

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE FIRST EDITION OF *LEAVES OF GRASS*

2005 is the sesquicentennial of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. A number of conferences and special events have been planned to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of America's greatest and most original books. Listed below is information on the conferences that have already been scheduled. Additional events will be listed in the next issue of the *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, and an events calendar will be continually updated on the *WWQR* website ([www.uiowa.edu/~wwqr](http://www.uiowa.edu/~wwqr)) in the "Announcements" section.

• "*Leaves of Grass: The 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference*" will be held from March 31 to April 2, 2005, at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Directed by Susan Belasco, Ed Folsom, and Kenneth M. Price, this conference will bring together some of the most distinguished American literature scholars from around the world, including Lawrence Buell (Harvard University), Matt Cohen (Duke University), Betsy Erkkila (Northwestern University), Ed Folsom (University of Iowa), Tom Gannon (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Ted Genoways (University of Virginia), Ezra Greenspan (Southern Methodist University), Jay Grossman (Northwestern University), Walter Grunzweig (University of Dortmund), M. Jimmie Killingsworth (Texas A&M University), Donald D. Kummings (University of Wisconsin-Parkside), Jerome Loving (Texas A&M University), Joel Myerson (University of South Carolina), William Pannacker (Hope College), Kenneth M. Price (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), Vivian Pollak (Washington University), David S. Reynolds (City University of New York, Graduate Center), Liu Shusen (Peking University), M. Wynn Thomas (University of Wales, Swansea), and Alan Trachtenberg (Yale University). Poets Jorie Graham and Galway Kinnell will give readings and talk on the relationship of Whitman to their work. Renowned jazz pianist Fred Hersch will perform his own composition "Leaves of Grass," and the University of Nebraska Symphony Orchestra will perform Paul Hindemith's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd (Requiem for Those We Love)" and will give the world premiere of Tyler White's "Mystic Trumpeter." A number of Whitman collectors will be present to discuss their collections and exhibit Whitman materials. Essays from the conference will be published in a collection to be issued by the University of Nebraska Press. Registration information, schedules, and other details are available on the Web at [www.unl.edu/leavesofgrass/index.html](http://www.unl.edu/leavesofgrass/index.html).

• "Whitman and Place," a conference investigating Whitman's relationship to particular American cities and regions, will be held April 21-23, 2005, at Rutgers University, Camden. Whitman created more than a new poetic form and a new voice when he published the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* 150 years ago.

He also created a new place—or, at least, he imagined what kind of a place America was, and could be. His poetry was rooted in specific landscapes—the shores of Long Island, the streets of Manhattan and Brooklyn, the plains and forests of the West—but it transformed them into the seedbeds of a democratic nation that was yet to come. The English department at Rutgers-Camden, the city in which Whitman made his final home, calls for papers that celebrate the sesquicentennial of Whitman's great song while they define the sense of place that Whitman brought to his work and to American poetry. We seek papers that break new ground in addressing Whitman's physical presence in these landscapes, the engagement of his poetry with these landscapes and their ideologies, the reception of Whitman and his poetry in various regions of the U.S. and around the world, the experience of encountering *Leaves of Grass* in precise places, including cyberspace, and the "place" or siting of such cultural conditions as childhood, manhood, and womanhood in his work. Papers should be no more than 8-10 pages long, capable of being read in twenty minutes or less. Please send a one-page abstract to the conference coordinator, Ms. Emily Beach, c/o the English Department, Rutgers University, 311 N. Fifth Street, Camden, NJ 08102 by the deadline, December 1, 2004.

- The University of Paris VII will hold a two-day international conference (July 4-5, 2005), "Celebrating Walt Whitman," organized by Éric Athenot of the University of Tours and Mark Niemeyer of the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne). The aim of the conference is to assess the special significance of the original edition in the context of antebellum American belles-lettres and culture while evaluating its remarkable position in the series of editions that were to culminate in the definitive *Leaves of Grass*. The conference will also explore the continuing presence of the poetry and the figure of its creator in the works of writers of the two following centuries. Whitman as a cultural icon (in film, music and art) will also be considered. Finally, a special emphasis will be placed on Whitman in France, how *Leaves of Grass* was first received in this country, what made it so important to French poets and poetry-lovers but also what the French practice of textual analysis (*explication de texte*) can contribute to Whitmanian studies through close readings of some of the poems. 200-word proposals should be sent to Éric Athenot ([eric64@club-internet.fr](mailto:eric64@club-internet.fr)) or Mark Niemeyer ([Mark.Niemeyer@paris4.sorbonne.fr](mailto:Mark.Niemeyer@paris4.sorbonne.fr)) by November 30, 2004.

- "Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*: The Sesquicentennial Symposium" will be held at The College of New Jersey September 22-24, 2005. The College of New Jersey is celebrating its own Sesquicentennial in 2005, and this conference on the 150th anniversary of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* will be the academic centerpiece of the College's yearlong celebration. Sixteen of the nation's leading scholars and poets will address the symposium. Presentations will be divided into three broad strands: Whitman in the nineteenth century, Whitman in the twentieth century, and Whitman in the twenty-first century. More information is available from the conference organizers, Michael Robertson ([mroberts@tcnj.edu](mailto:mroberts@tcnj.edu)) and David Blake ([blake@tcnj.edu](mailto:blake@tcnj.edu)).

• “The Making of *Leaves of Grass*,” an exhibit and symposium celebrating Whitman as a bookmaker, will be held at The University of Iowa from November 2005 through January 2006. The symposium will take place on the weekend of November 11-13, 2005, and will examine the implications of Whitman’s love of the book as material object. It is arguable that Whitman in fact did not think of his works as “texts” but rather as “books,” each physical book having an existence and a meaning distinct from the others. So he tended to think of his various editions of *Leaves* not as a single evolving text, but as six separate books, each with its own history, its own social and political context, and its own cultural work to accomplish. The symposium will address the important relationship of those contexts to the physical changes in the various editions and the material identity that each book carries in its unique binding, page layout, decorations, and typeface. The exhibit, to be held at The University of Iowa Museum of Art, will focus on the making of Whitman’s books and will feature editions of his work from 1855 to the present, with an emphasis on editions that demonstrate printing and design innovations. Directed by Ed Folsom and David Schoonover, this event hopes to draw those interested in Whitman and, more generally, those interested in the history of the book and the book arts.

#### WHITMAN/EAKINS FILM

*The Girl in the Ground* is a fictional, feature-length independent film inspired by the real-life friendship of the painter Thomas Eakins and Walt Whitman. Sarah Dunham, the writer, producer, and cinematographer, says this about the work: “At once a costume drama, morality tale, and suspenseful thriller, the film is also rooted in the belief that history and its figures demand our attention today, and that to conjure them with authenticity and creativity is precisely what keeps history vital.” The film, directed by Scott Working, has been shot and is currently in the editing stage. Dunham is now seeking funds to complete the work. To learn more about the project and to make a donation to the film, visit [www.thegirlintheground.com](http://www.thegirlintheground.com).

