



STARTING FROM PAUMANOK...

Fall 2011 Volume XXVI No.1

WWBA Receives Gift of Eight-Foot Bronze Statue

The Newsletter of the
Walt Whitman
Birthplace Association

Whitman Statue on Display

WWBA has been honored to receive an eight-foot bronze statue entitled *Whitman with Butterfly* which will remain on display in the courtyard of the Birthplace. The statue was the gift of Soka Gakkai's International-USA, a Buddhist community committed to peace, culture, and education. The bronze was commissioned by the group in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the first visit of its leader, Daisaku Ikeda,

continued on page 2

George Wallace Named WWBA 2011-2012 Writer in Residence

George Wallace, Suffolk County's first poet laureate (2003-2005), has been named Walt Whitman Birthplace 2011-2012 Writer in Residence. Wallace is a former board member of the association, and vice president of the Long Island Poetry Collective.



continued on page 7



The commanding bronze statue, *Whitman with Butterfly*, beckons visitors to the courtyard at the Walt Whitman Birthplace.

Inside

From the Director's Desk	2	Gladys Henderson	4	New Trustee	5	Rentals	7
C.K. Williams	3	Poetry Contest	4	Object Lesson	6	Membership	8
Calendar of Events	3	Literacy Gala	5	Visit to D.C.	7	Visiting WWB	8

From the Director's Desk



We approach Fall with spirit and gratitude. Once again, I want to thank Assemblymen Steve Englebright and Jim Conte for their leadership roles in securing funding from Suffolk County that enables the Birthplace to remain a vital Long Island presence.

The vibrancy of our programs continues to serve our local, national and global visitors every month. Annually we greet over 16,000 visitors and, a glance at our guest book shows international signatures from Budapest, Munich, and Seoul. Our national visitors hail from Oklahoma, Alaska and Georgia - not to mention our loyal visitors from all Long Island. One gentleman writes: "I came here from 10,000 km to meet and greet the Father of the American Poets, I saw his birthbed...I heard his voice. This is important - one of the most unforgettable days in my life." Signed, "HP, India." Thank you, Suffolk County, for enabling us to create such moments in people's lives.

WWBA staff and I recently participated in a lengthy self-study questionnaire distributed by the NYS Division for Historic Preservation. This endeavor enables us to enact their vision to make our site "a vibrant community asset... relevant and responsive to today's audiences." We also participated in a conservation workshop by New York State Parks which demonstrated the best practices in artifact conservation; as a result, we developed a housekeeping plan for optimum maintenance of the historic objects under our stewardship. One object recently donated is the 1892 edition of *Good-Bye And Hail, Walt Whitman*, inscribed by the author, Horace Traubel, a good friend of Whitman himself. Another donation is a 1900 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. We appreciate the generosity of such donors who seek out the Birthplace as "the most appropriate location for their treasured Whitman artifacts." We value our role as guardians and caretakers of such invaluable gifts.

A few months ago, I initiated the process of museum accreditation for the Birthplace by partaking in the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) sponsored by the American Association of Museums (AAM) which involved a rigorous evaluation and assessment of our Birthplace museum. Promoting the best standards in museum stewardship, this accreditation bolsters our grant writing credentials which will assist us in bringing the Museum to the next stage of development.

On the subject of grants, I want to thank the Town of Huntington, State Senator Carl Marcellino, the Huntington Arts Council, Poets & Writers, and Verizon for their grants which have supported our numerous community programs. Just last month, we successfully secured a NYS Council for the Humanities Reading & Discussion Grant which enables us to host four sessions next spring.

In closing, I thank our Board of Trustees for their vision and support, and I welcome new Board Member, Michael DeChristofaro. I thank Association members for all your contributions as we work towards our mission to preserve the past, honor the present and guide the future of Whitman's legacy.

Cynthia Shor, WWBA Executive Director

WWBA welcomes

Rose H. Harvey

as Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation

Gift of Bronze Statue

continued from page 1

whose admiration of Whitman's writings has had a profound influence on his work.

On Ikeda's return visit to the Birthplace in 1981, the visitor book entry of June 20th contains his inscription: "Now I've come to the birthplace of Walt Whitman, who, in my youth always uplifted my heart..."

Created by sculptor John Giannotti, who was inspired by Whitman's poetry and connection to nature, the statue is based on the famous photo portraying "the good gray poet" holding a butterfly in his hand as if directly communicating with it. It is one of three identical bronzes cast from the same mold, the other two are installed at SGI's headquarters in Tokyo and in Camden, NJ, where Whitman reposes.

*Join Us for Our 2011
Benefit for Literacy Gala at Oheka Castle*

October 13, 2011

Honoring

**Daisaku Ikeda, Poet and Educator
Frank Petrone, Huntington Town Supervisor
Thomas Schneider, Simon Property Group**



Sponsorship Opportunities:

Deborah Weber, Gala Chair

631-271-1746

dweber@simon.com

Ticket \$250

C.K. Williams: WWBA 2011 Poet in Residence

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association was proud to host C.K. Williams as our 2011 Poet in Residence. Mr. Williams' work has been honored with extensive praise and numerous prestigious awards, including the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Williams is known for his daring, formal style marrying perceptive everyday observations to lines so long they defy conventions of lyric poetry. His poems often border on the prosaic, inspiring critics to compare them to Walt Whitman's work. Mr. Williams will appear at this year's Walt Whitman Birthday Celebration on May 7th and 8th.

C. K. Williams is the author of 10 books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Wait*, published in 2010. *The Singing* won the National Book Award for 2003, and his previous book, *Repair*, was awarded the 2000 Pulitzer Prize and the Los Angeles Times Book Award. His collection *Flesh and Blood* received the National Book Critics Circle Award. Williams has also published a memoir and a prose book entitled *Williams, On Whitman*, which was released in 2010 by Princeton University Press. Among his honors are awards in literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the PEN/Voelcker Career Achievement Award, and fellowships from the Lila Wallace



Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment of the Arts. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2003, and teaches in the Writing Program at Princeton University.

Williams started writing poetry when he was 19, shortly after taking his last required English class at the University of Pennsylvania. "Poetry didn't find me, in the cradle or anywhere near it: I found it,"

Williams recalled. "I realized at some point—very late, it's always seemed—that I needed it, that it served a function for me—or someday would—however unclear that function may have been at first." Of Williams, poet Stanley Kunitz once said, "To put it simply, C.K. Williams is

a wonderful poet, in the authentic American tradition of Walt Whitman and William Carlos Williams, who tells us on every page what it means to be alive in our time."

The Walt Whitman Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the selection of **Martin Espada** as WWBA 2012 Poet in Residence. He will be reading from his work and conducting a master class with local poets on Saturday, June 2, 2012.

Calendar of Events

Thursday, October 13 6:30PM
Benefit for Literacy Gala
Honoring our 2011
Champions of Literacy

Saturday, October 22 1PM
Family Halloween Day
with Magic Bob

Sunday, October 30 3 PM
WWBA Long Island
Poet of the Year
Ceremony and Reception
Honoring Pramila Venkateswaran

Walking with Whitman
Poetry in Performance
Hosted by George Wallace

A series of performances and presentations by prominent figures in contemporary literature and the arts on the national scene, paired with respected voices on the regional scene.

Saturday, October 1 7-9 PM
Neeli Cherkovski
with Tammy Nuzzo-Morgan

Sunday, November 6 7-9 PM
Hettie Jones
with Gladys Henderson

Saturday, December 3 7-9 PM
Marvin Bell with Gayl Teller

Visit waltwhitman.org for the
2012 schedule

LI Poet of the Year: Gladys Henderson

The Walt Whitman Birthplace Association honored poet Gladys Henderson as the 2010 Long Island Poet of the Year. Her name was added to the plaque of Long Island School of Poetry Honorees displayed in the Interpretive Center at the Birthplace. The award honors poets who live on Long Island, have published poetry of excellent quality, and have worked to foster the growth and appreciation of poetry in local communities.

Gladys Henderson was born in New Rochelle, NY. She attended Midwestern University, Wichita Falls, Texas, with academic concentrations in art and psychology. She received her B.S. in Art Education and after graduation taught in both private and public schools. She was part of the committee to help conceptualize the First Long Island Poetry Marathon. Recently, she was also a member of the planning committee for the gala dinner to honor the Poet Laureates of Nassau and Suffolk counties and to applaud the publication of *Paumanok: Poems and Pictures of Long Island*. She also helped to facilitate "Frost on the Road," a workshop fundraiser for the Robert Frost



Executive Director Cynthia Shor; Whitman personator, Darrel Ford; 2010 honoree, Gladys Henderson; 2009 honoree, Patti Tana.

Foundation, Sugar Hill, NH. She runs two poetry workshop venues on the Island, The Poets Circle in Port Washington and Live Poets in Islip, NY. She also co-hosts a poetry reading venue at the Sonoma Café, Hauppauge, New York.

A prize-winning poet, she has won first prize in seven Long Island poetry competitions, 2004 through 2010. Nationally, she has been a finalist for the Paumanok Poetry Prize 2006, and has won standings in the Writer's Digest Poetry Competitions 2008, 2009 and Oberon Poetry Prize, 2009. She is widely published in anthologies and magazines and in 2008 Finishing Line Press selected her chapbook "Eclipse of Heaven" for publication as one of their tenth anniversary selections of new women's voices.

The Walt Whitman Board of Trustees is pleased to announce the selection of Pramila Venkateswaran as 2011 WWBA Long Island Poet of the Year.

Cooking Up a Great Poem

"Whitman Cooks" Poetry Anthology

Does the smell of cherry pie conjure up such sweet memories of holidays past that you are inspired to write a poem? If so, poets, chefs and restaurants should all consider submitting a poem and recipe to the *Whitman Cooks* poetry anthology!

The Walt Whitman Birthplace Association is embarking on a historic and artistic fundraising journey. WWBA is spearheading a fundraiser to produce *Whitman Cooks*, a national cookbook/poetry anthology comprised of poems and recipes that resonate together.



Cookbook/poetry anthology finalists will receive an author's copy. Submissions are being accepted now through October 31, 2011. A celebration featuring a tasting of selected recipes and a reading of featured poems will be held at the Walt Whitman Birthplace on a future date. All proceeds will be used to continue the legacy of the Walt Whitman Birthplace.

For additional information on guidelines and sponsorship opportunities, visit www.waltwhitman.org.

Walking to Jayne's Hill

Along the road beds,
blowing in their new June hats,
the wild flowers of this island,
lined up to greet me at spring's
opened door. They capture
my wounds in their deep luscious
pockets, those sweet nets of healing balm—
buttercups, forget-me-nots,
honeysuckle, all with bees in groom,
kissing the crowns of each.
The heart's sorrow dissolves
with the salve of their beauty,
their nods as if to say,
"Yes, begin again!"

-Gladys Henderson

Starting at Paumanok...

The Newsletter of the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association

Susanne Byrnes, Editor

Gary Ivan, Kimberly Wilder, Assistant Editors

Richard Ryan, Curator

2010 WWBA Benefit for Literacy a Success

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association held its annual Benefit for Literacy Gala at Oheka Castle on October 7, 2010, honoring three Champions of Literacy. There were more than 140 people in attendance.

Prolific writer Ray Bradbury, the author of more than 500 published works including such masterworks as *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451* was honored as Literary Achiever. Congressman Steve Israel accepted an inscribed, leather-bound copy of *Leaves of Grass* in Mr. Bradbury's honor. Bradbury, who celebrated his ninetieth birthday last year, had planned to attend the event, but was unable to make the long journey from his home in Los Angeles. In his videotaped acceptance speech, Mr. Bradbury recalled how Whitman's writing has been a frequent inspiration: "Walt Whitman told me how to sing the body electric and I have put that in my stories along the way. I even entitled one of my stories 'I Sing the Body Electric.' So you see, Walt Whitman has been part of my life."



In August 2010, Cynthia Shor, Executive Director of the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association, was invited by the Los Angeles City Council to participate in Ray Bradbury Week. At the City Council ceremony, Ms. Shor presented Mr. Bradbury with the Whitman Birthplace Association's Champion of Literacy Award for a life dedicated to writing, teaching and literacy. Ms. Shor said of Bradbury, "His life's work, both published and in real time, has been dedicated to the written word.

He is a life-long advocate of public libraries, and he still volunteers his time as a teacher of writing in the Los Angeles public school system."

Tracey A. Edwards, Vice President of New York Operations at Verizon Communications, was honored as WWBA Individual Leader for her past work with the Elwood Board of Education and her current work on the Advisory Board of C.W. Post College. At the event, Edwards presented a \$5,000 donation to the Birthplace from Verizon as a grant to help further their ongoing literacy programs and activities. The Long-Islander's Associate Publisher Peter Sloggatt presented Ms. Edwards with an inscribed copy of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.



WWBA Welcomes New Trustee

Michael DeCristofaro is a life-long resident of Huntington and a graduate of Walt Whitman High School. Michael has spent over 20 years as a manager for various Fortune 500 companies. He is a strong supporter of the arts and literacy organizations in the Huntington area. Michael is a very active member of the Huntington Chamber of Commerce and sits on both the membership and government relations committees.



He also takes part in many of the Young Professional events that help mentor young people who are about to enter or who have recently entered the business world. Michael is also involved with many Huntington organizations and charities. Michael and his wife Jennifer are firm believers in supporting Huntington and Huntington businesses. This was most evident last year when he and his wife were married in Huntington and used only local businesses for all their wedding needs. Michael is a Financial Advisor with Edward Jones, and has his office on Gerard Street in the heart of Huntington Village.



Assemblyman Steve Englebright was honored as Whitman's Education and Cultural Arts Advocate for his work in securing ongoing funding for heritage sites such as the Vanderbilt Museum and the Walt Whitman Birthplace in Suffolk County. Englebright, who has extensive experience as a scientist and an educator, as well as a passion for history, cited how critical these "institutions of optimism" are to our region's economy as tourism destinations, and also how important they are as integral parts of our shared national heritage. The Honorable Roger Tilles presented Englebright with a commemorative copy of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*.

An Object Lesson

Keeping warm was no easy task in 19th-century America. The following items helped the Whitman family stay warm and can all be found on a tour of the Walt Whitman Birthplace. In future newsletters, various museum objects that exemplify life in 19th-century America will be presented.

Bed warmer - c. 1860

A precursor to the modern-day electric blanket, this 19th century bed warmer was a necessity for folks during the long, cold winter months. Consisting of a metal container (this one being copper) usually fitted with a long wooden handle, it resembled a covered frying pan or a popcorn popper. The pan would be filled with hot coals and placed under the covers of the bed to warm it up or dry it out before use.



Foot warmer - c. 1800

Made of cherry wood, this early 18th century foot warmer is decorated with perforated or openwork hearts on the top and all sides. This hardwood box houses a sheet-iron tin pan which holds hot coals that provide warmth through the perforations. Women and children would use the device for long carriage rides and to keep warm during Sunday church services.



Tin Kitchen - pre-1850

An early version of the rotisserie, the tin kitchen looked like half of a small barrel with a cast-iron spit inside. A small door on the front allows one to peek in to check the meat without turning the entire kitchen around or leaning too close to the fire. Meats took on flavors of the fire without tasting as if they were smoked.



Commemorative Bricks

Consider supporting WWBA with the purchase of commemorative bricks that are now a permanent part of our attractive Poetry Circle on the Birthplace grounds. Your donation will help us provide for the preservation of one of the most significant historic homes in America.



Donations

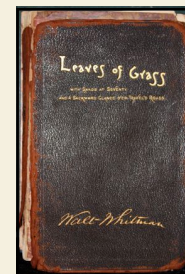
WWBA acknowledges the generous donation of these historic artifacts.



A late 19th-century inkwell, said to have been used by Walt Whitman, was donated by Kate Conlon of Edwardsberg, Mich.



The Leadbeater family of Ronkonkoma, NY, has donated a signed copy of Whitman's **November Boughs** circa 1888. Whitman's signature is pasted in the front cover.



On loan from the Smith Family of Ogunquit, Maine, is a collection containing an early edition copy of **Leaves of Grass** and documents chronicling the activities of the Walt Whitman Association circa 1920.

WWBA Thanks
NYS Office of Parks, Recreation
& Historic Preservation
Suffolk County
Town of Huntington
Verizon

Wallace Named WWBA 2011-2012 Writer in Residence

continued from page 1

In this position, Wallace will organize workshops, readings and lectures, and reach out to writing communities, social and cultural institutions, and the public. He will continue hosting the popular poetry series *Walking with Whitman: Poetry in Performance*, a group of presentations by intriguing figures in contemporary literature and the arts on the national scene, paired with respected voices on the regional scene.

Wallace is an award-winning poet and journalist who has performed his work across America and in Europe. Wallace teaches literature at Pace University in Manhattan. He is editor of *Poetrybay*, an online poetry magazine archived and distributed worldwide by Stanford University. Other editorial work includes **Poetryvlog**, **Long Island Quarterly**, and Walt's Corner in the **Long Islander** newspaper.

He is author of 19 chapbooks of poetry, published in the US, UK and Italy, including Poppin Johnny (Three

Rooms Press, NY 2009) **Summer of Love** (Shivastan Press, 2008) and **Burn My Heart In Wet Sand** (Troubadour Books, 2005).

In recent years his rigorous performance schedule has taken him to the West Coast, Europe, and the United Kingdom. He is a regular performer at Lowell Celebrates Kerouac, Howlfest, the Woody Guthrie Festival, and Bradfest. In the Metropolitan New York area he has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Algonquin Club, Tribes Gallery, Sidewalk Café and at C-Note, and hosts poetry events at Cornelia St. Cafe and Bowery Poetry Club.

An avid Whitman enthusiast, Wallace is a major interpreter of Long Island literature and local history, as well as European Surrealism, New York School and Beat writing; and has dialogued with many of the major figures in 20th Century poetry and the popular arts, including most of the WWBA Poets in Residence.

WWBA Visits Capitol

Rep. Steve Israel hosted WWBA and arranged meetings with representatives from the NEA, NEH, Dept. of Education and others to acquaint WWBA with possible funding sources. The Congressman, who is a history buff, gave the group a fascinating personal tour of the Capitol.



Commissioner Tours Birthplace

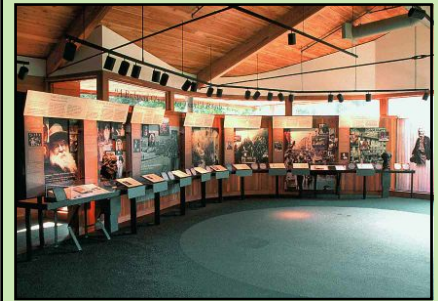
WWBA Board President William Walter, Ph.D. and Executive Director Cynthia Shor greet Rose H. Harvey, incoming Commissioner of the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, during a recent visit to the Walt Whitman Birthplace.



Rentals

Do you have an event or meeting to host? The beautiful Walt Whitman Birthplace sits on a landscaped acre conveniently located near the N.S. Parkway and the L.I.E. This historic site offers a unique venue for your gathering.

Our modern **Interpretive Center** overlooks the Birthplace and can accommodate 100 people. It features a small stage and P.A. system. Tables and chairs can be configured for a variety of events. A kitchen is available.



The **Gathering House** is a self-contained structure overlooking the grand lawn and is designed to accommodate art exhibits or meetings of up to 15 people.

The **Classroom** offers tables and chairs, TV/DVD, blackboard and podium. There is seating for 45 people.

Guided tours of the Birthplace and exhibits are available. For rates and information, please call 631-427-5240 or e-mail us at events@waltwhitman.org.

Join Us!

Member Benefits Include:

- ~Free admission to the Birthplace
- ~Invitations to special events
- ~Our seasonal newsletter
- ~10% off in the Museum Shop

Your support of the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association helps us preserve the poet's heritage, present programs for the public, and continue our work with school groups.

Membership Levels

Individual	\$30
Family	\$40
Student	\$20
Teacher	\$20
Senior	\$20
Veteran	\$20

We Ask Your Support

Become a member

Volunteer at the
Birthplace

Become a Sponsor

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association
246 Old Walt Whitman Road
West Hills, New York 11746-4148

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association

The Walt Whitman Birthplace Association preserves and operates the Walt Whitman Birthplace, a state-owned Historic Site, in cooperation with the Long Island Region of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The Walt Whitman Birthplace is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Summer Hours:

June 15 through Labor Day:

Monday through Friday 11:00AM-4:00PM

Saturday and Sunday 11:00AM-5:00PM

Winter Hours:

Wednesday through Friday 1:00-4:00PM

Saturday and Sunday 11:00AM-4:00PM

The Birthplace is closed on major holidays.



Admission:

Adult \$6. Senior /Group/Veteran \$5. Student \$4.
Members Free Children under 5 Free

School and group tours by appointment

For information, call 631-427-5240



STARTING FROM PAUMANOK...

WALT WHITMAN BIRTHPLACE ASSOCIATION
246 OLD WALT WHITMAN ROAD
WEST HILLS, NY 11746-4148

Fall 2011

Vol. XXVI No. 1

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 283
Huntington Sta., NY 11746-4148

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association

Board of Trustees

William Walter, Ph.D., President

Thomas Wismuller, Vice President

Mike Schenkler, Treasurer

Jack Coulehan, M.D., Secretary

Stuart Besen

Richard Bronson, M.D.

Michael DeCristofaro

Jeffrey Gould

Brenda Leigh Johnson

Honorary Trustees

Nelson DeMille

Ed Folsom, Ph.D.

Susan Isaacs

Karen Karbiener, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Cynthia Shor