



*...as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.*

Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Dear Friends of the GWC,

As many of you know, I am retiring retiring on June 30th as Director of the Gloucester Writers Center. As one of its founders, I wanted to share a little origin story of how Vincent's home became the community's house.

126 East Main Street was the home and studio of my uncle, Vincent Ferrini. Today, due to your support it has become a literary and cultural hub that celebrates Cape Ann's rich writing tradition. But the story really begins on Christmas Eve 2007, when Vincent packed away his typewriter and gave up this mortal coil.

Fast forward to the summer of 2009. Annie Thomas, Paul Sawyer, and I sit outside Paul's family home beneath the A. Piatt Andrew Bridge, talking about the possibility of transforming Vincent's studio home into a place dedicated to writers. Paul worried that the estate might sell the property before the community could raise enough money for a down payment and secure a mortgage. We all agreed that preserving Vincent's home as a place for writing was a goal worth pursuing.

A few months later, Paul wrote to tell us he was dying. We wanted our idea to become reality before he passed. We needed to move quickly and file for nonprofit status. The response was extraordinary. Generous contributions from community members soon provided the down payment needed to purchase Vincent's abode.

On June 23, 2010, one day before Vincent's birthday, Paul died. By the end of that month, the Gloucester Writers Center had opened its doors.

Over the past 15 years, the Gloucester Writers Center has welcomed hundreds of new and established writers, poets, storytellers, artists, filmmakers and readers. It has become what Peter Anastas memorably described as "a working writers center in a working town." In 2022 our beloved co-founder Annie Thomas decided it was time to retire. This October, will be my turn.

For many years, I have been working on a feature documentary about the saxophonist Lester Young. With more time available, I can now focus on completing that project. I am also beginning another long anticipated endeavor to tell the story of my grandfather who escaped the pogroms in Czarist Russia to follow his dream to become a farmer just west of Yellowstone National Park.

I never expected to spend fifteen years helping to lead a nonprofit organization, but doing so has given me the privilege of being part of countless meaningful events and friendships. I am especially proud of the Amiri Baraka Gloucester High Scholarship, created in 2014 after Baraka's visit to Gloucester to deliver the Charles Olson Lecture. And who could have predicted that *Fish Tales* would become our most beloved and most successful community program. Thank you, Jennifer, and all of our intrepid Storytellers-in-Residence, for making it possible.

As I step down, Kevin Perrin will take over as interim Executive Director on July 1st. I am sad to say Programming Director Eric Parkison is leaving for us for a full time gig. We will miss him but he'll be back for his Tuesday Night Poetry Group at 126. I am grateful to have worked with the multitudes of folks who helped build and sustain this remarkable grass-roots organization. On June 10, we begin our sixteenth year of serving Cape Ann's community. I am confident that the GWC will continue to inspire and support writers for generations to come. I especially want to thank JoeAnn Hart for picking up the cudgel and leading the Gloucester Writers Center through this transition. Her leadership, along with the dedication of our Board, volunteers, instructors, and supporters, ensures that the organization remains strong and vibrant.

I want to thank all the many dedicated staff and Board Members who have served over these last 16 years to make this spot a *rara avis* flying over the literary landscape of our city. For this occasion I need to use one of Vincent's favorite words. If we want the GWC to *fructify*, I encourage you to make a tax-deductible contribution to support our future growth. Your support help to the GWC to:

- Host literary events, including open mics, poetry readings, workshops, lectures, writing groups, and writers-in-residence programs.
- Preserve Gloucester's literary history and its connection to major twentieth-century poetry movements.
- Present *Fish Tales*, our signature storytelling program that combines civic dialogue and community engagement.
- Produce the annual Charles Olson Lecture Series, which brings internationally recognized writers to Gloucester.

The Gloucester Writers Center has earned a reputation as an intimate, grassroots literary center. We remain deeply committed to being "a working writers center in a working town."

Thank you for helping us keep this vision alive for the future.

Onward,

Handwritten initials 'HF' in a stylized, bold font.

**Save the date - HF Retirement Soiree !!
American Legion Hall Thursday - Sept 10**