

BETA



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#### NEWS

### WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM AND POETS HOUSE LAUNCH "POETRY WESTCHESTER!"

Category and/or Group (Schools and Libraries) February 8th, 2008

This year, Westchester residents will not have to wait until April for the delights of National Poetry Month to arrive in their communities! Thanks to an initiative funded by the Westchester Library System (WLS) and presented by Poets House (a 50,000-volume library and literary center based in Manhattan), creative, inspiring and enjoyable poetry programs for adults and teens will brighten up the bleak mid-winter, suggesting a rethinking of the Shelley's famous line from "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" to "If winter comes, here comes poetry!!"

The Mount Pleasant Library will be the "county seat" of this initiative, hosting a full array of programs including workshops, poetry readings and a poetry talk. Hettie Jones, noted poet (*Doing 70*, Hanging Loose Press, 2007), and memoirist of the Beat era, (*How I Became Hettie Jones*, Grove Press, 1996), will be the "Poet in Residence" in Mount Pleasant where she'll lead workshops for teens and adults and give a talk on "The Beat Poets." Joining her in a distinguished roster will be award-winning poets Edward Hirsch, speaking about *How to Read a Poem and Fall in Love With Poetry* (the title of his best-selling book) and reading from his forthcoming poetry collection *Special Orders* (Knopf, 2008), and Tom Sleigh, the author of *Space Walk* (Houghton Mifflin, 2007), who has been hailed by Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney as a poet of "lyric absolution."

Libraries in Irvington, Hastings, Katonah, Larchmont and White Plains will be the recipients of poetry workshops for either teens or adults. Pelham will present workshops for both age groups. All will be led by accomplished poets who are experienced in eliciting great poetry in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. Each workshop will be concluded by a poetry publication event at which recipients will receive a copy of an anthology of the group's work.

The idea behind "Poetry Westchester!", which is modeled after the Poets House initiative, Poetry in The Branches (PITB), is to create a poetry "mindset" for the library user and staff member and to create as many ways as possible for people to "bump into" poetry. This includes improved poetry collections, displays and a wide and continuing range of imaginative programs stretching into the future. To kick off the initiative, each participating library sent two staff members to a Poetry in The Branches Institute led by Poets House staff and accomplished poet/teachers. They spent a full day experiencing such things as writing in a workshop environment, discussing the many ways of incorporating poetry into public programs and displays, and examining a wide range of poetry titles.

Poets House is a 50,000 volume poetry library and literary center. Based in SoHo for the past two decades, the Poets House reading room is currently closed in advance of its move, in 2008, to a majestic new waterfront facility in Battery Park City. Founded in 1985 by the late Stanley Kunitz and Elizabeth Kray, the organization has a distinguished record of innovative poetry programming and currently presents over 200 public events per year, including panels, lectures, readings, art exhibits, writing workshops and walking tours in New York City and nationwide. Its signature program, the Poets House Showcase, is an unparalleled annual exhibit of all the poetry published in the United States. Each year,

Poets House adds the bibliographic records from the Showcase to its free, fully-searchable online database, the [Directory of American Poetry Books](#). With over 20,000 titles, the directory contains the most comprehensive information about U.S. poetry books and publishers from 1990 through 2007. For more information, visit [www.poetshouse.org](http://www.poetshouse.org).

Bringing this successful library initiative to Westchester was the brainchild of Siobhan A. Reardon, Director of the Westchester Library System. Having seen her own son flourish when having the opportunity to write poetry, and having seen the success of the program in other library systems, she felt that the moment was right to bring "PITB" to some of the 38 member public libraries of the Westchester Library System (WLS). WLS is one of New York State's 23 public library systems established in 1958 by State Education Law. Public library systems expand and enhance the resources and services of local libraries by enabling them to save funds through economies of scale and the cooperative sharing of resources and services. <http://www.westchesterlibraries.org>.

Poetry Westchester! Schedule for Winter/Spring 2008

### **Mount Pleasant**

February 4, 11, 25, March 3 at 4:30 pm – Teen Poetry Writing Workshop with Hettie Jones  
March 17 at 7:00 pm – Teen Poetry Workshop Publication Party and Reading  
February 11, 25, March 3 at 7 pm – Adult Poetry Writing with Hettie Jones  
March 24 at 7:00 pm – Adult Poetry Workshop Group Reading  
March 30 at 2:00 pm—Poetry Reading by Edward Hirsch  
April 6 at 2:00 pm—"The Beat Poets"-- a talk by Hettie Jones  
May 18 at 2:00 pm—Poetry Reading by Tom Sleigh

### **Pelham**

February 25, March 3, 10, 17 at 7 pm—Teen Poetry Writing Workshop with Erica Fabri  
April 14 at 7 pm—Teen Poetry Workshop Publication Party and Reading  
March 13, 20, 27 at 7:15 pm—Adult Poetry Writing Workshop with Joanna Fuhrman  
April 17 at 7:15 pm—Adult Poetry Workshop Group Reading

### **Larchmont**

February 26, March 4, March 11 at 10:30 am—Adult Poetry Writing Workshop with Steve Sher  
April 1 at 10:30 am—Adult Poetry Workshop Group Reading

### **Hastings**

March 1, 8, 22 at 2:30 pm—Adult Poetry Writing Workshop with Estha Weiner  
April 12 at 2:30 pm—Adult Poetry Workshop Group Reading

### **Katonah**

March 3, 10, 17 at 7:30 pm—Adult Poetry Writing Workshop with Caitlin McDonnell  
April 7 at 7:30 pm—Adult Poetry Workshop Group Reading

### **White Plains**

March 4, 11, 18, April 1 at 4:30 pm—Teen Poetry Writing Workshop with Rachel Simon  
April 15 at 4:30 pm—Teen Poetry Publication Party and Reading

### **Irvington**

March 25, April 1, 8, 15 at 7:00 pm—Teen Poetry Writing Workshop with Joanna Fuhrman  
May 6 at 7:00 pm—Teen Poetry Publication Party and Reading

### **Scarsdale**

March 26, April 2, 9, 16 at 3:30 pm—Teen Poetry Writing Workshop with Rachel Simon  
May 7 at 3:30 pm—Teen Poetry Publication Party and Reading