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THE PUBLIC HUMANIST

a group blog project hosted by the
Valley Advocate



The Public Humanist

That's right. Another blog. Surely there are enough words and visual noise in our lives without another claim on our attention.

This one is different. The Public Humanist, which began in May '07, is a group blog of 26 Massachusetts writers, many of them humanities professors at Massachusetts colleges, some of them independent filmmakers, all of them in the idea business. They join this project to give voice to humanistic inquiry as it intersects with current issues and social policy. You won't find much of that (yet!) in the blogosphere.

We present a weekly topic that two or more contributors write about, offering different, but not necessarily opposed, perspectives. Our aim is to generate commentary from people who might not be inclined to attend more traditional humanities program formats—and we are fortunate to be hosted by the website for Northampton's alternative weekly, the Valley Advocate. Please visit the blog at: www.valleyadvocate.com, and comment if you are so inclined. The blogosphere may seem ubiquitous in these times, but thoughtfully written entries that chart ideas and seek the ongoing relevance of humanities-based perspectives are far from the norm. We already know that the blogosphere is democratic—let's all help to encourage and become an informed citizenry of this new realm.

Mass Humanities

A Publication of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities Fall 2007

Mothering Heights

An interview with the author of a cultural history of Jewish mothers

Joyce Antler is the Samuel Lane Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University. A member of the MFH board from 1988 to 1994, she served as Chair from 1991 to 1992. She is the author or editor of nine books, the most recent of which is *You Never Call! You Never Write! A History of the Jewish Mother*, published by Oxford in 2007. Ellen K. Rothman, who is leaving the Foundation after 11 years as Associate Director to become Deputy Director of the Jewish Women's Archive, interviewed Antler via e-mail.



JA: The dominant, negative stereotype doesn't fit the way Jewish women see their own mothers—or how they see themselves as mothers. In fact, historically the Jewish mother's goal was to make her children self-reliant, not to infantilize them. And she succeeded. Whenever we acknowledge Jews' great success in America, we should credit the Jewish mother and the many ways in which she modeled strength and resiliency for her children.

EKR: Was there something peculiarly American about

Ellen K. Rothman: When did you first get the idea of writing a history of the Jewish mother?

Joyce Antler: Before this book, I had written about Jewish women as social and political activists (*The Journey Home: How Jewish Women Shaped Modern America*) and about their treatment in popular culture (*Talking Back: Images of Jewish Women in American Popular Culture*). After my mother's death, which occurred at about the time these works were published, I came to think even more about the ways in which our mothers' legacies had become buried under the weight of cultural myths. I wanted to dig under those myths and see how they related to the true stories, the true experiences, of women like my mother, who did not at all fit the stereotype of the Jewish Mother.

EKR: Neither did mine. My father is the one who is more likely to say "You never call. You never write" (or e-mail, as the case may be). I was very aware growing up, and maybe you were, too, that my mother didn't fit what I thought of as the stereotype of the Jewish mother, but you point out that the stereotype in fact has two sides.

JA: Yes, there are conflicting views of the Jewish mother. On the negative side, she's seen as a colossal figure—manipulative, demanding, whiny, overprotective, and guilt-producing. It's easy to imagine her hovering over her children, holding the spoon and urging them to take one more bite. Although it gets less play in the popular culture, there is an alternative stereotype: the Jewish mother as the emblem of unstinting love, support, and nurturance.

EKR: So I guess my mother fits the stereotype after all. I shouldn't be surprised.

the Jewish mother stereotype?

JA: After World War II, a team of social scientists working under Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict conducted a comparative culture study. In their exploration of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe, the researchers identified a "stereotype" of the Jewish mother that consisted of suffering, worrying and overfeeding, combined with "unconditional love." They exaggerated the "nagging" aspects of the stereotype, but in any case, these researchers were among several who claimed to find its roots in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. My book explains how the specific conditions of American life—immigration, suburbanization, even feminism—transformed earlier images and created specifically American models.

EKR: Your book begins in the 1920s. Was there a stereotype of the Jewish mother before then? Is it a byproduct of immigration?

JA: There have always been notions of Jewish mothers in our culture, but the mass immigration of the early twentieth century created tensions that disrupted traditional gender notions and family dynamics. These anxieties were often written onto the Jewish mother, so that in the 1920s and early 1930s you get dual images of the Jewish mother—nurturant and encouraging, like the mothers in Sophie Tucker's song "My Yiddish Mama" or in the first sound film, *The Jazz Singer*—or materialistic and manipulative, as in the film *Younger Generation*. In all of these cultural representations, the Jewish mothers were left behind as their children assimilated.

EKR: You write that stereotypes of "old-style Jewish mothers" persist, even as "cultural patterns on which they are based are becoming anachronistic." Why do you think this is?

Art as Healer and Provocateur: Double Edge Theatre Explores the Relationship of Art and Oppression

By Hayley Wood

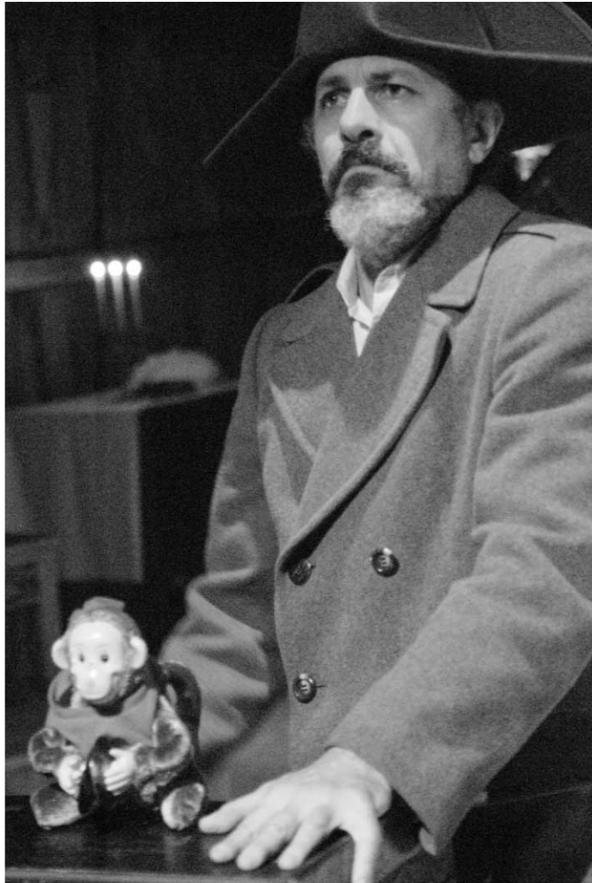
Part moving painting, part stream-of-consciousness anti-narrative, Double Edge Theatre's play *The Republic of Dreams*, based on the life and work of Polish artist and writer Bruno Schulz, is engrossing audiences and softening them up for moderated discussions about the role of art in times of oppression and in times like the ones we're living in. Double Edge Theatre's Artistic Director Stacy Klein observes, "This is a difficult time and place to be creative. I hope that difficulty will give rise not only to polemics, but also to art."

The free series of performances and lectures, entitled *Art as Healer and Provocateur*, marks a particular effort on the part of the company to bring its work—well known to loyal audiences from all over Western Massachusetts and most notably in their hometown of Ashfield—to new audiences in Hampshire and Franklin counties. Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture at Amherst College, moderates the post-performance talks that combine a panel discussion with an opportunity for audience members to share impressions and commentary. Double Edge Theatre received a Liberty and Justice for All grant from the Foundation in 2006 to amplify its reach with this new series of programs and to use its art as a means of generating public discussion.

Bruno Schulz provides the focus for the project. Murdered by a Nazi in 1942, Schulz had led a fairly low-profile and unassuming life in the Polish (now Ukrainian) city of Drohobycz as an art teacher, studio artist, and writer. The son of a textile merchant, he lived in his hometown for most of his short life. His childhood is described with an amazing use of visually rich language in his first published work, *The Street of Crocodiles* (published in 1934). Schulz illustrated his writing with line drawings that bring to mind the work of Maurice Sendak. His writing and drawing testify to the validity and importance of the inner life. There's no doubt that what he considered the stultifying and ingrown quality of his city (a "fathomless, elemental boredom," as he once put it) fueled his hallucinatory account of growing up in such a place, in such a time.

Double Edge Theatre does hallucinatory with gusto. Audience members can expect darkness, disturbing vignettes that won't let viewers forget the sticky guts of life, the smell of candle wax, an embrace of the bawdy, and frames of stopped action that flash the Holocaust context of the work. What Double Edge doesn't do is narrative. More interested in questions than answers, the work of the company resists expectations of closure and recognizable story forms. More suggestive than expository, *The Republic of Dreams* might be described as a mad cabaret of dream sequences.

Always interested in spectacle and visual art, Klein and her collaborators have incorporated in the piece not only the words and life story of Bruno Schulz, but his drawings and paintings as well; many of his prewar paintings are evoked through the actors' blocking, movements, and stillness. The set paintings were created by Polish artist (and Holocaust survivor) Mira Zelechower-Aleksion, whose smaller work is exhibited at the performances. Some of the paintings created for the performance are copies of murals that Schulz painted in the home of a Nazi patron and protector. (The Gestapo officer who killed Schulz bore a grudge against this "protector.") Both the art Schulz created by choice and that which he created in order to ingratiate himself with his "protector" are depicted in the performance.



"The Republic of Dreams, based on the life and work of Polish artist and writer Bruno Schulz, is engrossing audiences and softening them up for moderated discussions about the role of art in times of oppression and in times like the ones we're living in."

The first performance of the series took place in April at The Farm, the company's Ashfield home. Audience members mingled beforehand in the main barn and were led single-file to a more intimate performance space where the figures of Schulz's world—Bruno himself, Father, Mother—were already in position, performing their small rites by candle-light. The strange and beautiful pageant unfolded and was followed immediately by a panel discussion; the actors took seats with audience members.

Professor Stavans facilitated a conversation among the panelists, two of whom were the leaders of local congregations. The news of the week had been more than usually horrifying: Virginia Tech student Seung-Hui Cho had shot and killed 27 fellow students and himself on the university campus. He had left behind a videotaped manifesto. This event and the war in Iraq were mentioned by panelists and audience members. The play and the panel format provided an unusual entrée into the intellectual territory where art, daily life, and forces of violence in the world intersect. Double Edge Theatre had succeeded in generating questions, big ones: Is this world broken? Can art fix it? Where does oppression come from? Does it come from within all of us? As Stacy Klein has observed, Schulz saw the danger and death around him and insisted on dreaming his dreams and creating lasting testimonies through art and literature.

The Republic of Dreams will be performed in Greenfield on September 4 at the Pushkin Gallery, where a companion exhibit of works by set designer Mira Zelechower will be on display. The performance will be followed by a moderated panel discussion. Admission is free.

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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.

JA: Despite the seeming rigidity of the stereotype, it is constantly being transformed by new cultural norms. Yet the core components remain, and they continue to strike a chord among audiences. Perhaps this is because some of its attributes accord with perceived realities. Another reason for the durability of the stereotype is that while it incorporates fantasies and anxieties crucial to the story of Jewish acculturation, it also responds to the universal experiences of mothering and being mothered. And let's not forget that Jews themselves have been especially prolific in conveying the stereotype through many different forms of popular culture. Plus, the social and behavioral sciences—even the humanities!—have played a part.

EKR: Do you have something specific in mind, a work of literature, for example?

JA: Clifford Odets' 1935 play *Awake and Sing!* is often credited with presenting the first truly negative representation of a Jewish mother (although I think his character, Bessie Berger, had many positive traits). There were many other male authors who created Jewish mother characters; think of Philip Roth and Bruce Jay Friedman. We should also mention writers like Grace Paley and Tillie Olsen who gave us very different portraits. Mothering was a central artistic concern in the work of both women, and they provide innovative, positive models of Jewish matriarchs.

“**Stereotypes are central to all comedy, and every culture uses them. Many jokes concern parents, since we laugh about what we know best. But the Jewish mother stereotype is different, because it came to stand in for all American mothers of a certain kind: the overprotective mother, the ‘maternal tyrant’ in extremis.**”

EKR: What surprised you most while you were researching the book?

JA: The persistence, versatility, and ubiquity of the stereotype. It's unquestionably the dominant stereotype about Jews of either gender, and it has been perpetuated over the generations not only by comedians and writers but by psychiatrists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians—and by women as well as men. To understand its permutations is to understand a great deal about Jewish life in America—and about the phenomenon of mother-blame.

EKR: Is it because the Jewish mother embodies so much good and bad that the stereotype remains socially acceptable and an unquestioned part of the popular culture?

JA: That is one reason: the Jewish mother was born of this dialectic between blaming the mother and admiring her, between mother-love that overpowers and crushes and that which nurtures.

EKR: Can you think of other stereotypes in American culture that have had this kind of staying power?

JA: Stereotypes are central to all comedy, and every culture uses them. Many jokes concern parents, since we laugh about what we know best. But the Jewish mother stereotype is different, because it came to stand in for all American mothers of a certain kind: the overprotective mother, the “maternal tyrant” in extremis. The image gained power precisely because it came to represent this universal type.

EKR: You conclude from an analysis of several oral history projects that “they present a view of Jewish motherhood almost entirely at variance with stereotypical images.” Why do you think this is? How would you characterize the way the women interviewed described themselves and their mothers?

JA: Remarkably few observers have asked Jewish mothers directly about their experiences. I draw on a study of Jewish and Italian immigrants done in the 1980s and more recent studies conducted in Baltimore and Seattle by the Jewish Women's Archive and one I conducted myself of older women in Florida. When you ask Jewish mothers how they remember their own mothers and how they see themselves as mothers, their answers are almost uniformly positive: they see Jewish mothers as enablers who raised their children with moderate, flexible methods, passing on their own morals and values. They are proud of their offspring—and of themselves as parents—and they see this role as one of the most fulfilling in their lives.

EKR: You argue that comedy has been a main culprit in transmitting stereotypes of Jewish mothers, and you suggest that a new generation of comics is reinventing the Jewish mother. How so?

JA: While comics like Judy Gold, Amy Borkowsky, Wendy Leibman, Cory Kahaney, and Jackie Hoffman poke fun at the Jewish mother for nagging and intrusiveness—and they make good use of the “You Never Call!” mantra—they do it with empathy as well as humor. The Jewish mother in Sarah Silverman's routine is not traditional in any way.

EKR: How does it feel to have your daughter Lauren doing stand up comedy about her Jewish mother?

JA: My comedian daughter's Jewish mother is a feminist Jewish mother, which is a great new twist on the old routine.

EKR: Did she grow up hearing you deconstruct Jewish mother jokes around the dinner table?

JA: My two daughters have sometimes accused me of not having a sense of humor. In truth, comedy has an honored place in our family. (Lauren is a sixth-generation *badkhen*—the East European wedding singer who improvised witty rhymes on the spot.) Dinner time at our home was filled with jokes and laughter.

EKR: Do you have a favorite feminist Jewish mother joke?

JA: I like the one I quote in the Epilogue to my book, from Lauren Antler:

A Jewish mother would call and say, “Honey, have you looked outside? It's snowing. You might want to put on a jacket. You know what, on second thought maybe a snowsuit; I'm gonna revise that, you're gonna need a shield. On third thought, don't go outside at all ... you could die!”

“**A Jewish mother would call and say, ‘Honey, have you looked outside? It's snowing. You might want to put on a jacket. You know what, on second thought maybe a snowsuit; I'm gonna revise that, you're gonna need a shield. On third thought, don't go outside at all ... you could die!’**”

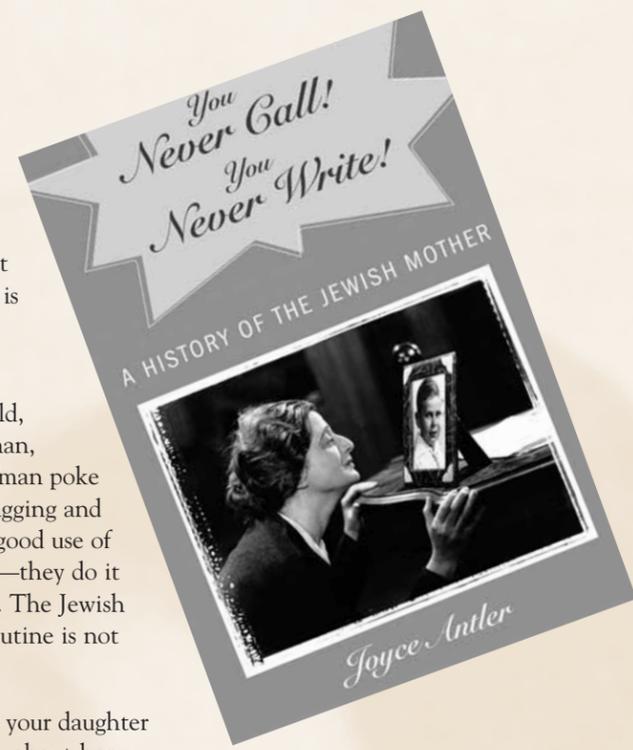
But a Jewish feminist mother would call and say, “Honey, have you looked outside? It's snowing. I hope you don't think that's a reason to stay inside and take a break from fighting the patriarchy. Because the misogyny happens out there whether it's raining or sleeting or snowing or whatever. And what? Are you going to wait for a man to shovel the snow? I don't think so. Let's get serious . . . and put on a coat.”

EKR: We can't do an interview about the history of the Jewish mother without mentioning *Portnoy's Complaint*. Even before Philip Roth created what one writer called “the caricature to end all caricatures of the Jewish mother,” Dan Greenburg's 1964 bestseller *How to be a Jewish Mother* used the claim that any mother could be a Jewish mother to appeal to a wide readership. How do you account for the fact that so many non-Jews refer to themselves and their own mothers as Jewish mothers?

JA: The Jewish mother has become such a familiar icon that her oversized traits stand in easily for those of other mothers. Many non-Jewish readers have told me that they never knew that they had “Jewish mothers.”

EKR: Are Jewish mothers becoming more like other mothers, or vice versa?

JA: Because of high rates of intermarriage, conversion, adoption, and single-parenting, contemporary Jewish mothers come from many different racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds. The category “Jewish mother” has itself become remarkably diverse.



FOUNDATION NEWS



Zachary Howard and Ellen Rothman

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR ELLEN ROTHMAN MOVES TO JEWISH WOMEN'S ARCHIVE

Foundation will close Metro Boston office

The Foundation's longtime Associate Director Ellen Rothman has resigned to become Deputy Director of the Jewish Women's Archive (JWA). The JWA is a Brookline-based national organization that was founded in 1995 by Gail Reimer, Ellen's predecessor as MFH Associate Director.

In her nearly 11 years with the Foundation, Ellen made many friends and accomplished a great deal, whether working with grant applicants, representing the Foundation at meetings and conferences, or managing some of our most important and successful initiatives. She directed the State House Women's Leadership Project, a long overdue public art and humanities project commemorating the contributions of women to public life in the Commonwealth; conceived and directed the development of Bringing History Home, an innovative interactive website using the collections of three history museums to tell the story of Massachusetts history for middle school students; and most recently served as Executive Producer for Mass Moments, our critically acclaimed electronic almanac and radio spots of Massachusetts history. Ellen's impact on the Foundation and on the public humanities in Massachusetts has been profound. To say she will be missed is an understatement.

Ellen's Administrative Assistant, Zachary Howard, has also left, to pursue a graduate degree in Public Policy and Urban Planning at the University of Washington in Seattle.

In the wake of their departure, the Foundation board has decided to close the Metro Boston office and consolidate operations in the Northampton office.

RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

At its June 8 meeting in Waltham, the Foundation said a fond farewell to three board members, each of whom served with dedication and distinction for the maximum of two three-year terms.

Yu-Lan Lin of Brookline, Senior Program Director of World Languages for the Boston Public Schools, was elected to the Foundation board in 2001. She served on the Grant Review Committee, the Membership and Nominating Committee, and the Program and Evaluation Committee. Her experience in public education has been invaluable to the board's deliberations.

Ingrid MacGillis of Pittsfield was appointed to the MFH board in 2001 by Governor Jane Swift. During her term on the board, Ingrid chaired the Grant Review and Program and Evaluation Committees, served for three years on the Executive Committee, and became a grandmother (twice!) and a naturalized citizen of the United States. No board member attended more Foundation-funded programs than Ingrid. Her thoughtful and perceptive written evaluation reports have become an important part of our historical record. A former teacher of English and German, Ingrid is a freelance translator specializing in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts of composers, musicians, and music publishers and enjoys leading Elderhostel groups to Eastern European countries.

Cullen Murphy of Medfield was appointed to the Foundation board in 2000 by Governor Paul Cellucci. Cullen served on the MFH Executive Committee and as Vice President of the board from 2004 to 2006. He played a pivotal role in the development of the Foundation's annual fall symposium and forged a number of important partnerships for the Foundation. Cullen was for many years the editor of The Atlantic Monthly and is now Editor at Large for Vanity Fair. He is the author, most recently, of Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America (Houghton Mifflin, 2007).

Yu-Lan, Ingrid, and Cullen have made unique and lasting contributions to the Foundation and to the public humanities in Massachusetts. We are deeply grateful for their time, their talents, and their friendship.

NEW BOARD MEMBER ELECTED

Also at the June 8 meeting, the board elected

Sonia Nieto of Amherst to a three-year term on the board of directors. Sonia is Professor Emerita of Language, Literacy, and Culture at the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, she attended the New York City public schools and St. John's University, where she received a B.S. in Elementary Education. She then attended the New York University Graduate Program in Spain, where she was awarded an M.A. in Spanish and Hispanic Literature. After teaching in public schools in



Dr. Sonia Nieto

Brooklyn and the Bronx, Sonia began her career in higher education as an instructor in the Puerto Rican Studies Department at Brooklyn College, where she worked in a joint program with the School of Education in bilingual education. Moving to Massachusetts with her family to pursue a doctoral degree in 1975, she earned her Ed.D. from the University of Massachusetts, with specializations in curriculum studies and multicultural and bilingual education.

Sonia's scholarly work has focused on multicultural and bilingual education, curriculum reform, teacher education, Puerto Rican children's literature, and the education of Latinos, immigrants, and other culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. She has written numerous book chapters and articles on these themes, and her articles have appeared in such journals as Educational Leadership, The New Educator, and The Harvard Educational Review. Her first book, Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education (1992), soon to be in its fifth edition (2008), is used widely in multicultural education and professional development courses. Other books include The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities (1999), and What Keeps Teachers Going? (2003), both published by Teachers College Press. Sonia has served on many local, regional, national, and international commissions, panels, and advisory boards that focus on educational equity for all students. She has received many awards for her research and advocacy, including the Human and Civil Rights Award from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (1989), the Teacher of the Year Award from the Hispanic Educators Association of Massachusetts (1996), and the Educator of the Year Award from the National Association for Multicultural Education (1997).

WELCOME

The Foundation welcomes Melissa Wheaton to our staff as administrative assistant. Melissa began in April and has already made terrific contributions to our data management, fundraising support, and the coordination of this newsletter.



Melissa Wheaton

She comes to us from Tufts Health Plan in Springfield, where she supported the sales and marketing staff. Other highlights of her career include several years at the First American Exchange in Boston, and as a bookseller at Wordsworth in Cambridge ("I did it for the books!"). Melissa holds a dual bachelor's degree in biology and psychology from Wells College. She and her husband, Henry, live in Westhampton, where in her spare time she fosters kittens and enjoys reading, cooking, and exploring western Massachusetts.

Announcing a National Conference brought to you by the Maine Humanities Council
as part of Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care,® a national literature and discussion program for health care professionals



Caring for the Caregiver

PERSPECTIVES ON LITERATURE AND MEDICINE

Save the Date: November 9 – 10, 2007 | Radisson Hotel Manchester, NH | \$100/\$125

Discover how literature and writing can support the personal and professional development of health care professionals.

Learn about:

- innovative programs
- best practices
- new research and evaluation methods
- how to implement a program in your own facility

We promise you will leave both informed and inspired!

Keynote Speakers: Rafael Campo, MD, award-winning poet; Rita Charon, MD, PhD, innovative leader in the field of narrative medicine; Anne Fadiman, author of *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*. | There will also be 20 workshops, discussions and informal presentations to choose from.

Who should attend? All Health Care Professionals: chaplains and clergy, educators (health, humanities, medical), health care administrators & staff, medical & nursing students, nurses, physicians, physician assistants, therapists, social workers & service providers.

Benefits: Learn strategies to successfully position programs in hospitals, hospice, medical education & social service organizations. | Explore model literature and writing programs in traditional and non-traditional health care settings | Understand how research and evaluation support literature and writing programs for health care professionals. | Network with colleagues from across the country.

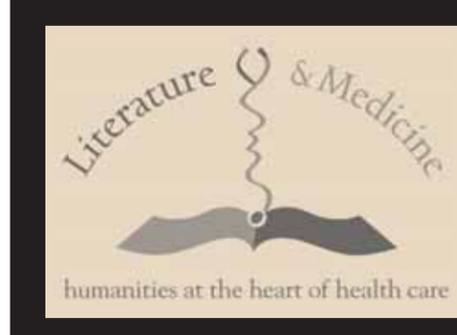
Literature & Medicine has received major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For registration form & more information: 1.888.MEReader
www.mainehumanities.org

Continuing Education Credits are available.

Literature & Medicine at Year 5:

MFH Plans Program Expansion



In January 2003, the *Literature & Medicine* program of hospital-based humanities seminars for health-care professionals made its Massachusetts debut. The program, a series of six monthly discussions, brings a diverse group of workers together at each site for professionally facilitated conversations about writings that illuminate the experiences of patients, patients' families, and caregivers as they confront illness, dying, and the challenges of alleviating pain and anguish. *Literature & Medicine* is currently being offered by four Massachusetts institutions: Cambridge Health Alliance, Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, UMass Memorial Hospital/UMass Medical School in Worcester, and Lahey Clinic in Burlington.

The program, officially titled *Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care*,[®] was developed and piloted in Maine by the Maine Humanities Council, which has won two three-year grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities to expand the program through training conferences, an electronic newsletter, and a national evaluation project that documents the program's impact on individual participants. Massachusetts was among the first states to join the program, which now operates in 18 states.

This past spring, the MFH board conducted an in-depth evaluation of the program in Massachusetts. Staff and members of the board's Program and Evaluation Committee looked at enrollment and attendance records from the hospitals, examined survey data on participants' experience and observations from facilitators, and interviewed hospital staff members who volunteer as program liaisons. The process was based on the Logic Model developed by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which provides a framework for integrating program goals with resources and activities required to achieve those goals and assessing the effects of the program on individuals and, insofar as possible, on institutions.

The findings were overwhelmingly positive, especially with respect to the impact of the program on individual participants. They reported, in strikingly high percentages, that the program had renewed their commitment to their work, enabled them to form valuable new relationships in the workplace, and influenced their professional practice by giving them new understanding of the importance of careful communication, empathy, and sensitivity to differences—especially cultural differences—in their relationships with co-workers, patients, and patients' families.

With this powerful data in hand, and a generous grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield Massachusetts, the Foundation hopes to add two new sites per year, over the next three years, to the four that currently host the program. Inquiries should be addressed to Kristin O'Connell, MFH Assistant Director and Statewide Coordinator for *Literature & Medicine* (email koconnell@mfh.org or telephone 413-584-8440). Additional information, including lists of readings, can be found at the MFH website and the website of the Maine Humanities Council (www.mainehumanities.org). Health care professionals may be interested in attending "Caring for the Caregiver: Perspectives on Literature and Medicine," a conference to be held in Manchester, New Hampshire on November 9-10. The conference program and registration information are posted on the Maine Humanities Council website, and the conference announcement appears on page 4.



Some Reflections on Literature & Medicine

Martin Newhouse

On June 26, 2007, the last session of this year's *Literature & Medicine* seminar at the Lahey Clinic in Burlington, will meet to discuss *Never Let Me Go*, a novel by Kazuo Ishiguro. As the seminar's facilitator, I chose this work in order to end with what I hope will be a thoughtful, informative, and ultimately moving discussion about the potential impact of science and technology on our society and on human nature itself. Based on my almost three years' experience with the participants in *Literature & Medicine* at Lahey, I know that even if these are not the specific issues we touch upon and the discussion takes off in ways that I can't even imagine, it will be an experience that I will treasure.

Unlike the other facilitators of *Literature & Medicine* in Massachusetts, I am also a member of MFH's Board of Directors. I volunteered for this "assignment" primarily because I was inspired by a program presented on *Literature & Medicine* at a Board meeting several years ago. I was emboldened to do so because of past experience as a teacher of cultural history at the college level. Like all *Literature & Medicine* facilitators, I have benefited enormously from the very helpful training provided by the Maine Humanities Council, where I met many other facilitators who are conducting this program in several states.

Comments from participants

(As a result of my experience in the program) I am more likely to slow down just a little in order to see my patients and my staff as very vulnerable human beings—as we all are.

I felt the readings and discussions related to death were particularly helpful in dealing with lingering traumatic feelings I harbor from witnessing children die in the ER and pediatric ICU in which I worked during my 20's.

As a result of the readings related to these subjects, I think about the internal pain and struggle mental health issues and addictions cause patients. For instance, a 15-year-old patient being diagnosed as psychotic and probably schizophrenic was being cared for, and attempts were made to get the family to admit him for meds to control his mental illness.

*The parents struggled with his behavior, but we emphasized how difficult his chaotic thoughts and hallucinations must be for him to deal with. This approach came about because I read the Kay Redfield Jamison book *An Unquiet Mind*.*

I feel rejuvenated after a session. The course discussions make me feel proud to be a medical practitioner.

“I was reminded WHY I was doing this, and given new strength to push on even on days when I was tired. It really meant a lot to me, both in the intergenerational connections, and the time to refocus on why we are here and what it means.”

My experiences at Lahey have made me a passionate supporter of this program. From my perspective *Literature & Medicine* yields tremendous results. Of utmost importance is the fact that, unlike the other wonderful public humanities programs that MFH supports, *Literature & Medicine* delivers humanities content directly to people at their workplace. I think that we often don't recognize that, with respect to public humanities programs, people at their places of work may well collectively make up a truly underserved community, since sadly the humanities hardly ever make an appearance in the workplace. One of the strengths of *Literature & Medicine* is that it combats this, by offering the hard-working individuals at the Lahey Clinic and the other hospitals where the program thrives a relatively convenient opportunity to study, read, and involve themselves with the humanities precisely because it occurs at their workplace right after work hours. Thus, people can come directly to the program, delay their journey home by a mere one or two hours, and spend time that they would otherwise probably never be able to spend with challenging works of literature, history, social science and analysis.

The opportunity for reading, reflection and discussion provided by the monthly *Literature & Medicine* seminar helps these busy professionals and workers focus on issues that they may not have had time or opportunity to ponder on their own. It does this by providing readings that cover various aspects of the practice and experience of medicine, from both the caregiver's and the patient's perspective, as well as larger issues of the human experience. These readings come in various forms—novels, short stories, poems, essays, memoirs, histories—thereby providing a kaleidoscope of perspectives on issues, some of which may be familiar, but are viewed in a new way, others of which may be new. In May of this year we read three short stories by Chekhov (himself a doctor) and one short story by Hemingway; most were on medically-related subjects, raising questions ranging from the limits of a doctor's duty of loyalty to his patient to the limitations on medicine's ability to improve the human condition. Unintentionally on my part, this last theme echoed our February readings on the influenza pandemic after World War I, which we dealt with in two remarkable works of the literary imagination, Katherine Ann Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* and William Maxwell's *They Came Like Swallows*.

Another real benefit of *Literature & Medicine* at Lahey and elsewhere is that it brings together individuals from different parts of the healthcare profession, and in that way improves communication and understanding. My sense is that Lahey is already a fairly well-integrated community. But during my training in Maine I came to realize that the hospital setting in general is one of the most hierarchical around, and that it was perhaps only in the *Literature & Medicine* seminar setting that nurses, doctors, social workers, secretaries, and others actually got to communicate across hierarchical lines with each other outside of their normal roles. I note in this connection that last year, for example, one of the van drivers at Lahey participated in our seminar. Two years ago and again this year, we have had participation by a chaplain at Lahey. In our seminar, all sorts of people who might not normally cross paths outside of work (doctors, nurses, and the van driver, for example) and might not normally communicate in anything but a strictly professional sense are talking to each other about vital issues of medicine, healthcare policy, and even life's most wrenching situations.

This leads me to what I consider to be the primary (and at the same time the most intangible) virtue of the program. Both the humanities input—the poetry, fiction, history, and analysis about medical issues, disease, communication, tragedy, and so forth—and the cross-department nature of the dialogue are bound, in my view, to improve the ability of the participants to deal with their everyday lives, and hence will have a positive effect on the delivery of health services at Lahey and any other hospital where the program is conducted. Those services, of course, are delivered to individuals from all walks of life and all economic strata.

Whether or not making medical professionals better at what they do was the original goal of the program, I see it as a real achievement in my monthly sessions. Not only are the participants made more sensitive to what they must face when, for example, they read extraordinary poetry about AIDS sufferers or recent works on lack of communication in the medical field and how doctors make mistakes, or the memoir of a parent who has had a sick child or suffered a suicide in the family; they also learn a tremendous amount from and about each other and their respective fields. Thus, doctors listen to what social workers say about their experiences and vice versa; psychiatrists trade impressions with oncologists, lab technicians, and chaplains. Ophthalmologists share their own experiences with secretaries, other doctors, and, occasionally, a van driver. How can this not improve the quality of the medical and other care that these individuals provide to patients?

As I look back over my three years facilitating the *Literature & Medicine* seminar at Lahey, certain moments inevitably stand out. These are the times when a particular work under discussion set our group on fire, and we knew that, just as we probably had done as undergraduates gripped by an intense idea, we could have gone on talking all night, except that we each had other responsibilities to which we had to attend. I am thinking of our discussions of Lucy Grealy's memoir *Autobiography of a Face*, William Gibson's play *The Miracle Worker*, Franz Kafka's story *Metamorphosis*, Jonathan Franzen's essay "My Father's Brain," and Kay Redfield Jamison's memoir *An Unquiet Mind*, among others. But my strongest feeling as I survey the work that we have done at Lahey is a sense of gratitude to the participants in the *Literature & Medicine* seminar, who warmly welcomed me to their midst, opened up to me their thoughts and feelings about some of the most important issues affecting not only medical science but also the human heart, and in doing so immeasurably enriched my life, as I hope our discussions and the works we have read have also enriched their lives.

The experience of reading these poems and books has done so much for me in all areas of my life. I have become awakened to the realities of disease, the impact on all of us, as families, societies, religions, nationalities, and traditions.

As a psychologist, hopefully I was already tuned to patients' emotions and nonverbal cues, but reading stories and poems about real or imagined-real situations others have encountered often exposed me to things I had dealt with before. Discussion within the group offered many levels of thinking and insight beyond what I would come up with on my own. I was REALLY glad to be in this program!

After reading Kafka's Metamorphosis I worked with a patient who had cancer and was also depressed. I mentioned I had read it. The patient read it too and found new ways to understand his treatment and diagnoses.

Massachusetts Clemente Course Graduates 40

With tears, embraces, heartfelt speeches, and the blend of solemnity and exuberance that marks all graduation ceremonies, the three Massachusetts programs of the Bard College Clemente Course in the Humanities celebrated the achievements of 40 new alumni—7 men and 33 women—in evening exercises and receptions during the week of June 11th. The Class of 2007 includes 12 graduates of the New Bedford program, 20 from Boston, and 8 from Holyoke.

The Clemente Course, offered in three community settings in a partnership between MFH and local service agencies, is a college-level introductory course in five humanities disciplines: Literature, Moral Philosophy, American History, Art History, and Writing/Critical Thinking. Classes, which meet for two hours twice a week through the academic year, are taught by college faculty; the students are low-income adults. Instruction, books, childcare, transportation, and a variety of cultural activities are provided without charge. Students completing the class at a high level of achievement earn six transferable credits from Bard College.

The graduations took place in elegant and handsome settings: the auditorium and entry hall of the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Great Hall at Codman Square Health Center, and Holyoke's Wistariahurst Museum. Each ceremony was followed by a reception at which the graduates enjoyed refreshments and mingled with their teachers, many family members and friends, and supporters of the course. The excerpts below are from the remarks of student speakers.

“*Julia Legas, our Philosophy professor, saw our characters and strengths and helped us understand goodness, justice, duty and morality. We became her scholars. We now know how to define the highest good and revel in our life experiences because our actions show that we are conquering the demands of life.*

—Patsy Williams, Boston

I would like to say thanks to each of our wonderful instructors for enhancing each of our lives with the passion for education and positive, energetic flair. You each opened my eyes to something I was previously blind to, and I feel I cannot express my gratitude enough.

—Abbie Saunders, New Bedford

Clemente has taught me to think, listen and respond in a different voice, a voice that many of us have and tend to ignore. . . . Clemente has assisted me in taking my time to listen to what is being told and to explore aspects of the readings in a different angle and without prejudices. I am thankful for having the opportunity of exploring my talents and myself.

—Rosanna Lopez, Holyoke

I have been a nurse's aide for 15 years. I'm a caretaker; it's what I do. My plan is to climb the ladder of success one step at a time and graduate with a degree in nursing. The Clemente program has given me the push I needed to begin my educational journey.

To my classmates, my peers, my friends: I wish you much success in finding “the good life.” To my mom: thank you for being there for my children when I'm unable. To my son and daughter: education is important! Your only limitations are the limits you put on yourself.

—Teri Melo, New Bedford

This program is a way to start your life towards a new direction. . . . I want to make a difference and be able to help people. I see a vision of having my own practice, my title on the door under my name: Psychiatric Therapist. This course has given me the hope and desire to better myself and help the Hispanic community by utilizing my linguistic skills. I plan on continuing my education by pursuing a major in Psychology. I chose this field because I want to show people that there are certain professionals that do care about their problems and are there to help get them through difficult times.

—Raquel Figueroa, Holyoke

Opportunities are like the stars in the sky, too numerous to count; that is what the Clemente Course in the Humanities was to me, a missed opportunity in my life recaptured. . . . I'm a Black Afro American woman, mother and grandmother 56 years of age. Being a fulltime mother was a wonderful opportunity but it required me to put my education on hold. . . . I'm back on track with my college education, with a goal and determination to complete it. ”

—Ethel Woodard, Boston

The 2007 Clemente program in Massachusetts was made possible with support from the Massachusetts State Legislature through the Department of Education, as well as donations from many private individuals, corporations and foundations, to whom we are grateful, including the following major supporters: the Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation; University of Massachusetts Dartmouth; Citizens Bank Foundation; Lyda Kuth; Harvard Pilgrim Health Care; and Paul and Martha Samuelson



Left to right: New Bedford Graduates Patricia Nadeau and Gilbert Guzman, with Art History instructor Memory Holloway.



Mona Griffith, Boston Clemente Class of 2007, with a friend at the post graduate reception.



New Bedford Clemente Graduates Teri Melo and Stacey Gonzales



Sisters Abby Morales, Holyoke Clemente Class of 2004, and Raquel Figueroa, Class of 2007



New Bedford writing tutor Norine Cleffi and graduate Gilbert Guzman

“Congratulations to the 2007 Massachusetts Clemente Course Graduates”

Holyoke

Raquel Figueroa
Ruth Garcia
Vida Gircys
Rosanna Lopez
Denise Ortega
Karen Patton
Rebecca Smith
Yesenia Torrens

Boston

Charmaine Barrett
Jean-Claude Bastien
Marion Bowden
Maria Z. Carvalho
Minik Chuigyn
Ruby Cox
Sandra Faye Goodman
Mona Griffith

Marie Florette
Haubourg
Bridget Hickson
Cecelia McBride
Kathy McKenzie-
Johnson
Madelyn D. Shaulis
LaKeysha Smith

Marcia A. Thomas
Evelyn Vazquez
Derval Williams
Patsy Williams
Ethel Woodard
Linda Woodbury

New Bedford

Victor Bariteau
Judi Brackett
Darci Cabral
Oussama Acim
Katie Furtado
Christopher Garriga
Stacy Gonzales
Gilbert Guzman

Teri Melo
Patricia Nadeau
Abbie Saunders
Alan Skinner

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

Art as Healer and Provocateur:

A panel discussion (with art exhibit, and performance) on the process of artistic creation within oppressive sociopolitical contexts. Features a showing of work by Polish-Jewish painter Mira Zelechower-Aleksun as well as a performance of *Republic of Dreams*, a short play based on the life and work of WWII artist Bruno Schulz.

When: Tuesday, September 4, 2:00 pm

Where: Pushkin Gallery, Greenfield

Phone: (413) 774-2891

North Adams Historical City Walk

A series of historical walks around the city of North Adams with Paul Marino. Interested persons are advised to dress for the weather, wear a hat with a wide brim and a good pair of walking shoes, and carry a canteen or bottle of water.

When: Saturdays at 2:30 pm

September 15, September 29, October 6, October 20 and October 27.

Where: Starting location varies by date.

Phone: (413) 663-3809

Email: historyman@copper.net

Central Massachusetts

Martha Rosler: Bringing the War Home

The first museum to bring together Martha Rosler's two landmark series of photomontages raising questions about the connections between consumer products, journalism, politics and violence. The first, *Bringing the War Home* (1966-1972), combines news photos of the Vietnam War with images from contemporary architectural design magazines. The second, *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful, New Series* (2004), combines news photos of the Iraq War with landscapes and interiors from magazine advertisements.

When: September 23 - January 13

Where: Worcester Art Museum, Worcester

Web: www.worcesterart.org

Phone: (508) 799-4406

Cost: Museum admission is \$10 adults, \$8 seniors and full-time students with current ID, Free for youth 17 and under. Saturday 10am-noon admission is free

Greater Boston

Hyphenated-origins: Going Beyond the Labels

A student-curated exhibit that presents the life experiences of Newton high school students whose families emigrated from China, Mexico, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Russia.

When: Through January 2008

Where: Newton History Museum, 527 Washington Street, Newton

Cost: \$5 adults, \$3 students/seniors

Web: www.newtonhistorymuseum.org

Phone: (617) 796-1450

Escrita da Vida ~ Vida da Escrita

The Colloquium will bring four critically acclaimed writers together with scholars, teachers, librarians, and interested members of the general public for an afternoon of conversations about literature and the performance of a play adapted from Charles Reis Felix's memoir of growing up in New Bedford, *Through a Portagee Gate*.

When: Saturday, September 22, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Where: John F. Kennedy Library, Boston

Web: www.mfh.org/escrita

Phone: (617) 514-1643

Jamaica Plain Historical Walking Tours

Guided walking tours of six distinct districts of the vibrant Jamaica Plain neighborhood of Boston.

When: Saturdays through Sept 29, 11:00 am

Where: Starting location varies, see website

Web: www.jpsh.org

No News Is Bad News

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities' fourth annual fall symposium will explore the relationship between the media and democracy. Three consecutive panel sessions will discuss War Reporting, Political Reporting, and The News Business and the Business of News. Hosted by Boston College. (See p. 12 for more details).

When: Saturday, November 17, 12:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Where: Robsham Theater, Boston College, Chestnut Hill

Web: www.mfh.org

Phone: (413) 584-8440

Southeastern Massachusetts

Escrita da Vida - Vida da Escrita Reading & Discussion Series

A five-part reading and discussion series offered free of charge by the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture at UMass Dartmouth. The books that will be read in the series are the same books that will be explored with their authors at the September 22 colloquium at the JFK Library. (Attendance at the colloquium is NOT a prerequisite for participation in the library program.) The five books in the series will be provided by the library free of charge.

Where: Taunton Public Library, Taunton

Email: cotlib01@tmpl.net

Phone: (508) 821-1410

Gunnysack Castle

When: Tuesday, September 25 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Fado & Other Stories

When: Tuesday, October 9 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Through a Portagee Gate, the play

When: Saturday, October 20 2:00 pm

The Holyoke

When: Tuesday October 23 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

My Darling Dead Ones

When: Tuesday, November 6 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Escrita da Vida - Vida da Escrita Reading & Discussion Series

Where: Casa da Saudade Library 58 Crapo Street New Bedford, MA 02740

Phone: (508) 991-6219

Email: jdowney@sailsinc.org

Gunnysack Castle

When: Thursday, September 27 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Fado & Other Stories

When: Thursday, October 11 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

The Holyoke

When: Thursday October 25 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm



Working Waterfront Festival

My Darling Dead Ones

When: Thursday, November 8 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Through a Portagee Gate, the play

TBA

The Working Waterfront Festival

Celebrating the commercial fishing industry and the men and women who harvest the North Atlantic. Walk the decks of a scalloper, dine on fresh seafood, mend a fishing net and watch a Coast Guard rescue demonstration. 2007 Theme: Women and the Working Waterfront.

When: September 22 and 23

Where: Port of New Bedford (Pier 3, State Pier and Steamship Pier)

Web: www.workingwaterfrontfestival.org

Northeastern Massachusetts

In the Spirit of Clara Barton: Almira Fales and the Women of South Danvers

A series of related programs and an exhibit of letters sent to Eunice Cook, the founder of the South Danvers Ladies Soldiers' Aid Society, from women who worked with the wounded during the Civil War.

Where: Eben Dale Sutton Room, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody

Web: www.peabodylibrary.org/suttonroom/index_suttonroom.htm (click on events)

Phone: (978) 531-0100 x 34

Registration is required for lectures.

Exhibit

When: September 20 through December 1, 2007

Lectures

Daughters of the Union

A talk given by Nina Silber, Professor of History at Boston University, on northern women's roles in fighting the Civil War

When: Thursday, September 20 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Clara Barton and the Missing Men of the Civil War

A talk given by Cynthia Dias-Reed, Curator of the Clara Barton Homestead Museum, on Barton's role in locating men missing in action during the Civil War.

When: Thursday, September 27 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Performance

A Visit with Clara Barton

An interactive performance by Living History performer Jan Turnquist that highlights Barton's unconventional approach in her work with the wounded during the Civil War at a time when social conventions prohibited such behavior.

When: Thursday, October 4 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

On the Road in Lowell: Confession, Dream, Prophecy: The Search for Selfhood in Kerouac's Life and Art

A panel discussion with Michael Skau, Joseph Donahue, Nancy Sawyer Fox and Hillary Holladay examining the significance of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*.

When: Thursday, October 4 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Where: Boott Cotton Mills Museum, 2nd Floor Event Center, Lowell National Historic Park

Web: www.ontheroadinlowell.org/

Phone: (978) 446-7162

Outside Massachusetts

Caring for the Caregiver

Conference about the Literature and Medicine program, and the ways in which literature and writing can support the personal and professional development of health care professionals. Learn about a range of innovative programs, best practices, new research and evaluation methods and how to implement a program in your own facility.

When: November 9 - 10

Where: Radisson Hotel, Madison NH

Web: www.mainehumanities.org

Phone: (888) 634-3233

Further details available on the website, in the fall.

Humanities Calendar						
wk	M	T	W	T	F	S S
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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.

“ Very often Jewish mothers internalize the negative attributes of the stereotype, judging themselves by its worst traits. If we acknowledge the positive stories, the positive characters, that define who the Jewish mother was, we can embrace and enjoy the label. ”

Secondly, today’s “helicopter” mother who hovers over her children and is on call 24/7—self-sacrificing, overprotective, deeply identified with her child’s success and embedded in every aspect of her children’s lives—resembles the fabled Jewish mother caricature more than ever before.

EKR: But isn’t she a stereotype, too?

JA: I think that the notion of a “helicopter” mother is denigrating; it requires mothers to defend themselves against accusations that they are pathologically involved with their children.

EKR: You were a founding board member and you chair the Academic Council of the Jewish Women’s Archive, which was established by Gail Reimer, former Associate Director of MFH, in 1995. JWA hosts a blog, “Jewesses with Attitude,” where young Jewish women “tell it like it is.” What would you think of a blog for Jewish mothers?

JA: There are plenty of blogs by and for mothers. But a Jewish mothers’ blog, where mothers could talk back to the jokesters who ridicule them and share their own stories and smarts would be terrific!

EKR: I looked and couldn’t find one. I wonder if it’s because women hesitate to self-identify as Jewish mothers? What do you think?

JA: Very often Jewish mothers internalize the negative attributes of the stereotype, judging themselves by its worst traits. If we acknowledge the positive stories, the positive characters, that define who the Jewish mother was, we can embrace and enjoy the label.

EKR: I know you’ve done that. I hope your book will help other women follow suit.

Grants Available

Current guidelines and application forms for MFH grants can be obtained by downloading materials from our website or telephoning the Foundation’s office. You must be a nonprofit organization, or have a nonprofit fiscal sponsor, to be eligible for funding.

(413) 584-8440 or www.mfh.org

Project Grants

In most cases, the maximum amount of a project grant will be \$5,000. Projects responding to our current theme, “Liberty and justice for all,” projects that qualify for special cultural economic development funds, and pre-production media projects may receive up to \$10,000. Proposals are due on the first business day of November, February, May and August. A draft proposal must be submitted at least 15 days before the final deadline. Applicants must consult with Hayley Wood or Kristin O’Connell before submitting a draft. Notification is within 90 days of the deadline.

Scholar in Residence & Research Inventory Grants

These programs, designed to improve the presentation of history in historical organizations, are administered by the Foundation. May 15th and January 15th are the deadlines for RIG applications. SIR grants have only one deadline per year, March 15th. Applicants must contact the Foundation’s Local History Coordinator, Patricia Bruttomesso at localhistory@mfh.org or (413) 584-8440 before submitting a proposal.

Guidelines are available at www.mfh.org.



2007 Massachusetts Book Awards Announced

The Massachusetts Center for the Book has announced the winners of the 2007 Massachusetts Book awards. The awards recognize significant achievements in fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and children’s literature, published in the previous calendar year and either written by a Massachusetts author or having a strong Massachusetts theme. The judging panels, made up of writers, booksellers, librarians, scholars, and teachers, select an overall winner and two honor books in each category. The twelve titles are added to the permanent collection maintained by the Secretary of the Commonwealth and promoted throughout the year by the Center for the Book, which arranges author visits to libraries and bookstores in every part of the state.



The awards will be presented this fall at a ceremony at the State House. Further information on the books, along with reading and discussion guides and news about other Center for the Book programs, can be found at the Center’s website: www.massbook.org. The 2007 winners are listed below.



FICTION

Award Winner
The Emperor’s Children by Claire Messud

Honor Books
Jump at the Sun by Kim McLarin
How Elizabeth Barrett Browning Saved My Life by Mameve Medwed

NONFICTION

Award Winner
Mayflower by Nathaniel Philbrick

Honor Books
House of War by James Carroll
Failed States by Noam Chomsky

POETRY

Award Winner
Averno by Louise Glück

Honor Books
Republic of Poetry by Martin Espada
God’s Silence by Franz Wright

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE

Award Winner
Incantation by Alice Hoffman

Honor Books
Clementine by Sarah Pennypacker
Counting on Grace by Elizabeth Winthrop



www.massmoments.org
an electronic almanac of massachusetts history

The Foundation received the following email inspired by Mass Moments, our electronic almanac of Massachusetts stories from history. Go to www.massmoments.org to sign up for a free daily email about what happened **on this day...**

From: Virginia Chadwick • **Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2007
To: info@massmoments.org • **Subject:** Rubber Bathing Suits

In a recent email from a friend of mine, she sent me an article that was in your publication. It was in to regard to Charles Goodyear receiving a patent on vulcanized rubber on June 5, 1844. After hearing a story I recently told her, she felt you would be interested in my situation with Goodyear rubber.

I am now 89 years old. Back in the 1930s when I was a teenager, much against my mother’s wishes, I purchased a Goodyear rubber bathing suit with my babysitting money. I spent my summers at Little Alum Pond in East Brimfield, Mass. The bathing suit caused quite a bit of comment. Though not as risqué as suits are today, it was the talk of the lake in those days. Fit skin tight, flesh colored and when in the water, with my tan, looked like I was in the nude.

One day while swimming with friends, I got on the top of a 20-foot diving tower and did a swan dive. On hitting water, the rubber suit split in two pieces. I hollered to my brother that I was swimming home which about a half a mile across the lake. In the nude, I hollered to my mother to throw me out another suit. Needless to say, the first thing I heard from my mother was, “I told you so,” and there were no more rubber suits for me after that.

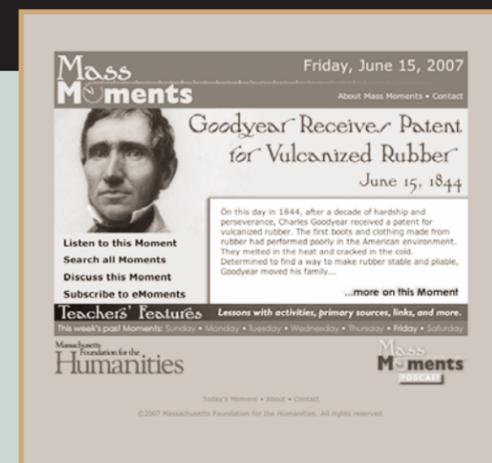
Goodyear also sold rubber girdles. I purchased one along with the suit at Steiger’s Department Store in Springfield. The girdle did not hold up very well either, and was too hot under clothes.

So, that is my experience with Goodyear.

I am handicapped now, but I still swim every day, doing laps and leg exercises. I also taught swimming for over 40 years, but have retired from that, as the kids got too hard for me to handle. So I took up learning how to use a computer at the age of 89.

Thank you for your time and hope I hear from you.

Virginia Chadwick
Chuluota, Florida



Recent Grants

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS

\$5,000 to the Berkshire Museum in Pittsfield for family-oriented programming related to a new exhibit about the connections between Eastern and Western art.

\$7,500 to Live in Concert, Inc., in Amherst toward the costs of presenting a fully staged production of a new opera set in Ford's Theatre on the night of Abraham Lincoln's assassination.



Abraham and Mary Lincoln (Donald Wilkinson and Angela Gooch) watch from their box as Gil Rose leads the Boston Modern Orchestra Project in *Our American Cousin*.

\$2,350 to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to present two forums on the responsibility of the press and to help introduce the newly established New England News Forum.

\$6,631 to Double Edge Theatre Productions in Ashfield for three events in different settings – an exhibit of the work of artist Mira Zelechower, a theatrical performance, and a panel discussion – all examining the role of the artist in oppressive contexts.

\$5,000 to Friends of WFCR in Amherst to produce 12 radio pieces focusing on the relationships between human history and environmental change in Massachusetts.

\$7,500 to the Plainfield Historical Society to develop and provide print guides to a series of family-friendly outdoor experiences designed to engage visitors in discovering the cultural and natural history of Plainfield.

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

\$5,000 to the Worcester Art Museum for programming and the publication of a brochure in conjunction with an exhibition of new work that juxtaposes news photographs from the Iraq war with advertising images of American landscapes and domestic interiors.

\$4,985 to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester for the development of a living history presentation on John Quincy Adams's service as the United States' first ambassador to Russia, with public performances in Boston, Worcester, and Amherst.

GREATER BOSTON

\$7,500 to Primary Source in Watertown for a seven-day teacher institute focused on the ways in which the concepts of liberty and justice are expressed in the Middle East.

\$4,588 to the USS Constitution Museum in Boston for the creation and production of a 20-minute dramatic piece based on the lives of sailors and sailors' widows in the years after the War of 1812.



Actors portray sailors, and widows of sailors, who served on USS Constitution.

\$600 to the Roxbury Action Program to underwrite the cost of a performance and discussion of the jazz compositions of Makanda Ken McIntyre during a community book fair.



The Makanda Project, featuring humanities scholar Salim Washington (front row, center).

\$5,000 to the Commonwealth Foundation in Cambridge to underwrite the costs of conducting a systematic inventory of individuals and organizations involved in poetry in Massachusetts and the obstacles and opportunities they face.

\$10,000 to the Welcome Project in Somerville for an exhibit and related programming devoted to the experiences of "older" and "newer" immigrants to the city, where nearly one-third of the population is foreign born.

\$10,000 to Theatre Espresso in Jamaica Plain to support 18 performances of an interactive and educational drama concerning the trial following the Boston Massacre, using the context of emotional public outcry to raise basic questions about the nature of justice and the functioning of the judicial system.

(Photo Right) Actors capture the state of heightened emotions that followed the Boston Massacre in Uprising on King Street.

\$10,000 to 888 Women's History Project in Cambridge toward production costs for a documentary exploring a little-known but highly significant event in the history of the Second Wave of the women's movement—the 1971 takeover of a Harvard University building.

SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

\$2,000 to Linking Communities in Martha's Vineyard to create a traveling historical exhibition and install commemorative markers honoring citizens involved in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

\$2,000 to the Orleans Historical Society for an exhibit of 25 museum-quality maps of Cape Cod and a related lecture series.



John Thornton's "A Chart of the Sea Coast of New Found Land, New Scotland, New England, New York, New Jersey, with Virginia and Maryland." From *The English Pilot*. London: W. Mount & T. Page, [1698]. Courtesy The Philadelphia Print Shop.

\$9,320 to the Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern Massachusetts in New Bedford to support several elements of their fourth annual Working Waterfront Festival.

\$3,090 to the Falmouth Historical Society to support a new trolley tour that will focus on agricultural history and contemporary farming in Falmouth.

\$10,000 to the Center for Independent Documentary in Sharon for development of *Peacemaking Circle*, a film examining the application in the criminal justice system of a Native American method of interactive conflict resolution.

\$5,000 to Spinner Publications in New Bedford for the publication of a memoir compiled from oral history interviews with the late Abraham Landau, a Holocaust survivor and longtime New Bedford resident.

Abraham Landau at work at his tailor shop on Sixth Street in downtown New Bedford, circa 1962. His forearm bears the identifying tattoo of a Holocaust survivor. Courtesy Spinner Publications.



NORTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

\$1,050 to the Peabody Institute Library in Peabody to support an exhibit and related programming about the contributions of Almira Fales and other Danvers women to Civil War relief efforts.

\$5,000 to the Cultural Organization of Lowell for *On the Road in Lowell*, three forums examining the cultural significance of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, in conjunction with the exhibition of the original manuscript.



OUTSIDE MASSACHUSETTS

\$10,000 to Old Stone House of Brooklyn, New York, toward pre-production costs of a documentary on famed orator and author Thomas Paine.



Detail from a 1792 British engraving of Thomas Paine surrounded by injustices, standing on morals, and appealing to the English to organize a republic. From the Library of Congress.

Mass. Memories Road Show Comes to Quincy



"Giant oyster shell",
Henry F. Nilsen, City Engineer,
City of Quincy, 1956

Elaine Caliri's parents fell in love while hanging out in the granite quarries behind her grandparents' house on Nilsen Avenue in Quincy. The couple, Henry Nilsen and Louise Carlson, married in 1926, and Henry worked for the City of Quincy for most of his career. The family has a long history in Quincy: Henry's father, Carl Nilsen, came from Norway in the 1880s and opened a blacksmith shop in the city. More than four generations later, Elaine and her family still live just two miles from where her parents courted.

Elaine Caliri's story is just one of many collected and preserved by the Mass. Memories Road Show, a project documenting the history of Massachusetts' cities and towns through family photographs and stories. Unlike the history that is often found in books or museum exhibits, the Mass. Memories Road Show captures stories of the Commonwealth's immigration and cultural heritage that are not documented in any other way.

Local residents are encouraged to dig through their scrapbooks, albums, drawers and boxes for photographs that document their family history. They are invited to a Mass. Memories Road Show, a public event where photographs (and sometimes jewelry or other small keepsakes) are scanned into an online database. The contributors are also asked to share "the story behind the photo" through a videotaped oral history interview.

All scanned photographs, digitized oral histories and other primary sources collected at the Road Shows are indexed and added to the Mass. Memories Road Show website at UMass Boston's Healey Library. The website (www.massmemories.net) will be a resource for learning materials aligned with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks and is an educational tool for the general public.

Edward Fitzgerald, executive director of the Quincy Historical Society, said the success of a recent Quincy Road Show was due both to the social aspects of the event and the types of photographs and stories that were collected.

"Historical societies can have trouble preserving the present moment," he explained. "They make well-intentioned decisions about what to preserve, but then 40 or 50 years later they may discover that something was missed. The Road Shows are a great way of teasing out the local history that has been overlooked."

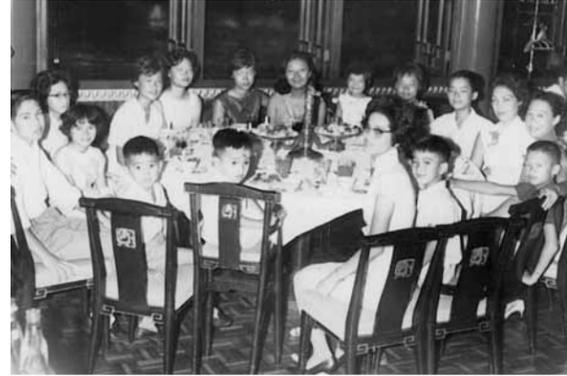
The current theme of the Mass. Memories Road Show is "Origins & Arrivals," with a focus on collecting material that documents immigration and migration to Massachusetts and the contributions people have made to their cities and towns. The project aims to provide a representative portrait of Massachusetts, so every effort is made to include recent arrivals, as well as people whose families have lived in the Commonwealth for many generations, and everyone in between.

The Mass. Memories Road Show has collected more than 600 photographs at events in Norwood, Dorchester, Roxbury, Quincy, Roslindale and Deerfield. It regularly receives requests to bring the Road Show to other communities, and is currently working with Natick, Holyoke, Sharon, Lexington and Whitman. This fall the project will add online exhibits highlighting contributions from previous Road Shows and featuring special topics such as Immigration, Weddings, School Days and World War II.

The Mass. Memories Road Show is an initiative of the Massachusetts Studies Project at University of Massachusetts Boston and is co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Foundations for the Humanities. For more information on upcoming events, or to bring the Mass. Memories Road Show to your community, visit www.massmemories.net.



"Bathing Beauty on the Beach," Louise (Carlson)
Nilsen, Wollaston Beach, 1925



"My Birthday Party: Hong Kong Party,"
Hong Kong, China, 1963



"Police Rescue Resident (and Cat) During Flood in
December 1945"

ESCRITA DA VIDA - VIDA DA ESCRITA

Conversations with Four Portuguese American Writers

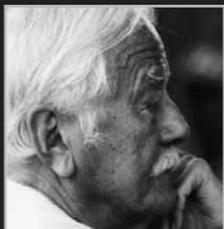
A Colloquium on Contemporary Portuguese American Literature

Join the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture, for two lively conversations, each featuring a pair of critically acclaimed Portuguese American writers and moderated by a prominent scholar. The two sessions will be followed by a performance of a play based upon Charles Reis Felix's memoir, *Through A Portagee Gate*. The play was adapted for the stage and will be performed by the New Bedford theatre company Culture*Park. The colloquium is free and open to the public. Registration is required. Chartered bus transport to JFK Library is available from the Fall River, Ludlow, New Bedford and Taunton Public Libraries for a small fee. Box lunches are also available at cost if you preorder. Go to www.mfh.org/escrita for more information or to register.

Reading & Discussion Series

Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities and the Center for Portuguese Studies and Culture at UMass Dartmouth are offering a five-part reading and discussion series free of charge in cooperation with public libraries in Cambridge, Ludlow, Fall River, New Bedford, and Taunton.

The five books in the series are the same four books that will be explored with their authors at the September 22 colloquium at the JFK Library plus the play. (Attendance at the colloquium is not a prerequisite for participation in the library program.) They represent the range of genres: the short story (*Fado & Other Stories*), the novel (*My Darling Dead Ones* and *Gunnysack Castle*), poetry (*The Holyoke*), and the memoir and play (*Through a Portagee Gate*). Books will be provided by the library free of charge. Participants receive and read the books about two weeks before the first session, then return on the appointed evening for a presentation and open discussion with Christopher Larkosh, a professor at UMass Dartmouth specializing in Portuguese American literature and translation theory.



Julian Silva



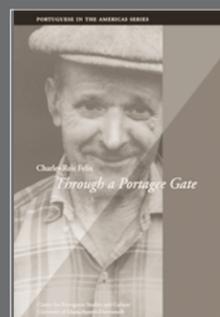
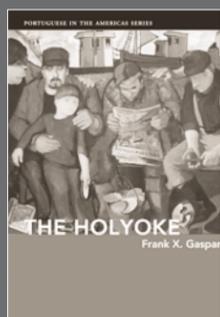
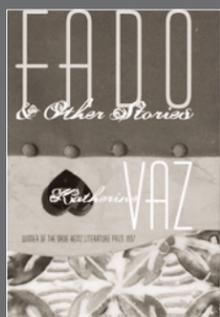
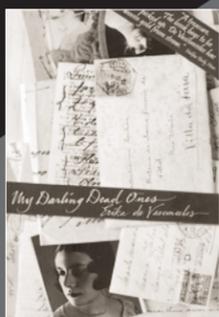
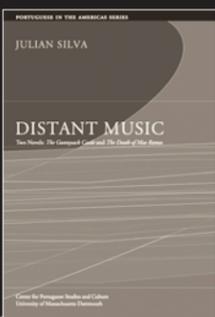
Erika de Vasconcelos



Katherine Vaz



Frank X. Gaspar





Lowell Bergman



Mark Bowden



Anthony Brinkley



David Carr



John Carroll



David Greenberg



Ellen Hume



Joe Lockhart



Samantha Power



Todd Purdham



Anthony Shadid



Andrew Sullivan



Margaret Talbot



Marcy Wheeler

THE FOURTH ANNUAL FALL SYMPOSIUM

NO NEWS IS BAD NEWS

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN OUR DEMOCRACY

Our topic this year is timely and important. With the recent controversies over the failure of the press to fully live up to its responsibilities in the runup to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the role of the media in the outing of a covert CIA agent, the rise of the blogosphere and so-called citizen journalism, and the impact of increasing financial pressures on newspapers and magazines, public confidence in the mainstream media is at an all-time low. What are the implications of this for our democracy? How might our faith in the press be restored?

Again this year, our fall symposium will consist of a series of three interrelated conversations, each focusing on a different aspect of our theme.

For more information, visit www.mfh.org

Saturday, November 17, 2007

12:30 -5:00 pm

Boston College

HOSTED BY BOSTON COLLEGE