# ANNUAL REPORT 2011

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### **GLOUCESTER WRITERS CENTER**

126 EAST MAIN STREET • GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

# GWC EVENTS

## 2010













COVER ART - Storm Surge - H.A. LIND - ACRYLIC ON PAPER • POEM - At the Brink Community of Self VINCENT FERRINI

### HISTORY

When Vincent Ferrini died on Christmas Eve, 2007 his nephew Henry Ferrini wanted to turn his home into a living memorial to the poet. The project languished for a

couple of years until Paul Sawyer a locally rooted, Unitarian Universalist minister was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Paul made it his last wish that his late friend Vincent Ferrini's studio would survive as a gathering and learning place, as it had been during Vincent's lifetime.



Paul enlisted the help of local ally and longtime friend Annie Thomas. Annie, Henry and Paul's enthusiasm won the support of others including New York writer André Spears who became a third co-founder.

The concept expanded to include Vincent's friend and fellow poet Charles Olson, then to take in the entire span of Gloucester's literary legacy - past and future. These efforts tapped into a remarkable popular groundswell of affection and appreciation for Vincent and Charles, and their presence in the community. Nearly \$100,000 was raised - much of it from small, local donations - and Vincent's house was saved and restored. The Gloucester Writers Center was incorporated on June 10, 2010, just before Paul Sawyer's death, and soon received 501(c)(3) status from the IRS. Now, two years later, GWC is a healthy, growing entity, sponsoring a range of events and programs that serve people from all of walks of Gloucester and Cape Ann life.



Peter Anastas, Charles Olson and Vincent Ferrini





Etchings of Vincent Ferrini and Charles Olson by Edmund Sullivan

MARK POWER PHOTO

### HISTORY

Vincent bought 126 East Main Street in the late 40's. Some report it was the original Harbor Cafe. The simple one-story building was used as his frame shop for years and later became his home.



The original art in Vincent Ferrini's collection comprised of works by many friends including: Paul Anderson (from his series of *Women in Cars*), Elaine Wing, David Bianchini, Mary Shore, Helen Stein, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Jain Tarnower.



Vincent's extensive library demanded almost all of the wall space.





Even the tiny kitchen had its own display of various creative works including one of Vincent's signature driftwood sculptures.





Vincent on the Good Harbor Beach bridge, November 13, 2007.

Charlie Olson installs a new door at 126 East Main Street



(l-r) Jo-Ann Castano, Susan Steiner, Richard Emmanuel, Isaac Ferrini and Geoffrey Thomas at the celebration of successfully purchasing the building at 126 East Main Street - the new home of the Gloucester Writers Center.



A final visit to Good Harbor Beach with Henry.

### ANNIE & HENRY



### **ANNIE**:

One of the exciting things about the creation of GWC was to understand how many people diverse and from all over - were out there in an unseen network of friends of Vincent's, or students of Charles Olson, and who really cared what happened to Vincent's home at 126 East Main Street.

They saw the importance of it as a representation of something to be revered - where you could go to talk about poetry and would end up talking about life because Vincent knew there was no separation - "life is the poem." Where for 50 years Vincent lived simply and wrote a constant stream of poetry, a solitary pursuit, but kept his door open to the whole community - writers, non-writers, Cape Anners and correspondents all over the world - the known and unknown equally welcome.

Now this simple little place serves as a launching pad from which a wide and diverse group of people, spanning generations, can share the work of writing, thinking, and conversing as a living form that builds community. We'll continue to be an open door, leading to the spirit of poetic inquiry that Olson and Ferrini practiced and continuing to build community that celebrates place and the truth of the poet/writer. Our programs are dedicated to this opening of dialogue, non-coercive, and irrespective of economic and social boundaries.

### HENRY:

This has been the year of getting our educational programs together. Charlee Bianchini has had terrific success with her women's writers groups and youth programs, and now Amanda Cook is on board. She has an idea about a Garden writing workshop, which we like a lot. When we brought Will Allen to talk about the farming crisis there were about 100 people in the audience. The groups at GWC are diverse, from poetry to the politics of agriculture. One thing remains in common - an underlying committment to understanding the place where we "live and have our being."

What resonates with me is the "deeper not wider" approach that we've been taking. Our annual event with the Cape Ann Museum is a great example of bringing people to Gloucester who had a relationship with Charles Olson, pushing us deeper into what the bard recognized in Gloucester.

In the film *Polis is This*, John Stilgoe said, "In order to understand and appreciate any landscape in its totality you have to look at it from all different angles. Geog-



raphy, Biology, Culture everything". As Vincent said:

"Remember one drop of sea-water is the whole of it, the whole of it one drop."

### GWC READINGS

In terms of lectures, readings and performances, the past year has been a busy one for us. Here's a list of the poets, novelists, critics, essayists, playwrights, and non-fiction writers who have appeared at GWC since April, 2011.

POET LAUREATE SERIES W/ KENT BOWKER/JACK EVANS & GHS STUDENTS - GLOUCESTER'S OWN TERRY REIS KENNEDY READING - "THE WRITERS & THE WOLVES." JOEANN HART/LAURA HARRINGTON READING - NOVELISTS AND FRIENDS KATE TARLOW - "I AM AN ARCHIVE AND IN IT ARE ALL MY THINGS" JOHN LANDRY - "FULLY AWAKE" - BLACK MOUNTAIN COLLEGE DAVID RICH - READS FROM HIS NEW CHAPBOOK "ARSHILE GORKY" ANDREI CODRESCU - "TEACHING OLSON IN BATON ROUGE" RELEASE PARTY FOR THE "ELICITOR" - GLOUCESTER HIGH SCHOOL LITERARY MAGAZINE RUTH LEPSON/JOEL SLOMAN - READINGS FROM THEIR WORKS LAUNCH & READING "POLIS 3" - GLOUCESTER/SAN FRANCISCO LITERARY MAGAZINE "SPACE TIME LOVE" - CHARLES ALEXANDER ON CHARLES OLSON TRIBUTE TO JOE GARLAND - THE PASSING OF A GLOUCESTER ICON POETS & LAUREATES - LOCAL POETS RUFUS COLLINSON, JAMES COOK, JOHN RONAN, WILLIE ALEXANDER WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE IAIN SINCLAIR - BRITISH WRITER AND FILM MAKER TALKS ABOUT OLSON PIERRE JORIS & NICOLE PEYRAFITTE - TRANSLATION AND COLLABORATION A DRAMATIC READING OF "TOUR" - PLAY BY LOCAL WRITER DAVID WISE "Dwelling in the Spell" - Poetry and music by Elizabeth McKim and Michael Siegell WILL ALLEN: "THE WAR ON BUGS" - AGRICULTURAL ACTIVIST TALKS ABOUT FOOD MICHAEL GREGORY: AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND POETRY - POET AND JAZZ GUITARIST SHEP ABBOTT READS - FROM HIS NOVEL-IN-PROGRESS, "DOGBOY" JIM DUNN AND MYSTERY GUEST - HAD TO BE THERE! GAY WALLEY - A READING OF HER NEW PLAY, "FREUD AND MAHLER" SUSAN ERONY - TEXT, IMAGE & VISUAL ART

Most of the events took place at the Gloucester Writers Center, 126 East Main Street Other venues included The Harbor Room (overlooking Gloucester Harbor), the Unitarian Universalist Church in Gloucester, and the Cape Ann Museum.

5

# KATE COLBY & THE GWC Foetry Salon

The GWC was founded in part to pique & promote the interests of local writers, readers and literary audiences. Bringing poets from outside of Cape Ann to read and discuss their work is





a key component of that mission. Our quarterly Poetry Salon brings a diverse selection of practicing poets from Boston, New York and beyond to local writers and listeners.

### The first four Salons featured poets:

- Kate Greenstreet Katie Peterson
- Anna Moschovakis Vincent Katz
- Kate Schapira Brenda Iijima
- Brian Blanchfield & Christian Hawkey.

Here are some responses from poets who read at the Salon:



KATE GREENSTREET - I had the sense that various camps of poetry were represented, all of us gathering happily in one place, our guns left at the door. People were enthusiastic, the food delicious, sold a lot of books, a wonderful, historic town. The sea! A great night all around.



VINCENT KATZ -GWC is adept at expanding the field to include writers, musicians, theater people, historians and others with a wide range of interests.



CHRISTIAN HAWKEY - In an increasingly virtual and placeless time, the Gloucester Writers Center is a place where language can gather, be shared, and be affirmed. Everyone was incredibly warm and welcoming. I didn't want to leave!

"I am always amazed by the generosity and engagement of our Poetry Salon audiences. I started the series in hopes of bringing a wide range of poetic voices to Gloucester, but all of my participating writers have left, in turn, with a little bit of the local brack and granite in their blood." KATE COLBY

# POETRY READING EVENTS



L to R - Gay Walley, Charlee Bianchini, Thorpe Feidt, Peter Anastas, Ellen Sibley & George Sibley.



Gerrit Lansing & Erik Lomen



Kent Bowker at GWC



Andrei Codrescu



JoeAnn Hart: "Reading at the Gloucester Writers Center was to stand on the shoulders of all the other Cape Ann writers who came before me".



Peter Anastas and Iain Sinclair tour Olson's Gloucester aboard the "Black Sheep".

"The Gloucester Writers Center is the literary heartbeat of New England" Don Wellman, Professor of Writing and Humanities.

# COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

We're happy that we can give writers the opportunity for undisturbed work and study in Vincent's beautifully refurbished home. And we're excited about the enrichment and stimulation of GWC readings and lectures. But our core mission is also closely aligned with the community programs we provide.

*Charlee Bianchini* has been a star for us in this regard. Since June 2010, a group of five to ten women have been meeting with Charlee at the Gloucester Writers Center and other locations. Calling themselves *"A Group of One's Own: Women Writers of Fishtown,"* they've been sharing the joy and fulfillment that writing can bring. They've also been joined by



various writers in residence at the Center. This has been a great way for our visitors to get involved in the weekly happenings of the Center, as well as a chance for the women to connect with successful writers and get a taste of what the writing life can be like.

Last August, the Gloucester Writers Center held a children's camp hosted by Charlee about *"sense of place."* For three days Cape Ann kids explored the ways we relate to place, and how it defines us as people and as greater communities. Then they wrote about it. According to Charlee, *"The workshop gave the kids an appreciation for nature and their community, as well as helping them develop their writing skills."* 

**Brynn Sibley** - "Charlee has helped me relax when I write and not feel like I have to be ever so conscious of each piece of syntax. We do a lot of free writes which means you are usually given a prompt and



then have to have the pen stay on the page until the time is up. I like this exercise because it helps the flow of continuous words." *Terry Weber,* local journalist, writer and early supporter of GWC, and the Finish Line Writers Group

have been meeting at the Gloucester Writers Center for several months. Terry reports, *"We are all working on our own* novels, memoirs or screenplays, yet still finding time to support each other's projects.



screenplays, yet still finding time to support each other's projects. May we all make it to the Finish Line!"

In March *Ruth Lepson*, who teaches poetry at New England Conservatory, brought twenty-five of her students to the GWC. Henry Ferrini, James Cook and

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Gerrit Lansing talked to them about Olson and student *Sarah Jarosz* responded,

"By studying Olson and being in Gloucester, I realized that my own interpretation of 'what is' will, in a sense, be original.... I certainly felt my inspiration surfacing today."



Sarah Jarosz



The *"Elicitor"* is Gloucester High School's literary magazine. Last fall's "Elicitor" launch event at GWC provided student contributors with a live link to the literary history of Cape Ann, as they read their work in the very space where Vincent had written over

James Cook

thirty volumes of poetry. Henry Ferrini noted, "Reading in a place that is devoted to writing gives these kids a good sense of the value of their own work. It validates their experience as writers."



The GWC Film Series curated by Henry Ferrini has had a strong reception. "Lowell Blues", about Jack Kerouac, "Polis is This" about Charles Olson, and "Fully Awake" a documen-

tary about Black Mountain College, were all well attended. But the showing of Henry's movie about Vincent – "*Poem in Action*"– in Vincent's own home, was particularly powerful.



As demonstrated by last year's "Scribbler's Feast" honoring local writer Peter Anastas, food is a medium too.

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And, in keeping with the theme of *"deeper not wider*," Rosemary Haughton, Nancy

Schwoyer and many longtime Wellspring supporters broke bread at the GWC to discuss the nexus between hospitality and social change.

The event was videotaped for the GWC archive.



Our first *Living History* event included Thorpe Feidt, Gerrit Lansing, Peter Anastas and Greg Gibson discussing 1960s literary Gloucester over dinner and wine.

This event was also videotaped for the GWC archive.

### Finally, in the spirit of sociability, we must mention June's birthday celebration for Vincent Ferrini – "La Dolce Vita."

The event was held in the beautiful Harbor Room across the street from the Gloucester Writers Center



and was attended by over one hundred people. Music and dancing were the fare, and the evening was highlighted by a hilarious skit in which "La Dolce Vita's" star, Marcello, comes back to Gloucester in search of "Ferrini." *Anita Ekborg* attended the party as well. She was looking for a real poet.

Events like these utilize GWC's physical space, and the talents of local artists and writers, to provide outreach and education, and also to carry forward the dialogue with place initiated by Olson and Ferrini. As we continue to grow, the services we are able to provide to the community at large will increase and diversify.

# BOARD of DIRECTORS

Henry Ferrini • President - is the co-director of the Gloucester Writers Center, the co-founder of the North Shore Jazz Project and a documentary filmmaker. His work has played on PBS and at museums and galleries around the world. His films include: Polis is This: Charles Olson and the Persistence of Place; Poem in Action, a portrait of his uncle Vincent Ferrini, and Lowell Blues: the Words of Jack Kerouac. He is developing films about the iconic jazz stylist Lester Young and Luminist painter Fitz Henry Lane.

*Annie Thomas* • *Clerk* - is the co-founder of Gloucester Writers Center. Vincent Ferrini was her close friend for 37 years and the godfather of her children. Annie brings years of nonprofit management experience to the project, including expertise in volunteer coordination and 12 years experience of highly successful fundraising as *Development Director of Wellspring House, Inc.* She also brings a commitment to maintaining the Vincent Ferrini House as a place of hospitality and nurture, in his honor.

**Peter Higgins** • **Treasurer** - has spent the last 33 years working in the manufacturing sector. He works as the treasurer of Bomco, Inc., a locally owned business that primarily supports the aerospace industry. He has served in the past as vice-chair of the Gloucester Conservation Board and has a degree in anthropology from Syracuse University.

*Charlee Bianchini* - grew up in Gloucester. She discovered poetry when she was in second grade, and hasn't stopped writing since. Her passion has evolved into travel writing. Charlee has traveled throughout the world, and in particular throughout Asia, doing extensive work and research within the Tibetan community. When she isn't traveling, she teaches creative writing to women and high school students at the GWC. Writing enables Charlee to explore and contemplate the things witnessed in her life's journey.

Wendy Fitting is the Pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Gloucester where she has served since 1989, after receiving a Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School. Prior to entering the ministry she worked for the Mass Department of mental health. She shares with Charles Olson and Vincent Ferrini a love of Gloucester and the appreciation of the particularity of place -- a theme that is central to her ministry.

*Gregor Gibson* is a writer, publisher, and has been an antiquarian book dealer since 1976, specializing in old and rare maritime books, documents, manuscripts and ephemera, and in the Literature of Cape Ann, about which he compiled a lengthy bibliography in 1979. His publishing house, Ten Pound Books has published 30 books, including Vincent Ferrini's autobiography *Hermit of the Clouds* and Peter Anastas' *Maximus to Gloucester*. He is the author of *Gone Boy* (Random House), *Demon of the Waters* (Little Brown) and *Hubert's Freaks* (Harcourt) as well as numerous small press publications.

André Spears is an experimental writer and independent scholar. His most recent publication is the bilingual book *Translation*, published in France in June, 2010. He earned a doctorate in Comparative Literature, with an area of concentration in the interrelation of literature and archaeology; his dissertation addressed the image of archaic Mesoamerica in the writings of Lawrence, Artaud and Olson. Concurrently, he worked as a freighter and tanker broker, following family interests in the Greek shipping business. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors at Poets House in lower Manhattan.

*Kate Colby* is author of four collections of poetry, including *Beauport*, which came out from Litmus Press in 2010, and *Fruitlands*, which won the Norma Farber First Book Award from the Poetry Society of America in 2007. She currently lives and works in Providence, RI.

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Dorothy Shubow Nelson - is an author whose book, The Dream of the Sea - Early poems was published in 2008. Her poems have appeared in such journals as Sojourner, The Café Review, Rhythm Magazine, atelier, North Shore North, Consequence Magazine, and Human Architecture, The Promise of Poetry in Memories of Mahmoud Darwish, (2009). She taught writing and literature at UMass Boston for many years. She has served as a community and labor activist in greater Boston and with the Black Lung Association of West Virginia. She was an editor for the East Boston Community News, and edits Union News for the faculty staff union at UMass/Boston. She corresponded with Vincent Ferrini and was a close friend for over 35 years. Many of his poems and letters to her are archived with the Cape Ann Museum. In 2009 she presented a paper on Charles Olson at the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment Conference.



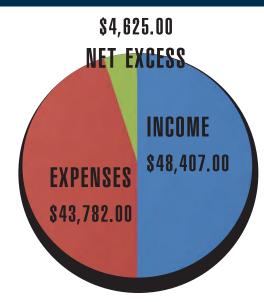
VINCENT CASTAGNACCI PHOTO

# GWC STAFF

Henry Ferrini & Anne Thomas - Co-Directors Greg Gibson - Editor Charlee Bianchini - Educational Coordinator H. A. Lind - Graphic Designer (in abstentia)

# VOLUNTEERS

### FINANCIAL



### Operating Statement Gloucester Writers Center 04/01/2011 - 03/31/2012

### INCOME

Donations, Grants, Events

\$48,407.00

### **OPERATING EXPENSES**

Salaries, Other Benefits	\$31,952.00
Professional Fees	4,230.00
Occupancy, Rent Utilities, Maintenance	3,838.00
Printing, Publications, Postage	2,142.00
Other Expenses	1,620.00
TOTAL	\$43,782.00
NET EXPENSI	ES 4,625.00

For every paid staff hour at Gloucester Writers Center there are 20 hours volunteered by our amazing cadre of talented people who have made the successes

of this past year possible. From writing a press release, taking pictures, helping with mailings, entertaining our supporters, leading a group, pounding a nail, making a sign, updating our website, doing a reading, plumbing, planting, parking, cooking, working at our events, lending professional services, the time and labor of many people of all ages has made our growth possible and continues to make the GWC the vibrant community it is. *Thank You!* 

### FUTURE AT GWC THE

The most visible aspect of the Gloucester Writers Center - the readings, lectures and residencies by visiting artists - continues to be a popular success and is running close to capacity. We intend to maintain it at this level, providing a forum for local writers, as well as bringing in new voices from beyond Cape Ann.

Now into its third year of existence, this "working writers center in a working town" is gaining traction. We have brought internationally known writers like Diane diPrima, Andrei Codrescu and Iain Sinclair to town. This year will be highlighted by appearances from counter-cultural icon Ed Sanders and prize winning poet Anne Waldman.

In addition, we plan to intensify our community outreach, by continuing to provide a meeting place for writers groups, and partnering with local schools in youth programs.

We will begin planning for long term maintenance and expansion of our

physical space at 126 East Main Street. We want to increase capacity while preserving the ambiance and spirit of Vincent's workplace.

Gloucester Writers Center will build upon the successes of our first years and broaden our grant writing.

But still, our future is in the hands of you, our supporters. Thank You!

ABBY COOK

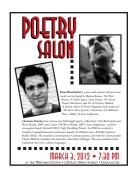


### 2011













A dramatic reading of



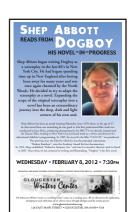


















THANK YOU TO THE BRUCE J. ANDERSON FOUNDATION FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT OF OUR EVENTS.

where is the connection

between the word & the action

the line, the hook, & the wonderful?





The Gloucester Writers Center is devoted to the exploration, development and celebration of our diverse voices through dialogue and the artistic process.

www.gloucesterwriters.org. 126 EAST MAIN STREET • GLOUCESTER, MA 01930 • USA