

Poet Laureate

Submitted by Rob Hardy, Northfield Poet Laureate

The Poet Laureate organized and/or participated in four events in October:

(1) **Poetry Reading and Workshop by Leila Chatti** (October 5). Leila Chatti, the 2017-28 Ron Wallace Poetry Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, was in town on October 5 to give a class for about 30 students at St. Olaf, a poetry workshop for 15 students at Northfield High School, and a reading to an audience of 25 people at the Northfield Public Library. The Poet Laureate hosted Leila for dinner on Thursday evening, showed her around Northfield, and took her to Martha's Eats and Treats on Friday morning. Her accommodations at the Alumni Guest House were provided by Carleton College (with funding from the English Department). St. Olaf paid a \$200 honorarium for the class, and the Poet Laureate paid a \$300 honorarium for the workshop and reading.

(2) **NER Vermont Reading Series** (October 16). The Poet Laureate participated in a reading at the Marquis Theater in Middlebury, Vermont, as part of a series featuring *New England Review* contributors and Middlebury college students. He shared the stage with essayists Lizzie Apple (student) and Jericho Parms, and poet April Ossmann. The event was organized by Carolyn Kuebler, the editor of the *New England Review*. About 50 people were in attendance, including Northfield sidewalk poet and former City Council member Patrick Ganey, who now lives in Middlebury.

(3) **"A Mob of Scribbling Women"** (October 19). This feminist reading and discussion group, co-organized by local writer Harmony Neal, drew 12 participants.

(4) **Poetry Reading and Workshop by Neil Hilborn** (October 26). Neil Hilborn, poet and YouTube sensation, gave a poetry workshop for 16 star-struck high school students at Northfield High School on October 26. Neil led them through a poetry prompt, answered questions, performed two of his poems, and posed for photographs with students. In the evening (after dinner with the Poet Laureate, Jessica Peterson White, and high school student Hannah Pahs), he performed his poetry for a crowd of 50 people (mostly under the age of 25) at Content Bookstore. He also signed copies of his book and posed for photographs.

Total participation in Poet Laureate-related programs in October: ±198 people

The Poet Laureate also met with Paul Niemisto, the conductor of the Cannon Valley Regional Orchestra, to discuss the narration the Poet Laureate is writing and performing for the CVRO's December production of *The Nutcracker* with dance students from Northfield and Cannon Falls.

Feedback of the Month

"It was nothing short of inspiring." —NHS student, on Leila Chatti's poetry workshop