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FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE ON

2/15/2011

## NEW BOOK HIGHLIGHTS CAPITAL REGION POETS

### *Award-winners from Smith's Tavern Poet Laureate Contest*

VOORHEESVILLE, NY -- In March of 2010 the poets of New York's Capital Region made the first of their annual pilgrimages to Voorheesville, a quiet upstate village nestled among the shadows of the Helderberg Escarpment in western Albany County. They were inspired by the quest to have their name engraved upon "the Willie," the coveted trophy given to the poet to be crowned as Laureate of Smith's Tavern. After a poetical bout of four hours, the judges awarded prizes to the poets placing third and second, and placed the crown of laurel leaves upon the head of the Poet Laureate of Smith's Tavern. **Award-Winning Poems from the Smith's Tavern Poet Laureate Contest: 2010 Edition**, a chapbook containing each of the three poems submitted by the award winners, has just been released by Square Circle Press.

The contest, a rousing success in its first year, is organized by the Sunday Four Poets, an open-mic poetry forum devoted to the writing and performance of poetry by participating poets from New York's capital region. Based in the Old Songs Community Center in Voorheesville, the group has gathered the fourth Sunday of every month since May 2008 to share their works and to hear a featured poet. Both the forum and the contest are open to any interested poets.

The new book features poems by Howard Kogan (Honorable Mention), Carolee Sherwood (Runner-up), and Barbara Vink, the 2010 Poet Laureate. The book also features photographs of the event taken by Edie Abrams, one of the three sponsors who lead the Sunday Four Poets and organized the contest. The other two sponsors are Dennis Sullivan and Michael Burke, both well-known in the capital region for their enthusiasm for poetry.

Michael Burke coordinated the publishing project and teamed up with Square Circle Press to produce the book. "I had a good idea about the chapbook I wanted to produce from the contest, but it wasn't until I met with Square Circle Press that my ideas came into a clear focus," stated Burke. "They were able to take my vision and make it a reality, and taught me a lot along the way about how the book publishing industry works today."

Square Circle Press, located in the hilltowns of Albany County, focuses its catalog on the history and culture of upstate New York. In addition to its regular catalog, the independent press collaborates with authors to help them self-publish their books, providing coaching and other services along the way. Richard Vang, owner and publisher, was enthusiastic about the project. "I went to the contest because I wanted to support our local writers and to hear some good poetry. I was very impressed with the quality of the poetry." After some initial meetings with Burke, Vang ultimately took on the project. "I am very pleased that we could produce this book for the contest. These are very good poets, and by publishing a book that is now out on the mainstream retail market, we hope to bring some increased exposure to their fine work," added Vang.

The book is available to bookstores and other retail outlets, and is available online at the Square Circle Press web site, as well as more popular online venues such as Amazon.com. Local libraries can also obtain the book through their usual distribution channels.

The Sunday Four Poets will be holding the second Smith's Tavern Poet Laureate Contest in April of 2011. Details about the contest will be announced in March.

### **BOOK INFORMATION**

For more information about how and where to purchase this book, or other titles, products and services available from Square Circle Press, visit the publisher's web site at [www.squarecirclepress.com](http://www.squarecirclepress.com).

**Title:** Award-Wining Poems from the Smith's Tavern Poet Laureate Contest: 2010 Edition

**Compilers:** Sunday Four Poets

**ISBN-13:** 978-0-9789066-9-6

**ISBN-10:** 0-9789066-9-1

**Retail Price:** \$9.95

**Physical:** 6 x 9 inches, 30 pages, softcover, perfect binding, B&W interior, illustrated

**Distribution:** Ingram/LSI; Square Circle Press