

Austin Poetry Society

P. O. Box 684672, Austin, TX 78768
www.austinpoetrysociety.org

December, 2009

Muse-Letter

Laureate Alan Birkelbach Leads Our Open Mic

On Saturday December 19, 1:30-3:30 p.m., we meet in the **North Village Branch Library**, 2505 Steck Ave. The 2005 Texas Poet Laureate, Alan **Birkelbach**, comes from Plano to be our featured reader and will emcee our annual open microphone for APS members. Birkelbach is one of four Texas Poets Laureate who have been members of APS, the others being Jenny Lind Porter (1963-1964), karla k. **morton** (2010), and Aline Michaelis (1934, who was Laureate before APS was organized). Birkelbach had a book launch on April 25, 2009, for his collection, *Translating the Prairie: Plano, Texas in Words and Pictures* (with art by 18 artists from the Plano community). In 2007 the TCU Texas Poets Laureate Series issued *Alan Birkelbach: New and Selected Poems*. His poetry appears often in anthologies and journals including *Borderlands*, *Concho River Review*, *Encore*, *Grasslands Review*, *Illya's Honey*, *Langdon Review*, *New Texas*, *Poet's Forum Magazine*, and *Texas in Poetry 2*.

Bring poetry to share in the open mic, especially your poems from *Reflections*, our 60th anniversary anthology. Or bring holiday poetry, or any other poetry you want to share. The meeting is free and all are welcome. Monthly contest results for entries from October and November will be announced.

From 11:00 to noon on Saturday, December 12, bring poems to discuss with the **APS Critique Group**, hosted by Beth **Kropf**, upstairs dining area of Central Market, 38th and Lamar. If you like, take the nudge of the month: make a list of things, subjects, objects, feelings and images that you don't think belong in a poem. Then write a poem about one of them. Because of the season, our **Fourth Thursday Open Microphone** goes on holiday this month, returning January 28, 2010. In the January session, hosted by Ralph **Hausser**, we will feature again all the poets in our 60th anniversary anthology.

A Constitutional Vote to Advance Our 501(c)(3) Application

In the December 19th business meeting, the Board asks you to approve two more Constitutional changes. None of our operations, rules or procedures are being changed by these revisions. With these technical improvements we hope to submit our application to IRS for non-profit status before the end of December.

The IRS form requires that, following the filing of our Certificate of Registration as a Texas non-profit corporation (March 13, 2008), we adopt our bylaws. The Board suggests that we change the name of our present Constitution to "Bylaws, Part A," and designate our present Bylaws as "Bylaws, Part B," and then re-adopt them as revised.

In addition, the Board asks you to approve an IRS-recommended Conflict of Interest Policy as Appendix A to Bylaws Part B. The form prevents directors, officers or committee members from using their office to give themselves inappropriate benefits. You may look at the form online in www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1023.pdf, and copies will be distributed at the meeting before the vote. On request to poetryplease@mail.utexas.edu, we'll mail you a paper copy in advance.

Welcome to New Members

We're very pleased to have these new and renewed members since last month:

Thomas **Cable**

Laura J. **Khalil**

Kay L. **Cox**

Lee **LeTeff**

Matthew **Johnson**

David **Oliphant**

If you're not a member, print out an application form from our website (<http://www.austinpoetrysociety.org/member-ship.htm>), whip out your checkbook, and join up.

On a trembling blade
 a green poet winding up
 a leap beyond thought
 -- Neill Megaw, from "Starting," *Other Voices*

Austin Poetry Society Poets Win Poetry Society of Texas Awards

Ten APS members had poems honored in the annual awards ceremony of the Poetry Society of Texas. Among them they divided up twelve of the first places in the 100 contests. One member, Von **Bourland**, won four first places. Shirley Elliott **Cosby** placed first, second, or third in twenty different contests. APS member poems were rated in the top ten 165 times, distributed among 87 of the 100 contests.

Ralph **Hausser**, APS historian, says this looks like our best performance ever in PST contests. "It shows we're writing good poetry," he says. "It motivates me to enter their contests next year.

On average in each contest, our poems were compared with over 41 other entries. These are our first place winners:

Von Bourland,

- #32, \$55, The Sue Cole Memorial Award
- #46, \$50, The Julia Herd Strong Memorial Award
- #53, \$50, The Lamroux Prize
- #91, \$25, The Jack Lee Feagin Memorial Award

Ron **Burt**, #56, \$50, The Kohanski Award

Elzy **Cogswell**, #20, \$100, The Voices de la Luna Award

Shirley Elliott **Cosby**,

- #27, \$75, The Harvey Jordan Turner Memorial Award
- #63, \$35, The "Marianne" Sonnet Variation Award

Shirley **Handley**,

- #34, \$50, The David Atamian Memorial Award

Jerri **Hardesty**,

- #43, \$50, The J. R. Reuther Memorial Award

Betty **Mol**,

- #73, \$25, The Rondel Davidson Memorial Award

Lisa **Salinas**,

- #83, \$25, The W. W. (Jim) Grimes Memorial Award

APS members held five of the top ten ratings in the prestigious Contest No. 1, which had 98 entries. One of our members, Shirley **Handley**, had two of those ratings. Other APS members who placed high in contests were Janet Carruth **McGuffin** and Nancy **Fierstien**.

Three APS members were honored in the 2009 Edwin M. Eakin Memorial Book Publication Award. Alan **Birkelbach** had two books honored, with second and fourth place in the 31 entries. Books by karla k. **morton** and Scott **Wiggerman** were singled out for the only citations of Special Merit awarded. Winner of the 2009 Eakin Book Award was Beverly Monestier of San Antonio. All the Eakin awards went to authors of Austin's **Dos Gatos Press**.

Reflections: 60th Year Anthology

Contributors' complimentary copies of our *60th Year Anthology* will be available for pick-up again at the December 19 meeting. If you can, please get your copy this way. Mailing costs about \$2.50 each. We've already mailed them to all out-of-Austin contributors. Immediately after the December meeting, the remaining complimentary copies will be mailed. Extra copies are available whether you have a poem in the anthology or not, but we're asking that for each additional copy, you contribute \$10 to replenish the publications fund.

Save the Universe: Give Poetry

We've probably left some of you out. Apologies, and let us know!

Buy from an Austin Publisher

Black Buzzard Press, Brad Strahan, <http://www.blackbuzzardpress.com/>

Dos Gatos Press, Scott Wiggerman, David Meischen, Cindy Huyser, <http://www.dosgatospress.org>

Morgan Printing, <http://www.morganprinting.org/>

Plain View Press, <http://www.plainviewpress.net>

Virgo Gray Press, www.virgograypress.wordpress.com

Give Subscriptions to Austin Poetry Journals

Ardent, <http://www.poetryinarts.org>

Bat City Review, <http://www.batcityreview.com>

Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review, www.borderlands.org/

Visions International, <http://www.blackbuzzardpress.com/>

Buy Collected Poems from a Local Bookseller:

Dearest Creature, by Amy Gerstler (Penguin Poets) \$18,
Selected Poems, by Wallace Stevens, edited by John N. Serio (Alfred A. Knopf), \$30.

A Village Life, by Louise Glück (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), \$23.

Wheeling Motel: Poems, by Franz Wright (Alfred A. Knopf), \$26.95

Buy Books About Poetry

The Anthologist, by Nicholson Baker (Simon & Schuster), \$25. A novel about a poet talking about poetry.

The Best American Poetry 2009, edited by David Wagoner and David Lehman (Scribner), \$16.

Book of Rhymes: The Poetics of Hip Hop, by Adam Bradley (Basic Civitas Books). Paper, \$16.95.

Poet Power: The Complete Guide to Getting Your Poetry Published, by Thomas A. Williams (Venture Press), \$16.95. Recommended by Mary Ellen Branan.

Songs of Ourselves: The Uses of Poetry in America, by Joan Shelley Rubin. (Belknap Press/Harvard University), \$18.95. Social and cultural roles played by poetry in the period from 1880 to 1950.

This month we've had too much to fit into the four pages to which we are fiscally limited. This supplemental sheet is inserted because we wanted you to know about these things.

Parks and Poetry Go Hand in Hand

It's possible that in the December 17th City Council meeting, a decision will be reached about naming the small park directly across from City Hall in the middle of the intersection of César Chávez and South First Street, just north of Ladybird Lake. December 17th is also the birthday of the late Bard of Hyde Park and Austin's life-long poet, Albert Huffstickler. The Board of Directors of the Austin Poetry Society proposed that the park be named the **Albert Huffstickler Poetree Grove**. If you knew Huff (or if you love poetry), perhaps you would like to join us in the project.



Our proposal will only succeed if Austin poets and poetry organizations let the City Council know how this could enrich the cultural climate of Austin.

The City Council agenda for December 17th will be posted online early next week. You can check it:

http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council_meetings/

They may postpone the hearing into the new year, but if they calendar the naming of the park for December 17th, you may support the proposed name in either or both of two ways:

1. Contact City Council at <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council/groupemail.htm> (sends one e-mail to all the Council members) or by phone calls, or postal mail. Tell them you're for it!
2. Attend the meeting when it is scheduled and speak on behalf of this poetry park.

It's a triangular piece of land with about eight large oaks, many of them with double-trunks. It comes furnished with limestone benches in the shade of the trees and sits in an intersection adjacent to the hike and bike trail on Ladybird Lake. This little jewel of a park could become a focal point for all the Austin poetry organizations, all the people who come for special events like Austin International Poetry Festival, and perhaps most importantly, for individual poets who just want to sit down and think.

For more information about Huff and about this nomination, you can go online to the *Outlaw Poetry and Free Jazz Network*, an online site out of France: <http://outlawpoetry.com/2009/12/08/albert-huffstickler-hello/>. There you will find photos of Huff and more details about his life and contributions to Austin culture.

Calls for Submissions

What we print here (and in all the other columns of the *Museletter*), is what arrives in writing on our desk. We do not check it. That's your job. It's easy to submit information to poetryplease@mail.utexas.edu, or Austin Poetry Society, P.O. Box 684672, Austin, TX 78768. We do make mistakes in transcription, for which we apologize, especially when we get caught. We would love it if you would volunteer to do a better job.

RIGHT NOW. Choose three of your best poems under thirty lines, draft yourself a biography under 75 words, and go online, <http://www.aipf.org>, to register for the **Austin International Poetry Festival**. The festival happens Thursday April 15th through Sunday, April 18th. It'll cost you a \$30 check or money order, but the whole program is worth much more than that. Also one of your poems may be chosen for the festival anthology, *Di-Verse-City*.

Deadline: December 22. If you win one of the annual contests of the **Poetry Society of America**, people will think you're really good. The statistical probability is slim, but then, poetry does not cram comfortably into statistics. You have to be a member to get the entry fees waived, but it's worthwhile to join. See the contests: <http://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/awards/annual/individual/>

Deadline: December 22. The **Poetry Society of America** is offering one contest for U.S. students, **grades 9 through 12**, the Louise Louis/Emily F. Bourne Student Poetry Award (their Award 6). Teachers or administrators may submit an unlimited number of their students' poems (one submission per student). Members of PSA have their entry fee waived. Individual non-member students must pay a \$15 fee, but non-member teachers may pay a single \$20 fee and enter as many students' poems as they like. <http://www.poetrysociety.org/psa/awards/annual/individual/>.

Deadline: January 1. Virgogray is seeking poetry about the values and ideals that formulated the American way of life. Accepted work will appear in the upcoming chapbook anthology *America Remembered* to be published in early 2010. For any of their anthologies, send 3 to 5 poems in .doc or like format to michael.aaron.casares@gmail.com. Subject Line: (Lastname) – (title of anthology) Submission. Information: <http://virgograypress.wordpress.com>.

Deadline: February 20, 2010. The 2011 Texas Poetry Calendar. Start thinking about your 2011 submissions. Guidelines are on their website (<http://www.dosgatospress.org/>) and also in the back of the 2010 *Texas Poetry Calendar*. Cyrus Cassells, author of four acclaimed books of poetry, will judge the awards.

Anytime. Laura Kooris's poetry and other creative work frequently appears at <http://www.drashpit.com>, and Drash Pit encourages your submissions of all forms of art. Look at the site to see how good it is, then send in your own work to: neena@drashpit.com.

Anytime: Virgogray Press is accepting non-themed poetry for its new online poetry blog, *Carcinogenic Poetry*. *Carcinogenic's* motto is "The truth is to lies like cancer," and in this manner is looking for honest, mind-blowing, soul poetry. *Carcinogenic* opens in December and publishes on a rolling schedule. Go online to learn how to submit: <http://virgograypress.wordpress.com>

Self Publishing Online

An Opinion Piece from Elzy Cogswell

I have bought several books from online print-on-demand publishers. Most recently I bought a book from www.lulu.com. The cover was beautiful, well-designed and appealing, and the binding was flawless ("perfect binding" though you can choose among other binding styles). It cost me \$8.95 (plus shipping). Although the publisher prints the individual copy after you place your order, I received the book just five days after I ordered it. I could have had the book instantly if I had chosen to download a copy for a fee.

It's important to me that my author friend did not pay a penny up front to have his book published. Lulu gets its money from selling the books. My friend opted to set a price which adds no royalty for himself, though that was an option. The only "costs" my friend had to pay were first, writing the book, and then designing the book's layout. He uploaded computer files containing the book from cover to final footnote, including the exact page layout. He wanted his friends to be able to get copies of what he had written, and he accomplished that. His book is thereby listed in a nationally-available database.

I have not yet self-published any of my poems, but I love the idea that you can put your words into the public's hands without being subject to the editorial judgment of others. Editors benefit writers by providing useful feedback and explaining why what you write is worth publishing—or not. Editors typically have been carefully vetted for credentials, but like all of us, they can be wrong. The web decentralizes power, and that seems like a positive idea.

Another friend published his fourth book through www.iuniverse.com. I bought a copy, paperback with perfect binding, equally professional looking. On the iuniverse web page, I found lists of many of their authors who have won major prizes. Doubtless any book which has good sales on iuniverse or lulu will get the attention of traditional publishers.

These are not mere vanity presses. They don't rob writers. They just get your words out into the world. That seems like a good thing.

Poetry Coming Down All Around Us: *Individual Achievements*

Mary Ellen **Branan** has posted a 2010 calendar of photos on www.lulu.com. Go to Lulu, click buy, select calendar category, and search "Landscapes of Bastrop." You can use "preview" to view the cover and all 12 months.

Michael Aaron **Casares'** chapbook of new poetry, *Green Tea America*, will be released this month from New Polish Beat, an independent press working out of Poland. This international press promotes and shares the work of new poets and writers. See <http://newpolishbeat.wordpress.com/>.

Elzy **Cogswell's** poem, "Colostomy," which appeared in Virgo Gray Press's chapbook, *So It Goes*, has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Two of his poems, "What Matters in a Poem" and "Wisdom Speaks to Youth," appeared in the December issue of *Pecan Press*.

APS member Kelly **Ellis** travelled to Dallas to read for the *Texas Poetry Calendar* on December 4.

Morrie W. **Greene** has a poem, "Ziplock," in the new Virgo Gray Press chapbook, *So It Goes*.

Judy **Jensen** was guest editor for the new issue of *Borderlands*, which is now available at BookWoman, BookPeople, and online at www.borderlands.org.

Ken **Jones** read from his new book, *Pleadings from the Pleiades* (a Poetry in the Arts Publication), at Brave New Books on November 14th. The book revolves around the theme of extraterrestrial contact.

Marcelle **Kasprowicz**, in between traveling and babysitting, has managed to get two poems published by *Mobius*, "Voyage of Discovery" and "Rhododendrons," and one by *Goblin Fruit*, "Lion in Love." Also, www.eatapeachpoetry.com, posted her "When Plague Came to Town" in their Summer, 2009 issue.

New APS member Lee **LeTeff**, on request, does videos of poetry readings and posts them on YouTube. For example: "Herman Melville and More by Thom Moon Ten" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yq93KgWF1Vw>. Also, "Who Wrote This?" with Thom Moon Ten: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qn_0n6ETGCc. Lee was a featured reader in the December 5th Expressions first Saturday series.

Sylvia **Manning**, through the magic of the web, has taken our campaign for the Albert **Huffstickler** international, posting this beautiful announcement, which tells how to contact the City Council. See <http://outlawpoetry.com/2009/12/08/albert-huffstickler-hello/>. The *Outlaw Poetry and Free Jazz Network*, an online site out of France, has also posted her prose poem and a photo of hers. Her most recent work there is available at <http://outlawpoetry.com/2009/12/03/sylvia-ann-manning-zorn/>. From there you can navigate to others. *Visions International* also published her translation of "At Point of Dawn" by Jacques Rancourt.

Dillon **McKinsey** reports that **Poetry in the Arts** has released a new issue of **Ardent**, featuring Dr. Aman **Kay** and seventeen other poets. Send an \$8.00 check made to Dillon, 302 Cripple Creek Road, Cedar Park, TX 78613.

Please correct Donna Marie **Miller's** name in *Reflections*, our 60th year anthology. (It's incorrectly entered there as *Diana Marie Miller*.) Profound apologies to Donna.

karla k. **morton**, APS member and 2010 Texas Poet Laureate, has been all over the state in support of *Redefining Beauty*, her Dos Gatos book, even appearing on *Good Morning, Texas*. Dos Gatos Press made an agreement with the Breast Cancer Resource Centers of Texas that for each copy sold on their website through April 1, 2010, they will contribute \$5.00 to the BCRC. Scott **Wiggerman** writes that they are really excited about the win-win situation of getting Karla's fabulous book out into the world and supporting the cause of breast cancer treatment at the same time.

Herman **Nelson** and John **Berry** were among the featured readers in the December 5th Expressions first Saturday series.

Katherine Durham **Oldmixon** has a poem "Mama Myrtle," a charcoal drawing "Depression," and a photograph "Healing Rites, San Miguel de Allende" posted in the online Health and Illness anthology in the Poet's Corner at: <http://www.fieralingue.it/corner.php?page&pid3257>.

Austin poet Kunzang **Roesler** has two poems, "Before Breakfast" and "One June Night," in Issue 81 of *Visions International*.

Austin poet Ebony **Stewart** offers her first CD, *Ebony Stewart Presents: The Chrysalis*, for sale online, \$10, at www.EbPoetry.com. She hopes to have her first book out by December 25th. Team Ebony performs at the Parish, 214 E. 6th St. at San Jacinto at 8:00 p.m. this Saturday, December 12.

APS member Robert **Stikmanz** appeared as one of the artists in the 2009 East Austin Studio Tour on November 21st. Then on November 25th, he appeared on Dillon **McKinsey's** regular Wednesday radio program "Writing on the Air," 6:00-7:00 p.m. on KOOP radio, 91.7 FM. Robert was interviewed and his most recent novel, *Sleeper Awakes* received a good review from Jeremiah Griffin in Issue 45 of *The Sorcerer's Scrolls*, available for purchase at <http://www.lulu.com/camazotz>. He has posted some of his recent video work on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmzzzzzKN1w>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkMG85q8xUQ>; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxoqEhGoC8g>.

Brad **Strahan's** journal, *Visions International*, enters its fourth decade with Issue 81 which has just appeared.

Thom Moon 10 managed the open mic part of Ken **Jones'** reading at Brave New Books on November 14th. Also, see videos of Thom's readings, listed above under Lee **LeTeff**, who made the videos.

David **Thornberry** has started a poetry blog which he warns is "limping along," but it's available in its current state at www.opposingthewilloflandrew.com. He says he's including lots of found poetry and everyday snippets of conversation and mass cultural flotsam and jetsam.

Please correct Mariann **Wizard's** home phone and website in the *Yearbook* directory. The correct information is: (512) 386-9489, <http://www.AWizardslife.com>. Apologies to Mariann.

Who's the Most Popular Poet?

The Academy of American Poets site, www.poets.org, annually posts a list of most popular poets based on traffic to their website. In Fall, 2009, the country's most popular poet is Billy **Collins**. In the top ten along with Nikki **Giovanni** and Allen **Ginsberg**, you will find our own pride and joy, Naomi Shihab **Nye**. Look at the rest of the lists. You may go to their poetry online.

Poetry as a Team Sport: *Games in Groups*

Deb Akers was featured on December 2nd with Edgar Pace for the monthly first Wednesday reading at Vinny's Italian Café. Madeleine Mercier provided music.

The new issue of *Borderlands*, No. 33 (Fall/Winter 2009), edited by Judy Jensen contains poems by Joe Ahearn, Alice Batt, Joe Blanda, Jill Alexander Essbaum, Jeff Stumpo, Abe Louise Young, and several APS members: Cindy Huyser ("The Sand Man of Sutton Hoo"), David Meischen ("Hadley Remembers"), karla k. morton ("Passing through Girdle Gulch", and "What Goes Unseen"), and Katherine Durham Oldmixon ("When the Border is a River").

Expressions on December 5th, hosted by Thom Moon 10, featured poets Kathleen Romana, Lee LeTeff, Herman Nelson, John Berry, Linda Gordon, and Phillip Abbott. Darrel Mayers provided the music.

Morgan Printing, besides producing our anthology, has brought forth poetry books by several good poets: Pat Crusier's *Walking Home from Church* (a sequel to *Life Is A Poem to God*); Laura Riddell's *Kaleidoscope* (with color illustrations, MindyRed@aol.com); and Christina Di Noia's *Moon is the Muse, Italian/English Inspiration* (quidnovi2@msn.com).

Scott Wiggerman notes that all the top placements for the 2009 Eakin Book Award were Dos Gatos Press authors, including Alan Birkelbach, Lynn Lewis, Beverly Monestier, karla k. morton, Loretta Diane Walker, and Scott himself.

The 2010 Texas Poetry Calendar brought together a slew of poets to read at BookPeople on December 5, including Usha Akella, Bob Ayres, Joe Blanda, Kay Cox, Stan Crawford, Cindy Harper, Jerry Hamby, Anne McCrady, Mary Parham, Frances Schenkkan, Beverly Voss, and Debra Winegarten, along with APS members Mary Ellen Branan, Ralph Hausser, G. Mark Jodon, George Klawitter, Katherine Durham Oldmixon, and Christa Pandey.

Austin is Poetry City: *Events*

As always, we can't guarantee any of the details below. You're only safe if you verify it yourself. You may also check Ric Williams' "Litera" column in the *Austin Chronicle*, or the new "Literary Events" column in the *Austin Statesman*.

Tuesdays at noon and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. through January 2. If you missed the final co-curators' tour of "From Out That Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Edgar Allan Poe" at the HRC, at the very least you should try to catch one of these free docent-led tours.

From now through December 29, Plain View Press will exhibit 40 new titles at the Armadillo Christmas Bazaar. For the music schedule, check <http://www.armadillobazaar.com/>. To browse Plain View books, go to <http://www.plainviewpress.net>. Visit the Plain View Press website and browse for their poetry, then print a coupon there and bring it to their booth just inside the front doors, beneath the Peace on Earth banner, for 30% off all Plain View titles.

Throughout December, Texas Nafas presents "Lucille Clifton on Poetry." The program airs a number of times each week on Channels 10 and 16. Check www.channelaustin.org and choose programming for exact times. Contact Texas Nafas: farid@texasnafas.org.

December 12, Saturday, 2:00-4:00 p.m. Wimberley Writers invite you to create your own Christmas card poetry. Maui Wowie, RR12 in the heart of the art of Wimberley.

December 14, Monday, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Brent Caballero, a brilliant young performance poet of truth is featured at The Hideout, 617 Congress. Always followed by an uncensored open mic.

December 17. Possible date the City Council will consider the APS Board's nomination of "Albert Huffstickler Poetree Grove" for the name of the small park at South 1st and Cesar Chavez. Check the agenda online, and if it's scheduled, be there for Huff and for Austin poetry: http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/council_meetings/. After all, it's Huff's birthday.

December 17, Thursday, 8:00 p.m. South Flavas Entertainment presents "The Last Poet Standing," \$1,000 competition to choose a performer in the Fifth Annual Urban Music Fest. Since Oct. 15, competitors have been rated on first and third Thursdays, and the finalists competing in the last round on the 17th are rated (from lowest to highest) Eric B, Faylita, Tova, Cousin Sarah, The Fluten One, Brent, Korim and at the top presently, Michelle Desire. Club Illusion, 2700 Pecan St. West, Pflugerville (intersection of FM1825 and Central Commerce). Cover charge: \$6. www.thelastpoet.com.

December 19, Saturday, 8:00 p.m. Zell Miller III hosts Spitfest XVI, "Make It Wet," featuring slam poets, with guest appearances by Christopher Michael and Christopher Lee, and hip hop artists. At The Independent, East 5th at Brushy, a block east of I35.

December 20, Sunday, 5:30 p.m. Come for wassail to Sri Atmananda School, 4100 and Red River, and benefit Kids for Kids, a charity for children in need in Darfur. The program features Thom Moon 10, and combines pagan and Christian celebrations.

December 21, Monday, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Dipika Mukherjee, noted international poet visiting Austin, is featured at The Hideout, 617 Congress. Always followed by an uncensored open mic.

December 25, Friday, 7:00-9:00 p.m. Holiday for Outcasts! at La Tazza Fresca, 37th and Guadalupe. Bring poems and songs to dispel holidayitis.

December 28, Monday, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Edgar Pace and Justin Time are featured at The Hideout, 617 Congress. Always followed by an uncensored open mic.

January 2, Saturday, 7:00-10:00 p.m. Expressions presents New Voices for the New Year, Bright young poets including Tova Charles, Brent Caballero, Shay and – You? Baha'i Center, 2215 E.M. Franklin Avenue. Bring a dish for the potluck at 6:00. Bring cans for the poets pantry.

January 4, Monday, 6:00-10:00 p.m. Michael Aaron Casares of Virgogray Press is featured at The Hideout, 617 Congress. Always followed by an uncensored open mic.

January 5, Tuesday, 7:00-10:00 p.m. A new venue, The Open Secret, hosted by John Hawk, open to all. Kick Butt Coffee at the Triangle, 45th and Lamar. It'll happen each first Tuesday.