

*Starting From Paumanok*

The Newsletter of Walt Whitman Birthplace Association

# WALT WHITMAN TURNING 200 YEARS OLD

HOW WE'RE CELEBRATING

**2018: A Year Review**

**ART** at Walt Whitman Birthplace

*New*

Interpretative Center Exhibition

Updated Children's Programming

## From the Executive Director's Desk

Greetings and Happy New Year! Like Janus, the two-faced Greek god who looks to the future and to the past, our Newsletter brings you the highlights of Summer-Winter 2017 while presenting the coming attractions of 2018.

Our 2018 Program Series, "Celebrating Women with Walt Whitman." recognizes women's achievements using Whitman's prose and poetry as a platform. We especially invite you to join us for a theatrical performance of the LI High School for the Arts on June 9. In addition, all eyes are on 2019, the bicentennial year of Whitman's birth wherein we are planning a major celebration of Walt's 200th birthday.

Our Capital Campaign moves forward with a refurbishing of our exhibit space and site development studies led and sponsored through major gifts by Board President Dr. William T. Walter. He is offered strong Board support which includes new Board Members Dr. Maria Basile, Dr. Susan Fishbein and Lauren Kaushansky. Board Member Jeffrey Gould provided a major gift to acquire the personal Whitman Library of Marvin Feinstein, whose collection was partially donated by the Feinstein family. We invite everyone to join us on April 26, 2018, for the launch of this new collection.

We welcome Chad Lupinacci as our new Huntington Town Supervisor and wish outgoing Superintendent Frank Petrone all the best. We congratulate Legislators Susan Berland, Thomas Donnelly, DuWayne Gregory, and William Spencer on their campaign victories and we thank all the Suffolk County Legislators, and the Huntington Town Council and State Senator Carl Marcellino, for their outstanding leadership and support for historic preservation and the cultural arts. We invite you to come visit, participate, enjoy, and support our mission to preserve and promote the legacy of Walt Whitman with us!

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*Cynthia Shor*

## WWBA graciously acknowledges support from the following Donors, Sponsors & Patron Level Members:

Carlos Aguasaco, Penny & John Barr, Matthew Bessell & Peter Bridgstock, George & Joan Blednick, Claire Borgi, Mimi Bright, Sherri & Thomas Casey, Deer Park High School Students, Dr. David Church, Stephen DeLugg & Charlotte Shutnitz, Emma DeStefano, Dorene Evans & Arthur Lothstein, Estee Lauder, Mary Flatley, Antionette Fleig, Maryanne Noel and Phil Friedman, Francis Gagliardi, Robert & Priscilla Hughes, Eric Janson, Ronald Janssen, X.J. Kennedy, Carole and Harold Klein, Patricia & Keith Kulisky, Alex Lima, Charles Lipp, George Mallis, Alberto Meschiari, Minuteman Press, Network for Good, Shana Nichols and J.P. Grossman, Mark Nucio, Tammy Nuzzo-Morgan, Frank Palmer, William Palmer, Joseph & Eleanor Perlman, Stephen & Mitsuko Post, Ashley Ronquillo, Ruth S. Rosenthal, Yrene Santos, Seven in Heaven, Cynthia Shor, Six Harbors Brewing Company, Patti Tana and John Renner, Carlos Velásquez Torres, James P. Wagner, Dr. William Walter, and William Wientge

**Special thanks to our Library Members:** Bethpage, Center Moriches, Commack, Copiague, Emma S. Clark, Farmingdale, Glen Cove, Harborfields, Half Hollow Hills, Huntington, Jericho, Longwood, Merrick, Middle Country, North Merrick, North Shore, Northport-East Northport, Oceanside, Plainview-Old Bethpage, Port Washington, Rockville Centre, South Huntington, Syosset, and West Babylon Public Libraries.

**Many thanks to New York State Parks & Trails, The Gardiner Foundation, Suffolk County, Huntington Township, New York State Council of the Arts, Humanities New York, Poets & Writers, and Huntington Arts Council for their continued support.**

*Your support helps preserve & promote Walt Whitman's birthplace, poetry, and legacy. Renew or Become a Member online at [www.waltwhitman.org](http://www.waltwhitman.org) or call 631-427-5240 ext. 114*

## Starting From Paumanok:

The Newsletter of Walt Whitman Birthplace Association

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## Whitman Birthday Weekend and 2018 Poet-in-Residence, Vijay Seshadri

Pulitzer-Prize winner Vijay Seshadri was honored as WWBA 2018 Poet-in-Residence on June 2, 2018, during WWBA's annual Birthday Celebration in commemoration of Walt Whitman's 199th birthday. Seshadri offered a four-hour master class in poetry writing, in which participants read selected poems as teaching devices and critiqued each other's verse. The sold-out afternoon workshop was scheduled for three hours, but was extended due to Seshadri's determination to give more feedback to participants. Auditors were able to observe the seminar for a reduced fee. Participant Tammy Green noted, "I greatly enjoyed this session, and it has revived my desire for more!" "It was astounding and wonderful that he decided to keep going for as long as it took to workshop every participant's poem," said attendee Nancy Keating.

That evening, Seshadri was joined by fellow poet and former Sarah Lawrence colleague John Barr in presenting a reading. Barr, WWBA 2013 Champion of Literacy, read selections from his new book *Dante in China*. The WWBA board awarded Seshadri with a plaque memorializing him as WWBA's 2018 Poet-in-Residence.

*This program made possible with funds from the Decentralized Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature and is administered by the Huntington Arts Council, Inc. Special thanks to NYS OPRHP, Suffolk County, and the Town of Huntington.*

On June 9, Walt Whitman Birthplace AssWhitman Birthday Weekend and 2018 Poet-in-Residence, Vijay Seshadri

WWBA's 2018 Poet-in-Residence Vijay Seshadri officiated Walt Whitman's 199th Birthday Weekend Celebration on June 3 & 4 at the Birthplace. The Celebration is usually held on the weekend closest to Whitman's birthday (May 31, 1819). The annual Poet-in-Residence designation was established in 1981 to honor poets who continue to embody Whitman's spirit of democracy, diversity and creativity. It is proudly sponsored by New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) through Huntington Arts Council Re-Grant Program.

On June 3, Seshadri offered a Master Class and Poetry Workshop. Long Island Poet Tammy Green shared her experience: "Kudos and huge thanks to WWBA for hosting the Poet-in-Residence Master Class. Vijay Seshadri was a generous, kind and caring teacher that worked to ensure that everyone in the class received feedback. It was one of the best poetry workshops I have ever attended. Thank you, Vijay. Thank you WWBA for making this possible. Local poets have an invaluable resource in the WWBA."

On the evening of June 3, joined by fellow poet John Barr, Seshadri gave a poetry reading, and on June 4, he addressed and congratulated the winners, participants, students and families of our 32nd Annual Student Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony, offering encouragement and invoking inspiration through the words of Walt Whitman.

Poet, essayist, and critic Vijay Seshadri was born in Bangalore, India, and came to the US at the age of five; he currently lives in Brooklyn. He earned a BA from Oberlin College and an MFA from Columbia University. Among his literary influences are Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Elizabeth Bishop, and William Blake.

Seshadri's poetry has been praised for its elasticity, vivaciousness, and intimacy of tone, and includes elements of Indian mythology and religion. His experience as a biologist for the National Marine Fish Service formed the centerpiece of his first collection of poems, *Wild Kingdom* (1996). His 2003 second collection *The Long Meadow* won the James Laughlin Award and his third collection, *3 Sections* (2013), won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. The Pulitzer Prize committee described *3 Sections* as "a compelling collection of poems that examine human consciousness, from birth to dementia, in a voice that is by turns witty and grave, compassionate and remorseless."

Seshadri has received fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the NEA, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He has been awarded The Paris Review's Bernard F. Connors Long Poem Prize and The MacDowell Colony's Fellowship for Distinguished Poetic Achievement. He currently directs the graduate non-fiction writing program, and teaches undergraduate writing workshops, at Sarah Lawrence College in New York.

## 32nd Annual Student Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony

Students submitted over 2,500 entries in the 32st Annual Student Poetry Contest in 2018. The Young Poet Contest was founded in 1986 by the late WWBA Trustee Maxwell C. Wheat. The Poet-in-Residence & Birthday Celebration are sponsored by NYSCA through the Huntington Arts Council Re-grant program.

Poet-in-Residence Vijay Seshadri, Huntington Arts Council's Executive Director Marc Courtade, and Huntington Town Supervisor Chad Lupinacci offered words of congratulations to the 100 student award winners and commended the teachers and parents for keeping poetry alive in the Young Poets. Whitman Personator Darrel Blaine Ford posed for photographs with all prize winners. Grand Champions read their winning poems. All winners received a certificate and a gift bag prize, and a wonderful day was had by all!

Congratulations to the Grand Champions: Bailey Brett, Boone Davis, Adriana Pioli, Kara Kokolakis, Katie Gozaloff, Katriel Murphy, Sarah Lewis, and Daniella Graffeo. The class anthology award was presented to Mrs. Shari Zindman/Grades 3 & 4: Locust Valley Intermediate School; Ms. Linda Lebowitz/Grades 5&6: Shore Road School; Mrs. Wallace/Grades 7&8: Mount Sinai Middle School; Mrs. April Zabinsky/Grades 9&10: North Shore Hebrew Academy High School; Mr. Kenny/Grades 9&10: W.T. Clarke High School; and Mrs. Rand/Ms. Rubenstein/Grades 3-12: JFK Middle School.

For a complete list of winners, please visit our website. Thank you to all participants for keeping the spirit and legacy of Walt Whitman alive!

## Whitman@200: Bicentennial Celebration Calendar

*2019 Whitman Bicentennial Celebration Year Highlights: Three multi-day conferences/festivals, Multiple poetry events, four community collaborations, five “Distinguished Speaker” lectures comprised of Whitman scholars, Whitman Family Reunion & Oral History Project, three Whitman-related exhibitions, Library of Congress Facsimile Exhibit and Lecture, banners in Huntington Township & a proposal to the US Stamp Advisory Committee for a 2019 issue of a Walt Whitman Postage Stamp..*

**January – March 2019:** WWBA will present Commercial Whitman: an exhibition of commercial artifacts of items that used images and the namesake of Walt Whitman on their labels or advertisements, dating from 1920 – present, from the personal collection of Birthplace member Ed Centeno.

**February 2019:** WWBA will host the regional competition of the annual Poetry Out Loud national high school poetry recitation contest in collaboration with Poetry Society of America (PSA). Forty regional finalists will compete to be part of PSA's national championship competition in Washington, DC.

**March & September 2019:** “I Hear America Singing:” story slam and community open mic.

**April – June 2019:** Photography Exhibition by B.A. Van Sise, fifth-generation descendant of Walt Whitman. Van Sise offers 15 interpretive portraits of notable American poets who have served as WWBA Poets-in-Residence,

alongside their poetry. For National Poetry Month (April), WWBA will present “Whitman at 200: Distinguished Speakers Series” and “Performing Poetry: A 3-workshop series.”

**April 6-7, 2019:** 2019 WWBA Poet-in-Residence Weekend. On April 6, our nationally acclaimed Poet-in-Residence for 2019 will offer a Poetry Writing Workshop and evening reading. On April 7, the Poet-in-Residence will officiate our 33rd Annual Student Poetry Contest Awards Ceremony, which honors approximately 100 young poets each year.

**May 31 – June 2, 2019:** Whitman Bicentennial Birthday Weekend Celebration

**May 31:** Walt Whitman's 200th Birthday! Whitman scholars David Reynolds & Jerome Loving will hold a panel presentation from 10:30am – 12pm. The Final Session of the Walt Whitman Initiative's “Whitman International Week” will be held at the Birthplace. Groups of Scholars attending the week-long celebration will be coming to Birthplace on their final day to tour our historic site from 1pm – 4pm. Afternoon activities will include a poets' corner and Whitman-era music and crafts from noon – 5pm. From 5pm – 6pm, join fellow Whitman enthusiasts for a “Happy Birthday Hour” and toast Walt in honor of his 200th birthday. Compagnia de' Colombari will present “More Or Less I Am,” a music-theater piece drawn from Walt Whitman's 1855 “Song of Myself.” The troupe, comprised of 8 actor/singers and 4 musicians, will circulate in Town of Huntington Friday afternoon reciting poetry in

open spaces as prelude to evening performance (7:30pm – 8:30 pm). Closing Whitman revelries will take place at 9pm.

**June 1:** High School students will attend writing workshops and offer presentations of their poetry. We will also host a collaboration with the “Bard's Initiative,” a local poetry group, to stage a marathon reading of Leaves of Grass in front of the Birthplace.

**June 2:** We will host a musical presentation featuring Whitman-era music. High School students will stage mini-poetry scenes throughout the day. Docents will become historic figures in costume and circulate with visitors. We will also unveil our 2019 Time Capsule in honor of Whitman's Bicentennial.

**July 2019:** Whitman Family Reunion & Oral History Project

**July – October 2019:** WWBA Archive Exhibit. An exhibition of books and artifacts from the WWBA archive will be on display. This exhibit will include Whitman family quilts, books signed by Whitman, the Whitman Family Bible, historic photographs, deeds, and documents.

**August 9-11, 2019:** Inaugural International Whitman Festival: Cultural Arts Celebration

August 9: First day of the Inaugural International Whitman Festival. Throughout the day we will welcome the convening of international presenters, afternoon panel presentations, a student poetry writing workshop, and an evening musical performance.

**August 10:** Whitman Scholar Ed Folsom will be the Keynote Speaker. The Festival continues with more

panel presentations and an evening theatrical performance.

**August 11:** The third and final day of the festival will include panel and student poetry presentations.

**September 2019:** Former Congressman Steve Israel will present his lecture: Whitman as the Poet of Democracy.

**October 5, 2019:** Whitman researcher Zachary Turpin will present his lecture: 'Missing Me One Place, Search Another': Thoughts on Finding More Whitman (and Even More Whitman) in the 21st Century.

**October – December 2019:** Library of Congress Facsimile Exhibit and Lecture. This lecture will be presented by Barbara Bair, MA, PhD, Specialist in Literature in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress. Bair oversees the three main Whitman collections, and will showcase facsimile items from the Whitman collection along with their historical narratives. Walking with Whitman: Poetry in Performance. Join local and national poets for an Open Mic, Musical Interlude, Featured Poet, Q&A and Book Signing. (Dates TBA).

### The Americas Poetry Festival of New York

The fourth annual Americas Poetry Festival of New York, a multilingual poetry festival and writers' conference organized by poets and Professors Carlos Aguasaco, Yrene Santos and Carlos Velásquez, Torres was held on Thursday, October 11 at 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

This free event featured poets from Lithuania, Brazil, Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Uruguay, Ecuador, and the USA, and was sponsored by Walt Whitman Birthplace Association, CUNY and Instituto Cervantes. The poets read from The America's Poetry Festival of New York's 2018 Multilingual Anthology honoring poet Virginia Moore, a rich diverse multilingual sampler from poets of 22 different countries, coedited by poets and Professors Carlos Aguasaco, Yrene Santos and Carlos Velásquez Torres.

Teacher Alex Lima and a vibrant crowd of Deer Park High School students were also in attendance. The afternoon, inspired by the multicultural embrace of Walt Whitman, was filled the joy and spirit of a multitude of languages and voices in world poetry.

### Poetry for the HART:

As part of its Public Art Initiative, the Town's Public Art Advisory Committee annually invites teen poets (ages 14 - 18) residing or attending school in Huntington to submit their work for inclusion in the Poetry for the HART Teen Poetry Project. Selected poetry is displayed inside buses on ad panels on the Town's HART bus system for a minimum of one year. The winning entries are also published in The Long Islander newspaper. The Town recognizes the winning poets at an evening award ceremony and poetry reading held at the Walt Whitman Birthplace in late April (National Poetry Month) each year. In addition, any winning poems inspired by one of several designated artworks on view at the Heckscher Museum of Art and submitted under the optional "Poetry and Art" category will also be displayed in the Museum. The deadline for 2019 is February 1. For more information and contest guidelines, please visit: <http://www.huntingtonny.gov/HART-poetry>

## WWBA Receives Grant from Gardiner Foundation

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association (WWBA) is proud to announce that the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation, established in 1987 by Robert David Lion Gardiner, has generously granted over \$82,000 to enable WWBA to refurbish its Interpretive Center exhibit and to execute 2019 programming in celebration of Walt Whitman's Bicentennial Birthday.

Whitman was born at the Birthplace on May 31, 1819, and much of his work extols his Long Island roots. WWBA was established in 1949 to steward Whitman's wide-reaching legacy. The Walt Whitman Birthplace Interpretive Center was built in 1999 to provide a location for the Birthplace's exhibits, which were originally housed on the second floor of Whitman's Birthplace. The Interpretive Center is comprised of numerous informative and photographic panels detailing Whitman's life and times. The restoration will refresh the panels that have been bleached by light and will add a new panel describing Whitman's school teaching years on Long Island. Throughout 2019, WWBA plans to hold various historic and literary events, including an operatic and theatrical Whitman-inspired performance in May, an international academic Whitman conference in August, and monthly lectures by notable Whitman scholars.

The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation supports the

study of New York State history. Robert David Lion Gardiner was, until his death in August 2004, the 16th Lord of the Manor of Gardiner's Island, NY. The Foundation is inspired by his personal passion for New York history, and encourages the preservation, collection, restoration, and exhibition of documents and artifacts of this history, as well as educational programs focused on this history.

"This restoration would not be possible without the generous donation from the Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation," said WWBA Executive Director Cynthia Shor. "We are again working with Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA) who designed the original exhibits. William T. Walter, PhD., Board President, has contributed many hours to preparing detailed specifications for RAA. Additionally, he has taken an important lead in our Capital Campaign to obtain all the necessary funds to support this renovation. We are grateful and appreciative of the Gardiner Foundation which gives us major support with this grant for our Bicentennial historic celebrations in 2019."

For more information on this project and to learn how you can make a contribution, please contact WWBA at 631-427-5240 ext. 111, or online at [www.waltwhitman.org](http://www.waltwhitman.org).

## Meet Our New Directors

Education Director, **Dr. Kelly K. Ronayne**, has a diverse background in education, history, publishing, the arts and teaching at the college level. She worked as Associate Dean and Adjunct Professor at St. John's University for 19 years. She earned her doctorate in Modern World History and



Education Director, Dr. Kelly Ronayne

her master's and bachelor's in Government and Politics with a Theatre minor. She is a published author of the following works and has presented at various conferences: *"Experimental Philanthropies and the Negro Theatre."* *In The 1930s: The Reality and the Promise* and *Stages of Modernity: The Federal Theatre Project and the New American Welfare State*.

She has performed in hundreds of productions in NYC and studied theatre at The School for Film and Televisions and TheatreVisions in NYC. She is also a world traveler and

created the first doctoral internship of its kind by studying school curricula throughout the country of Ghana, Africa and presented her findings.

Event and Media Director, **Tanya Kaiser**, has an extensive background working in non-profits; from museums and galleries to universities. She received her MFA in Studio Art from Stony Brook University, where she was named the Goldberger Fellow for excellence in the visual arts in 2016.

In 2013, Tanya began managing events, conferences, and exhibitions for non-profits. She co-managed the successful execution of the "How Class Works" conference, hosted at Stony Brook University in 2016. She also has a combined 11 years experience in graphic design and marketing.



Event and Media Director, Tanya Kaiser

## Art at Walt Whitman Birthplace

We are excited and proud to introduce art exhibitions featuring Artist Talks at the Walt Whitman Birthplace, which are free and open to the public. These artists share their experiences and insight into their creative process during these talks. The art exhibitions are curated using themes that relate to Walt Whitman, Poetry/Spoken Word, or Long Island. We began this programming with Long Island Native and abstract painter, Katherine Kaiser and her exhibition, *Native Turf*.

Abstract Painter, Katherine Kaiser revisits and archives significant places in her life on Long Island as the focal point of her creative process. This archive consists of an earth sample of the land containing grasses, roots, dirt, sand, and rocks etc., which are placed in a zip lock bag. Kaiser then snaps a photograph of the landscape, vegetation and architectural structure of the place to supplement the earth sample.

In her studio, Kaiser intuitively looks at each earth sample and the formal elements that are present, such as the composition, and combines it with some of the architectural shapes she sees in the photograph of the significant place. However, as an abstract artist, Kaiser reinvents the palette and changes each form to mirror her own vision of that object and its relationship with others. The end result of this process is an oil painting of ambiguous forms that speak to both architectural and natural elements.

Currently, Maggie Avolio's exhibition, *O Workmen and Workwomen Forever for Me!* is on display until November 30th. Avolio believes that her work is poetic in itself and

conceptually deals with labor and class, which is tied to Whitman's beliefs in democracy and equality. Avolio's



minimalistic artwork exists simultaneously as a painting, sculpture, and installation. Raw canvas is unwoven, torn, folded, or reconstructed to create three-dimensional form. Her processes are rarely complex, yet they rely on repetition of simplistic gesture

to manifest a larger experience. Individual threads pulled from a canvas are knotted and sewn back into the surface of the material resulting in a patterned drawing. By reimagining traditional painting constructs, Avolio is able to challenge notions of technique, perspective, space, dimensionality, color, and abstraction.

Avolio's works also deconstructs and subverts the conventions of historically male-centric art. She integrates her perspective and experience through a mixture of domestic craft and art historical references. Sometimes her work incorporates techniques like stitching and weaving (or unweaving) while other times, it relies on the drapery of canvas to elicit thoughts of soft, home spaces as well as classical painting and sculpture. Through her selective and purposeful use of materials and repetitious simple gesture, she draws upon references of "blue-collar" labor to rethink the notion of Art as an elitist and closed circle.

**Stay tuned for more artists during our 2019 bicentennial year!**

### 2019 LI Poet of the Year Nominations:



2018 LI Poet, Barb Reiher-Meyers

The Walt Whitman Birthplace Association is seeking nominations for our 2019 Long Island Poet of the Year award. This award is given annually by WWBA to a Long Island poet recognized regionally for the excellence of his or her work and who is active in supporting and promoting poetry on Long Island.

The nomination should consist of a: Brief bio/CV, Publications, Artistic engagements, Community activities and a two-page sample of the poet's work.

Please send these materials by email attachment to: [director@waltwhitman.org](mailto:director@waltwhitman.org)

Or by mail to:  
Executive Director  
Walt Whitman Birthplace Association  
246 Old Walt Whitman Road  
Huntington Station, NY 11746

Self-nominations are accepted. Nominations must be received by XXXX. The WWBA Board of Trustees Program Committee will choose the awardee by XXXX. The award will be presented at a reception/reading in XXXX

## Celebrating Women with Walt Whitman in 2018

Our 2018 program series, “Celebrating Women with Walt Whitman,” is a series of meaningful, timely events that offer an opportunity for discussions about women’s issues but also serves to enlighten and educate audiences of all ages in appreciation of Walt Whitman’s celebration of women.

Why celebrate women through Walt Whitman? As Janice Simpson noted in her bibliographic study, “Walt Whitman: Supporter of Women’s Rights and Independence” (Rutgers University, 2009), “Walt Whitman was and still is considered a supporter of the feminists.

Once I obtained an appreciation of what women were fighting for and against in the nineteenth century, it was easy to agree with the many critics who say that Whitman’s writing supports and encourages women in their fight for equality. This support comes not only



Dina Denis (right) and a “Dance Into Light” company member

from his poetry, but also from his prose and spans the length of his career. He truly believed all humans were created equal and should be treated as such.”

The first program in the series,

“Out of the Justice of Women,” was a four-part collaboration with Nassau BOCES Long Island High School for the Arts presented on June 9. Teacher Michael Tester produced and directed a theatrical presentation composed by students. Employing Whitman’s iconic Poem 43 as text, students composed “I Hear America Singing” in a physical and choral ode, followed by highlights from Whitman’s poetic references to women, including passages from “Song of Myself,” “Song of the Open Road,” “Unfolded,” and “Delicate Cluster.” Students visited the Whitman Birthplace to walk in Walt’s footsteps, participate in a poetry writing workshop, tour the historic site, and hold a dress rehearsal. Art students created the scenic backdrop to the performance. An audience Q & A followed the vibrant performance and art exhibit.

Carol Singley, PhD, offered a presentation of “Why Women Needed Women” on June 24. As a Professor of English at Rutgers, she prepared a discussion on Whitman’s relationships with feminists of his time. An Edith Wharton Scholar, Carol discussed how Edith and other women of her time needed each other for gender advancement and recognition. The presentation was based in feminist theory but easily accessible and engaging to the audience. Contemporary issues such as the “#Me Too” movement were discussed, exemplifying

why women still need women – to support each other in order to effect cultural change.

On October 14, WWBA’s “Favorite Poem Project,” back for its third year, included a community poetry reading featuring poems written by, for, or about women. Moderated by Legislator Susan Berland, the goal of the Favorite Poem Project this year was to creatively employ poetry to open a dialogue and stimulate a conversation about women, and participants enjoyed reading, listening, learning and teaching each other through their favorite poems.

There is still time to catch our fourth program: On December 9, Jane Alexander will present “My Achievements in Traditionally Male Professional Fields.” Alexander will discuss the challenges she faced as an Actor (“Kramer vs. Kramer”), as Chair NEA (1993-1997), and as an Conservationist who traveled the world. She presents her books *Command Performances: An Actress in the Theatre of Politics* (2000) and *Wild Things, Wild Places: Adventurous Tales of Wildlife and Conservation on Planet Earth* (2016). A Q&A and book signing will follow this highly anticipated event!

**Poetry Brick Appeal, Holiday Gifts, Etc.  
Rentals Available**

**Scout Programs • Tea Parties**

[www.waltwhitman.org](http://www.waltwhitman.org)

**School and group tours by appointment**

(631) 427-5240 ext. 113

### MUSEUM DAY

WWBA opened its doors free of charge on September 22 as part of Smithsonian magazine’s 13th annual Museum Day. Museum Day brings together museums, zoos & cultural centers from all 50 states to offer free admission to all Museum Day ticket holders. Museum Day represents a national commitment to access, equality and inclusion. Museum Day goes beyond getting visitors through museum doors—it acts as a springboard to empower and help advance the hopes and ambitions of the public, particularly school-aged children and those in underrepresented communities. For more information, please visit [Smithsonian.com/museumday](http://Smithsonian.com/museumday)

## Children's Events

WWBA hosted a Children's "Back to School" event on Wednesday, August 29. The event included two programs: "Make a Cornhusk Doll" and "Victorian Tea Party," and children were invited to attend one or both events. Wherever corn was grown as a crop, children in both Native American and Colonial American families used husks to fashion dolls. With a knowledgeable guide, children were invited to create their own cornhusk figures and to learn more about the historic aspects to cornhusk dolls. During the Victorian Tea Party, children were invited to bring a friend and/or a favorite stuffed animal or doll while learning etiquette and improving social and interpersonal skills.

On October 21, we held "Halloween Family Day," and children and their families were invited to dress in costume and participate in a day of fun, face painting, games, crafts, and guided tours of the Birthplace. Magic Mike entertained the crowd with magic tricks and treats, and a wonderful day was had by all.

Please join us for Family Yuletide Day on Sunday, December 2 at 1pm for a holiday sing-along, cookie decorating, face painting, old-time games and wooden toys, guided tours of the Birthplace, and a special visit from Santa!

The award-winning Mulvihill-Lynch Studio of Irish Dance will return for our annual "Irish Dancers" program on XXXXX. The program includes a dance performance, history presentation, Q&A with professional dancers, a simple Irish dance lesson, face painting, and guided tours of the Birthplace.

To register for any of our upcoming programs or to request more information, please contact Dr. Kelly K. Ronayne at 631-427-5240 ext. 113 or email: [educator@waltwhitman.org](mailto:educator@waltwhitman.org)

### NEW Girl Scout Programs through August 31, 2019 with Lena Massari-Sawyer

Instructor Lena Massari-Sawyer worked in the Education Division of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for over 24 years, teaching a variety of Gallery and Studio programs. She specializes in teaching children. Along with her teaching responsibilities, she has worked with the Museum's Development Department to prepare and

execute programs for the School of American Ballet, the Thurgood Marshall Academy, the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, and the Met's Family Circle.

### Plein Air Art Class at Walt Whitman Birthplace

Learn to paint with watercolors to capture the beauty of natural light and experience painting and drawing in Walt Whitman Birthplace gardens. Learn about the art work of the Hudson River School and the Impressionism Movement of the Nineteenth Century.

### Scribe Badge Walt Whitman Birthplace

Come to the Birthplace and learn about one of Walt Whitman's best-known poems, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd". Then create your own floral lilac paintings with acrylic paints.

### Junior Playing the Past badge at Walt Whitman Birthplace

Come to the Birthplace have some old-fashioned fun. Play games and join in a scavenger hunt to discover how the past plays a role in our future.

### New! Brownie Potter Badge at Walt Whitman Birthplace

Come to the Birthplace to learn about pottery made during the 19th Century in Long Island. Tour our Birthplace to see and draw some authentic pieces. Then, in our Gathering House, create pinch pots of your own.

*All programs are held Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Please call for availability. Each program is 90 minutes in duration and includes our Walt Whitman Birthplace Badge. Learn and Earn: Brownie Painting badge, Junior Drawing badge, Junior Scribe badge, Fun patch. For more information and/or to schedule a program, please call 631-427-5240 x113 or email [educator@waltwhitman.org](mailto:educator@waltwhitman.org).*

## Afternoon Tea at the Birthplace



Maintaining a tradition that began in 1860 with Queen Victoria, WWBA hosts afternoon tea parties. Afternoon tea can be one of the most special times of the day. Enjoy the elegance of a bygone era and transport yourself back in time as you experience High Tea at our historic site. Docent, Historian, and Curatorial Assistant Margaret Guardi

presents the program. A guided tour of the Walt Whitman Birthplace follows.

Rentals for private groups (12-24 people) are available. We also host several public high teas throughout the year, and a Victorian Tea specifically for children. For more information and/or to schedule a High Tea or a Victorian Tea Party, please call 631-427-5240 or email [educator@waltwhitman.org](mailto:educator@waltwhitman.org).



Walt Whitman Birthplace Association  
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**Interns:**

Thank you to our many interns for their time, energy, and special projects on behalf of WWBA. Germaine Jeanty (Adelphi University) assisted with photography and video, creating a series of short videos including "Welcome to the Birthplace." Stevie Martin (Half Hollow Hills High School) researched and wrote a paper on Historical Gardening. Alec Lurie (Fairfield University) and Ricky Martorelli (Sarah Lawrence College/ Oxford University) researched Walt Whitman's experiences as a School Teacher and Education in the 1800s; their work was instrumental in the creation of the text for a new panel in our Interpretive Center. Emma Cesario (Stony Brook University) assisted WWBA by becoming an experienced Tour Guide. The Norman & Jeanette Gould Library Launch was assisted by Rebecca Volpe (Fashion Institute of Technology), who was responsible for the design and display of the books during the event, and further assisted by Jennifer Hirschowitz (Fashion Institute of Technology) and Gavin DeGaetano (Stony Brook University), who accessioned all of the books into our archive using Past-Perfect (Museum Software). Current interns Brandon Manley and Andrew McFarlane (Half Hollow Hills High School) are assisting WWBA as part of the HHH Senior Experience Learning Program.



WaltWhitmanBirthplaceAssociation @wwbirthplace



**Our Mission**

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association is Walt Whitman's voice today, celebrating the poet's vision of democracy, diversity, and creativity. Our programs and exhibits educate the public on Whitman's life and times, explore his contribution to our nation's rich cultural heritage, and inspire young poets and writers.