

ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN MEMORIAM: EDWARD F. GRIER, 1917-2004

Edward F. Grier, Emeritus Professor of English at the University of Kansas and editor of the six-volume edition of Whitman's *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts* (New York University Press, 1984), died in Lawrence, Kansas, on June 15, 2004, at the age of 87. After receiving his PhD in American Civilization at the University of Pennsylvania in 1949, where he wrote a dissertation on "Walt Whitman's Democratic Idealism," he joined the Kansas English Department and served for many years as the Chair of the American Studies Program. He published an important essay on the periodical origins of *Democratic Vistas in American Literature* in 1951 and edited *The Eighteenth Presidency!* in 1956, making this important Whitman document widely available for the first time and analyzing it cogently in his introduction to the volume. Grier was a frequent reviewer of Whitman books, and during the 1960s he wrote the annual reviews of Whitman and Dickinson scholarship for *American Literary Scholarship*. Grier devoted most of his scholarly career, however, to the monumental task of identifying and gathering Whitman's prose manuscripts, transcribing them, annotating them, and arranging them. At over 2300 pages, the *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts* (1984), which he single-handedly edited, form the largest unit of *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, and they have been for the past twenty years an invaluable resource for Whitman scholars. Grier begins his preface to his massive edition by saying, "I have contracted so many debts in the course of the years that it is difficult to know where to begin acknowledging them." Whitman scholars over the past two decades have likewise become deeply indebted to the work of this industrious scholar, who has been and will continue to be gratefully acknowledged in books and essays for decades to come.

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 are celebrating the 150th anniversary of one of America's greatest and most original books. Listed below is information on the events that have already taken place or have been scheduled. An events calendar will be continually updated on the *WWQR* website (www.uiowa.edu/~wwqr) in the "Announcements" section.

"*Leaves of Grass: The 150th Anniversary Conference*" was 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 brought 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 Grünzweig (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 Galway Kinnell and Ted Kooser gave readings. Renowned jazz pianist Fred Hersch performed his own composition "Leaves of Grass," and the University of Nebraska Symphony Orchestra performed Paul Hindemith's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd (Requiem for Those We Love)" and gave the world premiere of Tyler White's "Mystic Trumpeter." A number of Whitman collectors were 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.

Washington, D.C., has been the site of a city-wide celebration of the sesqui-centennial, called "DC Celebrates Whitman: 150 Years of Leaves of Grass," sponsored by the Washington Friends of Walt Whitman and numerous other groups and organizations. The events took place from March 29 to May 31. There were poetry readings at various locations throughout the city, including the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Public Library, the Library of Congress Madison Building, and the Folger Library (where poets Mark Doty and Anne Waldman read on May 16). Many of the poets who read during the celebration are featured in the Winter 2004 special Whitman issue of the online poetry journal *Beltway* (www.washingtonart.com/beltway.html). A complete schedule of events is available at www.washingtonart.com/whitman/events.html.

"Whitman and Place," a conference investigating Whitman's relationship to particular American cities and regions, was held April 21-23, 2005, at Rutgers University, Camden, sponsored by the English Department. 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. Plenary speakers included Joann Krieg, speaking on Whitman and New York; Kenneth Price on Whitman and the Internet; Ted Genoways on Whitman and Washington, DC; William Pannacker on Whitman and Camden/Philadelphia; and Ed Folsom on Whitman and the Prairies. More than forty other papers were presented in sessions like "Whitman in New York," "The Place of the Nation," "Whitman in Camden/Philadelphia," "Siting Gender and Sexuality," "Whitman in Cybersapce," "Ecological Whitman," "Whitman and the

Literary Marketplace,” “North and South,” “East and West,” and “Reading Whitman in Place.” Selected papers will be published in the online *Mickle Street Review*.

The Walt Whitman House National Historic Landmark in Camden, New Jersey, is offering special programs to celebrate the 150th anniversary of *Leaves of Grass*. On May 26, the Walt Whitman Association sponsored its annual Walt Whitman Birthday Celebration and Regional High School Poetry Contest; this year’s contestants wrote poems inspired by Whitman’s first edition. On Saturdays in July, the historic site will host “The Many *Leaves of Grass*,” a special tour highlighting the sesquicentennial with a special display featuring the House’s remarkable collection of every different version edited by Whitman from the hallmark 1855 edition up to the 1891-1892 publication. Further information is available at www.njparksandforests.org/historic/whitman.

The Walt Whitman Birthplace Association is conducting a “*Leaves of Grass* 150th Anniversary Festival,” with a number of events scheduled from April through June of 2005 at the birthplace (246 Old Walt Whitman Road, West Hills, NY 11746-4148). Included are: a Walt Whitman Heritage Lecture on May 22 at 1:30 p.m. by Joann P. Krieg, whose talk on “Celebrating the *Leaves*” examined the 1855 edition and its contexts; the Walt Whitman Birthday Celebration at noon on June 5, with Nikki Giovanni, the Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 2005 Poet-in-Residence, reading her own and Whitman’s works, along with the Sampawams Creek musicians playing music of the period, and the announcement of the winners of Long Island’s Best Young Poets Contest Grades 3-12; chamber music and readings of Walt Whitman to commemorate the 150th anniversary, featuring Gary Soto, Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 2002 Poet-in-Residence, and Daniel Thomas Moran, presented by the Chamber Players International and the Birthplace Association, at Hoffman Center, Old Brookville, June 11 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.; and, on June 18 at 2:00 p.m., the *Leaves of Grass* 150th Anniversary Celebration, featuring Billy Collins, New York State Poet Laureate, former U.S. Poet Laureate, and Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 2001 Poet-in-Residence, Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 2004 Poet-in-Residence Samuel Menashe, and Walt Whitman Birthplace Association 1996 Poet-in-Residence Diane Wakowski. More events and further information are available at the Birthplace Association’s website, www.waltwhitman.org.

The Library of Congress is celebrating the sesquicentennial of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* with three free public programs and an exhibit: on Friday, March 25, there was a group reading and discussion of “When Lilacs Last In the Dooryard Bloom’d” introduced by Rosemary Winslow of Catholic University; on Thursday, April 14, at 7:30 p.m., poet and biographer Daniel Mark Epstein recreated Whitman’s “Death of Lincoln” speech in the Coolidge Auditorium, Jefferson Building, preceded by a short concert by members of the Air Force Band, brass quintet with tenor solo and piano, in keeping with the outline of the nineteenth-century lecture program (sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Library’s Manuscript and Music

Divisions, this event also commemorates the 140th anniversary of the death of President Lincoln in April 1865); on Tuesday, May 31 (Whitman's birthday), at noon, radio and television personality Robert Aubrey Davis read and discussed Whitman's poetry in the Pickford Theater, Madison Building, introduced by Patricia Gray (sponsored by the Office of Scholarly Programs). Running until December 3, the American Treasure Exhibit in the Thomas Jefferson Building will feature "Revising Himself: Celebrating 150 years of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*"; this exhibit, curated by Barbara Blair and Alice Birney, draws upon the Library's Feinberg, Harned, Traubel, Houghton, and other Whitman collections and demonstrates how Whitman's continual recasting of his life roles paralleled the constant revision of his writings. Some highlights include: a rare-book shelf of all the major editions of *Leaves of Grass*, Emerson's 1855 letter to Whitman recognizing the dazzling accomplishment, the surviving page from the original 1855 edition manuscript, the haversack the poet carried while helping wounded Civil War soldiers, his spectacles and pen, his cardboard butterfly and calamus cane, correspondence from and photographs of major friends, locks of Whitman's and Peter Doyle's hair, and a shelf of unusual translations of *Leaves of Grass* showing the poem's widespread influence on world literature. From noon to 1:30 p.m. on November 3 in the Pickford Theater, a panel discussion on "Whitman and Place" will be held, with presentations by Whitman scholars Joann Krieg (Hofstra University), Ted Genoways (University of Virginia), and William Pannapacker (Hope College). They will talk about their research on Whitman in New York, Whitman and the Civil War, and Whitman in Camden and Philadelphia.

The University of Paris VII will hold a three-day international conference (July 4-6, 2005), "Celebrating Walt Whitman," organized by Éric Athenot of the University of Tours and Mark Niemeyer of the University of Paris IV (Sorbonne). Keynote speakers will be Betsy Erkkila (Northwestern University) and Ed Folsom (University of Iowa). In the first session, "The printed and bound book" (Monday afternoon), speakers will include Folsom, Jonathan Levin (Fordham University), Donald M. Pease (Dartmouth), and Alan Trachtenberg (Yale). The second session, "All doctrines, all politics and civilization" (Tuesday morning), will feature Jay Ladin (Veshiva University), Tai Lynden Houser (Florida Atlantic University), Kerry Larson (University of Michigan), Larry Griffin (Three Rivers Community College), and Strother Purdy (The University of Wisconsin). The third session, "I am an acme of things accomplished" (Tuesday afternoon), includes Jeanne Cortiel (University of Dortmund), Adam Bradford (Brigham Young University), David Blake (The College of New Jersey), Deborah Jenner (Paris), and Marie Danniell-Grogner (Lyon II). "Poets to come," the fourth session (Wednesday morning), has papers by Erkkila, Walter Grünzweig (University of Dortmund), Agnieszka Salska (Warsaw University), Delphine Rumeau (Paris X), and Michael Robertson (The College of New Jersey). And the fifth workshop session (Wednesday afternoon), also called "Poets to Come," features Élise Brault (Paris VII), Vivian Pollak (Washington University), Olivier Brossard (Paris VII), Bill Berkson (New York), and Jiri Flajsar (Olomouc). The registration fee is 20€ regular, 10€ students. All checks should be made payable to "Monsieur

l'Agent comptable de l'université de Paris VII" and sent by July 1 to Éric Athenot, 4 rue de la Saïda 75015 Paris FRANCE. For further information, contact Éric Athenot (eric.athenot@wanadoo.fr).

Karen Karbiener of New York University is developing an exhibit entitled "Walt Whitman and the Promise of Democracy, 1855-2005," scheduled to open at the South Street Seaport Museum in Manhattan on July 4, 2005, and run through December 2005. The exhibit, in the Schermerhorn Row Galleries, will provide a three-dimensional, multimedia introduction to Whitman's work and his vision of America's potential. Focal themes include sexuality and repression, spiritual options to organized religion, and Whitman's bohemian circle in New York City. Karbiener says she is "working on making the participants' experience active, participatory, and 'sensual.'" The Seaport is also working in conjunction with several institutions (such as the Museum of the City of New York, the Whitman Birthplace, and Columbia University) to schedule events relating to the 150th anniversary of *Leaves of Grass*, including the Annual Marathon Reading of "Song of Myself," to take place in late May. Potential readers should check the Seaport website (www.southstseaport.org) to sign up for sections. Among other planned events is the production of a limited edition, letterpress "Song of Myself," to be published at Bowne & Co., the nineteenth-century job printing shop at the Seaport. The idea is to have the public help typeset the entire poem, making it perhaps the most democratic version of the poem yet available. Those interested in participating in these events, or those with suggestions for further events, should e-mail Karbiener at kk55@nyu.edu.

"Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*: The Sesquicentennial Symposium," directed by David Haven Blake and Michael Robertson, will be held September 22-24, 2005, at The College of New Jersey. Participants include Sherman Alexie, Anita Anantharam, Benjamin Barber, Daphne Brooks, Lawrence Buell, Wai-Chee Dimock, Betsy Erkkila, Ed Folsom, Janet Gray, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Matthea Harvey, David Lehman, James Longenbach, Meredith L. McGill, Angela Miller, Kenneth Price, Michael Warner, and Ivy Wilson. For information on events and activities, visit the website at <http://www.tcnj.edu/~whitman>.

Several departments at Central Connecticut State University have planned a series of events entitled "'Look Back On Me': New England Celebrates the 150th Anniversary of Walt Whitman's 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass*." From July 1 to September 30, the Burritt Library will host "Images of Walt Whitman: The Commercialization of an American Original." Drawn from the collection of Mr. Ed S. Centeno, this exhibition will consist of items depicting Whitman's name and image used in commercial advertising material (philatelic material, buttons, posters, pop art, advertisements, postcards, paintings, cartoons, photographs, bookseller's catalogs, sheet music, matchbooks, periodicals, and labels). The exhibit will also include the depiction of Whitman in children's literature as well as in gay publishing. In addition, several major events are being planned for September 22-23. The Theater department will present a performance of "I Sing The Body Electric" and the Music Department will

offer a concert of Whitman songs. Through the efforts of Professor Robb Dowling of the English Department, several distinguished visitors will give lectures and take part in panel discussions: Billy Collins, the former poet laureate of the United States and currently the New York State poet laureate; Karen Karbiener (New York University and Columbia University), Jerome Loving (Texas A&M); David S. Reynolds (City University of New York); and poet Martin Espada (University of Massachusetts). Further information is available at: <http://library.ccsu.edu/lib/archives/Whitman/index.html>.

The University of Northern Iowa is hosting a one day conference called "We Celebrate Walt Whitman" on November 9, 2005, that will capitalize on UNI's focus on education. The conference theme will be Whitman in the classroom and Whitman as a formative influence for young people. Ed Folsom of the University of Iowa will be the keynote speaker, and graduate students from the University of Iowa who work on the *Whitman Archive* will share their insights. A "Teaching Whitman Roundtable," tailored to the needs of secondary English teachers, will take place. The conference concludes in the evening with a musical program, presenting solo, jazz and choral music inspired by Whitman poems. The UNI dance group, Orchesis, will also be featured. In addition, Whitman himself, portrayed by Bill Koch, will make an appearance. For further information contact Bill Koch at William.koch@uni.edu or Julie Husband at Julie.Husband@uni.edu.

"Whitman Making Books / Books Making Whitman," 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. Books featured in the exhibit are from the University of Iowa Special Collections and from Kendall Reed's private collection. Keynote speaker will be Ezra Greenspan of Southern Methodist University. Directed by Ed Folsom and David Schoonover, this event should appeal to those interested in Whitman and, more generally, those interested in the history of the book and the book arts.