

## **Lorraine Riess Selected as First Poet Laureate for Haddam**

**By Kent Jarrell**

The Brainerd Memorial Library announced that Lorraine Riess has been selected for a two-year appointment as the Poet Laureate of Haddam. Lorraine, a published poet, and a Haddam resident will serve in the honorary position as the ambassador of the community's literary life on January 1, 2021.

The selection was made by a committee of community representatives that considered applicants' breadth of experience in poetry, comfort level in public speaking, and achievements of distinction.

After Lorraine's retirement from a career in architecture, she said she had time to do more thinking and began to further explore poetry as a member of the Connecticut River Poets, a group dedicated to encouraging and critiquing poets.

"The idea of expressing a particular idea or emotion, or leaving the reader with an indelible image is exciting for me," she said. "I think Japanese Haiku is the most elegant expression of this, but longer forms and sonnets allow us to expand on ideas as well. I strive for what one poet described as 'the best words in the best order.' I hope that I can have an enriching presence in the community and encourage a wider awareness of all that poetry can do for us. To make us more complete human beings, to meet our creative side with joy and surprise is a wonderful thing."

Although the position is unpaid, the Haddam Poet Laureate position is endorsed by the Town of Haddam and will be assisted by the Brainerd Memorial Library in the coordination of scheduling of events.

"Brainerd Memorial Library is delighted to announce the selection of Lorraine Riess as Haddam's first Poet Laureate," said Marijean Conrad, President of the Library Board of Trustees. "Lorraine is an accomplished poet who will give us a unique appreciation of life in Haddam. Our congratulations and best wishes go to Lorraine on this honor."

Margaret Gibson, Connecticut's State Poet Laureate, welcomed Lorraine to the ranks of Poet Laureates serving in more than thirty cities and towns across the state and said, "Ms. Riess is not only an accomplished poet, but she is also a generous and a compassionate listener, able to offer her insights and experience to others. Part of my focus as the State of Connecticut Poet Laureate is to offer the Town Poet Laureates opportunities to work together as we all bring poetry into the lives of our communities, whether in readings, workshops, community discussions. Poems give voice to our essential humanity, using language with imagination to engage our attention and reach out to each other. What good news that Haddam will be joining a state-wide expansion of language arts and imagination into the community!"