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**GROSSMONT COLLEGE HOSTS ELEVENTH ANNUAL  
LITERARY ARTS FESTIVAL APRIL 23-MAY 4**

El Cajon – Grossmont students are about to put the faces with the words they have been studying in English and creative writing classes this semester. Three accomplished writers, poet Steve Kowitz, short fiction author Aimee Bender and novelist Anthony Swofford, will headline this year's Literary Arts Festival to be held at Grossmont College April 23 through May 4. This year's featured guests are supported by Poets & Writers, Inc., through a grant it has received from The James Irvine Foundation and the Grossmont College Foundation.

The Festival, sponsored annually by the Grossmont College Creative Writing Program, will commence Monday, April 23 with a performance by hip-hop artist, activist and poet, Jeffery Evans in the Griffin Gate area of the Student Center. Evans will be followed by The Avant-Bard Poeticians who take the stage with word, rhythm and melody.

Headliner Steve Kowitz, who regularly tours with his popular poetry workshops, will present at 7 p.m. Tuesday April 24, also in Griffin Gate. Kowitz is the recipient of a National Endowment Fellowship in Poetry, two Pushcart Prizes, the Atlanta Review

Poetry Prize, the Oroborus Book Award, and most recently in 2006 the Tampa Review Poetry Prize.

Aimee Bender will appear April 26, 7 p.m. in Room 220. She is a professor of Creative Writing at University of Southern California. Her short fiction has been published in countless journals, including *Granta*, *GQ*, *Harper's*, *Tin House*, *McSweeney's* and *The Paris Review*. Swofford, author of the critically acclaimed autobiographical story *Jarhead*, recently released a new novel, *Exit A*. His writings have had widespread publication in periodicals such as *Harper's Men's Journal* and *The Iowa Review*.

The complete Literary Arts Festival schedule, including student presentations and an event to announce the winner of the annual Festival Writing Contest, is available online at [www.grossmont.edu/english/festival](http://www.grossmont.edu/english/festival).

According to Dr. Dean Colli, Interim Grossmont College president, "It is a pleasure to invite members of our community along with our students, faculty and staff, to attend this series of stellar literary events. I am proud of our committed faculty who have sustained this impressive eleven-year history of exemplary Literary Arts Festival activities."

Professor Stephanie Mood coordinates the annual festival. Mood said, "Our Creative Writing Program's Literary Arts Festival has gone from an event primarily featuring one or two local authors to a renowned festival attracting authors from around the country. This year's Festival, our most comprehensive yet, features three headliners representing poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction—three of our most popular courses. Anthony Swofford's memoir, *Jarhead*, is being read by students across the curriculum.

Not only will students have the opportunity to hear him read and ask him questions, but they will be able to meet him and have their books signed. For many of our students and community members, this is a first-time experience that is both meaningful and unforgettable.”

Mood emphasized that students are active participants. “One of the highlights of the event is our Student Reading, where standout students share their original work. In recent years, the Festival has become so popular that we have outgrown many campus venues; readings are literally standing room only. Moreover, we have added writing contests to the event which offer prizes and recognition to the creative work of Grossmont College and local high school students. Without the generous support of the college, donors to our Foundation, Poets & Writers Inc, and the hard work of the Creative Writing Program faculty, the tremendous growth of the Literary Arts Festival would not have taken place. We look forward to continuing to sponsor the Festival for many years to come.”

All events are free and open to the public. They are supported by the generosity of the Grossmont Foundation and Poets & Writers, Inc. through a grant it has received from the James Irvine Foundation. For more information, contact Mood at (619) 644-7495 or [www.grossmont.edu/english/festival](http://www.grossmont.edu/english/festival).

Driving directions are available at [www.grossmont.edu](http://www.grossmont.edu).

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