

# Mixing poetry and business

By Kathryn Koch

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PLYMOUTH -

At Ishtar's Avalon in downtown Plymouth, business mixes with the literary arts effortlessly, with the power of poetry to inspire.

"There's more to us than meets the eye," owner Patrice Hatcher said.

While best known as a witch shop, inside the walls of Ishtar's Avalon are poets who are ready to share their inner thoughts. Later this month, on the third anniversary of the store, Dennis Callahan and Rene Schwiesow will read from their latest books of poetry.

Dennis Callahan wrote the poems in his new book of poetry, *A Time Before Now*, when he was between 16 and 18-years-old in the midst of teenaged angst. He nearly had his poems published back then, but without his father's support he had to set that dream aside. That is, until now, and at his mother's urging.

"You do it from a very personal view," he said, explaining why it means so much to him to write poetry. "You have to like what you do. What you're trying to do in many ways is validate your own feelings."

Callahan said when he writes poetry, he's on a personal inward journey. He hopes other people will like his poetry, but he doesn't need them to. It's common, he said, for a person to either have strong feelings about a poem or not. Art, he said, is subjective.

Schwiesow, who runs an online poetry forum, said her poetry comes from a spiritual well, from a place inside, and she's willing to share that with her readers through her poetry.

"What we put to paper is a link to everyone around us and the spirituality that's inside us," she said.

A yearlong journey as a daytime caregiver to a woman suffering from pancreatic cancer inspired Schwiesow's book of poetry entitled, *A Year in the Quilt (Volume I) – Julia Mary Quintillo Umine*.

Schwiesow offered it in tribute to her family and friends to help them heal.

"There were a lot of people at loose ends and needing closure," she said.

Schwiesow said if her readers connect in some way, either positively or negatively, with what she has to say, then she has accomplished something.

“It has to touch a nerve so it resonates with them, even negatively,” she said.

Schwiesow calls her book of poetry entitled *Beginnings Beget Beginnings – Seven Days Into Eternity (Sometimes there is only one)* a love story. It’s about a love that does not end but carries on forever.

“In this book I want to show love shouldn’t really have any ending, and it’s not necessary that love dies,” she said.

Schwiesow said poets become witnesses and observers.

“There can be poetry in anything you see along the way,” she said.

Next year Schwiesow expects to release another book of poetry. She’s also working on a novel entitled *Beneath the Fallen Sky*. Callahan and Hatcher are working on a book about the craft, a sort of spiritual guidebook about the old ways of witches to dispel misnomers about witchcraft. Their goal is a spring of 2009 release.

Callahan and Schwiesow will sign copies of their poetry books at Ishtar’s Avalon Saturday, July 26, during the anniversary celebration. There will be sidewalk tarot readings Saturday and Sunday, July 27.

