

# 'Speak Words' brings speech alive at Donkey Coffee

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Play with words and someone is bound to get burned. Juggle adjectives, spin verbs, stand a profound idea on its head, and you've sparked a poetic circus, a festival of the spoken word for ranting madmen. Speak the word at Donkey Coffee every other Tuesday and whether you are the next Pablo Neruda or a Beatnik in black looking for your lost shaker of soul, the Donkey stage welcomes you to spout your trout, fry your fish and butter your blueberry waffles — poetically speaking, of course.

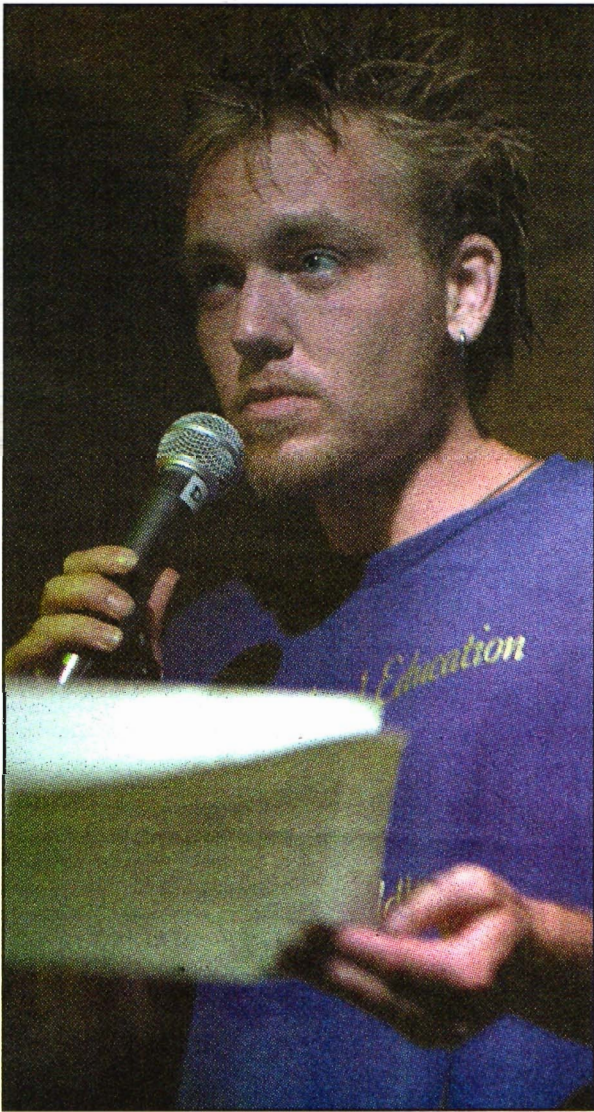
Spoken word at Donkey coffee is about playing with words. Scrap is divine, so give voice and life to the coffee-stained pieces of notebook muse left abandoned in shoe boxes and jean pockets across the nation. Whether you read from a Bette Crocker recipe book, lyrics you wrote for your dog in the middle of that dreary chemistry class or a muse you pulled out of the moon, there's an open microphone with your name on it and a packed house that will take on your every word.

Packed houses are a Sasquatch sighting in Athens during the summer. It's rare to see a packed room in the summertime when no music is involved, especially in a place where they don't serve beer or beer nuts and smoking is regulated to the sidewalk. With mere coffee and smoothies to lure in the palate, Donkey Coffee spoken word night manages a packed house in the middle of July because people are genuinely interested in sharing each other's words.

But the people at Donkey go to bed early, so get there ahead of time and get your name on a list, some caffeine in a glass and a chair to rest your bones. Sign-up happens at 8:30 p.m. Words start spouting at 9 and it's all over by 11, and we are safely tallying sheep by the stroke of midnight.

Anything goes. Poems, personal essays, even "There Once Was a Man from Nantucket" jokes are welcome on the Donkey stage.

While the main point of spoken word is to speak the words and share them, a little competition never hurt anything but Bill Gates' next-door-neighbor's lemonade stand. Everything is laid back with no pressure and the sharing of words is more like showing off a tattoo than a million dollar golf swing. But if you are the adventurous sort and want to lay it on the line, there is an competitive spout-off to top off the



**Brett Lyons speaks the word at Donkey Coffee spoken word night. Open mics for poets is every other Tuesday. Check out the word fest this Tuesday, and see what Allen Ginsburg has been howling about.**

evening. At the conclusion of each night, volunteers take the stage, and each volunteer is given a single word from the audience and 60 seconds to strut their rant. The winner is determined by hoots and whistles from the audience. As a winning prize, the victor gets to read for several different slots at the next reading.

The next spoken word is this Tuesday, and continues every other week. Turn on, tune in and drop in. Donkey Coffee will make a poet out of you, even if you do other people's taxes for a living.