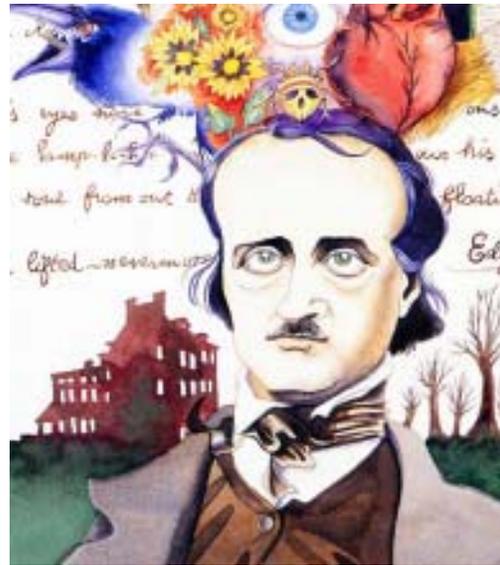


# Get Ready for Eddy's 200<sup>th</sup>!

January 19, 2009 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe. Authorized by Congress to interpret Edgar Allan Poe's place in literary history, the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site (EDAL) and the Friends of Poe will host a diverse calendar of speakers and performances throughout 2009 that will seriously stimulate the Poe enthusiast. The Friends of Poe, under the umbrella of Friends of Independence (National Historical Park), will also host writing and art contests. The centerpiece to the celebration will be the installation and unveiling of new exhibits at the site to commemorate Poe's legacy.

It is fitting that so much of the Poe birthday will be celebrated in Philadelphia. Poe thrived and achieved his greatest sustained success while living in the City of Brotherly Love. In Philadelphia, Poe invented the detective story (inspiring Arthur Conan Doyle to create Sherlock Holmes); served as a lightning rod for American publishing as the nation's premier and sometimes brutal literary critic; edited the country's most successful magazine and, of course, wrote enduring, haunting and disturbing stories and poems. Indeed, the theme for EDAL's commemoration of Poe's bicentennial is "*Edgar Allan Poe, the Many Sides of Genius.*"

EDAL, located at 7<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden Streets in Philadelphia, will collaborate with several local and national organizations to celebrate Poe's



*Detail of poster by Gerard Damiano, (back in print and available for sale!), created for EDAL for the 150th anniversary of Poe's death in 1999.*

literary legacy including: Friends of Poe, the Rare Book Department of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Poe Studies Association, Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Board, the Richmond Poe Museum, and the Walt Whitman House.

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## **At Last, New Exhibits.**

On the weekend closest to Poe's birthday, the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site will celebrate by dedicating new exhibits; staging an original Poe performance piece; hosting a talk by Poe scholar Daniel Hoffman, and unveiling the winner of a local poster contest.

For years, staff have planned new permanent exhibits to interpret Poe's life

and legacy. The universal theme of the Poe exhibits is human creativity, and the new exhibit will look into Poe's mind to explore what inspired and influenced his works. Exhibits will delve into Poe's Philadelphia, his inspirations and continuing influence. The presentation of the exhibit will veer away from the post modern look of the current exhibit to a display inspired by the aesthetics of Poe's time. Hal Poe, a descendant from the Poe family tree, who will speak at the Poe site in 2009, and Susan Jaffe Tane, will loan items from their extensive

private collections to round out the exhibit.

Poet and Poe scholar, Daniel Hoffman, will present a talk on women writers inspired by Poe, including Joyce Carol Oates, who recently published a book of stories inspired by great writers, Poe among them. Students from the Art Institute of Philadelphia will compete to design many products including website art, a rack card and poster. There will be an unveiling event at the exhibit dedication.

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## The Poe House Prepares

Initial conservation for the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site began this summer and continues through until January. Phase one of the project is to repaint and rehab. Maintenance work is scheduled to ensure that portions of the historic house remain open to the public.

The current museum exhibit space and Reading Room will close to the public after Labor Day in order to remove existing exhibits and

prepare for new exhibits. Visitors will enter the partially opened site through the 7th street gate and south facing door through November 2008.

The entire site will close from December through mid-January 2009 for the installation of new exhibits, museum lighting, carpet and artifacts. We plan to reopen the site on Saturday, January 17th, 2009 in time for a special Poe bicentennial weekend (through Monday, 1/19/09).

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## Tell-Tale Visit

On August 7, legendary groundbreaking singer/songwriter/ musician Bob Dylan visited the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site a day before appearing at the Electric Factory, (down the street). Staff who weren't in that day agonized over missing him. During his visit, Mr. Dylan took a

tour and asked intelligent and thoughtful questions while he and staff pretended they didn't recognize him. The title of his new CD "Tell Tale Signs" may hint of the answer to the question we most wanted to ask: "did Edgar Poe have any influence on you as an artist?"





## Poe's One-sided "War" with Longfellow



As Poe fans worldwide prepare for his bicentennial birthday, another renowned poet has already passed the 200 mark.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, one of the most popular poets of the nineteenth century turned 200 in 2007. Remembered today for such works as *The Song of Hiawatha*, "Paul Revere's Ride," and "The Wreck of the Hesperus," Longfellow started his career as a professor of languages at Harvard College. By 1854, he had retired from teaching and became one of the first Americans to successfully sustain himself financially as a professional poet. He remained one of the most celebrated poets of his day up through his death in 1882.

Longfellow's home, which was once used by George Washington as a headquarters in 1775 during the Siege of Boston, is markedly different from the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. Where very little was left behind at Poe's house, Longfellow left behind some 35,000 catalogued items including a 14,000-volume library, several works of Art and original furniture.

Longfellow's literary career, however, was not without its hardships. One of his biggest challenges came from a certain

literary critic who had earned a reputation as the "tomahawk man." This critic was none other than Edgar Allan Poe, whose attacks on Longfellow earned the nickname "The Longfellow War." Though Poe originally called Longfellow "unquestionably the best poet in America," he seems to have changed his assessment. It started with a few lines in his "Autography" series for Philadelphia's *Graham's Magazine* in 1841. Though he admitted the considerable influence Longfellow had on American poetry, Poe said that Longfellow had gained his reputation by being "a determined imitator and a dexterous adapter of the ideas of other people."

Longfellow's work was far from original, Poe went on, referring to his poetry as plagued with "an imitation sometimes verging on downright theft." Poe claimed that he was one of Longfellow's victims, saying that Longfellow's *The Spanish Student* was stolen from his incomplete play *Politian* and that "The Beleagured City" was taken from Poe's "The Haunted Palace."

These were the beginnings of what Poe biographer Kenneth Silverman called "arguably the longest, strangest, and most-publicized personal war in

American literary history.” In the end, Poe would write more about Longfellow than about any other individual writer.

Things really started to heat up in January 1845, when Poe was living in New York. The *Mirror* published Poe’s review of *The Waif*, a poetry collection overseen by Longfellow. Though Longfellow claimed the poems were neglected poems by anonymous minor poets, Poe believed they were actually Longfellow’s own poor-quality poems.

Poe’s accusations expanded into all-out declarations of plagiarism, especially in the pages of *The Broadway Journal* while Poe was its editor. He also took stabs at Longfellow during a public lecture in February 1845. Newspapers reported on these public attacks, sensationalized them a bit, and Poe was surrounded by intense notoriety just as “The Raven” was being published for the first time.

His comments were not without rebuttal, including a pseudonymous writer named “Outis” – an unidentified writer (the word is Greek for “nobody”) who some claim may have been Poe himself, trying to draw out the debate and bring attention to *The Broadway Journal*. Others independently made similar statements about Longfellow, though none as harsh as Poe’s, including Walt Whitman, William Gilmore Simms, and

Margaret Fuller. Of all the responses to Poe’s attacks on Longfellow, however, none came from Longfellow himself, who remained silent (at least publicly). By mid-1845, Poe had ceased his attacks, with only occasional potshots here and there in the next couple years.

Longfellow, in the end, comes across as the bigger man. After Poe’s death in 1849, he corresponded with the critic’s mother-in-law Maria Clemm. He gave her some monetary support, and even invited her to visit him at his home in Cambridge.

Today, Longfellow’s home of over half a century still stands in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and is dedicated as a National Historic Site.

Rob Vellella  
*For the Edgar Allan Poe  
Newsletter*

*[Note: visitors to the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site enjoyed Mr. Vellella’s voluntary services until he was employed by the Longfellow Historic Site. His knowledge, wit and energy were greatly appreciated by the Park Rangers at Poe’s Philadelphia Home. Rob will speak in November, (see Events listings)]*

## Friends of Poe – Bicentennial Calendar of Events

### Thursday and Friday, October 23 and 24, evening \$10.00 free for members

A seasonal favorite, Park Rangers lead you through Poe's home by candlelight, exploring Poe's themes of horror. These popular tours always sell out, so we're expanding to two evenings! Benefits Friends of Poe, call (215) 861-4971.

### Friday, October 31, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Cassandra Peterson, portraying her character **Elvira**, will give a partial reading of Poe's poem "The Raven" at a press conference at the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. This has been arranged by Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, which will promote Philadelphia as a Halloween destination and highlight Poe bicentennial activities.

### Saturday November 22, 2:00 PM

Former Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site volunteer, now Park Ranger at Longfellow Historic Site, Rob Velella, will talk about Poe's "Longfellow War" and sign and discuss his Poe biographical 2009 calendar.

### Saturday January 10 (Time to be announced)

On January 10, 2009 the Free Library of Philadelphia (<http://www.library.phila.gov/>), Central Branch, will feature internationally renowned Poe actor David Keltz as Poe. Also appearing at the library that day will be Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff as Poe's fiancée Helen Whitman.

### Friday evening, January 16, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

The Official Friends of Poe bicentennial birthday party! Festivities will take place at the German Society, 7<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden Streets, across the street from Poe. Actors and Park Rangers Paul Campbell and Helen McKenna-Uff will perform an original piece, "Doppelganger Poes". There will be a wine-tasting of vintages mentioned in Poe's works and a preview of the new exhibits.

### Saturday, January 17, 2:00 PM

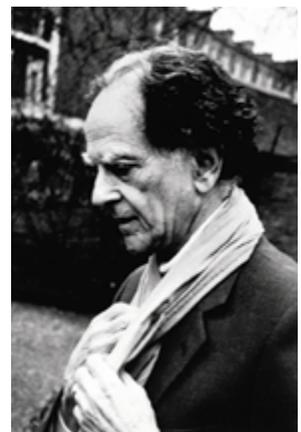
Official public opening for new Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site exhibits, Daniel Hoffman, poet and Poe scholar, will offer a talk on Poe's influence on women writers like Joyce Carol Oates.

### Saturday, March 14, 2:00 PM

Meticulous researcher and masterful writer, David Reynolds, author of *Beneath the American Renaissance*, biographies *Walt Whitman's America* and *George Lippard, Prophet of Protest* and professor at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, will discuss "Poe in his Times" and sign copies of his new book *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson*.

### Friday April 3, 2:00 PM

Cultural historian, Karen Halttunen, author of *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, and a professor at UCLA, will discuss her book



*Daniel Hoffman*

*Murder Most Foul*, and how Poe's Gothic horror was influenced by newspaper reporting.

**Saturday, May 23, 2:00 PM**

Tony McGowan, a West Point English professor, will speak on Poe's military experience, which included a stint at West Point, and how it influenced Poe's writing.

**October (exact date to be announced)**

Kevin Poe, Park Ranger from Bryce Canyon (no relation) will give a fascinating and entertaining illustrated talk which reveals the science behind Poe's major work, *Eureka*, a largely unknown and misunderstood work that explains the origins of the universe.

**Speakers and events confirmed to participate, dates to be announced:**

Daniel Stashower and Lou Bayard will discuss Poe's creation of the mystery story. Stashower, authored *Beautiful Cigar Girl*, a history of the true story behind Poe's "Mystery of Marie Roget". Bayard is publishing on detective Francois Vidocq, inspiration for Poe's detective Dupin.

Hal Poe, professor and descendant of one of Edgar's relatives, will discuss the most famous member of his family tree.

Edgar the Raven will fascinate children and adults during a demonstration by the Audubon Society of Sharon Connecticut. Park Rangers will discuss Poe's poem about the bird.

**Other Philadelphia Events**

**October 1, '08 - February 13, '09**

"Quoth the Raven"; an exhibition of the Colonel Richard Gimbel Collection of the works of Edgar Allan Poe, commemorating the 200th year of his birth. Included are rare and rarely seen autograph manuscripts, first editions, and Poe family heirlooms. Among the manuscripts: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Raven," and "Annabel Lee." On view also is "Grip," Charles Dickens's pet raven, and inspiration for Poe's most famous poem.

Rare Book Department, Parkway Central Library, 1901 Vine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103  
Open 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday; Tours of the Department at 11 a.m.  
Special Saturday hours: Saturday, January 10, 2009 9 - 5 p.m.

**Tuesday January 13 (Time to be announced)**

The Free Library of Philadelphia will host a "Great Poe Debate", brainchild of journalist and Poe expert Ed Pettit, featuring representatives from various cities where Poe lived to prove why their city deserves Poe's remains. The debate will be emceed by local comic, media personality and Poe performer Grover Silcox. Ed Pettit will have a chance to represent Philadelphia during the debate.

**Friday January 16, 2009**

Our favorite media personality, Grover Silcox, will appear with Fox 29's Dr. Mike at the College of



*Edgar the raven, will be featured in a talk and demonstration about ravens.*

**Friends of Poe**

*Friends of Poe supports the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site in its efforts to interpret Poe's life. Membership benefits include free attendance of special events, books, tours and an opportunity to meet with other Poe admirers. We invite you to join. If you join, among other benefits, you will receive the twice-yearly Friends of Poe Newsletter. For more information, go to [www.friendsofindependence.org](http://www.friendsofindependence.org) or call the Friends at (215) 597-7919 or call EDAL at (215) 597-8780.*

Physicians Mutter Museum ([www.collphyphil.org](http://www.collphyphil.org)) on January 16, 2009, offering “Beloved Physician”, a look at how medical issues, such as his wife’s tuberculosis, influenced Poe’s life and writing. Somehow, Grover manages to make us laugh while discussing these dreadful things.

**October 8 -11, 2009**

The Third International Poe Conference will meet in Philadelphia Oct 8 to 11, 2009, at

the Hyatt Hotel. At the conference, Poe scholars will present new scholarship, participants will attend a premier of a musical composition, inspired by Poe, and written by Augusta Reed Thomas and see a performance by Norman George as Poe.

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## Former Poe House Volunteer Creates New Poe Calendar

While pursuing his graduate degree in English Literature, Rob Veleva volunteered at the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site, to the delight of visitors and the Park Rangers. After months of offering entertaining, informative, and thoroughly researched tours, Rob produced, for his graduate thesis, a page a day calendar, essentially, a Poe biography, for 2009.

Rob will speak some time in November. After hearing a witty, energetic, and informative talk, you may purchase copies of his calendar, proceeds from which will benefit the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. Rob is now employed by the Longfellow Historic Site in Cambridge.



*In November, Rob Veleva will talk about Poe’s Longfellow “War” and his new Poe calendar.*

## Poe is Everywhere!

Theater groups, museums, movie theaters, and scholarly societies from all corners are embracing Poe's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. Besides the International Poe Conference (see events listing) this article will just point out a few that have come to our attention:

The **Baltimore Poe Museum**, will offer two weekends worth of birthday January 17, 18, 31 and February 1, John Astin will perform a "Birthday Salute to Poe". Also in the program will be theatrical performances of Poe short stories. In October 09 Baltimore will give Poe the funeral he should have had in 1849, featuring a horse drawn coffin and eulogies by 19<sup>th</sup> century dignitaries.

The **Edgar Allan Poe Cottage** [www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org) in New York is preparing for a comprehensive renovation and new visitor center and will have a fund-raiser "An Evening with Edgar Allan Poe and His Cottage" on October 17, 2008 at 6 PM at the National Arts Club.

The **Richmond Poe Museum** is offering a special exhibit, ending October 31, 2008, "The Incredible Mr. Poe: Edgar Allan Poe in the Comics: An Exhibition", devoted to the comic books and graphic narratives based on Poe's work. The Edgar Allan Poe Museum is located at 1914 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23223, phone 804 648-5523.

October 30 and 31, 2008, the **Lyceum Museum**, in Alexandria, Virginia, will offer renowned actor David Keltz as Poe (he's coming to Philadelphia in January). Phone: (703) 838-4994.

The **Japan Poe Society** (<http://www.poejapan.org/>) is planning The Bicentennial Special

Conference for September 19, 20, 2009 at Keio University in Tokyo. The Society will offer several panels in English.

**C.T.E.L.** (Centre de Recherche Transdisciplinaire en Epistémologie de la Littérature) in Paris, France, will host a Poe symposium January 22 and 23, 2009 on Poe's influence on generic theories in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century French literature and culture.

The **American Studies group at the University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies** (Ulices) will hold a symposium on "Poe and Gothic Creativity" in Lisbon, 19-20 March, 2009.

The best-named theater company, **Zombie Joes Underground Theatre Group**, will open all-new adaptations of Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Masque of The Red Death" at St Luke's Theatre in New York on August 27th, 2008. [www.zombiejoes.com](http://www.zombiejoes.com).

