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**A SIMPLE WAY FOR YOU TO HELP US:
PLEASE TAKE OUR 10-MINUTE SURVEY.**



Through this newsletter, we engage thousands of people across the Commonwealth by:

- interviewing humanists whose work is contributing to a more enlightened citizenry,
- featuring grant recipients and listing grants made to organizations for public humanities projects,
- announcing humanities-related events happening throughout the state, and
- getting the word out about our own public programs and events.

Or do we?

We would like to hear your opinions about Mass Humanities. Do you read it all, or do you look for certain sections? Do you attend programs or events based on what you read here? Would you prefer an electronic version, of certain sections or of the entire newsletter? Please take our survey and let us know how best to reach you.

It should not take more than ten minutes to complete. You can flip to page 8, fill out and mail us the survey. Or, take the survey online at

www.mfh.org

and click the Newsletter Survey button. Thank you for taking the time out to complete it! Information we gather through this survey will remain confidential.

Mass Humanities

A Publication of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities Spring 2008

No News is Bad News

By David Reich

*Editor's note: The following excerpt is from an article written for *Boston College Magazine*, ©2008 Trustees of Boston College. Used with permission.*

On Saturday, November 17, seven big-time editors and reporters, one celebrated blogger, and a former presidential press secretary met on the stage of Robsham Theater to consider the latest puzzles, annoyances, and threats facing the mainstream media. The occasion of this worry-fest was a symposium titled “No News is Bad News,” which like three previous fall convocations—on presidents, the voting rights act, and the Supreme Court—was organized by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and hosted by Boston College. Over the course of the afternoon, before an audience of some 500, panels of speakers chewed over such topics as the challenge of the Internet, plummeting newspaper circulation (and advertising revenues), shrinking staffs, and charges of liberal and conservative bias. The grimmest consideration of all, however, was undertaken by the first panel—a set of war correspondents who addressed the risks and obligations of reporting from Iraq, where the conflict has resulted in the death of 124 journalists, including 32 in 2006 alone—a single-year record, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The *Boston Globe*'s Kevin Cullen (Iraq, Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia) and the *Washington Post*'s Pulitzer winner Anthony Shadid (West Bank, Lebanon, Iraq) spoke of the difficulties attendant on their work in Iraq because reporters, Western reporters especially, are increasingly seen as legitimate military targets—something new in the annals of journalism, according to the panelists. “I was only in Iraq for a week,” Cullen said, “and I thought I was going to die every day. I was in Belgrade for 40 days of bombing every night, and I never thought I'd die.” Shadid, who arrived at Robsham with what appeared to be a diaper tote slung over his shoulder (his young daughter was in the audience), and who was wounded by an Israeli round several years ago while reporting from the West Bank, noted bluntly, “I have a daughter, and I've sometimes taken risks I shouldn't have taken.” During his last tour in Iraq, he said, security was so perilous that “I simply couldn't do my job anymore.” Without the Iraqi journalists who make up 80 percent of the *Post*'s Baghdad staff, “the story would not be coming out,” he said, adding, “The Middle East, probably the most relevant region in terms of news, is in some ways in a process of entropy. It's collapsing. We have to figure out how to cover that story.”

A third panelist, the Kennedy School of Government's Samantha Power (former Yugoslavia, Darfur), herself the winner of a Pulitzer for *A Problem from Hell*, her book on genocide, described the cost-benefit analysis she did when offered a reporting assignment in a war zone. Power, who traveled to Darfur in 2005 to interview the head of the Janjaweed militia, said, “No one had gotten to the head of Janjaweed, and there was no evidence that we as Americans or as Westerners or as journalists were targets, even though . . . this guy was clearly a killer *par excellence*.”



No News symposium panelists Samantha Power and Anthony Shadid

Adding insult to the serious prospect of injury, those covering Iraq face charges of bias from the war's supporters and critics at home and abroad. The war reporter's job is to analyze and explain the conflict, said Shadid, and not to express pro- or anti-war views. But “increasingly, the political culture in the United States doesn't want that type of discussion. It wants to know which side are you on.”

As if to illustrate the point, a woman who identified herself as a Boston College graduate used one of the floor microphones to accuse the panel of a “liberal bias that made it impossible for you to think positively about the war.”

“How would you presume to know what our bias is?” retorted Cullen, whose short stay in Iraq had resulted in a column about some U.S. marines who had flown a sick Iraqi girl out of the country for medical treatment.

A second audience member, equally impassioned, came at the panel from the opposite angle, asking whether the media would keep the country from “being spun into another war,” this time with Iran. “Apologies [for being misled on the Iraq war] aren't what we need,” she said. “We need an independent press.”

Power responded by saying that the invasion of Iraq took place during a time, following 9/11, when normal journalistic skepticism “melted away,” as had—she noted—most checks and balances within government. Citing recent editorials against a war with Iran in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, she expressed hope that this period of immoderate trust had itself now passed.

The full article, containing a review of the second and third panels, entitled, “Political Reporting” and “The News Business and the Business of News,” can be found in the newsletter section of www.mfh.org.

The proceedings of all three panels may be viewed at www.bc.edu/frontrow.

FOUNDATION NEWS

BOARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities is actively seeking nominations of qualified individuals to serve on its board of directors. Candidates must work or reside in Massachusetts and believe in the importance of the humanities and their relevance to contemporary life.

In addition to professionals in fields related to the humanities, the board consists of members with expertise in program evaluation, grassroots organizing, marketing, finance, law, fundraising, and many other areas. If you would like to nominate someone, or are interested yourself, please visit our website, www.mfh.org/foundation/wanted.htm, for more information and a description of board member responsibilities.

WELCOME

In the fall, the Foundation welcomed both Pleun Bouricius and Tiffany Lyman-Olszewski to our staff.

Pleun Bouricius, who was born and raised in The Hague, The Netherlands, and has a PhD in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University, is the Foundation's new Program Officer. Pleun is responsible for running small grants programs and initiatives in Massachusetts history. Currently, she is organizing the Foundation's annual history conference for small historical organizations, this year entitled, "Sustaining the Future of Massachusetts History" (see page 6). She and her husband, Tee O'Sullivan, live in Plainfield with a dog named Sam.

Tiffany is the Development and Communications Assistant, with a BA from Skidmore College in English Literature. Before arriving at the Foundation, she held similar positions at Tapestry Health of Florence, and Jewish Community Housing of Brighton, MA, and has also held various other jobs in the nonprofit sector in Boston.

RENOVATIONS AND MOVES

After choosing western Massachusetts for its sole location and settling into the Shepard House at Historic Northampton, the Foundation has been abuzz with the sounds of change. Due to the addition of new staff members, we have been in the midst of renovating rooms and shuffling offices, while continuing to preserve the integrity of the historic building. The renovation of the Shepard House began in November, and should wrap up by the end of February. In addition to the conversion of unused rooms into office space, renovations are being made to the front rooms, bathrooms, hallways and staircases.



Tiffany Lyman-Olszewski and Pleun Bouricius



The Big Read

The Foundation is co-sponsoring "The Big Read," organized by WUMB-FM radio station at UMass Boston with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. WUMB has also received funding from Massachusetts Literacy Foundation, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Government Relations and Public Affairs at UMass Boston to kick off this program. The Foundation has donated \$4,500 to supply copies of the book *To Kill a Mockingbird* to students who participate in the Greater Boston area. "The Big Read" will encourage young people to come together to read, discuss, and celebrate reading as an integral and stimulating part of life. "The Big Read" focuses on both middle and high school students, and by 2009 approximately 400 towns and cities nationwide will have hosted a "Big Read" program.

WUMB is planning a variety of projects throughout the six-month program, including a contest for songs inspired by *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a radio show, a MySpace page, book giveaways, and more. WUMB's partners will coordinate other events, which can be found at: www.wumb.org/thebigread.

"The Big Read" is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, in participation with the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and Arts Midwest. www.neabigread.org

Participating Organizations:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Massachusetts Bay, Boston
www.bbmb.org

Healey Library at UMass Boston, Boston
www.lib.umb.edu

Hingham Community Read Program, Hingham
www.hinghamlibrary.org

Labouré Center of Catholic Charities, South Boston
www.ccab.org/locations/metro-boston/laboure

Mass Humanities, Northampton
www.mfh.org

Newburyport Literary Festival, Newburyport
www.newburyportliteraryfestival.org

Richards Memorial Library, North Attleboro
www.sailsinc.org/northattleboro

Silver Lake Gallery, Newton
www.silverlakegallery.com

Tobin K-8 School, Roxbury

William Monroe Trotter Institute, Boston
www.trotter.umb.edu

Worker Education Program, Roxbury

WriteBoston & Community Leadership Academy, Brighton
www.cityofboston.gov/bra/writeboston

WUMB-FM, Boston
www.wumb.org

Greater Egleston High School, Roxbury

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Editor

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities promotes the use of history, literature, philosophy and the other humanities disciplines to deepen our understanding of the issues of the day, strengthen our sense of common purpose, and enrich individual and community life. We take the humanities out of the classroom and into the community.

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, a private, nonprofit, educational organization, receives funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities; the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency; and private sources.

Our American Cousin

By Hayley Wood

This June Northampton's Academy of Music, a nineteenth-century theatre not unlike Ford's Theater, in which Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, will host a contemporary opera, *Our American Cousin*, about the night of Lincoln's death. Composer Eric Sawyer, a member of the composition faculty at Amherst College, is the founder of Live in Concert, a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding the audience for new music by presenting works by living composers in combination with other artistic media, including dance, poetry, film, and computer-assisted technologies. Librettist John Shoptaw is Professor of English at UC Berkeley, where he teaches American poetry and poetry writing. His work for the opera is his second collaboration with Live in Concert, the first having been the setting of his poem "Itasca," about the discovery of the source of the Mississippi River, to music for four singers and electronic instruments.

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities awarded Live in Concert a \$7,500 Liberty and Justice for All grant in March 2007. The opera presents a play within a play: *Our American Cousin*, the actual play that the Lincolns were watching at Ford's Theater in Washington on the night of the assassination. It was the first Broadway hit and a reliable income generator for Laura Keene's traveling theater company throughout the Civil War. In the opera, Laura Keene (a real historic personage) greets the Lincolns and describes the play about to be performed, supposing that it will be particularly relevant to them, since it depicts "a certain backwoods bumpkin, / honest Asa, [who] travels east to reunite/two branches of a severed family."

Characters in the opera—both in character within the period romantic melodrama, and as "themselves" backstage—muse idealistically on the power of art to help audiences forget violence and discord as well as the cover it provides from reality.

One actor learns that the young man he hired to take his place as a soldier has been killed in the war.

Audience members—represented by the opera's chorus—voice their perspectives as well. Nurses recall their experiences with the war's wounded; freed former slaves (former slaves were very likely among the audience members at the 1865 performance) refer to their harrowing journeys from the South and the perceptions by whites that they are "three-fifths of a man"; Union veterans claim to have fought to preserve the unity of the nation, not to free slaves; businessmen crow about their war profits. The opera concludes, after Lincoln is shot and various leading characters respond, with the play's cast and audience members uniting in an elegy of the "eye for an eye"-style justice that fate seems to demand: "Blood will have blood/until every drop drawn with a lash/shall be paid for with another drawn with a gun."

A story so central to the character of the United States may be especially well suited to opera, which, Eric Sawyer claims, is uniquely able to "tell some stories in a more immediate and resonant way than any other medium, especially those on subjects of national and cultural identity." With this performance, Live in Concert will be promoting its mission to bring new music to audiences that might not otherwise have an opportunity to experience it. Audience members unfamiliar with opera will benefit from pre-performance panel discussions with musicians and performers. Supertitles and programs containing the libretto will help audience members follow the action, keep up with the play within the play, and catch the subtleties of the poetry being sung. John Shoptaw notes that "the opera is sung in American; opera gives a theatrical experience emotionally enhanced and intensified by music. Despite its historical pretext,

the opera is funny and fun; it's OK to laugh. Both the writing and the music are accessible and absorbing." The music for *Our American Cousin* falls into the category of "modern classical," which Eric Sawyer describes as a "dual concept, with nods both to the present moment and to time-honored tradition." The performance will involve classically trained musicians. (Sawyer is a classically trained composer who is also a solo and chamber pianist.) Modern classical music can incorporate elements of varied musical traditions such as jazz, pop, world music, and Broadway show tunes. Just as a merging of diverse music traditions invigorates modern classical music, Live In Concert is actively promoting the idea that a multitude of artistic disciplines, such as dance, poetry, and theater, can combine with new music and amplify the effects of every element.

The Academy of Music in Northampton is an ideal venue for such a rich and unusual theatrical offering. The theatre itself, which opened in 1891, is the set, and a very fine one, with a box for the presidential couple, the same kind of door of access to the box that John Wilkes Booth had, the same visibility from the audience seats, and appropriate period ornamentation. There are other historic ties between the Academy and Laura Keene's company. In the Academy lobby hangs a photograph of Joseph Jefferson, who played the American cousin of the play during its run on Broadway (but not at Ford's Theater on the night of Lincoln's assassination). Most likely he appeared in other plays at the Northampton Academy of Music. E. H. Sothern, the son of the actor who played the comic Lord Dundreary in *Our American Cousin*—the trademark performer of the production—appeared several times at the Academy.

The hope of Live in Concert and Mass Humanities is that the magnificent combination of art and history presented in the opera, accompanied by panel discussions with the composer, librettist, and stage director, will both expose new audiences to new music and stir audience members to consider how the thematic elements in the performance affect their own lives. In the opera, Laura Keene bids her audience to "forget awhile," but I think our librettist would have us remember.

Our American Cousin will be performed at the Academy of Music in Northampton on June 20 and 22. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the opera website: www.ouramericancousin.com



Donald Wilkinson, rehearsing as Abraham Lincoln, reflects on the evening's entertainment and the national moment, as Mary Lincoln (Angela Gooch) sits beside him in the Presidential Box. Gil Rose leads the Boston Modern Orchestra Project below. Photo by Samuel Masinter.



Janna Baty, as actress-director Laura Keene, rehearses a bit of comic hijinks on the stage of Ford's Theater. Photo by Samuel Masinter.



"Assassination of President Lincoln" from Harper's Weekly, April 29, 1865

Recent Grants

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

\$8,100 to the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield for *Film Feasts*, an extension of the museum's Little Cinema run into the off-season with four "film and feast" events, each of which partners the museum with a local restaurant.

\$10,000 to the University of Massachusetts/New WORLD Theater in Amherst to support a multifaceted project entitled *Walaalo! Somali Women's Project*, which aims to develop economic opportunities for Somali immigrant women in the Springfield area and build understanding of Somali history and culture in the larger community.

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

\$10,000 to the Worcester Historical Museum for an exhibition and panel discussions entitled, *Got Food? Creating a Hunger-Free Community*, about the 200-year history of Worcester County hunger relief programs.

GREATER BOSTON

\$4,000 to Actors' Shakespeare Project in Cambridge for a series of workshops, the performance of selected scenes with panel discussions, and a writing activity for veterans entitled *Henry V Conversations: What is a Just War?* in conjunction with a production of *Henry V*.



A scene from *Henry V*, performed for panel discussion, *Henry V Conversations: What is a Just War?* Seth Powers as Henry and Molly Schreiber as Catherine. Photo by Carrolle Photography.

\$8,994 to Brandeis University in Waltham for *On Equal Terms*, a traveling exhibit on women in the construction trades following the 1978 Executive Orders that opened up industry jobs and training programs to women.

\$3,280 to the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library for *Boston and Beyond: A Bird's Eye View of New England: A Lecture Series*, and a Web-based exhibit, to accompany a gallery exhibit of late nineteenth century maps.

\$10,000 to the Lexington Historical Society for *The Day the Revolution Began: Orientation Film for Visitors to Lexington*.

\$5,000 to the New Repertory Theatre, Inc., in Watertown to support *Their Voices Will Be Heard: Artist Responses to the Israeli/Palestinian Situation*, a series of panel discussions, film presentations, and other events in

support of the performance of two plays: *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, about a young American woman who was killed in Israel, and *Pieces*, an autobiographical work about a young woman who served in the Israeli army.

\$7,052 to Northeastern University School of Law in Boston to support this year's Valerie Gordon public lecture featuring Gail McDougall, entitled *Examining Human Rights and Racial Justice in Boston, the U.S. and the World* and mount a related exhibition of photographs.



Congress of Racial Equality picketers in front of the First National Bank of Boston in 1965. Courtesy of Northeastern University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department.

\$10,000 to the Old South Association in Boston in support of *Revolutionary Ideals and Modern Debate: The Evolution of Liberty and Justice*, a series of public programs and a teacher workshop on the Bill of Rights.

\$5,000 to The Partnership of the Historic Bostons, Inc., to support *First Contacts - In the Time Before Now: The Massachuset*, a series of public events focusing on the Massachuset people at point of contact with the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts Bay Colony, during the week of "Charter Day," September 4, 2008.

\$5,000 to Vinfen Corporation in Cambridge in support of *Moving Images: Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health Film Festival*, Vinfen's first-annual Mental Health Film Festival, to be held at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.



Still from *Imagining Robert*, a documentary by Lawrence Hoti that tells the story of two brothers, Robert Neugeboren, who has struggled with mental illness for 38 years, and Jay Neugeboren, a prize-winning novelist and his brother's primary caretaker.

\$10,000 to the Boston Museum for a video-response booth mounted at the Boston Public Library to capture visitors' responses and stories at an exhibit, *Choosing to Participate*, and in future exhibitions.



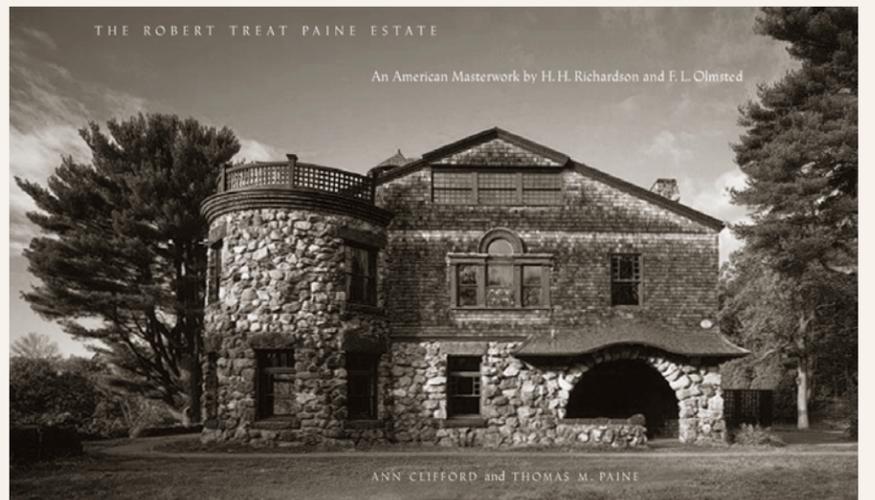
Boston Museum Video Story Booth at "Choosing to Participate" exhibit at the Boston Public Library, January-May 2008.

\$10,000 to Lifted Veils Productions, Inc. in Cambridge toward the production of a yearlong international radio program entitled *The Color Initiative*, focusing on skin color, to be broadcast by *The World/PRI*.



Kobe Bryant poster in Shanghai; one of the few non-white western images. Photo by Phillip Martin.

\$5,000 to the Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust in Waltham to support the *Stonehurst Exhibit and Signage Design Project* at the country home of Robert Treat Paine, created by H. H. Richardson and Frederick Law Olmsted.



The new 40-page full-color guidebook to Stonehurst tells the story of this icon of American design. For more information, see www.stonehurstwaltham.org. Cover design: Gilbert Design Associates, Inc. Photograph: Bret Morgan.

\$9,595 to Stonewall Communities, Inc. in Boston to support *The Birth of the Gay-Straight Alliance Movement in Massachusetts, 1987-2007*, a course for seniors in the GLBT community that will capture oral history accounts.



Pat Gozemba, author of *Courting Equality*, a book of stories and photos that chronicles the legalization of same-sex marriage in Massachusetts, speaking at a "brown bag lunch."

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

\$4,995 to The Navy & Marine Living History Association in North Attleboro for an educational poster about the first Civil War Submarine, the Alligator.



Three-D rendering of the Alligator that shows the interior and exterior of the model 1861 version. Image by Chuck Veit.

\$10,000 to Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth to support an exhibit entitled *Chosen to Lead* that will run from July to November 2008, and programming on leadership and the political process in Plymouth County and the Wampanoag Homeland in the 17th century.

NORTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

\$5,000 to the Lynn Museum & Historical Society for an exhibit entitled, *Different Journeys, Common Bonds: Stories of New Americans from the Former Soviet Union*, based on the lives of seventeen local Soviet immigrants.

\$5,000 to the Robert Frost Foundation in Lowell for the bilingual exhibition, *Lasting Legacies: Art and Poetry for Lawrence Massachusetts*, featuring Frost's early work and European Impressionist paintings collected by his family's minister, Rev. William Wolcott.

CAPE COD

\$5,000 to Martha's Vineyard Museum in Edgartown for a website exhibit entitled, *Laura Jernegan: A Girl on a Whaleship*, based on her original journal from 1868.



Photograph of Laura Jernegan. Courtesy of Martha's Vineyard Museum

Humanities Calendar

All events are open to the public, and unless otherwise indicated, free.

 Events or programs sponsored in part by the MFH

Western Massachusetts

Film Feasts

Where: Berkshire Museum Little Cinema, Pittsfield

Web: www.berkshireremuseum.org

Phone: (413) 443-7171 x13

Sideways / Brix Bistro

Prior to the cinematic romp through California wine country in Alexander Payne's poignant comedy, *Sideways*, starring Paul Giamatti, Chef/owner Patrick Spencer will lead a discussion of the film, the Pinot Noir effect and differences between Pinots. Then, convene at Brix Bistro in Pittsfield for a four-course meal featuring complementary Pinot Noirs from around the world.

When: Sunday, April 13, 3 pm

Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Dinner: \$100 pp not including gratuity. Limited to the first 24 patrons

Black Orpheus / Brazilian Restaurant and Pub

Black Orpheus, one of the most popular foreign films of all time, fills the screen for the Berkshire Museum's third Film Feast. Experience the visual storm of dazzling dance and intoxicating samba music, then discover the historical influence of African music, religion, and dance on contemporary Brazilian music through a hands-on samba drumming workshop led by Jim Weber, director of the Berkshire Bateria Escola de Samba. Then join us for dinner and a performance by the Bateria at the Brazilian Restaurant and Pub, located off North Street in downtown Pittsfield.

When: Sunday, May 4, 3 pm

Cost: Film and lecture: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Dinner: All you can eat traditional Brazilian buffet \$15

Save Your Collection, Share Your Story, Sustain Your Mission: A Primer for Small Museums and Historical Societies

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and NEMA are again partnering to offer a two-part Saturday workshop for small museums and historical societies. Topics essential to all organizations will be addressed including: mission and governance, collections care and preservation, fundraising, education, and exhibitions.

When: Part I - Saturday, April 12, 9:30 am - 3:45 pm
Part II - Saturday, April 26, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Where: Plainfield Town Hall, Plainfield

Phone: (781) 641-0013

Cost: \$35 for two workshops, lunch included.

Stories from the Island

A local intergenerational story-gathering program will culminate in this presentation by young mothers from The Care Center and the older residents they interviewed in an effort to record stories of migration and cultural transplantation.

When: Monday, April 28, 10:30 am

Where: Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke

Web: www.wistariahurst.org

Phone: (413) 322-5660

Central Massachusetts

Save Your Collection, Share Your Story, Sustain Your Mission: A Primer for Small Museums and Historical Societies (See above)

When: Part I - Saturday, April 12, 9:30 am - 3:45 pm
Part II - Saturday, April 26, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Where: National Plastics Center and Museum, Leominster

Phone: (781) 641-0013

Cost: \$35 for two workshops, lunch included.

Sustaining the Future of Massachusetts History

A conference for Massachusetts history organizations including workshops on re-interpreting collections, creating partnerships, multi-lingual programming, innovative approaches to history, and developing new audiences. Space is limited; please register online.

When: Monday, June 9, 9 am - 3:30 pm

Where: Hogan Campus Center, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

Web: www.mfh.org/masshistory

Phone: (413) 584-8440

Cost: \$40 including lunch/
\$25 with student ID

Greater Boston

Revolutionary Ideals, Modern Debate: The Evolution of Liberty and Justice

The Right to Vote. Voting rights in American history have been shaped by economic development, immigration and race and class relations. How do new efforts to regulate voting change our concept of this civic act? Featuring: Alexander Keyssar, Matthew W. Stirling Professor of History and Social Policy at the Kennedy School and author of *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States.*

When: Wednesday, April 30, 6:30 pm

Where: Old South Meeting House, Boston

Web: www.oldsouthmeetinghouse.org

Phone: (617) 482-6439

Boston & Beyond: A Bird's Eye View of New England

Gallery tours featuring one of the world's pre-eminent collections of bird's eye view maps, recently preserved with a "Save America's Treasures" grant. The exhibit will showcase the diaries, field sketch notes, and manuscript drawings of the Boston area craftsmen who made these spectacular maps.

When: Wednesday, May 7, 1:00 - 2:00 pm
Thursday, June 12, 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Where: Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library

Web: www.maps.bpl.org

Phone: (617) 859-2387

Boston Portuguese Festival Poetry of the Azores

Three Portuguese-American poets of Azorean descent will read their poetry and discuss the influence of the nine islands on their work, including Nancy Vieira Couto and Frank Gaspar (third TBD).

When: Thursday, June 5, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Where: Boston Public Library, Mezzanine Conference Room

Web: www.bostonportuguesefestival.org

Phone: (617) 536-8740

Choosing to Participate: Facing History and Ourselves

An interactive multi-media exhibition that has won nationwide praise for encouraging hundreds of thousands of people of all ages to consider the consequences of their everyday choices - to discover how "little things are big" - and for inspiring them to make a difference in their schools and communities.

The Boston Museum Story Booth: Share your story, record your reactions to the exhibition, share a memory of living in Boston or anecdotes about a moment when you had a challenging choice to make. Step into the booth and let your voice be heard.

When: January 20 - May 20

Where: Boston Public Library, Copley Square, Boston

Web: www.choosingtoparticipate.org

Phone: (617) 232-2595

Archives Alive! Promoting Your Archival Collections

In this two-part morning program, participants will learn "How to Get Your House in Order" before you promote your collections from Archives Consultant Laura Lowell, and then "How to Promote Your Collections" from Bonnie Hurd Smith, Public Relations Consultant. Workshop attendees are encouraged to bring their project and program ideas to share, as the morning will conclude with a question-and-answer period.

When: Friday, April 11, 9 am - 12 pm

Where: Lexington Historical Society (Lexington Depot), Lexington

Web: www.nmrls.org/hrc

Cost: Free, but registration is required. Please RSVP to svanderman@nmrls.org

Northeastern Massachusetts

Archives Alive! Promoting Your Archival Collections (See above)

When: Friday, May 16, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Where: Beverly Public Library, Beverly

Web: www.nmrls.org/hrc/

Cost: Free, but registration is required. Please RSVP to mary@nmrls.org

Southeastern Massachusetts

Save Your Collection, Share Your Story, Sustain Your Mission: A Primer for Small Museums and Historical Societies (See above)

When: Part I - Saturday, April 12, 9:30 am - 3:45 pm
Part II - Saturday, April 26, 9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Where: Freetown Historical Society, Freetown

Phone: (781) 641-0013

Cost: \$35 for two workshops, lunch included.

Chosen to Lead

A yearlong series of public programs and temporary exhibit exploring the nature of leadership in Plymouth Colony and the Wampanoag Homeland in the 17th century, and its continuing impact today.

When: July - November 2008, daily 9 am - 5 pm

Where: Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth

Web: www.plimoth.org

Phone: (508) 746-1622

Cost: Free with museum admission

Coming This Fall Traces of the Trade

Filmmaker Katrina Browne and nine other descendants of the DeWolf family, a Bristol, RI, slave trading empire, trace their ancestors' activities both before and after the slave trade was abolished in 1808 — a quest which takes them from the family mansion, to the archives of the Bristol Historical Society, to Ghana and Cuba.



To mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the legal importation of slaves into the United States, and examine critically the centrality of the commerce surrounding slavery to the economy of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities will feature *Traces of the Trade* in its Massachusetts history programming this fall. Program Officer Pleun Bouricius interviewed Katrina Browne. Read the interview at www.mfh.org/tott.html

"People who have seen the film are as shocked as we were to learn this history — especially that it was so widespread, that people bought shares in the slave trade. You have to start thinking about the sugar in their tea, the cotton clothes, the coffee. That creates a real parallel to today."

Humanities Calendar

wk	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
13						1	2
14	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
17	24	25	26	27	28	29	30

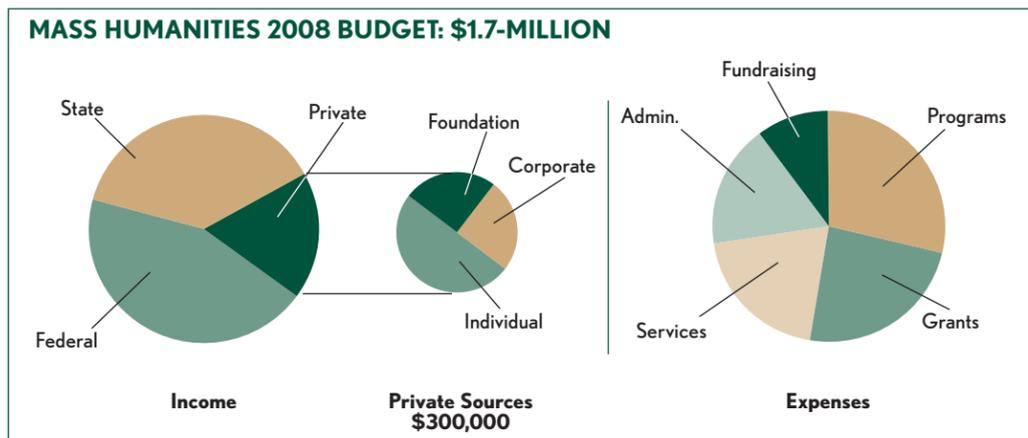
Publicize Your Humanities Event

Do you have a humanities event coming up? If your event is open to the public and held in Massachusetts, go to our website at www.mfh.org and submit your event via the online form. Your information will be reviewed for possible inclusion on our website and in our print newsletter.

To our generous donors: Thank you!

Everyone in Massachusetts should benefit from the insights of history, literature, philosophy and the other humanities disciplines. As you look through this newsletter you will understand the scope and depth of our work to bring relevant humanities programming to more people, more often, throughout the state. Our diverse board members from around the state and our staff of nine professionals are working to broaden the reach of the public humanities.

The National Endowment for the Humanities and the Massachusetts Cultural Council provide core funding for our work. Through a major grant to the Massachusetts Department of Education, the State Legislature supports the Clemente Course in the Humanities.



A growing number of private individuals, foundations, and corporations share our commitment to better inform and improve the lives of our fellow citizens through the humanities.

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\$20,000 or more

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Please let us know of any omissions or errors at info@mfh.org or (413) 584-8440.

Sustaining the Future of Massachusetts History:

A CONFERENCE FOR MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY ORGANIZATIONS

Co-sponsored by Mass Humanities, the University of Massachusetts Amherst Program in Public History, and the Massachusetts Historical Society

Monday, June 9, 2008

9:00 am – 3:30 pm

Hogan Campus Center, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

Keynote Speaker: Dennis Fiori

President, Massachusetts Historical Society

Dennis Fiori was appointed president of the Massachusetts Historical Society in 2005. Previously, he was director and CEO of Maryland Historical Society, director of the Concord Museum, deputy director for programs at the Institute of Museum and Library Services in Washington DC, and deputy director of the Maine Arts Commission

Capstone Speaker: Barbara Silberman

Principal, Heritage Partners

Barbara Silberman is a principal with Heritage Partners Consulting, which specializes in strategic planning, audience development and interpretation for historic sites and museums. She founded and directed the Heritage Philadelphia Program, which provided grant funding to more than 450 historical organizations in the Philadelphia region. Prior to that, Silberman was the director of the Germantown Historical Society, in Philadelphia. She currently serves as the Chair of the American Association for State and Local History Historic House Committee and is a board member of AASLH and of the Sargent House Museum in Gloucester.

Workshops on: reinterpreting collections, creating partnerships, multi-lingual programming (including oral history), innovative approaches to history, and developing new audiences. Topic tables at lunch, including: Massachusetts History on the Web; Oral History – Gathering the Stories

Detailed program and registration online at www.mfh.org/masshistory

Space is limited. • \$40.00 including lunch (\$25.00 for students with copy of ID) • Register by June 1, 2008.

A Double Take on Clemente

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities presents the Clemente Course in the Humanities at three sites in Boston, New Bedford, and Holyoke. Plans are underway for a fourth site in Lowell this fall, and we would like to start the program again in Worcester in the coming years.

Through Clemente, low-income adults take introductory college-level classes in American history, art history, literature, moral philosophy, and writing and critical thinking, for one academic year, free of charge. Successful participants earn six transferable credits from Bard College. Most of the participants are women, and most are racial minorities. The Clemente experience encompasses many steps toward a better future for participants, their families, and their communities.

Lyda Kuth and Julia Legas share a passion for Clemente. Lyda recently attended a class taught by Julia, and they have inspired each other to continue supporting the program in their own ways.



Boston Clemente Class of 2007



Julia Legas

Julia Legas teaches philosophy and critical thinking at Suffolk University and Cambridge College, in addition to teaching the moral philosophy component of the Clemente Course. She has advanced degrees in English and Philosophy from California State University, Long Beach and Boston College. Her academic specializations include political philosophy, democracy theory, philosophy of literature, ethics and aesthetics.

On the first day of teaching the moral philosophy section of the Clemente class in Boston, I had prepared my usual stirring speech about the value of the humanities: you will encounter the great minds of the past; you will take up the great ideas that all people have contemplated; you will read and write in ways that will help you discover your place in this great conversation. All the educated people of the past have read these same texts; you will read them as they are themselves, no extraneous commentary; just you and the text. The humanities will open up the world to you in new and different ways that will change your vision of the world, and of yourself. I was stirred, at least.

I got to the end of my talk where I wind up to my dramatic conclusion: philosophy requires arduous thinking and careful reading and writing; it is often hard to hear your long-held beliefs criticized; people who are invested in the status quo do not want philosophers in their midst shaking things up. Be advised, scholars: philosophy is difficult and dangerous. Ta-da. I look out to the room and there is a hand up. Excellent, someone is willing to sign up for the cause; the first soldier in the army is volunteering. A well-turned out, very proper woman in her 50s asks me, "Have you ever taught this class before? Because I think philosophy is very enjoyable."

And there began the great conversation I had with the Clemente Class of '07.

Our time was spent together working philosophy. I always address my class as "scholars." I want them to rise to the challenge of doing philosophy, not just reading it. By taking up the selfsame questions that plagued Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, Sartre, and the other great philosophers we study, we do not just read what they wrote; we do what they did. Philosophy is an act: a commitment to seeking out, and seeking within. Philosophy engages the whole person.

At the end of the class, my scholars agreed with me that philosophy was difficult and dangerous, but not for the reasons they initially assumed. They got better at reading, writing and arguing,

A well-turned out, very proper woman in her 50s asks me, "Have you ever taught this class before? Because I think philosophy is very enjoyable."

to be sure, but they saw that they themselves were changed because of what they had thought, and that their lives were at stake for them in a new way. The habits of mind we tried to cultivate together in our classroom would keep them restless for the remainder of their lives.

Lyda Kuth is a founding board member and current director of the LEF Foundation, a private foundation founded in 1985 to support the creation and presentation of new work in the visual arts, performing arts, literary arts, new media, film and video, architecture and design.

The Clemente program has captivated me since I read an article about it over twenty years ago and tucked it away in a file. In 1999, I read in the "Mass Humanities newsletter" that the program had been launched in Massachusetts, and I contacted the organization to learn more. I've been supporting the program personally ever since.

The Clemente Course resonates with me because it puts into action many of my own core values, like individual agency and the idea that people can change their lives. As a student of literature and



Lyda Kuth

history, I left college for five years and returned to finish my degree with a great deal more conviction. I understand how adults motivated to return to school are likely to have profound experiences.

What struck me about the Clemente classes that I have attended is how the "humanity" at the heart of the humanities is immediately apparent. All participants, faculty and students alike, are on a level playing field. At LEF we emphasize access to the arts for all people, and a mutual respect between artist and funder. This is the kind of mutual respect I have seen, between faculty and students. In a Clemente classroom you see a microcosm of the ideal community, a place where voices have equal weight and are heard by all.

In the art world, everything boils down to the work of the individual artist. My fellow trustees at LEF and I believe in the "ripple effect" of the creative endeavor of artists and the collective result that is greater than the sum of individual experiences of a work of art. Earl Shorris,* the founder of the Clemente Course, applies this concept to society and the poor. I agree with his emphasis on the fact that individuals make up the body politic, and I admire his patience in attending to one person at a time. We also share the belief that educated mothers create educated families. All of these are characteristic of the Clemente Course.

The value of this kind of patience is too often overlooked in the foundation world. This reflects a concern that is emerging in the field as a whole, which is that the pendulum has swung too far toward funding decisions being based on tangible results within a set timeframe. While the longitudinal evaluation of the program that Mass Humanities is conducting shows many promising results of this type, I choose to support Clemente because of the subtler, longer-term outcomes for participants that are probably impossible to measure.

I encourage you to become more involved. There are many ways:

- Attend a Clemente graduation this spring.
- Let your legislators know that you support the Clemente program.
- Donate to the Clemente Course, and encourage others to do so. If your book club or other group gives together, consider Clemente. Donate online at www.masshumanities.org; or contact John Sieracki for more information about giving: jsieracki@mfh.org

* Earl Shorris is founder and chairman of the advisory board of the Clemente Course in the Humanities, and author of *Riches for the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2000). An interview with Mr. Shorris can be found at the Newsletter section of www.masshumanities.org.

Address service requested

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What is your age range?

- Under 18 18-24 25-35
 36-50 51-65 66-80
 81 or older

What is your gender?

- Male Female

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some elementary or high school High School diploma or GED
 Some undergraduate work Undergraduate degree
 Some graduate work Graduate degree

What experience do you have with the humanities? Check all that apply.

The humanities include, but are not limited to, the academic disciplines of history; literature; philosophy and ethics; foreign languages and cultures; linguistics; jurisprudence or philosophy of law; archaeology; comparative religion; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; and those aspects of the social sciences (anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, government, and economics) that use historical and interpretive rather than quantitative methods.

- Undergraduate coursework/degree
 Graduate coursework/degree
 Have worked in a humanities-based profession
 Have volunteered for a humanities-related organization
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 Attend at least one public humanities program annually
 Professional writer
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Step 2: Tell us about the newsletter:

Check all that apply regarding how you usually read *Mass Humanities*:

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Please score the following statements as follows:

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neutral / no opinion
4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree

1. I look forward to each issue of *Mass Humanities*. 1 2 3 4 5
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Step 3: Tell us anything else you'd like us to know.

We would welcome any other comments or suggestions on the *Mass Humanities* newsletter:

Thank you!!