Poe Foundation Welcomes New President

On October 5, 2013, the Poe Foundation of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum elected a new board president, Annemarie Beebe of Fort Mill, South Carolina. She is succeeding Dr. Harry Lee Poe, who has reached the end of his second term. Dr. Poe will continue to serve on the executive committee. Dr. M. Thomas Inge of Randolph Macon College in Ashland will serve as Vice President, and Jeffrey Chapman will continue to serve as Treasurer.

Returning for another term on the executive committee is Robert A. Buerlien, and joining the committee is Kia Ware of Tappahannock, Virginia. The board also welcomed new members Harriss Ricks, Murray Ellison, and George W. Poe.

At the conclusion of the board meeting, outgoing president Dr. Poe accepted the Old Stone House as a gift from Preservation Virginia’s president Anne Geddy Cross.
Members Explore Poe Sites

The Poe Museum’s many members help make its work possible. That is why the Museum offers special tours and programs to thank them. In November, the Poe Museum arranged members-only tours of Richmond’s Monumental Church and Petersburg’s Hiram Haines Coffee House. In Monumental Church, members were able to visit the Allan family pew in which Poe sat when he attended services as boy. Led by a guide from the Historic Richmond Foundation, Museum members learned about the unusual architecture of this building designed by America’s first native-born professional architect Robert Mills. The above photograph shows the group exploring the crypt underneath the building.

For the other members-only tour, Jeff Abugel, author of *Edgar Allan Poe’s Petersburg*, took a group through the areas of the historic Hiram Haines Coffee House that are usually off-limits to the public. These spaces included the room in which Poe might have spent his honeymoon. Some of the original paint and mantles were still visible in this 1814 landmark, which is in the process of restoration.

The Poe Museum would like to thank the Historic Richmond Foundation, Jeff Abugel, and our members for making these tours possible. Check future newsletters and our website for information about upcoming members-only events. If you have not already done so, be sure to renew your membership today.

Apply Today for 2014 Conference

Rachel Martens, one of the students from the Poe Museum’s 2012 Young Writers’ Conference, has already published her first novel. Maybe you or one of your students will be next. If you are a high school student who loves writing, this week-long residential writing conference could be the start of your literary career.

Conference attendees will meet professional writers and editors, strengthen their writing skills with workshops and lectures, and get inspired by visiting Poe sites in Virginia. The conference director is Edgar™ Award winning author Dr. Harry Lee Poe.

For more information and an application, please visit the Poe Museum’s website at http://www.poemuseum.org/students-writers-conference.php, call 888-21-EAPOE or email info@poemuseum.org. The deadline to apply is April 1, 2014.

Above: Hal Poe and Katie Skiff with students from the 2013 conference
Recent Gifts Enhance Poe Museum Collection

The Poe Museum’s first president, James H. Whitty (1859-1939), was a prolific Poe collector and researcher who was one of the driving forces behind the founding of the Museum. His donations to the Poe Museum’s collection include a lock of Edgar Allan Poe’s hair and a portrait of Poe’s employer Thomas White. Whitty also located Poe’s trunk in the possession of relatives of the poet’s sister’s foster parents; this piece would be one of the first pieces acquired by the newly formed Poe Museum in 1922. Although the bulk of Whitty’s personal collection of Poe memorabilia is now held in other collections, the objects he did give to the Poe Museum are today some of its most important.

The ongoing process of learning more about the Museum’s artifacts often involves consulting the letters and documents compiled by collectors like Whitty. This is why the Museum was thrilled to receive a donation of a box of Whitty’s letters and photographs from Al Bridger. Among the interesting pieces in the box are photographs of Whitty (right) and a list of the Poe letters he once kept in his safe deposit box. Bridger’s gift is now at the Museum where they will be preserved and studied.

Other recent acquisitions include the anonymous gift of the first American edition of the novel Alice featuring an advertisement for the May 1838 release of Poe’s only novel The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, which is believed to have actually been released two months later. New books being added to the Poe Museum’s reference library are the exhibit catalog A Painter’s Poet: Stephane Mallarme and His Impressionist Circle donated by Martha Steger; the novel The Conqueror Worms by Brian Keene given by an anonymous donor; Sunlight Beyond the Grave: The Story of the Carling Brothers by Michael Kelly donated by the author; and Quaint, Curious & Forgotten, an anthology of Poe’s favorite detective stories edited by Peter Horvitz, donated by its editor. A truly unique gift was a collection of Poe portrait sweatshirts donated by Carl Levison in memory of his father.

Sculpture is Coming to Poe Museum

Since his death, Poe’s image has inspired countless visual artists from Edouard Manet to Marilyn Manson. We have seen Poe’s visage appear on so many album covers, comic books, and oil paintings that it is a rare that a portrait is striking enough to stand apart from the rest. Recently, such a portrait was brought to our attention by an artist in Azerbaijan. Earlier this year, Habib Saher crafted a beautiful life-sized sculpture of Poe (pictured left). Saher offered to donate the piece to the Poe Museum, which gratefully accepted his offer.

Before the sculpture can come to the Museum, Saher needs the permission to send it from the Azerbaijani Cultural Ministry. The Academy of Fine Art in Baku has offered to help him acquire the necessary permission and even to build a crate for shipping the artwork. The Museum anticipates receiving the sculpture in the spring and holding a public unveiling ceremony upon its arrival. Check our next newsletter and our website for updates on this exciting acquisition.
Who is Annabel Lee?

One of the questions the Poe Museum’s tour guides hear most often is, “Who is Annabel Lee?” Since Poe’s classic poem “Annabel Lee” first appeared in print in 1849, readers have speculated about whether or not the poem refers to a real person from the author’s life. Opening just in time for Poe’s Birthday Bash on January 18, the Poe Museum’s new exhibit “By the Name of Annabel Lee” will explore the poem and the people who may have inspired it.

The exhibit will profile the multiple women considered to be inspirations for the poem, and visitors will learn in the words of Poe’s close friend Frances S. Osgood (above) who she believed was “the only woman whom he ever truly loved.” Rare artifacts to be displayed include the manuscript for Poe’s essay about Osgood, original letters by Osgood and others, and stunning portraits of Poe’s muses including Sarah Helen Whitman (below). The show promises to reveal the rarely seen romantic side of Poe and his work.

In celebration of this historic renovation, the Poe Museum is inviting visual artists to sketch, paint, or photograph the garden for a special exhibit opening in June. “Poe’s Enchanted Garden” will run from June 24 until October 31, 2014. For more information, please contact Chris Semtner at chris@poemuseum.org or 888-21-EAPOE. Above: S. Shelton’s 1924 painting of the Enchanted Garden.

The Author’s Appetite

What were Poe’s favorite foods? Find out in May at the Poe Museum’s exhibit and event, “The Author’s Appetite.” This is just one of the great events coming to the Poe Museum this spring. You can also look forward to the return of the Unhappy Hour, new temporary exhibits, and more. Check our website poemuseum.org for all the latest updates.

We Bring Poe to You

Can’t bring your group to the Poe Museum? We’ll bring the Poe Museum to you. While there is nothing quite like a visit to the Poe Museum to see its world-renowned collections and legendary Enchanted Garden, your class, club, or library can still experience some of what the Museum has to offer. The Poe Museum regularly sends speakers, performers, and traveling exhibits to libraries, schools, and museums across the country. We even offer virtual tours through Skype. For more information or to schedule a program, please contact Amber Edens at 888-21-EAPOE or amber@poemuseum.org.
Celebrate Poe’s Birthday

We say this every year, but this year’s Poe Birthday Bash will be the biggest and best so far. With twelve straight hours of family-friendly tours, performances, book talks, live music, dance and more, this will be the highlight of the Poe year and is not to be missed. The festivities begin at noon on Saturday, January 18 with a poetry reading by Poe himself and will continue until midnight with a toast to Poe in the Poe Shrine.

Features of the day include Poe and the poetess Frances Osgood reading their love poetry to each other at 12:30. There will be performances of Poe’s works “Hop-Frog” at 3 P.M., “Never Bet the Devil Your Head” at 7 P.M., “The Tell-Tale Heart” at 2:30 and 6:30, and “The Conqueror Worm” at 9 P.M. While here, you can meet authors including Trish Foxwell (author of A Visitor’s Guide to the Literary South) and Jeff Abugel, who will be reading and signing his book Edgar Allan Poe’s Petersburg at 6:15 P.M. Some of the authors from the new mystery anthology Virginia is for Mysteries will be here as well as the artist Abigail Larson. Be sure to get a piece of birthday cake at 6 P.M.!

For a complete schedule, please visit poemuseum.org, email info@poemuseum.org, or call 888-21-EAPOE.

Poe: Science Fiction Pioneer

Over the past few months, it was not uncommon to hear Poe Museum guests leave the gift shop commenting, “I didn’t know Poe wrote science fiction.” As surprised as they were to learn Poe wrote science fiction, they were shocked to discover he wrote so much of it. Space travel, amazing new technologies, and visions of the future have long been staples of the science fiction genre, but few realize it was Poe who helped popularize these themes. Well before the word “cyborg” entered the English language, Poe wrote “The Man that was Used Up” about a man who was more machine than human. Before Jules Verne explored unknown worlds, Poe took us to the moon in “The Unparalleled Adventure on One Han Pfaall.”

Poe’s science fiction stories also took us on trips to the future, journeyed to unknown lands, and even showed us how to reanimate a mummy. The Poe Museum’s exhibit “Poe: Science Fiction Pioneer” explored the many ways Poe helped shape one of today’s most popular literary and film genres. This often-overlooked aspect of Poe’s oeuvre is one of his most important contributions to our culture.

*Pictured Right: Engraving of Steering Balloon from first printing of Poe’s story “The Balloon Hoax”*
Poe Museum Upcoming Events

POE’S BIRTHDAY BASH
January 18th
NOON - MIDNIGHT
MUSIC | TOURS | LIVING HISTORY | CASH BAR | AND MORE
www.poemuseum.org

January 18, 2014, Noon to Midnight
Poe Birthday Bash
Join the Poe Museum for twelve hours of fun for the whole family.

January 18—April 20, 2014
Exhibit: “By the Name of Annabel Lee”
Meet the women who inspired Poe’s love poetry and discover the origins of his most famous poem.

April 24, 2014, 6-9 P.M.
April Unhappy Hour
Kick off spring with our first Unhappy Hour of the year. Features live music, performances, and more.

June 22-28, 2014
Edgar Allan Poe Young Writers’ Conference
Apply today for this awesome opportunity for high school students to learn the craft of writing from the pros. Applications due April 1, 2014.