobel is a senior at Chrysalis School and an admirer of the philosophy writings of Hannah Arendt, for her writing style and the way that

she addresses the world's problems.



**Robby Holman** 

A sophomore at Butte High School, Robby has his sights set on studying Aeronautic Engineering beyond high school. Brandon Mull is his fa-

vorite author, for his captivating characters, settings, and plots.



**Kenna Anderson** 

Kenna, a senior year at Flathead High School, is currently enjoying work by the author Helen Macdonald, saying that her writing "forms a clear

bridge between the human and natural world and presents intricate tensions found in our environment..." Kenna plans to major in biology with a pre-med emphasis.



# **Olivia King**

Olivia is a 9th grade student at Belt High School who plans to attend college in California toward a goal of becoming a graphic designer. She

is a fan of the "thrill of the horror" and the author Stephen King.



### **Lucy Johnstone**

Lucy is a junior at Hellgate High School who is interested in pursuing studies at a historically women's college, to major in either education or

costume design. Her favorite film is *Every-thing Everywhere All At Once*, for its performances, themes and costuming.





#### **Mark Gibbons**

Mark Gibbons grew up in a small Milwaukee Railroad town in western Montana where he married his high school sweetheart. He earned a BA in English & Psychology, taught high school English for a decade, and in his forties took an MFA in creative writing from the University of Montana.

Mark's grandparents came from Ireland and Germany, making his parents first generation Americans. As the first college graduate in his family, Mark boasts a work resume that most "western stickers" (those determined to stay in Montana at all costs) know all too well: dishwasher, janitor, carpenter, wood cutter, gandy dancer, surveyor, fire fighter, furniture mover, laborer, truck driver, and teacher.

In 1970, Mark was in a poetry workshop at his high school taught by an unknown Indian poet, James Welch. A student of Richard Hugo's, Welch gave Mark permission to write poetry in his own voice, out of his life experiences. He's been writing ever since. He is the author of 11 books of poetry. Most recently *In the Weeds*, published by the Drumlummon Institute, appeared in 2021. Mark is the editor of the Montana Poets Series for FootHills Publishing, and has served as the tenth Montana Poet Laureate since 2021. In that capacity he has produced fifty interviews with Montana poets archived on YouTube and at Humanities Montana as *Poets in Montana*.

Mark has been teaching poetry in Montana for over 25 years, and currently he works for the Missoula Writing Collaborative. He has been involved with Poetry Out Loud since its inception serving as a judge and recitation consultant in the last two decades.



#### **Aaron Parrett**

Aaron Parrett is a professor of English at the University of Providence. He has written many books, articles, and essays, including *Montana*: *Then and Now* (2014), and *Literary Butte* (2015). In 2017 he printed a collection of previously published fiction in a fine letterpress edition called *Maple & Lead* (Territorial Press) to critical acclaim, which won an Artist's Innovation Award from the Montana Arts Council as well as a High

Plains Book Award. A fiddler and songwriter, he has also released several CDs and LPs of original music, including the acclaimed *The Sinners* (1996). He is also Executive Director of The Drumlummon Institute, a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 in Helena devoted to publication of quality art and literature related to Montana and the West. Along with writer Russell Rowland, Parrett hosts a monthly podcast about Montana literature called *Breakfast in Montana*.



### **Anna Paige**

Anna Paige is a Montana-based arts journalist and co-founder of Young Poets, winner of the 2021 Library of Congress Award for Literacy. Since her first newspaper gig in 2003, Anna has been writing about arts and culture in the West. She has undergraduate degrees in anthropology and journalism from the University of

Wyoming and a master's degree in arts and culture management with a concentration in creative writing from the University of Denver.

Anna founded Pen and Paige in 2009 to document the arts by telling the stories of Montana creators, music experiences, and recording visual and performing arts. She has resided in Billings for more than a decade, where she teaches poetry in the elementary schools and is the co-host of *Resounds: Arts and Culture on the High Plains* on Yellowstone Public Radio.

Active in the writing community of Montana, Anna has taught writing and composition at Montana State University Billings, as well as classes through the Big Sky Writing Workshops. In 2016, she co-founded Billings Area Literary Arts, an organization dedicated to building and enhancing literary arts in and around Billings, and in 2019 launched an open mic event for poetry at Kirks' Grocery.

# **ACCURACY JUDGE**

#### **Donna Davis**

Quondam attorney and philosophy prof, Montana native Donna Davis is an award-winning poet and actor. For almost a decade, she taught poetry in Montana and Wyoming schools as a Poet on the Prairie under the auspices of the National Writer's Voice and the 92nd Street Y. She simultaneously served as a Tumblewords (a WESTAF program) teaching poet.

In 1997, Donna was awarded a Montana Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship in Literature. She was later the winner of a Myrna Loy Center artist award, the first for poetry, and a Helena National Forest artist residency. An avid supporter of intellectual freedom, she has been honored by the ACLU of Montana and other organizations. Her work appears in various anthologies, including Poets Across the Big Sky.

#### MASTER OF CEREMONY

Monica Grable

#### **JUDGES**

Mark Gibbons Aaron Parrett Anna Paige

#### **ACCURACY JUDGE**

Donna Davis

#### **SCORE TALLY**

Hannah Grable Ginny Newman

#### PROGRAM DESIGN

Eric Heidle

#### **TEACHER ASSISTANTS**

Alison Kreiss Scott Cooney

#### **CALIBRATION ROUND**

Donna Davis

#### **ASL INTERPRETATION**

Macy Henze Molly Verseput Dana Walls

#### **COVER PHOTOGRAPH**

Eric Heidle

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Katie Knight

#### **VIDEOGRAPHY**

Helena Civic Television

A TREMENDOUS THANK YOU TO ALL THE TEACHERS, PARENTS AND POETS WHO SUPPORTED THIS YEAR'S STATE FINALISTS AND TO OUR HOST, GRANDSTREET THEATRE!

According to John Hollander in *Committed to Memory*, long before there was writing, stories were kept alive through a cycle of reciting. Even after almost three millennia of written literature, poetry retains its appeal to the ear as well as the eye. To hear a poem read aloud by someone who understands it and who wishes to share that understanding can be a crucial experience.

# PAST STATE CHAMPIONS

#### 2022

- 1. Rachel Campbell *The Chrysalis School*
- 2. Zoe Belinda Red Lodge High

#### 2021

- 1. Brady Drummond Belt High
- 2. Anna Christensen Flathead High

#### 2020

- 1. Isabella Shinn Flathead High
- 2. Katy McCumber Butte High

#### 2019

- 1. Sophie Barth Butte High
- 2. Victoria Shelton Belt High

#### 2018

- 1. Anna Hedinger *Flathead High*
- 2. Clint Connors Butte High

#### 2017

- 1. Anaka Ronan Helena High
- 2. Claire Parsons Hellgate High

#### 2016

- 1. Savannah Smith Helena High
- 2. Taylor Blossom Capital High

#### 2015

- 1. Taylor Rogers Willard Alternative
- 2. Taylor Blossom Capital High

#### 2014

- 1. Sowmya Sudhakar Butte High
- 2. Darcie Caldwell Helena High

#### 2013

- 1. Taylor Blossom Capital High
- 2. Stella Shannon Hellgate High

#### 2012

- 1. Austin Graef Hellgate High
- 2. Stella Shannon Hellgate High

#### 2011

- 1. Stella Shannon Hellgate High
- 2. Bella DeLong Helena High

#### 2010

- 1. Diego Steele Sentinel High
- 2. Bella DeLong Helena High

#### 2009

- 1. Sara Larson Butte High
- 2. Adryan Kransky Hellgate High

#### 2008

- 1. Amber Greymorning Hellgate High
- 2. Mike Zarling Helena High

#### 2007

- 1. Josh Kelly Flathead High
- 2. Jana Barros Helena High

#### 2006

- 1. Cassin LaFontaine Helena High
- 2. Christian Munck Helena High

# A PROGRAM OF:









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