

## **POET POPULIST PROGRAM**

### **Candidate's Toolkit**

This toolkit contains information to help you participate faithfully in a public art program. The program may help you win the office, or it may help you distribute your art, meet members of the general public, become part of a community of writers, and have fun.

By participating in the election, you agree to these guidelines, which are spelled out in further detail below. Thanks for your time and participation!

#### **I. About the program:**

The Seattle Poet Populist is an informal office established in 1999 for a poet, who by popular acclaim, represents the principles of populist poetic expression.

The program supports creative public thinking, articulate leadership, and the practice of democracy. It proposes that artists can be part of the civic discourse, and that the civic discourse can be artistically inclined.

It also gives arts organizations a chance to reach out to new audiences city-wide.

#### **II. Code of Conduct**

1. Candidates will convey the utmost respect for the mission of the program, the other candidates, sponsors, supporters, and participating arts organizations, both during and after the election.
2. Please note: The election is for residents of the City of Seattle, one vote per valid email address. Any candidate who supports fraudulent voting or who campaigns in an otherwise destructive spirit, will be disqualified. Decisions will be made by the program administrators (Luna Park), will be final, and will not be subject to appeal.
3. If elected, you will serve the office faithfully. Technically, you are charged with "promoting the principals of populist poetic expression when performing in and around the city, providing public education in poetry and authoring an original poem for inclusion in the city's archives at the conclusion of his or her one-year term." Besides the formal requirement of writing one poem, there is some flexibility as to the other stipulations.

### **III. Candidate's Statement: What's your platform?**

From your nominator, we have received a short bio of you, a representative poem, a description about the nominating organization, and their rationale for nominating you.

What you need to communicate to your voters is why YOU think you qualify to be the Poet Populist. What makes you a voice of the people? Will you do anything specifically in your year as the Poet Populist? Would your plans make you a more viable candidate?

Take some time to think about how you might use your position. Cody Walker, the 2007 Poet Populist, gave 23 public readings, many of which came as direct invitations to the Poet Populist. This means you will have an opportunity to reach hundreds of people of all ages. What else might you want to do as an elected official?

Write down your CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT and we'll post it on your profile at [poetpopulist.org](http://poetpopulist.org). It must be 100 words or less in length.

### **IV. How to Enhance Your Profile**

Candidate profiles on [poetpopulist.org](http://poetpopulist.org) contain basic information. If you like, we will add information if you provide it in the proper format. Want to see an example? Check out our populist pal Walt Whitman at <http://www.poetpopulist.org/candidates/index.php?id=14>

- 1) Candidate's Statement: see directly above for information about this. Limit your statement to 100 words or less, including any hyperlinks.
- 2) URL: do you have a personal website, myspace page, or other site you want us to highlight? Please send the address and we'll list it on your profile.
- 3) Video: provide a link to a YouTube video of you reading and we will embed it directly into the [poetpopulist.org](http://poetpopulist.org) site
- 4) Audio: we will stream an audio file from your profile on our site. It should be an MP3 file, 3 minutes or less in length. You can also send a link to an audio file you have posted elsewhere.
- 5) Myspace: Tell your local friends to vote. Invite us to be your friend. We (and our 400+ friends) are at <http://www.myspace.com/poetpopulist>.

## **V. More Promotions**

1) Posters and postcards: We will have postcards and posters available for you by early October. You can work with your nominating organization to distribute these, or do it on your own. We will be posterizing the city with hundreds of posters.

2) Word of Mouth: The election is a great way to educate people about poetry and public art. Familiarize yourself with some of the other poets and populist poets in history (Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, Adrienne Rich, Allen Ginsberg, Maya Angelou, Joy Harjo...) and talk to people about them. Hand them a postcard and invite them to visit the site and vote!

3) Emails: of course.

4) Events: you could sit at a table at your local grocery store, talk to your local library about posting some information there, have an announcement made to your church and give a reading at the social hour, find an opportunity at your school, invite your yoga classmates out for tea after class, knock on all the doors in your apartment building or street...

## **VI. Schedule**

Here are some dates to keep in mind:

- September 22, Monday: Election begins
- October 16, Thursday: Candidate's Reading, at Richard Hugo House
- November 4, Tuesday: Election ends at midnight!
- November 14, Friday: Finalist reading and announcement of winner, at Richard Hugo House
- January 25, 2009 (to be confirmed), Sunday: inauguration, at Seattle Public Library Central Library

## **VII. Education**

The Poet Populist program, at heart, is a community arts and education program. We aim to provide a practical application in art and democracy, and teach people about it as well. To this end we have developed "Democracy and the Arts," a curriculum that meets national education standards. It will be presented in numerous Seattle high schools in 2008 and 2009. For more information or a copy of the curriculum please drop us a line at [info@poetpopulist.org](mailto:info@poetpopulist.org).