

Northfield Poet Laureate Report November 2017

We started off the month, on November 2, with a visit from award-winning poet Anders Carlson-Wee, who led a poetry workshop at Northfield High School and gave a well-attended reading at Content Books. Anders returned to Northfield on November 20 to spend the day at Northfield High School leading additional workshops for students in Jennifer Lompart's ELL class who are preparing for the 3rd Annual TORCH Poetry Slam. Both visits were sponsored and paid for by the Poet Laureate's 2017 SEMAC grant.

Much of my work in November has been behind the scenes. I met with Emily Oliver, the interim associate director of Academic Civic Engagement at Carleton, to discuss possible partnerships between her office and the Poet Laureate. Emily recruited three Carleton students (all bilingual in English and Spanish) to work with Jennifer Lompart's students at the high school on their poetry slam poems. We also made arrangements for Carleton to host a preliminary round of the Be Heard Minnesota youth poetry slam series, sponsored by the Twin Cities' organization TruArtSpeaks (<http://truartspeaks.org/>). The event will be held at Carleton's new Kracum Performance Hall on Saturday, February 3, 2018. Emily also hired a student "public poetry fellow," Amirah Ellison (the daughter of Rep. Keith Ellison), to work with her and the Poet Laureate on planning a week-long poetry festival at Carleton over the winter term. The event will be a college-community partnership.

I also met with Emily's counterpart at St. Olaf, Alyssa Herzog Melby, to discuss possible collaborations. Because the Poet Laureate position will not be funded by SEMAC money in 2018, it's important to be developing local sources of funding and local partnerships to sustain the program.

On November 17, my poem for the Northfield Public Library was installed in the library atrium. The work was expertly done by Amber and Andy from Graphic Mailbox. This month I also started work on writing a poetic retelling of the story of *The Nutcracker* ballet to present as part of the Cannon Valley Regional Orchestra's performance (with dancers from Northfield and Cannon Falls choreographed by Shari Setchell and Ashley Groth) on December 16 and 17.

Finally, I attended part of an Arts and Culture Commission meeting to give an update, wrote a blurb for a forthcoming poetry book by another local poet, and accepted an invitation to give a poetry reading at the Pump House Regional Arts Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin, sometime in 2018.