



Cambridge Arts Council

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 17, 2011

Contacts:

Mara Littman, Dir. of Marketing & PR

617-349-4382 or [mlittman@cambridgema.gov](mailto:mlittman@cambridgema.gov)

Julie Madden, Dir. of Community Arts

617-349-4381 or [jmadden@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jmadden@cambridgema.gov)

## Cambridge Arts Council Announces the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cambridge Poetry Festival Sunday, April 3, beginning at 12:00 Noon

Festival Kick-off Location: Jill Brown-Rhone Park (formerly Lafayette Plaza) in Central Square  
(across from Luna Café, 403 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge)

Cambridge, MA – Curated by the current Cambridge Poet Populist Jean-Dany Joachim, the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cambridge Poetry Festival** on Sunday, April 3, beginning at 12:00 noon, shares once again the joy of poetry and the art of words with the entire community. The Festival brings together professional and novice poets, writers, performers, and singer/songwriter musicians from the community and beyond. The event begins in Jill Brown-Rhone Park (formerly Lafayette Plaza) in Central Square (across from Luna Café, 403 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge) from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m, and continues throughout the day with open-mic poetry and musical performances at different venues throughout Cambridge and at the main branch of the Cambridge Public Library. The event is FREE!

To learn more about the Poetry Festival, visit [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist), e-mail [poetpopulist@cambridgema.gov](mailto:poetpopulist@cambridgema.gov) or call the Cambridge Arts Council at 617-349-4380.

**The Cambridge Poetry Festival** on Sunday, April 3, 2011 provides the first official opportunity to meet the four finalists “campaigning” to be the next Cambridge Poet Populist. These Cambridge poets – **Toni "Bee" Brooks, Irene Koronas, Scott Ruescher, and Jeff Walker** – were nominated by Cambridge residents and reviewed by a Selection Committee. The finalists kick-off the Poetry Festival by showcasing their talents with individual readings followed by a brief Q&A. The Festival continues throughout the day at different venues with readings by local poets and writers including Mary Buchinger Bodwell, Juan Casillas, Charles Coe, Doug Holder, Coutchève Aupont Lavoie, Charlot Lucien, Peter Payack, Marilène Phipps-Kettlewell, Emmelie Prophète, Marcia Ross, Alan Smith, Thomas Spear, Leonardo Toppin, Molly Lynn Watt, and others. For schedule updates, visit [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist)

The Poet Populist election begins now and extends through Friday, April 29, 2011 at 12:00 noon. Cambridge residents can vote for the candidate of their choice at the **Cambridge Poetry Festival** on Sunday, April 3, 2011, online at [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist), and at the Cambridge Arts Council, 344 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Cambridge.

In addition to the **Cambridge Poetry Festival** on Sunday, April 3, 2011, the finalists will read on Thursday, April 21, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, Spiegel Auditorium, 56 Brattle Street. Each finalist, **Toni "Bee" Brooks, Irene Koronas, Scott Ruescher, and Jeff Walker**, will be given equal time for questions and answers from the audience. Come listen, learn, and evaluate the City’s next “literary ambassador.”

The third Poet Populist to take office will succeed Poet Populists Jean-Dany Joachim (2009-2011) and Peter Payack (2007-2009). Programs initiated by these Poet Populists have included the annual Poetry Festival; fortune cookies containing short poems; a recently published community poem entitled, *On the River: The Cambridge Community Poem*, that weaves together over a thousand submissions from residents into a collective work; poetry scavenger hunt; reading series; and public appearances, including a feature on WGBH kids' animated show, *Arthur*.

### **Poet Populist Finalists**

**Toni Bee** is a writer, poet, and photographer. She is a citizen journalist in the Neighbor Media program at Cambridge Community Television (CCTV) where she hosts the monthly talk show "BeLive with Bee." If elected to the position, she states, "My goal would be to present poetry and teach its methods while creating a reciprocal relationship with those who also consume the literary art form."

**Irene Koronas** has a fine arts degree from Massachusetts College of Art & Design. She is a multi-media artist working with paint, collage, mono-printing, artists books, poetry and photography. She is currently the poetry editor for Wilderness House Literary Review. Her poetry has appeared in journals and magazines, and online zines.

**Scott Ruescher** has lived in Cambridgeport since 1982. A native of central Ohio, Ruescher grew up in a historically interesting town outside of the capital city of Columbus that had gone in one century from being a reliable stop for runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad before the Civil War to being a white-flight suburb during the Vietnam and Cold War eras. His parents hailed from blue-collar agricultural/industrial stock, and he and his sister were the first in his immediate family to go to college.

**Jeff Walker** is a poet, fiction writer, and artist who has long made his home in Cambridge, and has been writing poetry for nearly four decades. He worked in publishing for several years before applying his passion for writing and community service as a leader in prevention education campaigns in the fight against AIDS. Walker has since spent nearly 15 years working for state and municipal agencies designing award-winning community health programs that have been reproduced internationally.

For more information about the finalists, and to read samples of their poetry, visit [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/poetpopulist)

### **About the Cambridge Poet Populist Program**

The Poet Populist Program is sponsored by the City of Cambridge, Cambridge Arts Council, and Cambridge Public Library. The Poet Populist is elected by Cambridge residents to this unofficial office of the City of Cambridge with a "mandate" to create his or her unique style of poetry-focused events and programs that celebrate poetry and benefit the broader population.

Modeled, in part, on Seattle's Poet Populist Project, Cambridge's Poet Populist program was developed in 2007 to facilitate the creation and appreciation of poetry throughout the city for all Cambridge residents. Cambridge developed a Poet Populist program to give Cambridge residents the opportunity to nominate and elect fellow citizens to the position, rather than appointing a poet to represent poetry, which is the common procedure for Poet Laureate programs.

For more information, visit [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org) or call 617-349-4380.

### **Cambridge Arts Council – *Nurturing the Arts in Cambridge***

The Cambridge Arts Council exists to ensure that the arts remain vital for people living, working and visiting Cambridge. [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org) or 617-349-4380.

###