**Starting From Paumanok**
The Newsletter of Walt Whitman Birthplace Association

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**Upcoming Events**

- **Winter Break**
  - Make A Dream Catcher & Tea Party
  - February 21, 2018

- **Walking With Whitman**
  - Scott Hightower
  - March 2, 2018

- **Gould Library Launch**
  - April 26, 2018

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**WWBA Announces 2018 Poet-in-Residence**

Walt Whitman Birthplace Association is pleased to announce its 2018 Poet-in-Residence, Vijay Seshadri, who will offer a Master Poetry Class and a poetry reading on June 2, 2018.

Poet, Essayist and Critic, Vijay Seshadri was born in Bangalore, India, and came to the United States at the age of five. Currently, he 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.

Praised for its elasticity, vivaciousness, and intimacy of tone, Seshadri’s poetry 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 second collection of poems, *The Long Meadow* (2003), won the James Laughlin Award, and his third collection of poems, *3 Sections* (2013), won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. The Pulitzer committee described the book 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, and has been awarded The Paris Review’s Bernard F. Conners Long Poem Prize and the MacDowell Colony’s Fellowship for Distinguished Poetic Achievement. He has worked as an editor at *The New Yorker* and has taught at Bennington College. At present, Seshadri directs the graduate non-fiction writing program and teaches undergraduate writing courses at Sarah Lawrence College.

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**Washington’s Spy Trail Takes Historical Turn**

Representative Thomas Suozzi stood outside his office in Huntington on Saturday, July 29, surrounded by Long Island historical figures including Walt Whitman, to announce a bill that would bestow the Washington Spy Trail national historic status. Fifty miles of Route 25A from Great Neck to Port Jefferson which are designated as the George Washington Spy Trail would receive national historic status under legislation introduced by Rep. Thomas Suozzi (D-Glen Cove) and Rep. Lee Zeldin (R-Shirley).

The two Long Island Congressmen are sponsoring the bill to help promote the role of Long Island in the American Revolution. The “Spy Trail” was part of the Culper spy ring, organized in Setauket during the Revolutionary War.

The national historic status of the Washington Spy Trail would benefit Long Island by increasing tourism and federal grant money to preserve the rich legacy in Long Island’s historic places. WWBA is proud to stand with Walt Whitman as an important part of Long Island’s vibrant history.

WWBA thanks Rep. Thomas Suozzi and Rep. Lee Zeldin for introducing the bill and wholeheartedly supports the efforts of these two Congressmen to preserve history.
Preserving the Legacy of Walt Whitman

SPORTS: Susan Berland, Thomas Donnelly, DuWayne Gregory, and William Spencer on their campaign victories and we thank all the Suffolk County 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 the cultural arts. We invite you to visit, participate, enjoy, and support our mission to preserve and promote the legacy of Walt Whitman with us.

SPECIAL THANKS TO WWBA STAFF

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Thank you to all members! Your support helps preserve & promote Walt's legacy!

Renew or Become a Member: www.waltwhitman.org or call (631) 427-5240 ext. 114

The Association first appropriated $10,000 to enable WWBA to complete the acquisition of the Feinstein Collection of 250 Whitman-related books. The collection includes many rare books, as well as first editions of Leaves of Grass and November Boughs.

The collection will become known as The Norman and Jeannette Gould Library, comprised of the Feinstein Collection. The public is invited to join the Gould and Feinstein families at the celebratory launch of The Norman and Jeannette Gould Library on April 26, 2018, at the Birthplace.

The collection will be housed and preserved on the Walt Whitman Birthplace premises and it will be available to the public for scholarly research, historic documentation, and general appreciation of Whitman's influence and collective writings. All usage of WWBA’s library collection will facilitate a Reading & Discussion group, with author appearances and programming with the supervision of Curator Richard Ryan and the Feinstein Family, and will maintain the books for generations to come.

Marvin Feinstein is a lifelong book collector and author who lived in Northport, L.I., with w i d o w M ir i a n, sons David and Allen, who wanted to keep his Whitman collection intact and approached the WWBA with the offer to purchase and appraised at approximately $20,000. The Association first appropriated funds to purchase ten books, but upon closer inspection, the Association decided to try and raise funds to secure the entire collection. When Trustee Jeffrey Gould heard of the offer to purchase the Whitman collection intact, he generously offered to secure the collection with WWBA. The Association extends its thanks to Trustee Jeffrey Gould and the Feinstein Family for their ongoing support in behalf of literary scholarship and historic preservation.

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Preserving the Legacy of Walt Whitman

**Salut au Monde Series**

*O Take my hand Walt Whitman!
Such gliding wonders! Such sights and sounds!
Such join’d unended links, each hook’d to the next,
Each answering all, each sharing the earth with all.*

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**Poetry for a Diverse World, Multilingual Poetry Reading**

In Poetry for a Diverse World, English-as-a-New-Language (ENL) students from Hicksville High School reflected on their personal experiences as an insider or an outsider through the lens of Walt Whitman’s poem, *Salut au Monde*. They added their unique contributions to the diversity of voices celebrated by Whitman.

Teacher and facilitator Barbara Suter guided the students through workshop writing and their poetry presentations. Hicksville High School teacher Margaret Mitchell collaborated on the project with Suter. The students also enjoyed a Birdcourt place, picnic lunch, and a picnic award.

Hicksville Schools Superintendent Dr. Carlos Bueno attended the performance and said, “I am so proud of all you students accomplished today.”

Below is an excerpt from student Carlos Leon’s “A poem to every 1”:

> What do you hear my friend?  
> I hear the laments from people who came seeking a better life, they hear the factories where my compatriots worked, I hear their stories and I feel their suffering...
> I’m here in America and I believe in this country, struggles are always present in our lives, but we can overthrow them, memories from my country El Salvador are treasures in my mind, life is different but future is unknown. But will be better.

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**Walt Whitman: Do entityManager.**

Walt Whitman was a poet about universal brotherhood. *Salut au Monde* was about joining Whitman in expressing brotherhood.

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**WBA’s 2017 Program Series, Salut au Monde.**

WBA’s 2017 Program Series, *Salut au Monde*, explored important issues to forge universal connections among diverse communities. *Salut au Monde* (“Greetings to the World”) by Walt Whitman is a poem about universal brotherhood. *Salut au Monde* was free and open to the public.

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Each presentation or event was free and open to the public.

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Preserving the Legacy of Walt Whitman

Walking with Whitman: Poetry in Performance/Open Mic

The seventh season of our signature series, Walking with Whitman: Poetry in Performance, returned on October 6, 2017, for a stellar evening with Swansea poet, Ian Griffiths. Griffiths read from his book Conversations with Birds and celebrated the poetry and prose of Dylan Thomas. The series continued with featured poets Dorianne Laux (November 3) and David Amram (December 1). Now to the series is the Community Open Mic, a popular addition which has attracted and inspired many local poets and writers.

The first half of our seventh season began with dozens of people ready to take the mic and share their poetry, a full house in attendance, and award-winning poet Martin Espada on March 3. Espada’s latest book, Vivas to Those Who Have Fulfilled (2016), was sold out by the end of the evening. Patricia Spears Jones continued the series on April 7 to another full house. She received a standing ovation for her powerful reading and offered an intimate Q&A and book signing. On May 5, WWBA gave a warm welcome to Wendy Barker, who read from her sixth book of poetry, One Blackbird at a Time, ending the first half of the series on a strong note.

Poetry Readings and Open Mics are open to the public and include discounted tickets for members. The event, which begins at 6 pm with the Community Open Mic, continues with readings and a musical interlude by Tom Santoriello & Friends before the featured poet takes the stage at 8 pm. After the reading, each poet offers a Q&A and book signing.

On Dec. 1st, composer and performer David Amram re-visited the influence of Walt Whitman, his aesthetics and the aesthetics of artists (including Jack Kerouac) with whom he has worked. He offered anecdotes in a presentation punctuated with readings from his memoirs, as well as musical sampling from his 1977 cantata “A Year In Our Land.” Amram also improvised a song about WWBA with Tom Santoriello and Margaret Lassen, which was truly a delight.

Walking with Whitman: Poetry in Performance is hosted by George Wallace and sponsored by Poets & Writers.

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 2017 Multilingual Anthology, a rich diverse multilingual sampler from poets of 22 different countries, coedited by poets and Professors Carlos Aguasaco, Yrene Santos and Carlos Velasquez Torres.

T.A.P.F.N.Y

The American Poetry Festival of New York 2017, the fourth annual multilingual poetry festival and writers’ conference organized by poets and Professors Carlos Aguasaco, Yrene Santos and Carlos Velasquez, was held on Thursday, October 6, at 11 am-1 pm.

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 2017 Multilingual Anthology, a rich diverse multilingual sampler from poets of 22 different countries, coedited by poets and Professors Carlos Aguasaco, Yrene Santos and Carlos Velasquez Torres.

Teacher Alex Lima and SS Deer Park High School students were also in attendance. Senior Christopher Isola, Bianca Punger, Katharine Vasallo, Dayanna Zuluaga, and Michael Pacheco read their poetry as well as poetry selections from public school writers. The afternoon was filled with sounds of multilingual poets and the spirit of Walt Whitman.

31st Annual Student Poetry Contest

Students submitted over 2,700 entries in the 31st Annual Student Poetry Contest of 2017. The Young Poet Contest was founded in 1986 by the late WWBA Trustee Maxwell C. Wheat. The Poet-in-Residence & Birthday Celebration is sponsored by NYSCA through the Huntington Arts Council Re-grant Program.

Poet-in-Residence Marilyn Hacker and former Huntington Town Councilwoman and current Suffolk legislator Susan Berland offered words of congratulations to the 100 student award winners and commended the teachers and parents for keeping poetry alive in the Young Poes. 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. A wonderful day was had by all!

Congratulations to the Grand Champions: Tesse Burke, Muskan Kumar, Nathan Barry, Hadar Leyboy, Sophia Takvorian, Christian Ramos. The class anthology winners, please visit our website. Thank you to all participants for keeping the spirit and legacy of Walt Whitman alive!

Celebration are sponsored by NYSCA through Huntington Arts Council Re-grant Program.

Marilyn Hacker, 2017 Poet-in-Residence, Presided at Whitman Birthday Weekend

WWBA’s 2017 Poet-in-Residence Marilyn Hacker officiated at Walt Whitman’s 190th Birthday Weekend Celebration on June 3 & 4 at the Birthplace. The Celebration is held on a weekend close to Whitman’s birthday of 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.

Marilyn Hacker is an award-winning poet best known for formal poems that mix high culture and colloquial speech. Over a career spanning forty years, Hacker has established herself as a preeminent voice in the tradition of Robert Lowell and Adrienne Rich. Her books of poetry include Presentation Piece (1974), which won the National Book Award, Love, Death, and the Changing of the Seasons (1986), and Going Back to the River (1990). In 2009, Hacker won the PEN Award for “Poetry in Translation” for her translation of Tales of A Severed Head. In 2009, Hacker and celebrated the poetry and prose of by Rachida Madani.

On Saturday, June 3, Marilyn Hacker presented a Master Class in Poetry, where participants responded to poetry, discussed aspects of inspiration, wrote their own poems, and shared their creativity. Later the same evening, Hacker gave an evening poetry reading at the Birthplace. On Sunday, June 4, she officiated the 31st Annual Young Poet Awards Ceremony. WWBA thanks Marilyn Hacker and the community for making Walt’s Birthday Weekend a celebration filled with poetry, creativity, diversity, and inspiration.

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Special Events
Children’s Events: Back-to-School & Yuletide Family Day
On August 30, WWBA held Make a Dream Catcher and a Victorian Tea Party. Children were invited to attend one or both of the events, and there was a quite a lively group! Dream catchers were originally made by the children of Native American tribes. To indigenous people, dreams were messages sent by sacred spirits. Children learned the legend of how dream catchers ward off bad dreams, and crafted their own.

Next, children enjoyed a Victorian Tea, an informative program that includes role-playing while teaching social skills and confidence. Children learned dining manners, such as how to properly hold utensils and cut with plastic knives and forks. Kids also practiced table setting and introductions.

New Program!
Tea for Teens
On December 3, families joined WWBA for the annual Yuletide Family Tea when they sing-along kicked off the event at 1 p.m., and was followed by a visit with Santa (as portrayed by Darrel Ford). Kids decorated cookies and delighted face painting with Miss Carin. Children also made ornaments, played with Whitman-era games and toys, and took guided tours of the Birthplace. Parents were able to win raffle prizes.

Throughout the year, there are many events for children, including school programs for all grade levels.

Make a Dream Catcher & Victorian Tea Party will be held February 21, 2018 at 1 p.m.

Make a Dreamcatcher: Children’s Program
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To register or for more info, contact Carolyn, 631-427-5240 ext. 113 or educator@walth Whitman.org

Adult High Tea
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 Margaret Guardi discusses and presents Whitman-era clothing and etiquette. A guided tour of the Walt Whitman Birthplace follows the program.

Several public high teas are held throughout the year. Rentals for groups of 12-24 people are available.

Contact Margaret Guardi at tea@walth Whitman.org

Irish Dancers
Join us for our yearly Irish Dancers celebration, featuring dancers from the award-winning Mulvihill-Lynch Studio of Irish Dance!

Sunday, March 4, 2018
1 pm
$9.00/child, chaperones FREE
• Simple Irish dance lesson
• Dance performance, history presentation and Q&A with professional dancers
• Face painting with Miss Carin
• Guided Tours of the Birthplace

Contact Carolyn, 631-427-5240 ext. 113 or educator@walth Whitman.org

Art at the Birthplace
Land, Sky, Sea, Words. by Mark Nuccio

Mark Nuccio and his acrylic on canvas painting “Lil’l the unbounded sea” are exhibited his paintings widely and has been published in periodicals, newspapers, and chapbooks. He also writes a monthly historical article for Boating World magazine. In 1987, Nuccio and his wife Linda founded Design Edge, a graphic design/ manufacturing company. The couple lives on Long Island and Oak Island.

“Call for the Arts,” hosted by the Syosset High School Mural Club

Students in Orchestra and Band, as well as spoken word pieces. Proceeds were donated to Action Against Hunger and WWBA.
Bard's Day

The Bard's Initiative held their 7th annual "Bard's Day" at the Walt Whitman Birthplace. Included in the events of the day were readings from the Bard's Annual 2017 (the yearly publication of the Bard’s Initiative), the announcement of the Bard's Awards 2017, food, entertainment, half-time shows, and an all-around good time!

Bards Initiative Hosts Book Launch to Celebrate Long Island's Poets Laureate

The Huntington Arts Council (HAC) NYSCA Initiative." The winners received certificates signed by Huntington Town Board members for community-acclaimed Nassau County Poets Laureate celebrated their new anthology Laurels: Poems by Long Island's Poets Laureate, edited by James Wagner.

With an introduction by Suffolk County Legislator Vivian Fisher, the night included an Open Mic after the Laureates' reading, a Q&A, book signing. Over 50 people attended the memorable event.

Wagner described the night as “such an awe-inspiring, poetically historical, culturally relevant and important event with special thanks to Vivian Fisher for getting the Poet Laureate program started, to George Wallace for his editorial advisement on the book, to the Poet Laureates of the Island for their poetry, their wisdom and their contribution to the arts.”

Draw Out!

Hecksher Park's free arts festival certainly drew out a crowd on September 24. WWBA presented Whitman-era toys for children. Other cultural partners provided life-size chess games, live model sketching, and artist-guided painting. Complimentary art supplies were provided. Photo credit: Hecksher Park

Tulip Festival

During this free festival at Hecksher Park on May 7, WWBA presented an activity for children: "How to Set a Table for a Victorian Tea Party." Everyone had a lot of fun learning about tea party manners and table setting. Victorian-era toys were also on hand for the children to explore.

WWBA Receives $25K Grant from NYS

The Park and Trail Partnership Program, created by Governor Cuomo in 2015, is a $500,000 capacity-building matching grants program funded by the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. Twenty partner organizations received $450,000 to advance their work to raise private funds for capital projects, perform maintenance, provide educational programming, and promote public use through hosting special events. Grants were matched by over $200,000 in private and matching funding.

On May 6, 2017, Governor Cuomo announced the second round of state grants to 20 organizations dedicated to the stewardship and promotion of NYS parks and historic sites.

WWBA received a $25,000 grant to “Bring Walt Into the 21st Century” and modernize exhibit space to include new information, emphasize Whitman as the Poet of Democracy and add newly acquired artifacts. The Park and Trail Partnership Program grants are designed to enhance the preservation, increase the sustainability, and promote the tourism and economic development of Parks and Historic Sites.

The announcement coincided with the annual I Love My Park Day. This year’s event was sponsored jointly with Parks & Trails New York, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the National Park Service, Excelsior Conservation Corps, and the New York State Commission on National and Community Service.

Approximately 8,000 volunteers participated in this statewide event, helping with community clean-up, beautification and stewardship events at more than 125 state parks, historic sites and public lands across New York. Volunteers worked on dozens of park and trail projects, planted trees and gardens, cleared debris, restored trails and wildlife habitats, and cleaned beaches and shorelines.

"New York is home to some of the most beautiful parks in the world and it is our duty to preserve and protect them for future generations," Governor Cuomo said. He is committed to revitalizing the State park system with his NY Parks plan, a commitment to leverage $900 million in private and public funding for State Parks from 2011 to 2020. The 2017-18 state budget proposal allocates $120 million toward this initiative.

State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey said, “...volunteers are crucial to making our park system a success.” WWBA Executive Director Cynthia Shor (pictured above) stated, “This Parks & Trails grant greatly enhances our stewardship of the Birthplace of America’s great poet, Walt Whitman, born here in 1819. WWBA appreciates the support from Governor Cuomo and Parks & Trails.” Shor went on to say, “WWBA thanks the 20 volunteers who assisted in cleanup for the 2017 I Love My Park Day.”

Community Outreach

H.A.C. Awards

The Huntington Arts Council (HAC) NYSCA 2017 Grants for the Arts Ceremony Reception took place March 21. Above on left, HAC ED Mark Courtois presents awards.

Poetry for the H.A.R.T.

The Huntington Town Board recognized 16 local teen poets selected to participate in the Town’s “Poetry for the HART: Public Art Initiative.” The winners received certificates signed by Huntington Town Board members during the April 26 ceremony. Their poems will also appear on Huntington Area Rapid Transit (HART) buses.

H.A.R.T.

Like Walt Whitman, Wheat was a son of Long Island. He connected strongly with the natural world and the environment, and he loved people and bringing others together. In addition to his workshops and classes, Wheat also founded several community programs including Taproots and You Can Write Poetry.

Maxwell Wheat was WWBA's 2003 Long Island Poet of the Year in 2003. He will be deeply missed.

Remembering Maxwell Wheat, Jr.

On July 8, 2017, WWBA held a tribute for community-acclaimed Nassau County Poet Laureate Maxwell Wheat, Jr. Local poet Tom Stock officiated, sharing memories, stories, poems and song with those gathered to celebrate Wheat’s life and express gratitude for his inspiration and art.

Wheat lived a full life, and he shared his love, his curiosity, his sense of community, and his passion for poetry and nature with all he encountered. In 2007, he was unofficially named Nassau County’s first Poet Laureate after being snubbed by the legislative committee for his anti-war views.

Maxwell Wheat. Photo credit: Paula Camacho

Bard's Initiative Hosts Book Launch to Celebrate Long Island's Poets Laureate


Every year, poets convene during National Poetry Month to celebrate their craft. Saturday, April 8th, was no exception as the Bard’s Initiative gathered at the Birthplace Saturday, April 8th, was no exception as the Bard’s Initiative gathered at the Birthplace to celebrate Walt Whitman’s Birthday. Included in the evening of the day were readings from the Bard's Annual 2017 (the yearly publication of the Bard’s Initiative), the announcement of the Bard's Awards 2017, food, entertainment, half-time shows, and an all-around good time!

WWBA opened its doors free of charge to over 100 visitors on September 24 as part of Smithsonian magazine’s 13th annual Museum Day Live! This initiative involves participating museums across the US who emulate the spirit of the Smithsonian Institution. Free admission was granted to those who downloaded a Museum Day ticket in late August. WWBA recognizes the importance of museums and is proud to be a part of this program. For more information, please visit Smithsonian.com/museumday.
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.