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Staten Island honors the Bard's birthday with Shakespeare Sonnet-Thon

by VICTORIA PRIOLA

Grymes Hill is bringing back the classics this week.

To honor the life and works of William Shakespeare, Wagner College and the Staten Island Shakespearean Theatre join forces to present the second annual Shakespeare Sonnet-Thon from 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday.

“The 154 sonnets we celebrate with the Shakespeare Sonnet-Thon, sing to us of love,” said Charlie Siedenburg. “They might have fallen out of fashion, but that is no reason to neglect these exquisite pieces.”

Wagner students, faculty and staff are participating as well as interested members of the community. The college welcomes students and interested spectators for an afternoon of sonnet reading and reflection.

Here's what you need to know: The event takes places Thursday on the steps of Wagner's Main Hall. Readings are free and open to public: Rain or shine.

A QUICK HISTORY LESSON: The actual date of Shakespeare's death is a mystery, but it is commonly estimated to be April 23, based on the date of his funeral, April 25, 1616. His birth is thought to be the same date, based on his baptism record of April 26, 1564.

The Sonnets are Shakespeare's most popular works. A few of them, such as Sonnet 18 “Shall I compare thee to a summer's day,” Sonnet 116 “Let me not to the marriage of true minds,” and Sonnet 73 “That time of year thou mayst in me behold,” have become the most widely-read poems in all of English literature.

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets, likely composed over an extended period from 1592 to 1598. They were published in 1609. To this day, his works are still considered legendary.

Wagner College is located at 1 Campus Road in Grymes Hill. To become a sonnet reader, email charlie_siedenburg@yahoo.com.