

## POETS HOUSE ANNUAL REPORT FY 2013

(July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013)



Margo Viscusi Reading Room

With your support this past year, Poets House, one of the most comprehensive poetry libraries in the country, launched an online catalog of over 50,000 items, allowing readers and researchers all over the world to explore our inventory of books and materials. Following the upgrade of our website in 2012, the launch of our online catalog makes important poetry resources available to a global audience and reflects the cultural, social and aesthetic range of our commitment to poetry.

**2,913  
Showcase  
books from  
719 publishers**

The economic climate this past year was a challenging one for many organizations. This was especially true for arts not-for-profits in Lower Manhattan. Yet our visitorship remained steady—**66,000 PEOPLE VISITED** us onsite at 10 River Terrace; **14,000 CHILDREN, PARENTS AND EDUCATORS LEARNED** about poetry at Poets House; and **OVER 5 MILLION PEOPLE WERE INTRODUCED** to Poets House via our public partnerships and upgraded website. This was no small feat in the face of Superstorm Sandy and diminished funding in both the private and public sectors. Miraculously, Poets House was not flooded during Sandy as the river breached other parts of Lower Manhattan.



Joy Harjo, *Native Innovation*

We were continually heartened by the outpouring of our supporters' contributions, which helped us through a few unexpected and difficult moments—as well as our supporters' intrepid dedication to visit the library, come to programs, and view the exhibitions. Many of you told us that your enduring commitment to Poets House is a response to the need for a *place* for everyone to explore poetry—from award-winning poets to students, from seniors to children. Our mission has—and will always be—to foster interest in poetry by welcoming *everyone* into the art. Just as poetry contains multitudes, this home for poetry welcomes everyone.

**145 public programs  
—  
75 workshops &  
classes**

Inside, you will read about this past year's literary programs for adults, children and youth; our library, catalog and exhibitions; local and national public partnerships; and Poets House's relationship with online media. We are proud to have accomplished so much with your belief in the power of poetry and your commitment to Poets House. Every day you help us to fulfill our mission.



Poem in Your Pocket Day Reading

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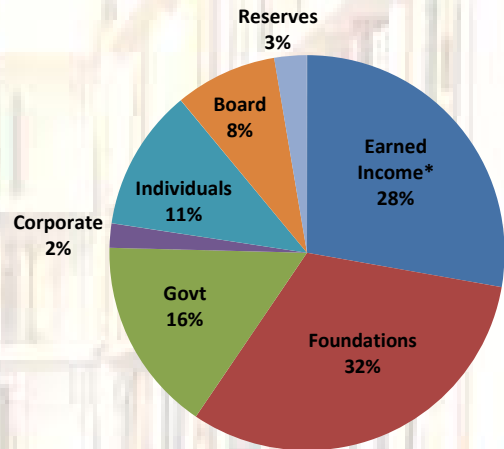
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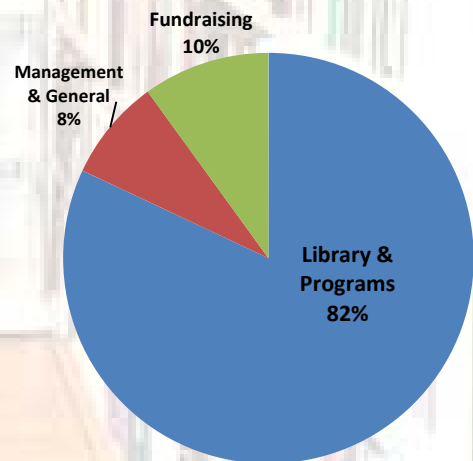
## FINANCIALS FY 2013

**Operating Revenue**  
 (\$1,612,772)



\*Earned income includes admissions, book sales, workshops & classes, space rentals, contracted services, membership, PITB Institute and benefit income.

**Operating Expenses**  
 \$1,612,460



## LIBRARY

Library  
attendance  
is ↑ 75%  
from 2009

Poets House has achieved a new level of visibility and service. Free and open to all, our library has become a destination for increasingly diverse audiences—poets at all stages of their careers, students, teachers, scholars, translators, New York tri-state residents, and national and international tourists. In FY 2013, visitorship to our library rose to 47,800 people, a 75% increase from 2009, the year Poets House moved into our new home.

This spring, **the launch of our library catalog on our new website** made our prized collection—one of the most comprehensive open-stack poetry libraries in the country—more accessible than ever. Ten years in the making, our library catalog strengthens our online presence and attracts attention from libraries, educators, researchers, poets and general readers. Our catalog introduces the many entry points into the art of poetry, from recordings of great poets to books on how to write poetry. It also enables the public to make connections between poets featured in our programs, multimedia archives and our book collection. We have continued to add recordings of each season's programs to our library's Multimedia Archive, and we have introduced a sampling of our collection's recordings by posting over 60 audio and video recordings to our website in FY 2013. Thousands of additional recordings can be enjoyed onsite in the Frank Platt Listening Center.



This past year, our **21<sup>st</sup> Showcase gathered 2,913 books from 719 publishers**, a 28% increase in poetry books from FY 2010. The Poets House Showcase is a unique and democratic exhibition of all the poetry books published nationwide, demonstrating the breadth of contemporary poetry, from chapbooks, broadsides and ephemera to masterworks by major publishers. After the exhibition, all Showcase books become part of our permanent collection—and are included in the online library catalog, searchable from anywhere in the world.

## LITERARY PROGRAMS



Programs at Poets House are informed by the iconic presence of our library. They extend the resources of our collection through dialogue, readings and performance, connecting contemporary poetry with its history. In FY 2013, we presented 145 public programs, featuring poetry and poets from around the world.

A highlight of this past year's programs was ***Native Innovation: Indigenous American Poetry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***, a groundbreaking three-day symposium of readings, conversations and panels on issues of Native American identity and poetics with **Sherwin Bitsui, Joe Bruchac, Natalie Diaz, Jennifer Foerster, Santee Frazier, Joy Harjo, Allison Hedge Coke, Roberta Hill, Maurice Kenney, Cedar Sigo, James Thomas Stevens, Orlando White** and **Karenne Wood** (supported by the Lannan Foundation).

We also presented a full spectrum of contemporary poets reading and discussing the work of other poets through our signature *Passwords* series. Larger scale co-sponsored tributes focused on the works of legendary American poets like **Adrienne Rich, Lucille Clifton, May Swenson, Sekou Sundiata** and the

Palestinian poet **Taha Muhammad Ali**. Other programs ranged from the Russian avant-garde underground in the 1920s to the poetics of kitsch, from the texts of composer John Cage to a talk on painter Philip Guston's collaborations with poets. Some additional highlights from our 2012-2013 program season were:

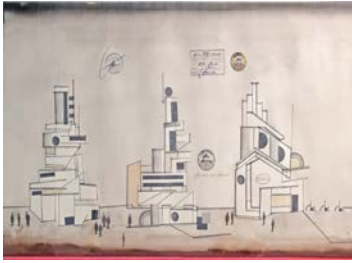
- A reading and discussion at the AWP Conference in Boston with poet **Adonis**, one of the most revered poets of the Arabic-speaking world, and his translator **Khaled Mattawa**;
- **John Ashbery** reading from his new book, *Planisphere*, to a packed house of 350 people (co-sponsored by the River to River Festival);
- *The Poetic Species*, a conversation on poetry and science with former U.S. Poet Laureate **Robert Hass** and Pulitzer Prize-winning entomologist **E.O. Wilson**, held at the American Museum of Natural History and attended by nearly 700 people;
- A poetry reading on Governors Island inspired by Mark di Suvero's sculptures with **Yusef Komunyakaa**, **Tan Lin**, **Paul Muldoon** and **Brenda Shaughnessy**, pictured above, (co-sponsored by Storm King Art Center);
- **The Dark Room Collective**, a community of African-American writers, reunited for panels, readings, conversations and a musical performance with **Tisa Bryant**, **Thomas Sayers Ellis**, **Major Jackson**, **John Keene**, **Tracy K. Smith**, **Rochelle Spencer**, **Sharan Strange** and **U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey**;
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> **Emerging Poets Fellowship** with **Mahogany Browne**, **Jessica Elsaesser**, **Paul Hlava**, **Rosamond King**, **Elsbeth Pancrazi**, **Montana Ray**, **Andrew Seguin**, **Xeña Stanislavovna Semjonová**, **Purvi Shah** and **Ocean Vuong**. This 12-week program was led by Jen Bervin (made possible by the Jerome Foundation).



Creating a welcoming environment to learn about poetry outside of a traditional academic setting, in FY 2013 Poets House offered **75 classes and workshops**. Our website further extends the dialogue about poetry and culture.

Other international programs this past year included: Sean Cotter on **Romanian** poet Nichita Stănescu with poet Saviana Stănescu Condeescu / Poet-translators Jean Valentine and Christian Wiman on **Russian** poets Osip Mandelstam & Marina Tsvetaeva / Poet Graham Foust and translator Samuel Frederick on **German** poet Ernst Meister / Don Share on **Spanish** poet Miguel Hernández / Karen Emmerich and Edmund Keeley on **Greek** poet Yannis Ritsos / Jennifer Scappettone on **Italian** poet Amelia Rosselli / David Hinton on Classical **Chinese** poetry / A tribute to **Swedish**-born poet Siv Cedering / Iowa International Writers Program: Alina Dadaeva (**Uzbekistan**), TJ Dema (**Botswana**) and Rodrigo Garcia Lopes (**Brazil**), plus dozens of poets from the **United States** and **Canada**.

## EXHIBITIONS



Our exhibitions facilitate dialogue and synergy between poetry, the visual arts, archival works and other art forms. In fall of 2012, Poets House's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary came to a close with two exhibitions, made possible by the Leon Levy Foundation and Dedalus Foundation, celebrating our founders Elizabeth Kray and poet Stanley Kunitz. **Bettissima**

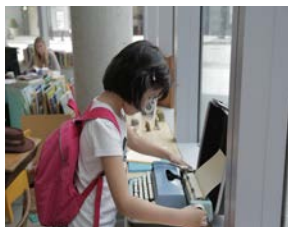


included manuscripts and letters written to Kray by E.E. Cumming, T.S. Eliot, Marianne Moore and other luminaries. Simultaneously, **A Poet's Circle**, curated by Jason Andrew, featured paintings by Kunitz's friends—Philip Guston (upper right), Robert Motherwell, Saul Steinberg (upper left), and Jack Tworkov, among others. The entwined exhibitions were followed by a reading from *The Collected Poems of Stanley Kunitz* with **Tina Chang, Mark Doty, Cornelius Eady, Marie Howe, Major Jackson, Michael Klein, Donna Masini, Tom Sleigh** and other friends.



In the spring, **Toothpaste and Coffee House: Change & Continuity** traced Coffee House Press' history in poetry publishing, from letterpress editions and offset printing to newer technologies. The exhibit—including broadsides, chapbooks and important first editions—provided a capsule view of the trajectory of this independent press (and its precursor Toothpaste Press) renowned for adventurous discoveries, editorial excellence, elegant design and steadfast commitment to writers, readers and poetry. Two public programs featured Coffee House Press founder **Allan Kornblum**.

## CHILDREN & YOUTH PROGRAMS



During FY 2013, nearly 14,000 children, educators and parents learned about poetry through our Constance Laibe Hayes Children's Room and education programs. As in past years, Poets House offered free class trips; Children's Room library hours; a weekly toddlers program; and interdisciplinary weekend programs with acclaimed artists and writers. In addition to our annual film screening of *Red Balloon* and readings by children's book authors Bobbi Katz and Carin Berger, children wrote poems during every program, which included: *An Ode to Odetta*, folk music legend of the civil rights movement; *Blown Away by Poetry* with puppetry by Urban Stages; and *Ships, Seas and Poetries!* in which children built model boats and sang sea shanties, harkening back to the oral tradition of poetry.

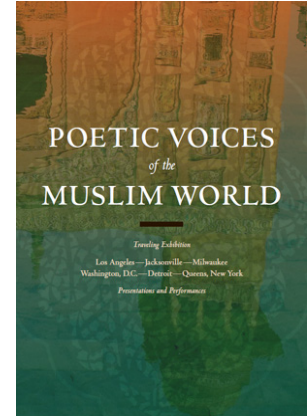


In partnership with Goldman Sachs, Poets House worked with three local schools—P.S. 89, P.S. 276 and P.S. 1—to explore students' poetry writing, using the theme of neighborhoods as inspiration during in-class visits and class trips to Poets House. The program reached nearly 250 students in Lower Manhattan and culminated at Poets House on Poem in Your Pocket Day in a day-long reading and anthology release party, during which every student received a professionally printed book featuring their poetry. Thousands of pocket-sized editions of student poems were distributed throughout the neighborhood.

## POETS HOUSE IN THE WORLD

Poets House is committed, as part of its mission, to broadening audiences for poetry. Partnerships in our neighborhood, throughout the city, and across the nation help us to invite people of all ages to discover poetry.

***Poetic Voices of the Muslim World*** builds on Poets House's 20-year history of helping library systems become centers for the discovery of poetry. *Poetic Voices* is a two-year, six-city initiative that presents free lectures, readings and performances exploring the diversity of Muslim cultures via its poetries. Our partners include library systems in Detroit, Jacksonville, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, Queens, and Washington, D.C.



This program introduces national audiences to the diversity of poetic traditions across Muslim cultures. It is co-produced by City Lore with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities' *Bridging Cultures* initiative and the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.

Launched in spring 2013 in Jacksonville and Los Angeles, these programs were attended by nearly 2,000 people; an accompanying traveling exhibition was viewed by 100,000 people; and the dedicated website reinforced visitorship. Currently, *Poetic Voices* is

being presented in Milwaukee and Washington, D.C. For more information, visit <http://poeticvoicesofthemuslimworld.org>.

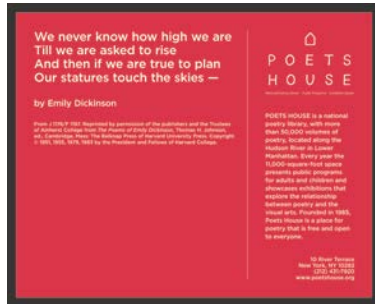
This year, our annual **Poetry in The Branches National Institute**—an in-depth training for librarians—focused on poetry services for children. The two-day seminar provided librarians with the tools to create public poetry programs for children at their branches and expand their children's poetry book collections. Librarians from all five boroughs attended. Support from the Marcia Brady Tucker Foundation provided free tuition to the librarians.



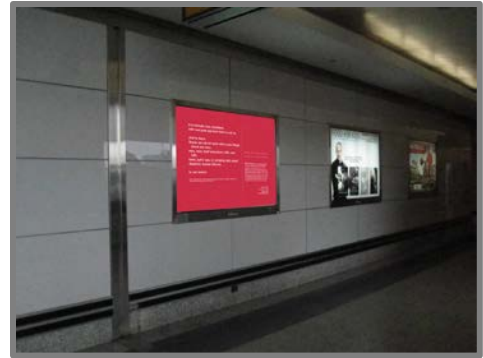
A highlight of our annual outreach efforts in Lower Manhattan is **Poem in Your Pocket Day**. Ten thousand pocket-sized poems—some written by local school children—were distributed throughout Lower Manhattan. A community breakfast and open mic invited neighbors, community leaders, students, educators and poetry



enthusiasts to share poems they loved. Nearly 250 local students read their poems throughout the afternoon.



Poets House brings poetry to millions of commuters throughout the PATH trains and stations, JFK Airport, Laganardia Airport and on the AirTrain in an ongoing partnership with The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey. ***Along These Lines***

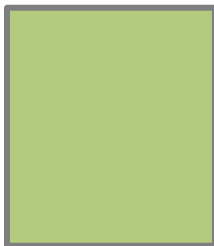


emblazoned lines of poetry on colorful posters—by poets such as Marianne Moore, Allen Ginsberg and Muriel Rukeyser, as well as exciting poets of our moment—throughout the PATH trains and stations. And this past spring, Poets House designed a series of poetry posters centered around the theme of travel for the “light boxes” in JFK and Laganardia Airports, as well as a series of posters for the AirTrain.

## PUBLICITY, ONLINE MEDIA & WEBSITE

The upgrade of Poets House’s website allowed us to launch the online catalog and add more audio and video segments. As a result, our viewer participation multiplied: the number of page visits rose by 82%, and the amount of time spent on the website as a whole increased by 158%. We discovered that the more content we upload, the longer people stay on our website.

In the past year, 195,000 unique visitors have come to our website; 63% of them are new. We were reached by 14,740 people via mobile devices. The majority of viewers are from the U.S., but visitorship also comes from the U.K., Canada, India, Australia, Germany, France, Italy and the Philippines. Of our international visitors, 85% are new to the site.



Our social media programs, such as Twitter and Facebook, allow us to engage our audiences in new ways. We now have nearly 25,000 Twitter followers who are inspired by lines of poetry tweeted throughout the week, who then extend our reach and community by retweeting our posts. On Poets House’s Facebook page, our 9,010 Facebook fans learn about our programs and events, receive sneak preview photos of upcoming exhibitions, and participate in a forum in which they can dialogue and interact with one another about poetry.

In FY 2013, we had 28 major program reviews and listings, including a *New York Times* review by art critic Holland Cotter of the *Bettissima* and *A Poet’s Circle* exhibitions celebrating co-founders Stanley Kunitz and Elizabeth Kray. *Native Innovation* received a critic’s pick in *Time Out New York* and six reviews, from the blog *Harriet* (Poetry Foundation) to *Downtown Express* to the online poetry magazine *Coldfront*.

## 2014 & BEYOND

Through our library, programs, and website, Poets House is a place to read, write and discover poetry—whether in New York, on the other side of the country, or the other side of the world. During the next year, we will continue to build infrastructure to strengthen Poets House. And we will embark on new partnerships with the Metropolitan Museum of Art; expand our exhibitions; and find new opportunities to deepen service, while maintaining our home’s site and our core mission. In all we do, we aim to make *a place for poetry* that inspires new discoveries in language and feeling.

# Thank You to Everyone Who Contributed

POETS HOUSE IS GRATEFUL TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS *PLACE FOR POETRY*. DUE TO SPACE LIMITATIONS, THE FOLLOWING ACKNOWLEDGES ONLY GIFTS OF \$500 AND ABOVE MADE DURING THE LAST YEAR. WE SEND A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO **DEBORAH S. PEASE** FOR HER EXTRAORDINARY SUPPORT OF POETS HOUSE THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE ORGANIZATION.

**We salute those individuals and foundations whose recent generous leadership donations have enabled the growth of Poets House:**

Penny & John Barr • Thomas M. & Kate Cheney Chappell • Robert Kissane • Deborah S. Pease • Myra & Harold Shapiro • Margo & Anthony Viscusi • The J. M. Kaplan Fund • Leon Levy Foundation • The Reed Foundation • The Tomorrow Foundation **Poets House programs, services and capital project are made possible, in part, with public funds from** Battery Park City Authority • Institute of Museum & Library Services • National Endowment for the Arts • National Endowment for the Humanities • New York City Council • New York City Department of Cultural Affairs • New York State Council on the Arts • The Port Authority of New York & New Jersey **Additional support comes from the following donors:** **Foundations:** Axe-Houghton Foundation • The Howard Bayne Fund • The William Bingham Foundation • Bloomberg Philanthropies • Booth Ferris Foundation • Bydale Foundation • The James J. Colt Foundation • The Concordia Foundation • Cornelia & Michael Bessie Foundation • The Dedalus Foundation • The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation • Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art • The Sherman Fairchild Foundation • The Greenwich Collection • The Jerome Foundation • Lannan Foundation • LitTap • Lower Manhattan Cultural Council • Joseph & Katherine Macari Foundation • Stavros Niarchos Foundation • Pine Tree Foundation of New York • Poetry Foundation • Marcia Brady Tucker Foundation • The Walbridge Fund • The Whistler Trust • The Winston Foundation **Corporations:** Alfred A. Knopf • American Express Foundation • Berkshire Capital • Blue Smoke • Con Edison • Debevoise & Plimpton • Goldman Sachs • Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP • Lutz & Carr • Merck Partnership for Giving • NY Waterway • Sullivan & Cromwell LLP **Individuals:** Roger Alcaly & Helen Bodian • Arthur Yorke Allen & Mary Stewart Hammond • Thomas Amon • Page Ashley • Lee Niven Auchincloss • Anne Newman Bacal & Jules Bacal • Susan Baker & Michael Lynch • Sylvia & William Barone • Ellen Ivey Bates • Laura Baudo & Robert F.X. Sillerman • Dyke Benjamin • Greg Berman • Don Bernhardt • Jutta & Hans Bertram-Nothnagel • Marie-Eve & Michel Berty • Ernest & Rita Bogen • Louise Braverman & Steven Glickel • Lee Briccetti • Bobbie Bristol & Galway Kinnell • Marilyn Callander • Jane & Ivan Chermayeff • Jim Chervenak • Peter Cole • Ginnie Cooper • Mary Cronson • Pierre & Ellen De Saint Phalle • Frederick Doner & Michele Oka Doner • Linda Earle • Lynn Emanuel & Jeffrey Schwartz • Florence Fearrington • Cheri Fein • David Ferry • Merlin Fisk • Fredericka Foster & Bennett Shapiro • Matthew Frazier • Lorraine Gallard & Richard H. Levy • Johanna & Leslie Garfield • Rust Gilbert • Martín Gómez • Alison Granucci • David & Joan Grubin • Elizabeth Guthrie • Jim & Erica Haba • William Haas • Robert Herrmann • William Higgins • Edward Hirsch • Jerry Hong • Helen & Frank Houghton • Mary-Beth Hughes & Duke Beeson • Fred Hugue / Astoria Federal Savings • Allen & Valerie Hyman • Susan Jackson • Thomas Campbell Jackson & Penny Brandt Jackson • Anne-Marie Jannuzzo • J. Chester & Freda Johnson • Meredith Kane • Vincent Katz & Vivien Bittencourt • Harry Kendall • Wendy Keys & Donald Pels • William Kistler • Wendy Larsen • Paul LeClerc & Judith Ginsberg • Ellen Levy • Owen Lewis • Anne Locke • Clara & Bevis Longstreth • Susan Lorence • Anne Marie Macari • K. Ann McDonald • Bruce & Christina McEver • Ann McGovern • Josephine A. Merck & James Stevenson • Jim & Agnes Metzger • Richard & Barbara Moore • John Morning • Jane & Stanley Moss • Renate Ponsold Motherwell • William James Murray • Susan Oliver • Nancy Olnick & Giorgio Spanu • James & Mary Ottaway • Antonio Pérez / Borough of Manhattan Community College • Jim Periconi & Alice McCarthy • Frederick & Alexandra Peters • Lin Peyton & Morris Hancock • Carole Pittelman • Frank & Judy Platt • Nicholas & Sheila Platt • Richard & Audrey Platt • In Honor of Marie Ponsot • Ginger Potter • Nicholas F. Potter • Joan Pratt • Warrie & Warfield Price • Matthew Putman • Anna Rabinowitz • Paula Rackoff & Norbert Lempert • Theresa Marie Reilly • Charles Reiss • Frederic C. Rich • Christopher & Rebecca Roberts • Lillie Robertson • Joanna & Daniel Rose • Jane Rosenblum • Stewart Rosenblum • Neal Rosenthal & Kerry Madigan • Ruth & Alfred Rosenthal • Jeanette & Alexander Sanger • Susan Levin Schlechter • Richard & Sheila Schwartz • Cynthia Sears • Daniel Shapiro • Michael Sillerman • Ward & Carolyn Smith • Gregory Solak • André Spears & Anne Rosen • Michael & Judy Steinhardt • Jamie Stern • Peter Stern & Helen W. Drutt English • Mr. & Mrs. James Stevens • Catharine Stimpson • Nina Sundell • Szilvia Szmuk-Tanenbaum • Quincy & Margaret Troupe • Enzo & Mayalen Viscusi • Jane & David Walentas • Jerrie Whitfield & Richard Motika • Peter Wiley • Ealan Wingate & Melinda Davis • Annie Wright • Barbara & Charles Wright • Kevin Young • Lori Zabar & Mark Mariscal • Ruth Zamoyta • Anonymous (3) **Special thanks to our more than 1,000 members! (As of August 1, 2013)**

