Marilyn Hacker Named
WWBA 2017 Poet in Residence

Marilyn Hacker will officiate as Poet in Residence at the annual Whitman Birthday Weekend Celebration. On Saturday, June 3, 2017, Hacker will offer a Master Class Poetry Workshop from 12:30pm - 3:30pm and an evening reading at 5:30pm. On Sunday, June 4, she will officiate at the 31st Annual Young Poet Awards Ceremony from noon - 2pm. Saturday’s programs require a fee and pre-registration, and Sunday’s event is free. All programs are open to the public.

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 the poem, King of a Hundred Horsemen, by Marie Étienne, which also garnered the first Robert Fagles Translation Prize from the National Poetry Series. In 2010, she received the PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry. She was short listed for the 2013 PEN Award for “Poetry in Translation” for her translation of Tales of A Severed Head by Rachida Madani.

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 NYSCA through Huntington Arts Council Re-grant Program.

Third Multilingual Poetry Festival held at the Birthplace

WWBA hosted The Americas Poetry Festival of New York (TAPFONY), an international multilingual writers’ conference, sponsored by CUNY, Instituto Cervantes, and WWBA, on October 13, 2016. The festival featured over 20 poets from many countries, such as Estonia, Romania, Spain, Mexico, France, Bulgaria and India. This was the third multilingual poetry festival and writers’ conference organized by poets and professors Carlos Aguasaco, Yrene Santos and Carlos Velásquez. Over 60 Deer Park High School Spanish Class Students attended with teachers Ms. Mendiolaza and Alex Lima, and six students joined in by reading their poems in Spanish. CUNY participants purchased multiple bricks for the Whitman Commemorative Brick Circle. The festival was free and open to the public.
Greetings!

Springtime at the Birthplace heralds Whitman’s birthday of May 31, 1819. This is his 198th year, and we are currently in great anticipation of Walt’s 200th birthday in 2019. In preparation for our bicentennial celebration for 2019, we launched a Capital Campaign in 2014 to “Bring Walt Into the 21st Century” with the goal to modernize our site’s exhibit spaces.

I am proud to report the campaign is going strong. We recently received a $25,000 Legislative Grant from the NYS Department of Education “to develop and implement programs and exhibitions to educate the public on Whitman’s life and vision.” We are especially grateful to State Senator Carl Marcellino for his assistance with this. We are currently undertaking a site survey and a connectivity study to create an environment for the modernization. Our goal is to upgrade all the exhibits spaces with new and additional information about Whitman, and to create innovative methods of delivering this information to our visitors in engaging and interactive ways.

The Birthplace is an international destination for many, but it is also a community literary and historic center for our local and regional visitors. Our modernization will serve both audiences well by offering a wealth of information for one time visitors, but will also encourage and inspire repeat visits by guests of all ages. We welcome support of all kinds in our Capital Campaign – please contact me to help bring Walt into the 21st Century.

Dana Gioia Selected as WWBA Champion of Literacy

Dana Gioia, an internationally acclaimed and award-winning poet, will be honored at the Birthplace on Sunday, April 30, 2017, from 2-4 PM.

Gioia is named 2016 WWBA Champion of Literacy in recognition of his outstanding achievements in promoting literacy through his literary body of work which includes five volumes of poetry, eight poetry chapbooks, three opera libretti, and numerous publications, essays, reviews and critical writings. In addition, Gioia served as Chair of the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) and in 2015 he was named Poet Laureate of California.

A graduate of Stanford Business School, Gioia achieved distinction as VP of Marketing at General Foods, but left in 1992 to begin a full-time career as a poet. In 2002, his third collection, Interrogations at Noon, won the American Book Award. Gioia completed an MA in comparative literature at Harvard University and is an active translator of Latin, Italian, German, and Romanian poetry. His newest collection is 99 Poems: New & Selected. He has written over two dozen literary anthologies and college textbooks and has received 11 honorary doctorates.

During his two terms at NEA (2003-2009), he initiated innovative programs such as Shakespeare in American Communities, Operation Homecoming, and the Big Read. In 2005, Gioia founded Poetry Out Loud with fellow poet and Poetry Foundation President John Barr. John Barr will offer an introduction for Gioia at the Award Ceremony, where Gioia will read his own poetry and offer an acceptance speech. Additionally, five High School finalists from the Poetry Out Loud recitation contest will recite their winning poems.

The Award Program is free and open to the public. Scheduling conflicts prevented him from appearing here in 2016.

Gioia is the Judge Widney Professor of Poetry and Public Culture at the University of Southern California and lives in both Los Angeles and Sonoma County.

WWBA graciously acknowledges the continued support from the following Donors & Patron Level Members:

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Special thanks to New York State Parks, Suffolk County, Huntington Town, New York State Council of the Arts, Humanities New York, Poets & Writers, and Huntington Arts Council for their continued support.

Thank you to all renewed members! Your support helps us preserve and promote the legacy of Walt Whitman.

Renew or Become a Member Today:
www.waltwhitman.org or call Kristin Walter (631) 427-5240 ext. 114
Bilingual Poetry Reading

Award-winning Hispanic-American poet Luis Alberto Ambrogi joined with Vijay Seshadri, 2014 Pulitzer Prize winner in Poetry, to offer a Bilingual Poetry Reading and Book Presentation on September 8, 2016. Ambrogi and Seshadri alternated reading their poetry in their native language best in English. Ambrogi, an internationally known author and poet, presented his latest book, Todos somos Whitman/We are all Whitman. He has more than twenty publications collected in Argentina, Costa Rica, Spain and the United States. In 2010, he won a Fullbright-Hays and the Simon Bolivar International Poetry Prize. His poetry has been translated into several languages and recorded in the Archives of Hispanic Literature of the Library of Congress. This was his third appearance at the Whitman Birthplace whereby he donated the proceeds of his book sales to the Whitman Association.

Vijay Seshadri is a New York-based poet, essayist and literary critic whose work includes The Long Meadow (2003) which won the James Laughlin Award, and 3 Scrons, which won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. Seshadri was born in India. He has received fellowships from the NY Foundation for the Arts, the NEA, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He has worked as an editor at The New Yorker and as professor and chair, he taught writing courses at Sarah Lawrence College. After their poetry reading, both poets concluded with closing remarks, a Q&A and a book signing with the audience.

WWBA selects Tammy Jean Nuzzo-Morgan as 2017 Long Island Poet of the Year

Tammy Jean Nuzzo-Morgan will be awarded the WWBA 2017 Long Island Poet of the Year Award on Sunday, April 23 (Shakespeare’s Birthday), 2 pm at the Birthplace. The program is free and open to the public – all are invited to attend.

Nuzzo-Morgan is a poet of great talent and innumerable honors. After a business career dating from 1987, Tammy changed professions in 2001 and she founded The North Sea Poetry Scene, Inc. As Executive Director, she offered readings and workshops in schools and prisons, awarded scholarships to local students, fundraised for community charities and advocated for social justice causes. Her publications include five books: The Bitter, The Sweet (2004), One Woman’s Voice (2005), Let Me Tell You Something (2006), for Michael (2008), and Life’s a Beach (2011).

Walking With Whitman: Poetry In Performance

In Fall 2016, Walking With Whitman concluded its 2016 Series featuring poets Joseph Millar, Grace Cavalieri and Nathalie Handal. The Series is hosted by George Wallace and is sponsored by Poets & Writers.

On October 7th, Joseph Millar read from his three books: Overtime, a finalist for the 2001 Oregon Book Award; Fortune; and BlueRust. November 4th brought Grace Cavalieri from Washington, DC, to the Birthplace. Cavalieri has 18 books and chapbooks, and she founded “The Poet and the Poem” series for public radio, celebrating 39 years on-air in 2016, the past 19 years of which are recorded at the Library of Congress. December 2nd featured Nathalie Handal reading from her book, the critically acclaimed Andalucia, along with other new poems. She has served in several countries as a cultural diplomat for the US State Department. She is a professor at Columbia University.

Walking With Whitman: Poetry In Performance started its seventh season with a full house to greet award-winning poet Martin Espada on March 3, 2017. A new Open Mic feature attracted 25 poets, including six local High School students. Tom Santoriello and Friends offered a Musical Interlude and 35 more guests arrived for Espada’s passionate reading with many of his poems focusing on Social Justice topics.

His Republic of Poetry was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and his latest book, Vivas to Those Who Have Failed (2016), was sold out by evening’s end.

Walking With Whitman continues on First Fridays for 2017 with: April 7, Patricia Spears Jones; May 5, Wendy Barker; October 6, Ian Griffiths; November 3, Dorianne Laux; and November 1, David Amran.

The Open Mic and poetry reading are open to the public, with discounted tickets for members, free refreshments and free house tours prior to the event. Tom Santoriello and Friends offer a musical interlude, and featured poets offer a Q & A and a book signing at each event.

Consecutive Series Sponsored by Humanities New York

In Fall 2016, WWBA featured two Reading & Discussion Series sponsored by Humanities New York (HNY).

Trustee Dr. Jack Coulahan facilitated the September series, “Literature, Compassion, Healing,” the oversubscribed-class read A Life in Medicine: A Literary Anthology with selections by Charlotte E. Gilman, Anton Chekhov, and Audre Lorde, among others. Topics included women’s health, the healer’s experience, difference and disability, health care and society.

During the six-part series, a reprise of Dr. Coulahan’s 2015 series of a similar topic, provocative discussions explored the experiences of illness and healing, the nature of empathy, and the human need for compassion. After the final class, participant Lisa Gastron acclaimed, “The facilitator...had the medical knowledge and understanding of the health-care system then and now. As an author himself, he helped us think about the readings from a literary point of view, not just plot. The format of the anthology, supplemental readings and a novel was excellent.”

In October 2016, WWBA Writer in Residence George Wallace facilitated the five-part Reading and Discussion Series “Reaching for the American Dream,” featuring four authors telling their cultural stories through their Pulitzer Prize winning books.

Participants read short stories by Junot Díaz, Jhumpa Lahiri, Jennifer Egan, and Humboldt’s Gift by Saul Bellow. The four Pulitzer Prize winners spoke of individuals struggling to better themselves and achieve the American dream — and how, despite their efforts, they may have ended up fulfillled or at odds with other elements of society.

Participants Jack Finkenberg described the series as, “The best reading group I have been in. And I’ve been in many. George Wallace has a great knowledge of literature and life. I hope he returns.”

George Wallace, first Suffolk County Poet Laureate in 2003, granted his wish by offering the True Crime, An American Genre” for the March 2017 Humanities New York Reading & Discussion Series.

Winter 2016/Spring 2017
Preserving the Legacy of Walt Whitman
www.waltwhitman.org

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On August 4th, 2016, NYS Assemblyman Steven Englebright presented a three hour program, “A Conservationist’s View of Whitman’s Long Island,” accompanied by a detailed slideshow depicting the topography of Long Island as it looked during Whitman’s boyhood and adult life. WWBA presented Environmental Democracy as the 4th part of its 2016 Democratic Vistas: Voices of Democracy Series. The aim of the Environmental Democracy program was to offer insights into Long Island environmental concerns in the spirit of Walt Whitman whom critics have stated was the first “ecological poet.” Englebright, current Chair of the Committee of Environmental Conservation, has professional training as a geologist and biologist and helped lead the movement to protect the Pinewoods Watershed, among many other notable environmental advocacy actions. He brought forth Whitman’s passion for the earth with his extensive personal slide collection and commentary which lasted 1 1/2 hours. The audience viewed historic vistas of the Huntington area, Brooklyn fields, and glacier formations. Englebright richly described the topography of Long Island and explained that many Long Island proper names are derived from the names of local plants and shrubs, such as Flatbush being named after the “flat woodland” or “wooded plain” of the small tress that grew there.

Participants engaged Englebright in a 1 1/2 hour Q & A which explored topics such as how to protect the Long Island aquifer. Englebright’s most recent legislation (A10264-Englebright/S7908-LaValle) was signed into law in December, 2016, creating a task force to identify solutions to ocean acidification to better protect Long Island’s coastal waters. Environmental Democracy was sponsored by Humanities New York and was free and open to the public.

WWBA presented Veterans Favorite Poem Project as the 5th and final program of its 2016 Democratic Vistas: Voices of Democracy Series. Veterans gathered on November 13th, 2016, to read their favorite poem by a published poet and to share the poem’s significance. Friends and families of veterans were also invited to attend.

WWBA Board Members and veteran George Mallis of the Birthplace with Joann Krieg with Honorary Trustee, Karen Karbiener, PhD.

WWBA Board Members and veteran Robert Savino emceed along with WWBA Champion of Literacy awardee and Veteran John Bart. Barr served as the first president of the Poetry Foundation from 2004-2013. Author of three major works of poetry, Barr is a Navy Veteran of the Vietnam War. Savino is an award winning poet and the 2015-2017 Suffolk County Poet Laureate. Savino served in 1967-1969 (USN-R). Savino and Barr shared favorite poems that spoke to their experience during active duty. One Veteran attendee passed around a framed photo of his platoon buddy who never made it home and he was visibly moved. Other veteran attendees shared poems that described the impact that war had on them, their families and friends. This program was generously sponsored by John & Penny Barr, and was free and open to the public.

This five part series held throughout 2016 derives from Whitman’s book, Democratic Vistas, published in 1871 in the aftermath of the Civil War. In his book, Whitman lamented over the passive nature of readership in America and urged Americans to become active readers in order to be informed voters. Walt’s text grounds this series which was designed to encourage democratic literacy by providing a forum for diverse community voices to share in cross-cultural communication in a variety of humanities programs. Interesting to note, Whitman’s book title, Democratic Vistas, was used as the headline for Time Magazine’s presidential inauguration in 2009. WWBA gratefully acknowledges Humanities New York as primary sponsor for the series.

George Mallis - Picture Perfect Donor and Volunteer

George Mallis purchased and donated a new Canon scanner to assist with digitizing the WWBA paper collections. He is assisting Curator Richard Ryan in digitizing photographs and documents for reproduction and for cataloging in the recently acquired PastPerfect Software for Collection Management. As an ancillary to this project, George has created digital restorations of all the known authentic Whitman photographs.

Mallis first came into contact with the Birthplace in the 1980s when he enrolled in the Hofstra Museum Studies program. His course required a visit to a historic site or museum, and he selected the Whitman Birthplace. He has been visiting ever since. From 1989 into the early 1990s, he photographed a variety of historic artifacts on display in the Birthplace and digitally enhanced their artistic effect. He created a series of note cards and wall pictures with the images, and he donates these items to the Birthplace for sale in the Museum Gift Shop. He replenishes them annually as a donation. From 1990 - 2005, George frequently served as an events photographer.

In 2005, he took the iconic Birthplace photo that is used for promotional purposes for WWBA postcards, the website, and media placements and requests no royalties. An avid collector of historic postcards and photographs, he has recently donated over 30 postcards dating between 1905-1915, with the majority depicting early images of the Birthplace. In 2014, WWBA hosted an exhibition of his photography-based digital art. Mallis will be exhibiting his work in the East End Photographers Group show at Ashawagh Hall, Springs, East Hampton, June 3-June 14, 2017, with a reception on Saturday, June 3, as well as an EEPP show at the Water Mill Museum, July 18-August 14, 2017. He will have a solo show at the Long Beach Library West End Annex during the months of April and May, 2017. Mallis was recently appointed historian of the Incorporated Village of Lawrence. WWBA wishes him luck in his newest endeavor, and the Association gratefully thanks George Mallis for his long term support, his historic donations, and his ongoing volunteer project of digitizing the archival documents.

Remembering Trustee Joann Krieg

by Karen Karbiener, PhD, Honorary Trustee

Joann was a ground-breaking Whitman scholar, fierce and very dear friend and mentor. She was a powerful role model to me, with incredible drive and energy to build a career even after she had raised a family. She published prolifically on Whitman when scholarship from a female perspective was uncommon, uncovering details about his most obscure years on Long Island and putting together a standard reference on any Whitman scholar’s bookshelf.

Joann was President of the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association during the design, construction and opening of its new Interpretative Center in 1997. She loved Walt – and she loved opera. After retiring as Professor Emerita from teaching literature at Hofstra University for more than 30 years, Joann left Long Island and moved to an apartment within walking distance of Lincoln Center, seeing all the performances she cared to see and living life to the absolute fullest.

One of my favorite memories with Joann is our road trip to the Birthplace in July 2014 to view the newly acquired Whitman Bible. Though she had been an active member of the Birthplace Association for many years and served as Trustee from 1970 - 1985, it had been a while since she had visited Walt’s house and she was thrilled to tour it again. As we leaned through the beautiful Bible gifted by Whitman to his sister Mary Elizabeth, we discovered a tiny scrap of paper wrapped around a thick gray lock, and inscribed “My Mother’s Hair” in his most loving hand.

Joann and I smiled at each other through rising tears. This was our Walt: at once America’s greatest poet and a tender-hearted, open-armed friend who celebrated love in its myriad forms. I will miss Joann and the ways she brought Whitman’s message of love to her work and the people in her life.
Walt Whitman Birthplace Association
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Winter 2016/Spring 2017 Vol. XXX No. 1

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## 2017 Calendar of Events

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**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.