



NEWS RELEASE

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Celebrate Emily Dickinson's Words! The Emily Dickinson Museum and the Jones Library host a day of family activities in honor of National Poetry Month

AMHERST, Mass.--In honor of National Poetry Month, the Emily Dickinson Museum and the Jones Library will join together for "Celebrating Emily Dickinson's Words" on Saturday, April 10, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the library. This full day of family friendly activities includes a poetry discussion with poet Marilyn Nelson, a children's craft and story time, a community poetry banner, a poetry open mike, and tours of the Jones Library Special Collections department and walking tours of downtown Amherst.

"The library will be buzzing with poetic energy on April 10," said Beth Girshman, adult programs coordinator for the Jones Library. Programs are free and open to the public. A complete schedule is below.

A highlight of the April 10 afternoon is "The Power of Dickinson's Poetry," a discussion of Dickinson's poetry with poet Marilyn Nelson at 2 p.m. Nelson returns to the Jones Library after her popular discussion session last year during "Emily Dickinson's Poetry 101," another collaboration between the Emily Dickinson Museum and the Jones Library. Nelson is the author or translator of twelve books and three chapbooks, is a professor emeritus of English at the University of Connecticut, and was Poet Laureate of the State of Connecticut from 2001 to 2006.

From noon to 4 p.m., the community poetry banner project invites everyone to contribute a favorite poem, word, or poetic thought to a colorful banner designed by Nan Fischlein, the Emily Dickinson Museum's program coordinator. "The individual contributions will be 'stitched' together into a larger fabric piece that will demonstrate the significance of words in our lives," said Fischlein. "A volunteer crew of fabric artists and I look forward to seeing what the public helps us create." The resulting banner will hang at the Jones Library throughout the rest of National Poetry Month and will later visit the Emily Dickinson Museum.

In addition to the full schedule of programs at the Jones Library, the Emily Dickinson Museum at 280 Main Street in Amherst will be open for guided tours from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants in any aspect of "Celebrating Emily Dickinson's Words" will receive a discount coupon toward admission to the museum, valid for the month of April. Jane Wald, the Emily Dickinson Museum's executive director, notes that "the day's activities will nurture an active awareness of poetry's significance--past, present, and future. We are delighted to work once again with the Jones Library to celebrate the vitality of Dickinson's words with the entire Amherst community."

"Celebrating Emily Dickinson's Words" is supported in part by a grant from the Amherst Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and by the Friends of the Jones Library System. For more information, please call the Museum at 413-542-8429 or 413-542-2034 or the Jones Library Reference Desk at 413-259-3096. More information may also be found at www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/events or at www.joneslibrary.org.

In addition, the library and museum will sponsor three poetry-writing workshops (two for adults and one for youth) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The theme-based workshops, led by poets from the MFA program at the University of Massachusetts, will use Dickinson quotations and topics as springboards for generating new verse. Pre-registration is required; for the adult workshops, a \$10 fee is required (scholarships are available); the youth workshop (for ages 13-18) is free. For more information and to register for the workshops, contact the Reference Department at the Jones Library at reference@joneslibrary.org or 413-259-3096.

Schedule for "Celebrating Emily Dickinson's Words" on Saturday, April 10, 2010
(unless otherwise indicated, all programs are free)

11 a.m.

Emily Dickinson for Children, During this hour-long program, library staff will read aloud several stories about Emily Dickinson and a selection of her poems. Younger poetry lovers will get a head start on the community poetry banner project (see entry at noon). Stories and craft best for 4 years old and up. Children younger than 6 must be accompanied by an adult.

Lyric Discoveries, During this 45-minute program, curator Tevis Kimball will share some of the poetic treasures in the Jones Library's Special Collections department.

Walking Tour of Dickinson's Amherst, This 45-minute guided walking tour of downtown Amherst will explore the town as Emily Dickinson knew it. Includes a brief stop at her home, The Homestead.

Poetry Workshops for Adults, Participants in these Dickinson-inspired workshops will craft new ideas and poems under the guidance of poets Henk Roussow and Hannah Brooks-Motl. Participants are invited to share their work at the Poetry Open Mike later in the day. Two-hour program; \$10 registration fee (scholarships available); to sign up, contact reference@joneslibrary.org or 413-259-3096.

Poetry Workshop for Young People Participants ages 13 to 18 will work with poet Gale Thompson to craft poems in the spirit of Emily Dickinson. Free two-hour program; to sign up, contact reference@joneslibrary.org or 413-259-3096.

Noon

Community Poetry Banner, Throughout the afternoon (noon to 4 p.m.), everyone is invited to contribute a favorite poem, word, or poetic thought into a colorful banner that will hang at the Jones Library throughout the rest of National Poetry Month. Portions of the banner will be read aloud at the Open Mike.

Lyric Discoveries See description at 11 a.m.

Walking Tour of Dickinson's Amherst See description at 11 a.m.

Bake Sale and Poetry Shop Refreshments made from Dickinson's recipes and items from the Emily Dickinson Museum shop will be on sale in the library's atrium. (until 2 p.m.)

2 p.m.

The Power of Emily Dickinson's Poetry, Poet Marilyn Nelson, former poet laureate of Connecticut, returns to Amherst to lead a lively and illuminating discussion of Dickinson's poetry. Marilyn Nelson is the author or translator of twelve books and three chapbooks. Titles include *The Homeplace*, which a finalist for the 1991 National Book Award; *Carver: A Life In Poems*, a finalist for the 2001 National Book Award, a Newberry Honor Book, and a Coretta Scott King Honor Book; and *A Wreath For Emmett Till*, winner of the 2005 Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. Nelson's newest book of poetry, *Sweethearts of Rhythm*, was released in 2009 from Dial, and was illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Her honors include two NEA creative writing fellowships, the 1990 Connecticut Arts Award, an A.C.L.S. Contemplative Practices Fellowship, a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship, and a fellowship from the J.S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Nelson is a professor emeritus of English at the University of Connecticut; founder and director of Soul Mountain Retreat, a small writers' colony; and was Poet Laureate of the State of Connecticut from 2001-2006.

4 p.m.

Poetry Open Mike. The day's events culminate in an "open mike" for the day's workshop participants and members of the general public to share a poem. The Community Poetry Banner will also be on view. Hosted by Maureen Buchanan Jones, Executive Director, Amherst Writers and Artists.

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. Both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. The museum is overseen by a separate Board of Governors charged with raising its operating and capital funds. The Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson. The official museum website is www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org. Regular museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. March 31 through December 20, 2010, with extended summer hours 10 a.m. until 5 p.m., June through August. The Emily Dickinson Museum is located at 280 Main Street in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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