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Boys posing in the streets of Cienfuegos. Check out more photos from the recent Mass Humanities Traveling Seminars to Cuba on page 3.

The Balm of Books

A Mass Humanities program is rewriting the way health care is delivered across the Commonwealth.

By Brendan Tapley

Leslie Nyman, a facilitator of *Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care™* at Baystate Medical in Springfield, does not mince words: “As a young nurse, I was shocked to discover how many doctors and nurses with whom I worked were not conversant in literature. Literature is the greatest teacher of compassion. It is the one place where we can see another’s experience through [different] eyes.”

As a definition of empathy, Nyman’s is a good one. That her theory also serves as the basis for Mass Humanities’ powerful, and popular, health care program further proves its relevance.

Eight years ago, *Lit & Med*—the program’s short-hand—made its debut in five hospitals in Massachusetts. The program’s goal then, as it remains today, was to bring together a diverse group of health care professionals to reflect on their roles through the medium of literature.

“I think we don’t recognize that, with respect to the humanities, people at their places of work make up a truly underserved community, since sadly the humanities hardly ever make an appearance in the workplace,” says Martin Newhouse, also a *Lit & Med* facilitator and a Mass Humanities advisory board member. “The opportunity for reading, reflection, and discussion provided by *Lit & Med* helps health care professionals focus on issues that they may not have had the time or opportunity to ponder on their own.”

Indeed, part of what makes the program’s framework so appropriate for the health care community is the way in which it asks for, and provides, a specific type of time and focus. “It is the type of time that we all in this day and age, no matter our backgrounds, need,” says David Tebaldi, Mass Humanities’ executive director. “But for those dealing on a daily basis with the complex dilemmas health care summons—death and dying, debilitating disease, family dynamics, ethical choices, among others—it could be argued that such introspective time is critical to doing their jobs well.”

Lit & Med is predicated on the belief that the humanities, because they ask individuals to wrestle with intellectual and emotional questions, are uniquely positioned to help improve the bond between physician and patient, a bond that can only fulfill its potential when honesty, sensitivity, awareness, and compassion are brought to bear. When faced with serious health care concerns, such bonds, however essential, are rare.

For Laurie Rosenblatt, MD, a facilitator at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Brighton, *Lit & Med* has offered that and other dividends to her hospital. “In large health care organizations, people with clinical and non-clinical functions coordinate services and care often by e-mail. Many find this efficient but isolating. The poems and stories [we study] bring up anecdotes of personal experiences that broaden and deepen mutual understanding and build group cohesion. The program makes the large modern hospital system a more hospitable place.”

Newhouse agrees. “The hospital setting is one of the most hierarchical around, and it [is] perhaps only at *Lit & Med* sessions that nurses, doctors, social workers, secretaries, and others actually get to communicate across lines and outside of nor-

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

mal roles. At Lahey Clinic, one of the van drivers participated in our seminar, and two years ago, a chaplain joined.”

“When you know someone, what they do, how they see the world, how they see their work” says Rosenblatt, “you may be more likely to make the extra effort to help them out. One of St. Elizabeth’s strengths is the feeling the community has for its hospital and the family feeling among staff members. [Right now] the hospital is in transition to a private model, causing anxiety about changes in values and culture. The *Lit & Med* program, by building relationships among staff members, may stabilize the staff and reduce turnover, which is an expensive and disruptive side effect of private acquisition.”

Lit & Med functions as a series of six monthly discussions organized around a wide array of themes: the bond between patient and caregiver; addiction; aging; end of life; different ways of “seeing”; working in health care; compassion fatigue and burnout; grace and illumination; and class and culture. A single literary work or several short ones, along with the issues they provoke, inspire the conversation. That conversation is led by a professional facilitator who may be a university scholar or a professional within the medical community. The works chosen represent a wide range [see page 6], but all grapple with the big-picture complexity people face when confronting health.

“We’ve discussed the care of dying patients, the challenges of caring for those who are chronically ill, and our own sadness at not being able to ‘fix’ the suffering we witness,” says Rosenblatt.

Patrick Ireland, who facilitates the *Lit & Med* program at UMass Medical says, “Flannery O’Connor wrote that most of us live our lives of routine until the moment when life’s mysteries are revealed to us.

“The program makes the large modern hospital system a more hospitable place.”

That is true of those of us who work in medicine as well, and I think it is the study of such humanities-grounded works that opens students up to the human issues of the healing science they practice. I’ve seen the moment in which some insight has been sparked, some light bulb turned on because of the direction the conversation is going in. It is the moment that our discussion of humanistic issues in the works we read has touched their working lives and made a positive difference from which they will never recover.”

For Nyman, who was a registered nurse for

18 years, *Lit & Med* has even compelled her to develop her own program. “I’ve partnered with a doctor at Baystate who was in my first *Lit & Med* class and is the liaison doctor for Tufts medical students. Our program, *Point of View*, focuses on self-reflection as well as offering an opportunity for students to express their fears, shame, concerns, frustration, and hopefully joy, about being medical students.”

But among all these outcomes, perhaps *Lit & Med*’s signature legacy resides in its simplicity. Says Rosenblatt: “The participants have said that the program allows them to ‘put faces to names.’”

In a sea of proposed changes and health care fixes, is there not a more important solution than that?

If you would like to find out more about Lit & Med, or to support it with a donation, please contact Rose Sackey-Milligan by writing rsackey-milligan@masshumanities.org.

For a closer look at a *Lit & Med* session, and a reading list based on a *Lit & Med* syllabus, turn to page 6.

MASS HUMANITIES

66 Bridge Street
Northampton, MA 01060
tel (413) 584-8440
fax (413) 584-8454
www.masshumanities.org

STAFF

David Tebaldi
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
tebaldi@masshumanities.org

Pleun Bouricius
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
pbouricius@masshumanities.org

Depika Fernandes
FISCAL OFFICER
dfernandes@masshumanities.org

Anne Rogers
SYSTEMS MANAGER
arogers@masshumanities.org

Rose Sackey-Milligan
PROGRAM OFFICER
rsackey-milligan@masshumanities.org

John Sieracki
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS
EDITOR OF MASS HUMANITIES
jsieracki@masshumanities.org

Brendan Tapley
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER
btapley@masshumanities.org

Melissa Wheaton
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AND GRANTS ADMINISTRATOR
mwheaton@masshumanities.org

Hayley Wood
SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER
hwood@masshumanities.org

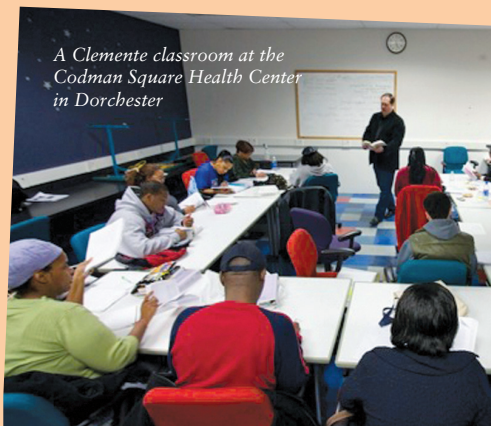
Mass Humanities promotes the use of history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines to deepen our understanding of the issues of the day, strengthen our sense of common purpose, and enrich individual and community life. We take the humanities out of the classroom and into the community.

Mass 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.



“One reason I love Mass Humanities is that it operates at different scales: It funds public art projects that tens of thousands of people will encounter, and it funds a college-level humanities course for a few dozen people that will make a critical difference in their lives. To put it another way, Mass Humanities has an influence of both great breadth and great depth.”

Jack Cheng is a professor who has taught art history at colleges around the Commonwealth, as well as at the Clemente Course in Boston.



A Clemente classroom at the Codman Square Health Center in Dorchester

Queuing Up for Cuba

Essay and photos by David Tebaldi

After an eight-year hiatus, Mass Humanities resumed its popular Cuba travel program this past winter. Two week-long, scholar-led traveling seminars were organized to learn about and encourage the further development of civil society in Cuba. The January seminar was led by Javier Corrales, a political scientist at Amherst College specializing in Latin America and member of the Mass Humanities board of directors. The March seminar was led by Rafael Hernández, one of Cuba's leading public intellectuals and the editor of *Temas*, a quarterly journal focusing on politics and culture in Cuba.

The itineraries included visits with Cuban political scientists, urban historians and cultural workers; union officials; artists and writers; religious institutions; art and history museums; and small business owners who are leading the way in the Communist country's emerging private economy.

Both groups also enjoyed breathtaking private performances by the Chorus of Cienfuegos and Danza Contemporánea de Cuba. The world-class contemporary dance company will be performing in Boston on May 26 at the Strand Theatre (see page 4).

Seminar participants discovered that despite decades of autocratic rule and economic deprivation—

caused in part by the U.S. embargo of Cuba since 1960—the Cuban people seem remarkably content. They love their country. They want the Revolution—which is not, as we may think of it, something that happened a half century ago, but rather something that Cubans are living and reaffirming every day—to succeed.

Conventional wisdom has often suggested that there is no civil society in Cuba; that is to say, no institutions that operate independently of the state, such as charities, social clubs, or trade associations. Indeed, we learned that, until recently, even the term “civil society” was regarded by the government as a euphemism for counter-revolutionary activity and therefore repressed.

However, while it is true that Cuba has nothing like the civil institutions in a country like the U.S., we discovered that Cubans demonstrate far higher degrees of trust, cooperation, and altruism. It would be interesting and instructive to learn why this is so, and answering that question is one of our goals as we further explore Cuba in our future seminars. We hope you can join us.

More Mass Humanities Traveling Seminars to Cuba are planned for fall 2011 and winter 2012. If you would like to be informed about the details of future trips, send an email to David Tebaldi at tebaldi@masshumanities.org, and David will see that you are notified.

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A baseball fan in Havana. Tickets to the ballgame cost 3 pesos (about 15 cents).

The Escambray Mountains in south-central Cuba were the theater of the “War Against the Bandits,” a six-year rebellion (1959–1965) by a group of Cuban insurgents who opposed the new socialist government led by Fidel Castro.



Not all billboards in Cuba are as anti-American as this one, but they all carry political messages.



Great breadth and great depth are not an easy combination to come by, but for more than 35 years, Mass Humanities has brought both to the Commonwealth by sponsoring programs that enlist history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines to enhance and improve our civic life. In this political and economic climate, it has never been more important to support organizations that keep us thinking, keep us questioning, keep us aware. Mass Humanities is committed to these goals. If you share our commitment, please make a gift today. Every dollar counts.

Please Give!

To make a gift, you can use the envelope in this newsletter. You may also go online and click Donate at www.masshumanities.org. Or call the Foundation at (413) 584-8440, or write John Sieracki, director of development at jsieracki@masshumanities.org



Danza Contemporánea de Cuba

Greater Boston

Danza Contemporánea de Cuba Performance

The special grand finale of Danza Contemporánea de Cuba's highly anticipated U.S. tour brings to Boston audiences the distinct style that Artistic Director Miguel Iglesias Ferrer says "is more than a fusion of Spanish and African; it's a statement, a way of life about the freedom to act and the willingness to openly express personal opinions." Presented by Dance for World Community, Educational Travel Alliance, and Mass Humanities.

When: Thursday, May 26, 7:30 pm

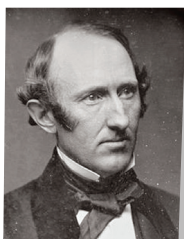
Where: Strand Theatre, 543 Columbia Road, Dorchester

Web: www.dccboston.com

Phone: (866) 811-4111

Cost: Tickets start at \$35.00

Wendell Phillips Bicentennial Exhibit



On display this summer at Harvard University, an exhibit on Wendell Phillips focusing on his

illustrious Massachusetts ancestry, his education at Harvard and subsequent banishment from campus for his perceived radicalism, and his long career as an orator and abolitionist.

When: Through August 2011; opening and reception Thursday, June 2.

Where: Lowell Room, Houghton Library, Harvard University

Web: hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton

Phone: (617) 495-2440

Central Massachusetts

Worcester's Blackstone Canal Horse and Wagon Tours

Join trained interpreters from South High School for a riveting journey through Worcester's Canal District as they tell the farm-to-factory story of the Industrial Revolution and the immigrants who made it happen.

When: Every Thursday in July and August at 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 pm

Where: Meet at the corner of Temple and Harrison Streets,

Web: www.canaldistrictalliance.org

Northeastern Massachusetts

The Greatest Anxiety: South Danvers on the Eve of the Civil War

This new exhibit explores the tensions and anxieties experienced by this community in the years leading up to the Civil War.

When: Through August 1

Where: Peabody Institute Library, 82 Main Street, Peabody

Web: www.peabodylibrary.org/history/events.htm

Phone: (978) 531-0100

Pioneer Valley

I Was There: Stories of War and Homecoming

An exhibition of photographic portraits of local veterans inspired by Tim O'Brien's novel about the Vietnam War, *The Things They Carried*. The exhibit uses photography and transcribed interviews about the veteran's wartime and homecoming experiences, creating a visual and intellectual link with the viewer as it builds on O'Brien's literary insights into the realities, sacrifices, and human costs of war. A collaboration of the Hallmark Institute of Photography, the Veterans

Education Project and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

When: Through June 5

Where: The Gallery at Hallmark, 85 Avenue A, Turners Falls

Web: www.vetsed.org

Phone: (413) 863-0009

The Use and Misuse of Religion in American Political Life

A lecture series with Q&As that includes: "Religions in America: Source of Healing or Power" with Professor Stephen Prothero of Boston University and Professor Kathryn Lofton of Yale University on June 22; "Has it Always Been Like This? Religious Division and Political Partisanship in the American Past" with Professor David Wills of Amherst College, Wednesday, July 13; and "The Role of Media in Understanding Religion in American Political Life" with Professor Gustav Niebuhr of the University of Washington, Wednesday, August 1.

When: Dates as noted; all lectures begin at 7:00 pm

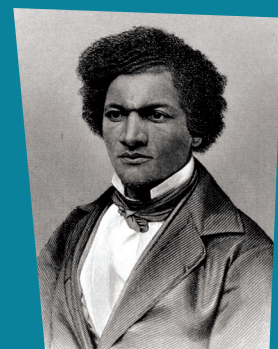
Where: Charlemont Federated Church, 175 Main Street, Charlemont

Web: www.charlemontfederated-church.org

Phone: (413) 339-4294

Reading Frederick Douglass in the Era of Barack Obama

Organize your community group, your library, your town, your church, your family and friends for a communal reading of Douglass's speech, "The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro." Mass Humanities will fund the stipend* of a moderator (a teacher or scholar) for a discussion after your reading.



A U.S.-Iraqi Cultural Collaboration in the Pioneer Valley

This series of discussions and performances will center around “Having the Life of Our Times: A Community Response to Children, War, and the Possibilities for Peace,” an exhibit of 15 murals painted by Iraqi and American children, from the “How Will They Know Us / American Mural Project,” on display at the Northampton Center for the Arts June 22-24. Unless otherwise noted, all events listed below take place at the Northampton Center for the Arts: 17 New South Street, Northampton, (413) 584-7327. For more information, visit www.nohoarts.org or www.iraqichildrensart.org.

And Their Views Will Be Given Due Consideration

This panel on youth, art, history, and culture will feature Peter Pufall of Smith College; Laura Thompson, KidSpace at MASS MoCA director; artist Thamer Dawood; and John Russell from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

When: June 22, 7:30 pm

Iraq and the U.S.: The Possibilities for Reconciliation

A brown bag lunch discussion on using art in humanitarian aid efforts will be led by Iraqi Childrens Art Exchange Director Claudia Lefko; Iraqi artists and humanitarian workers Faiza Al Araji and Auf Al Arawi; and Kate Lefko-Everett, researcher and project leader at The Institute for Justice & Reconciliation in Cape Town, South Africa.

When: June 24, 12:00 noon

Two Perspectives on Iraq

Exhibit of recent paintings and drawings and a discussion with Iraqi artist Thamer Dawood and Northampton artist Harriet Diamond.

When: June 15-July 31;

Gallery Talk: June 23, 7:30 pm

Aftermath

Staged reading of a play written and produced by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen. The writers traveled to Jordan where they developed the play in collaboration with Iraqi refugees. Talk-back will be led by Hampshire College Professor Bob Meagher, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Professor Branda Miller, and Iraqi human rights worker and advocate Auf Al Arawi.

When: June 23, 7:30 pm

Cost: \$12.00

Open Shutters Iraq

Produced by Iraqi filmmaker Maysoon Pachachi, *Open Shutters Iraq* features a group of Iraqi women who used photography to document their lives under the guidance of photojournalist Eugenie Dolberg. Professor Ann Ciecko from UMass Amherst will lead a discussion of the film.

When: June 19, 7:00 pm

Where: Pleasant Street Theater, 27 Pleasant Street, Northampton

Web: www.amherstcinema.org

Cost: \$8.75

An Evening of Dance, Music, Readings, and Spoken Word Performance

Musician Mary Ellen Miller and her students from Northampton Community

Music School and Smith College Campus School will perform original compositions, “sounding” the “How Will They Know Us” murals. The Lisa Leizman Dance Company will perform original work, choreographed for this exhibit. Local author and former U.S. Marine Tyler Boudreau and writer Tony Gardina will read and perform original work created for this event. Iraqi and American youth mural painters and artists will offer reflections.

When: June 24, 7:30 pm



Above: A student working on a
“How Will They Know Us” mural.
Below: A mural that will be on display



Artists Matt Mitchell and Thamer Dawood mix
paint in preparation for the mural project.

In addition, the first ten groups to submit a brief report, photographs, a recording or video documenting a public event, with a release for us to post them online, will be awarded \$150*.

Visit our Web site for everything you need: the speech, tips for organizing, discussion guidelines, supporting materials, publicity guidelines, and templates and links to resources:

www.masshumanities.org

*Contact Pleun Bouricius in advance regarding stipends and awards: pbouricius@masshumanities.org

A Closer Look at *Literature & Medicine*

By Leslie Nyman

Leslie Nyman was a nurse for 18 years and has just begun her third year facilitating the Lit & Med program at Baystate Medical in Springfield. Recently, she partnered with a doctor at Baystate to create their own program, inspired by Lit & Med, called Point of View. It focuses members of the medical community on the art of self-reflection.

One of the central ideas behind the *Lit & Med* program is to bring together hospital employees from multiple disciplines and allow them to share their experiences, feelings, and thoughts. A social worker hears what a nurse experiences, a doctor sees what a case manager is coping with. The neutral medium of literature offers a safe, beautiful, and articulate meeting place.

The facilitator guides these conversations in subtle ways. His or her first task is to read the work deeply, to find the themes and narrative structures employed by the author. After that, the biggest challenge can be *not* speaking, but encouraging the members of the group to express their first impressions and reactions. I always begin with the question: “What is your response?” Then, I listen, and I ensure that everyone who wants to speak, who has a thought, is given time and respect.

I have heard responses and interpretations that I could never have imagined. Very often I’m hearing a point of view that may be tangential to the reading, but I allow the group to continue in that vein. It may lead to a treasured opening. At a lull in conversation, I may ask about a particular motif used by the author. “Did anyone notice it? What do you think it means?”

Recently, one of my group’s themes was “Difficult Coworkers.” We read Herman Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener,” a 19th-century story about a perhaps crazy, perhaps stubborn worker in a law firm. It is one of the few selections that is not specifically about health care. My class said they did not like the story; that it was not only difficult to read, but boring. I struggled to find an opening for them, to discover its relevance. Three participants in this class were RNs working in case management. When I asked them

about what they did, how they felt when dealing with stubbornly resistant patients (as Bartleby is), they spoke of personal experiences. They could begin to generalize by using Bartleby. As the class filtered out at the end of the session, several members thanked me for the reading. They said they had learned to expand their experience and their understanding because of the literature.

Another gratifying episode came in my first group. We had read a personal memoir by an articulate journalist dying of cancer. She wrote that she believed that everyone encountered in the health care setting—from secretary to X-ray technician to surgeon—is in a position to help and maybe save her. It was a very personal statement and entirely from the point of view of a patient who felt at the mercy of the medical establishment. One member of the class, a physician, took issue with it. He asserted that this was not true, that not every staff member held that kind of importance or could offer that kind of help. For once, I was speechless. Other members of the class disagreed with him, and I was pleased and satisfied when, during the very last session that season, that same individual stopped the conversation (about another issue raised by another patient) to say: “I never thought of it that way!”

This is one of the purposes of this program. We want everyone working in the health care field to understand that there are multiple responses to what is happening. Literature is the greatest teacher of compassion. It is the one place where we can step into another’s shoes and experience their world through another point of view.

Literature & Medicine Reading List

If you’re interested in the range of humanist issues provoked by medicine but are not affiliated with a hospital, try putting this reading sampler on your night table. For complete syllabi, you can visit our Web site: www.masshumanities.org.

Stories

- “A Better Angel,” Chris Adrian
- “A Doctor’s Visit,” Anton Chekov
- “The Blow,” J.M. Coetzee
- “Watch the Animals,” Alice Elliott Dark
- “Out of the Snow,” Andre Dubus
- “Appropriate Affect,” Sue Miller
- “The Bear Came Over the Mountain,” Alice Munro

Poems

- “What the Doctor Said,” Raymond Carver
- “Brilliance,” Mark Doty
- “Introduction to Asthma,” Susan Eisenberg
- “The Ship Pounding,” Donald Hall
- “Let Evening Come,” Jane Kenyon
- “The Portrait,” Stanley Kunitz
- “The 90th Year,” Denise Levertov
- “The Promise,” Sharon Olds
- “Sonnet #22,” William Shakespeare
- “A Sight in Camp,” Walt Whitman

Novels and Plays

- Our Cancer Year*, Joyce Brabner and Harvey Pekar
- The Plague*, Albert Camus
- The Woman Who Walked into Doors*, Roddy Doyle
- The Miracle Worker*, William Gibson
- Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro
- Long Day’s Journey into Night*, Eugene O’Neill
- King Lear*, William Shakespeare

Nonfiction/Essays

- “On Blindness,” Jose Luis Borges
- “Letting Go,” Atul Gawande
- “On Being a Cripple,” Nancy Mairs
- “Living in Moral Pain,” Peter Marin
- “Tools of the Trade,” Danielle Ofri
- A Three Dog Life*, Abigail Thomas
- “Communion,” Richard Weinberg
- “The Halloween of My Dreams,” Marjorie Williams

Several of the grants fall under special categories:

□ CCCC: Crisis, Community, and Civic Culture

▲ ENA: Engaging New Audiences

■ SIR: Scholar-in-Residence Grant

Recent Grants

Greater Boston

\$5,000 to the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice in Cambridge to support public programming around a daylong symposium examining the life of radical abolitionist Wendell Phillips

\$10,000 to The Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery in Watertown for teacher development workshops in Medford and Deerfield on the history of Northern slavery and complicity, including current enslavement ■ CCCC

Central

\$10,000 to Worcester's Blackstone Canal Horse and Wagon Tours to expand its training program and hire additional students to become living-history guides and perform public education tours about the area using horse-drawn hay wagons ▲ ENA

\$5,000 to the Higgins Armory Museum in Worcester to create interactive elements for an exhibit entitled "Extreme Sport: Jousting Then and Now," which will examine jousting as an "extreme" sport with roots in Medieval warfare

Connecticut River Valley

\$1,800 to the Ashfield Historical Society to create an oral history performance based on the exhibit, "World War II Veterans' Voices," to be performed by high school

students at the Mohawk Trail Regional High School and the Shelburne Falls Senior Center

\$6,300 to The Charlemont Federated Church for a three-part series on the use and misuse of religion in American political life as part of The Charlemont Forum, its annual summer program serving the hill towns of Western Massachusetts ■ CCCC

\$10,000 to The Five Colleges, Inc., Learning in Retirement, in Northampton, to fund a two-day public symposium on Civil War history. The conference features many of the most notable names in Civil War scholarship. ■ CCCC

\$3,000 to Historic Northampton to research a collection regarding the "New Organization" Liberty and Free Soil abolitionists who were active in Northampton Center, with the goal of placing abolition and the "underground railroad" in their proper context for programming ■ SIR

\$9,910 to the Northampton Center for the Arts to support community programming around an exhibit of 15 murals created by Iraqi and American children, including a play performance, film screening, panel discussions, and a dance performance ■ CCCC

\$5,000 to the Sons and Daughters of Hawley to fund an archeological dig for Mohawk Trail Regional high school students at Sanford Tavern in Hawley. The project will uncover evidence of early 19th-century social life and habits.

Metro West Boston

\$10,000 to the Filmmakers Collaborative in Waltham for the creation, testing, and distribution of a curriculum for Beth Murphy's *Beyond Belief*, a film that explores the aftermath of 9/11 through the eyes of American women, whose spouses died in the tragedy, as they travel to Afghanistan ■ CCCC

\$2,952 to The Norwood Historical Society to research the architectural style and historical significance of municipal and commercial buildings in Norwood designed by architect William G. Upham between 1910 and 1930, and interpret their relevance to the town's civic identity through public programming ■ SIR

\$5,000 to the Robert Treat Paine Historical Trust in Waltham to support the installation of permanent historic signage for Stonehurst, the well-known reformer's 19th-century home, designed by H.H. Richardson, with grounds designed by Frederick Law Olmsted

Northeast

\$3,000 to The North Andover Historical Society to identify themes that come out of the Society's holdings and North Andover history that match the Massachusetts Frameworks curriculum; those materials will then be made accessible to teachers for use in classrooms ■ SIR



Two Iraqi teens working on a mural that will be on display in Northampton. (See page 5.)

\$2,000 to The Peabody Institute Library to support public programming that will accompany an exhibit about local economic and social uncertainty on the eve of the Civil War ■ CCCC

Southeast and Cape Cod

\$9,251 to Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth to help stage the project, "One Play, One Community: *Romeo and Juliet*," and engage multi-generational audiences throughout the Plymouth community via performances, reading and discussion groups, children's programs in local libraries, and television broadcasts ▲ ENA

Outside Massachusetts

\$5,000 to Good Radio Shows, Inc., of Albuquerque, NM, for a one-hour documentary on the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps, its efforts in international peacemaking and service, and how international service transforms Americans



The site of a future archeological dig for Mohawk Trail Regional High School students at Sanford Tavern in Hawley. The project will serve as a "living classroom" by uncovering evidence of early 19th-century social life and habits.



A Peace Corps volunteer in The Gambia poses with teachers at the end of a workshop in which they made big books to read with their classes. Photo courtesy of Blair Cochran.

Mass History Conference

Off the Record

Telling Lives of People Hidden in Plain Sight

A Conference for Massachusetts History Organizations

Monday, June 6, 9:00 am–4:00 pm
College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

Register online at masshumanities.org. Registration fee \$65; \$55 each if three or more register from one organization (group discount registration by mail only); \$45 for students.

The 2011 Massachusetts history conference takes as its theme historical programming (exhibits, tours, talks, Web sites, etc.) featuring people who are underrepresented in the collections of local history organizations: slaves, free Blacks, Native Americans, itinerants, recent immigrants, the poor, the disabled, the ill, and women (and men) who did not toe the line in some way.

We now know that the public wants to look behind the curtain, find out about the not-so-official version of town history. How do we translate our commitment to the public, to our towns, and to the past into programming? How do we tell stories of lives that may not have full names and photographs in our collections?

Keynote speaker
Elise Lemire,
author of *Black
Walden: Slavery
and Its Aftermath
in Concord,
Massachusetts*



Historical organizations in Massachusetts often scramble to afford opportunities for professional and other development. Our annual Massachusetts History Conference presents a fabulous and very reasonably priced opportunity to network, to find out how other organizations are approaching their task, to show what your organization is doing. Typically, the conference—the only one of its kind in Massachusetts—draws participants from more than 100 historical organizations around the state. Even if you are not involved yourself, please pass this on to your local historical organization.

masshistorycommons.wikispaces.com

Interact with other attendees, participate in eRideShare for the conference, sign up for space in the Commons room, and later find the presentations from the sessions.

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