



Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism

Arts  
Tourism  
Historic Preservation

**NEWS**  
For immediate release

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**TWENTY-EIGHT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN  
CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON CULTURE & TOURISM'S  
POETRY OUT LOUD STATE FINALS MARCH 16**

**HARTFORD, Conn. (March 7, 2011)** – Twenty-eight of the state's leading young bards, muses and rhymers will compete at the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism's state finals for its sixth annual *Poetry Out Loud: National Recitation Contest* to be held March 16 at Southern Connecticut State University.

The competition, presented in partnership with the Institute Library and Southern Connecticut State University, is part of a national program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation. *Poetry Out Loud* encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition.

**WHAT:** Connecticut's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual *Poetry Out Loud* State Finals

**WHO:** Featured speakers and participants will include:

- **Host:** Actress and Director, Tanya Wright of HBO's *True Blood*
- **Judges:** Randall Horton, *Connecticut poet, Assistant Professor of English at the University of New Haven, and 2011 NEA Creative Writing Fellowship recipient*; Amber Rose Johnson, *2010 National and Rhode Island POL Champion*; Mimi Madden, *Hill Stead Museum and Director of the Sunken Garden Poetry Festival*; Monica Ong, *new media artist and writer*; Dr. Michael Shea, *professor of English at Southern Connecticut State University*; and John Stanizzi, *poet, English teacher and former POL coordinator at Bacon Academy, Colchester*; and Accuracy Judge, *Elizabeth Cleary, Institute Library's Poetry Institute Coordinator*
- Student finalists from 28 Connecticut high schools – *see attached list*

**WHEN:** March 16, 2011 @ 4:30 p.m. (snow date March 17, 2011)

**WHERE:** The Michael J. Adanti Student Center Ballroom, Southern Connecticut State University, 345 Fitch Street, New Haven, CT 06515

**OTHER:** Attendance at the state finals is free and open to the public. Seating is limited. For further information, Please contact Alice-Anne Harwood at (203) 512-7614 or [aliceanne.harwood@gmail.com](mailto:aliceanne.harwood@gmail.com).

*Poetry Out Loud* is a national arts education program that encourages the study of great poetry by offering educational materials and a dynamic recitation competition to high schools across the country. *Poetry Out Loud* uses a pyramid structure. Beginning at the classroom level, winners advance to a school-wide competition, then to the state competition, and ultimately to the National Finals in Washington, DC. Over 365,000 students across the country are taking part in *Poetry Out Loud* this year.

Students participating in the *Poetry Out Loud* program have benefited from educational materials created by the Arts Endowment and the Poetry Foundation. These materials include a standards-based teacher's guide, a comprehensive website, Best Performances DVD, and a CD featuring poetry recitations by well-known actors and writers such as Anthony Hopkins, Alyssa Milano, N. Scott Momaday, and Rita Dove. Participating Connecticut students also had the opportunity to work with professional poets and theater artists during school visits and a full-day workshop at the Carol Autorino Center.

### ***Poetry Out Loud Prizes***

The winner of the *Poetry Out Loud* Connecticut finals will receive \$200, and the winner's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. The second place finalist will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The Connecticut state *Poetry Out Loud* champion will be sent to compete in the National Finals in Washington, DC, April 27-29, 2011. The *Poetry Out Loud* National Finals will award a total of \$50,000 dollars in scholarships and school stipends, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the *Poetry Out Loud* National Champion.

### **About the National Endowment for the Arts**

The NEA is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts — both new and established — bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases. For more information, please visit [www.nea.gov](http://www.nea.gov).

### **About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring the best poetry before the largest possible audiences. For more information, please visit [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org).

### **About the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism**

The Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism brings together tourism, Historic Preservation and the arts. Its mission is to preserve and promote Connecticut's cultural and tourism assets in order to enhance the quality of life and economic vitality of the state. For more information, log on to [www.cultureandtourism.org](http://www.cultureandtourism.org).

### **About the Institute Library**

The Institute Library (founded 1826) in New Haven, is Connecticut's oldest living literary institution and one of the last remaining membership libraries in North America. During much of the 1800s, the Library was a center of literary life, adult education, and social debate in New Haven. Since May 2008 the Institute Library has been home to the Poetry Institute which brings together poetry lovers from across the community to enjoy vibrant, exciting evenings of poetry with featured readers from a wide variety of poetic backgrounds.

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**2011 Poetry Out Loud State Finals  
Competitors by School\***

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\*Subject to change

<b>School</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Student Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Avon High School	Avon	Thomas teGroen	10
Berlin High School	Berlin	Alexandra Asal	11
Bolton High School	Bolton	Meghan Monk	11
Branford High School	Branford	Emily Owen	12
Cheshire High School	Cheshire	Jonathan Esty	10
Choate Rosemary Hall	Wallingford Center	Shira Hereld	12
Classical Magnet School	Hartford	Aliza Lipman	12
Darien High School	Darien	Robbie Florian	12
East Windsor High School	East Windsor	Luis Gomba	11
Gilbert School, The	Winsted	DeQuan Barnes	11
Joel Barlow High School	Easton/Redding	Cormac Cummiskey	10
Lewis Mills High School	Burlington	Matthew DiSorbo	10
Lyman Memorial High School	Lebanon	Lindsey Malcolm	12
Middletown High School	Middletown	Katherine Roy	12
Montville High School	Oakdale	Ashley Sgandurra	12
The Morgan School	Clinton	Abraham Romero	12
Newington High School	Newington	Stacey Pelton	10
Newtown High School	Newtown	Lila Kohrman-Glaser	12
Oxford High School	Oxford	Katelyn Wentz	9
Renbrook School	West Hartford	Audrey Stys	9
Ridgefield High School	Ridgefield	Ben Garbow	11
Rockville High School	Vernon	Erin Connolly	12
Stonington High School	Stonington	Lauren McCue	12
University High School of Science & Engineering	Hartford	J'Vaughn Joseph	10
Waterford High School	Waterford	Madeline Lewis	11
Wilton High School	Wilton	Alosha Southern	10
Windsor High School	Windsor	Evan Debevec McKenney	10
Wolcott High School	Wolcott	Adam Swatt	12