Home of the Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book

2006 - 2007
BIENNIAL REPORT
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Front cover: bottom left, Allen Sockabain storytelling during the Humanities Fest; bottom right, a rapt audience at the Humanities Fest.
PHOTOS DIANE HUDSON
It is with pleasure that we present this report to our friends, partners, and contributors. We hope that you will find it interesting to see the breadth of the MHC’s work, and the extent of our impact around Maine in 2006 and 2007.

This year, we are trying something new as we move from an annual to a biennial report format. This will not only conserve paper and energy, but by saving almost 40% over the cost of two annual reports, will free more of our resources to support our programs and services, the real work of the MHC.

And that work is exciting indeed! The last two years have been extraordinarily busy, as we’ve had a leadership transition, celebrated our 30th anniversary, and mounted a number of new programs, including public symposia on literature and history. We also commissioned *Taxing Maine*, a play about the history of taxation in our state, that traveled to 34 venues in Maine and won three national awards. In addition, we’ve maintained our full range of ongoing community-based programs and grant-making activities. I think that this report will provide at least a snapshot of these activities, what they are, and how they link together in our effort to bring the power and pleasure of ideas to audiences of all kinds in every corner of Maine.

The strength of this programming has translated to strength in our fundraising, and we’re grateful that the MHC continues to attract support from one of the most diversified funding bases of any of our 56 sister organizations across the country. In this report, you’ll find lists of the many individuals, families, foundations, and corporations who have chosen to support our organization. We want to particularly acknowledge the many people who contributed in 2006 to the Dorothy Schwartz Opportunity Fund, developed in honor of Deedee on the occasion of her retirement. That new fund has already begun to provide us with resources for some exciting new ventures, now in the planning stage.

Thanks to all of you for your support, your involvement, and your commitment to our work.

Erik Jorgensen
Executive Director
IS IT WORTH LOSING YOUR SOUL TO WIN AN ELECTION?

FALL WEEKEND

Offered with support from We the People, a program of the National Endowment for the Humanities

This question seems particularly relevant in 2008, but was just as important in 2007 when the MHC presented *A Good Book on a Fall Day* in October. This new lecture and discussion program revolved around Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men*. Inspired by Louisiana politician Huey Long, the story follows Willie Stark, a smooth-tongued populist obsessed by his ambition to become President. Distinguished scholars presented on a variety of topics. Speakers included Ray Arsenault (University of South Florida) on the connection between Huey Long and Willie Stark, Tricia Welsch (Bowdoin College) on American politics in films, and Joseph Wensink (Brandeis University) on the limits of political idealism. The day ended with a bourbon tasting and a gala Southern dinner overlooking Portland from the University of Southern Maine’s Glickman Library. These talks and more are available as podcasts on www.mainehumanities.org.

INTENSE HUMANITIES EXPERIENCES

COMMUNITY SEMINARS & WINTER WEEKEND

Scholar-led discussions can be powerful, and two MHC programs make the most of what a small group and big books can offer. Not all the books offered in Community Seminars (held in Portland, Falmouth, Augusta, Bangor, and Camden for 25 participants) are physically big, but they are, more often than not, challenging in other respects. Participants find this delightful, and discussions examine books with vigor and insight. Dinner before the discussion adds to the experience.

Winter Weekend has been a tradition for more than a decade. Over 125 people gather at Bowdoin College in Brunswick for a two-day extravaganza of lectures around a very big book (in 2006, it was *Swann's Way*; in 2007, *The Canterbury Tales*). Speakers include experts in their fields on some aspect relating to the book, including translation, art, a history, and music. The diversity of presenters rounds out the experience.
In 2006, for its 30th anniversary, the MHC went all out and offered, in addition to its regular programs, a one-day lecture series and humanities celebration at Bates College in Lewiston: the Humanities Fest. The 25 presentations included such diverse topics as Walt Whitman and the Civil War, Power and Idealism in Imperial Greece and Rome, Money and the English Novel, and Ordinary People or Willing Perpetrators: Free Will and Coercion in Nazi Germany. The speakers were scholars from Maine’s universities and colleges who had participated in MHC programs in the past, and who kindly donated their time for this event. In addition, the MHC offered a storytelling program with Ashley Bryan and Allen Sockabasin at the Franco-American Heritage Center—and a free, authentic Somali lunch. At both sites, birthday cake for the MHC closed activities and delighted children and adults alike.

With the click of a button, Humanities on Demand now puts the humanities at your fingertips. Available as audio files that work on any computer, the first programs included interviews with Maine writers from the MHC’s Maine Writers Speak compact disc (released in 2006 in celebration of the MHC’s 30th anniversary, it includes interviews with Richard Ford, Richard Russo, and Monica Wood, among others). The Portland Public Library’s Brown Bag Lecture Series, featuring popular, fascinating, and unusual authors swiftly followed. Humanities on Demand offers talks on books, writing, history and more, and is updated every month.
A LOVE OF READING

PROGRAMS THAT BRING BOOKS AND IDEAS TO LIFE FOR AUDIENCES NEW TO READING

In 2007, Borders, Inc. contacted the MHC with an offer to promote Born to Read with a book drive in its three Maine stores. Staff at Borders stores in South Portland, Brunswick, and Bangor explained what Born to Read does and encouraged customers to add a children’s book like The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf to their purchases. Thanks to this generous effort, and to the enthusiasm of Borders staff, Born to Read received 3,220 books for its Peaceable Stories initiative, as well as a $1,837 gift from Borders in support of the program!


BORN TO READ

“Looking very carefully at books, especially the few that did not appeal to me at first, helped me to see things in new perspectives in order to facilitate learning for myself and the children in my classroom.”

– an early childhood educator who attended a Peaceable Stories training.

Born to Read provides valuable early literacy experiences for children birth through age five through programs for the professionals who provide their care. Born to Read’s goal has always been to ensure that Maine children five and under are read to daily by a caring adult. To that end, Born to Read holds training sessions, seminars, and conferences for early childhood educators, volunteer readers in child care programs, and others who work closely with young children. Born to Read’s programs put great emphasis on preparing children not just for school, but for lifelong learning.

In 2006 & 2007: Born to Read trainings reached 1,262 caregivers in 535 childcare classrooms, and gave them 12,972 books to share with more than 12,000 children.
FOCUS: South Portland

Lisa Nadeau describes Tall Pines Family Child Care, the program she runs out of her home for children up to four years old, as “very small and homey.” The many windows are full of light, and welcoming stuffed animals, toys, and books are everywhere. Lisa has participated in Born to Read trainings since 2005. She has always seen Tall Pines as a literacy-based program where stories can be valuable jumping-off points for discussion and teaching. This makes her a natural for Born to Read because using books to stimulate conversation is one of the program’s chief goals. And using books to start conversations is no problem for Lisa. “My kids love books.”

In 2007, Lisa attended “Children and Conflict in a Changing World,” one of Born to Read’s Peaceable Stories seminars. Peaceable Stories encourages early childhood educators to use books to help children understand the many meanings of peace in their lives and in today’s world. Lisa found the facilitators and discussions fascinating, and especially enjoyed learning from Maine author and illustrator Lisa Jahn-Clough about how a book is created from initial idea to finished product. Hearing how other educators work with children in different child care settings was also of interest to Lisa, who runs Tall Pines by herself. Born to Read trainings offer a rare opportunity for educators to discuss child care issues with colleagues.

Lisa also found the seminar’s read-aloud sessions inspirational. “It was so comforting, so pleasant to be read to,” Lisa said with a small laugh. “It was really one of the great aspects of the class. We could just drop everything and let those words come on us.” Being read to, and shown pictures, helped Lisa experience the twelve books distributed as part of the series from a child’s perspective before reacting as an adult. She appreciated the variety of books, especially the unique approach of the “twisted fairy tale” The Three Little Wolves and the Big, Bad Pig. “The books present the types of conflicts kids have and share examples of ways to resolve them—but without being right in your face.”

In the big picture, the books helped Lisa, whose home child care program is licensed for just six children, think about diversity on a larger scale. “These trainings have given me an awareness of diversity—and I mean both how it appears in children’s literature and also how, in our classrooms, we can open kids to understanding. Born to Read reminded me that even with our small classrooms, the way the world is now makes it important to teach about diversity.”
NEW BOOKS, NEW READERS

“The way that NBNR removes the discussion from being about the participants themselves to characters in a book gives them the opportunity to reflect on their own opinions without being defensive; this gradually leads them to self-reflection and even the willingness to verbalize this self-reflection.”

– Scholar/Facilitator of the Biddeford 2006 group

New Books, New Readers partners with adult basic education and literacy volunteers to share a powerful humanities experience with adults just learning to read, beginning to read and speak English, or working to improve reading skills. Using children’s literature at a variety of reading levels, a scholar/facilitator leads discussions and ensures that every participant is listened to. For many low-literacy adults, this kind of encouragement is new, and the books are the first books they have ever read all the way through.

In 2006 & 2007: New Books, New Readers offered 125 four-session series in 31 communities across Maine, reaching nearly 2,000 people and giving away close to 20,000 books. Many sites host two programs each year, finding that such regular access to New Books, New Readers builds success among adult learners.
FOCUS: Houlton

“I’ve been a reader since the time I was tiny,” muses Bernadette Farrar, Instructor and Adult Basic Education Coordinator at the Houlton Higher Education Center. She recalls the importance of books early in her life, and how difficult it was to gain access to them in a rural community where the nearest library was 20 miles away. The bookmobile, which came every two weeks, was, Bernadette remembers, “a highlight.” Bernadette credits her mother, who loved to read, for her own love of books. She hopes to see this love blossom in her students, who face many of the challenges she did as a rural resident.

Feeling that this program is crucial for students who are parents, Bernadette works hard to encourage them to attend New Books, New Readers. “The spill-over for this program is incredible,” she says. Books commonly end up not only in the hands of students’ children, but in the hands of their nephews or a girlfriend’s child.

Houlton Higher Education students include people of all ages. Some are long-time adult basic education learners, and some are working toward GEDs. Others are taking classes as part of a college transition program—and Bernadette tells these students that the discussion they are experiencing in New Books, New Readers is equivalent to the quality of discussion they would have in a college classroom.

For all of its participants, the program has made a difference. “I’ve seen students who were really quiet and would not speak up in a group setting become comfortable. These are quiet people who I didn’t think would ever speak out in a group.” It also offers people a valuable connection with stories that they may not get in any other part of their lives.

“People still like to be read to,” Bernadette says. “It doesn’t matter if you’re a child or an adult. You still like to hear stories. It takes you outside of yourself. It allows you to think of something else beyond your own troubles. It teaches self-awareness, that you’re not the first person, or the last, to go through this.”
PROGRAMS FOR PROFESSIONALS

LITERATURE & MEDICINE: HUMANITIES AT THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE®

“My take away after four years of participation and observation is that [these] seminars begin with illustrating the differences we all have in opinion, perspective, style and background… but we leave with greater understanding, tolerance, respect and a personal bond for each other.”

– Literature & Medicine participant, 2006

Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care uses a deceptively simple yet unique approach to serve health care professionals and, in consequence, their patients. Health care professionals from all levels of the hierarchy gather as equals to participate in a reading and discussion program, facilitated by a humanities-trained scholar. They talk about literature that helps them gain new perspectives toward themselves, each other, and their patients. Formal evaluations show that this program works: medical professionals report improved morale, greater empathy, increased cultural sensitivity, and improved interpersonal and communication skills.

In 2006 & 2007: Literature & Medicine reached 17 hospitals/medical sites in Maine and 59 nationwide, serving over 2,000 health care professionals, and affecting many thousands of patients each year.
FOCUS: Togus

A suggestion from a friend brought Enoch Albert, a nurse at Togus Veterans’ Hospital, into the Literature & Medicine fold. He was interested in the concept of a program “designed to promote discussion among a diverse group of people who work together but don’t often get the chance to talk and share ideas and emotions informally,” and this turned into a commitment that lasted throughout his years at Togus before his retirement. Enoch became a co-liaison with physician assistant Dan Hamilton, the friend who introduced him to the program, coordinating as well as participating in the group at Togus.

Enoch’s group mirrored the diversity of other Literature & Medicine groups: it included administrators, secretaries, social workers, physician assistants, nurses, and physicians. Literature & Medicine aims to help participants understand and empathize with their patients and their colleagues. This was especially important at Togus as medical staff’s experiences often differed dramatically from their patients’. When he joined the group, Enoch realized that most of the staff were not combat veterans and “had no idea what those who were in combat experienced.”

The attempts of health care professionals to open communication with veterans can also be difficult because many veterans don’t want to talk about their experiences. This made readings, especially those about combat experiences, critical in helping staff gain a perspective on their patients without pressing patients to enter into an uncomfortable conversation.

“I think the readings, but more importantly the discussions, gave those of us who have not experienced combat a slightly better understanding of the relationship between those veterans and the VA as an institution, as well as some of the extreme situations combat vets experience,” Enoch said. Our facilitators were not from the hospital, and their outside perspectives led to “some new understanding of the problems that vets and the Togus staff have.”

Many of Enoch’s colleagues found the program extremely powerful. “I have heard more than one physician state they have a new appreciation of veterans’ experiences and would look on them from a different perspective as a result, and I believe the readings and discussion helped me and others better serve veterans at the end of their lives as a result of Literature & Medicine.”

The program itself has been so meaningful to Enoch that after he and his wife moved to Bar Harbor four years ago, they joined a Literature & Medicine group at Mount Desert Island Hospital. They have been part of it ever since.
Major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the U.S. Department of Education, the Freeman Foundation's National Consortium for Teaching about Asia, and UnumProvident

**MHC TEACHER PROGRAMS**

"An extremely knowledgeable, organized, dynamic speaker took me [on an historical tour] sequentially through the [origins of] the Middle East right up to 'our' present quagmire."

— a teacher who took part in the America in the Middle East day-long program March, 2006

MHC teacher programs offer intense professional development in humanities topics for Maine teachers K through 12. From day-long seminars to week-long institutes and programs that meet frequently throughout the year, MHC teacher programs give educators the chance to think and work as scholars. This translates to tremendous learning for both them and their students.


David Farrington engaging a model U.N. group at Yarmouth High School.

PHOTO: DIANE HUDSON
FOCUS: Yarmouth

David Farrington, who teaches social studies at Yarmouth High School (his classes include “World to 1600” and “Intro to Government”), has been a Maine educator for 14 years and calls the MHC’s teacher programs “far and away the most intellectually stimulating and rewarding form of professional development that I’ve experienced.” He finds his opinion shared by many colleagues, all of whom highly value the serious scholarship that is at the center of MHC teacher programs.

Educators today face pressure to seek training in assessment and reporting techniques—necessary, David calls this, but hardly inspirational. “Teachers like me,” David said, “respond to the MHC teacher programs with such enthusiasm because these programs focus on the history and literature that we love.”

MHC teacher programs open dialogues between educators and prominent scholars “who challenge us to deepen our understandings and pursue our questions.” In this context David, like many others, “welcome[s] the chance to deal with big ideas and intellectual challenges.”

David is what he calls a “serial participant” in these programs. He has taken workshops on the Middle East, American consumerism, the Harry Potter phenomenon, American Studies, and Asian Studies, the latter through a week-long program called “Views of the East.” He is also a participant in one of the MHC’s largest and most ambitious programs, “Teaching American History,” which is composed of a series of summer institutes requiring intense study and a significant commitment of time, energy, and imagination.

“The Teaching American History” has had an immediate effect on David’s classroom. This ranges from placing a “Teaching American History” handout, text, or idea in his curriculum, to the research and use of textual and visual primary documents, which “Teaching American History” scholars show how to find and use in order to tell the story of history directly.

“My students now work with primary documents ranging from Muslim accounts of the Crusades, to African-American slave narratives, to 1950s political advertisements on television,” David said. “I find that when students understand a primary document’s context and begin to learn the skills of interpretation, there is no more powerful tool for teaching history.”
Let’s Talk About It

“Last fall our two libraries shared Ethic Americans in Maine. It was the first time either library had offered a Let’s Talk program. We were somewhat apprehensive as both libraries are small and staff time is limited. However, we found that offering the program was a very positive experience thanks to the way the program was organized for us, and the help that we received from MHC.”

– The Harrison Village Library and the Waterford Library, who jointly offered a series in 2007

Since 1985, Let’s Talk About It has served a dual purpose in Maine: strengthening the state’s small libraries and their communities by bringing people together in open conversation around books. Scholars facilitate this free program and help create new series. Series are comprised of five topically grouped books that are loaned to program participants. Themes suit all tastes: 20th century detective fiction, literature of post-war Japan, the Gilded Age, or the experience of wilderness. Go to www.mainehumanities.org/programs/talk.html for a complete list.

In 2006 & 2007: Let’s Talk About It reached over 30 libraries each year, serving hundreds of participants.
FOCUS: Cornish

After *Let’s Talk About It* created the series “The Japanese Family in the 20th Century,” staff sought facilitators with an in-depth knowledge of Japanese culture. A suggestion sent us to Patricia Parker, who had been a literature professor in Hiroshima and had led reading and discussion groups there for seven years.

“What has been really interesting to me is that the small town of Cornish was the first to request this particular *Let’s Talk About It* series, and many of the participants were not actually residents of Cornish but drove sometimes 20-30 minutes to get to their library. That speaks admirably for the people in small Maine communities!”

In some ways, the differences between the people in Pat’s Japanese groups and her current participants in Maine were not great: “Those Japanese women, like the *Let’s Talk About It* participants, were educated, good readers, and eager to learn. They wanted someone qualified to lecture on American literature but they also wanted to talk and tell each other what they themselves thought about the books under discussion.”

But the cultural differences provided fascinating insights in the *Let’s Talk About It* series, which was, after all, about families, individuals, and relationships. In Japan, “the group members had known each other for years and had established their pecking order, had set up competitions between themselves, and they did not want me to upset their relationships. I had to figure out who were the ‘leaders,’ who felt she had to talk more than anyone else at each session, who preferred to sit quietly and say little. The American *Let’s Talk About It* participants came as strangers to each other, felt little or no competition, and were far more open to the idea of listening to each other and to me.”

*Let’s Talk About It* participants began the series with little knowledge of Japan (none had ever even known a Japanese person). They initially interpreted stories based on their own experiences, finding commonalities between the Japanese characters and people in their own lives. But as the series went on, Pat saw participants begin to view the novels through their emerging understanding of Japanese culture. By the end of the series, “participants felt much more comfortable interpreting the novels, I think. They enjoyed the last novel, partly because they felt that finally they had enough background to really understand.”

It is that understanding of different worlds and different perspectives that *Let’s Talk About It* aims to encourage with series like this.
MHC GRANTS

“My foreman at the time was a very good fella, but he didn’t quite know what to do with me because I was a woman… And so he put me sweeping the floors. I s’pose he figured, well, that’s what women do. But eventually they got to figure out that I could do just about anything the rest of those guys did.”

– Dola Hinckley, interviewed in “The Writing on the Wall”, hired in 1974, and the first woman to work on the mill floor at Eastern Fine Paper

The Maine Humanities Council began life in 1976 as a granting organization, redistributing funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities to nonprofits statewide. Since then, the MHC has expanded its work, creating and implementing the many programs described in this report. Since 1976, the MHC has invested more than $4,000,000 in grants to Maine communities—with amounts ranging from $500 to $5,000 (averaging $1,000).

Small grants can make a difference. For many nonprofits, the simple application and rapid turnaround of the MHC’s rolling deadlines fills an important niche. Funded projects include historical exhibits, lecture series, book discussions, school-based programs, and cultural presentations, each helping to enrich communities across the state, especially in rural areas.

In 2006 & 2007: 159 MHC grants were awarded, reaching more than 100 towns and thousands of Mainers.

Women sort rags to be used in the paper-making process inside the Eastern Fine Paper Mill in Brewer, Maine, early twentieth century. This image is one of the many available on the Maine Folklife Center’s DVD, “The Writing on the Wall: Oral Histories of Eastern Fine Paper Company Workers.”
MacDougall admired the machinery, but as a folklorist, she was even more intrigued by the signs, pictures, and graffiti on the walls—vestiges of the human side of a century of labor. MacDougall saw the potential for an oral history project to preserve the rich knowledge and heritage of the paper workers.

By the middle of that year, they had recorded oral history interviews with 40 mill workers and scanned more than 500 historic photographs. When a factory closes, there is a narrow window of opportunity in which to capture the stories of workers with specialized experience before they are retrained into general, service-related industries. The Folklife Center received a planning grant from the MHC in 2005 that allowed MacDougall to seize that opportunity. She formed a partnership with the City of Brewer and held an initial meeting with eighteen former mill workers.

In 2006, MacDougall and her colleagues received a major grant from the MHC to expand the project. They had recorded oral history interviews with 40 mill workers and scanned more than 500 historic photographs.

"As I began planning the oral history project," MacDougall says, "I seized upon the phrase ‘the writing on the wall’ as a title, partly because of the pictures and partly because many former Eastern employees said they ‘could see the writing on the wall,’ fearing that the mill would soon close.” Their instinct was reasonable, based on the nationwide trend of outsourcing manufacturing jobs.

As the project grew, the grant from the MHC helped the Folklife Center leverage other funding. A “Women in the Curriculum” grant from the University of Maine led to a special project and online book, Women in Maine’s Paper Industry, 1880-2006. A “Save Our History” grant from The History Channel allowed Brewer Middle School students to take a field trip to the mill, conduct video interviews, and make their own “Mill Town” DVD. All of the mill buildings have since been razed, but the stories preserved in the student work, online book, and “The Writing on the Wall” documentary DVD are all that remain.

But in 2007, the Folklife Center prepared a promotional video for Cianbro Corporation’s new business at the mill site, using historical photos collected during the project. They are currently working with WBRC architects in Bangor to add historical content from the mill project to renovations of Brewer City Hall. The work continues.
Film Screening with Karen Shopsowitz

$500: Northeast Historic Film celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2006. In celebration, Toronto filmmaker Karen Shopsowitz screened “My Father’s Camera,” her Peabody Award-winning documentary on the cultural history of home movies. Shopsowitz conducted research for this project, which looks at how amateur movies engage the audience differently than professional films, at NHF. She writes, “One of the things that I look at is the way history creeps into the frame inadvertently and becomes really interesting in terms of the context that it takes on.” Excerpts from NHF’s newest history creeps into the frame inadvertently and writes, “One of the things that I look at is the way differently than professional films, at NHF. She conducted research for this project, which looks at how amateur movies engage the audience differently than professional films, at NHF. 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The Human and the Eternal: Shaker Art in its Many Forms

$5,000: Since the late 1700s, the Shaker Society at Sabbathday Lake in New Gloucester has adapted to many changes, yet preserved its self-sufficiency, spirituality, and communal life. As the only remaining active Shaker community in the United States, Sabbathday Lake is committed to educating the public about the Shaker tradition. Every summer, its Library and Museum welcome over 12,000 tourists and dozens of researchers to its collections and permanent exhibits. Its first major new exhibition in more than twenty years, The Human and the Eternal: Shaker Art in its Many Forms, opened in May 2008 and will remain on display through October, then re-open for the 2009 season. Examples of needlework, furniture, paintings, rugs, embroidery, boxes, and baskets (many made in Maine) will offer insights into Shaker life over the centuries, and provide visitors with a better appreciation of contemporary Shaker culture. For information on visiting the museum, please visit www.shaker.lib.me.us/museum.html.

> United Society of Shakers

One Book, One Community

$1,000: The Oxford Hills region’s second One Book, One Community program featured Suburban Safari by Maine author Hannah Holmes. Like the previous year’s program, which focused on Ernie’s Ark by Monica Wood, local librarians and volunteers worked together on a series of events and discussions to promote reading and dialogue in the community. The theme of the book lent itself to discussions about the natural resources of the area and the importance of stewardship. The program drew the interest of the many outdoor and conservation groups in the area, including the Oxford Hills Nature Club and the Western Maine Citizens for Clean Air and Water. The year-long program started with a kick-off event in February, with book distribution and an appearance by the author. The theme of stewardship was kept at PIHS on 3rd Street.

> Norway Memorial Library

Romeo & Juliet

$5,000: Beginning in January 2006, 10-15 boys at the Long Creek Youth Development Center worked on interpreting and staging Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet under the guidance of Caitlin Shetterly of the Winter Harbor Theatre Company. Their intensive study used hip hop culture, immensely popular with Long Creek residents, to translate the play into contemporary language. At the culmination of the program in March, the ensemble performed for 200 of their peers, invited guests, families, and staff.

> The Winter Harbor Theatre Company

Presque Isle and its Main Street

$1,000: With help from University of Maine at Presque Isle history scholars and students, the Presque Isle Historical Society (PIHS) created an exhibit as the construction of the B&A Railroad, the fire at the Braden Theatre, and the Centennial Celebration in 1959. The panels were unveiled on University Day in April 2006, then displayed in the university library and at the Mark & Emily Turner Public Library in Presque Isle, and will be kept at PIHS on 3rd Street.

> Presque Isle Historical Society

McLaughlin Garden Visitor’s Center

$500: The famous McLaughlin Garden in South Paris opened a new educational exhibit for visitors in May 2007. A permanent installation at the welcome point for visitors showcases the story of this historic site. Printed materials detail the history and horticultural significance of the 20th-century garden as well as the architectural features of the 19th-century farmhouse and barn. To plan a visit, call (207) 743-8820 or visit www.mclaughlingarden.org.

> McLaughlin Garden

Snapsots of Change: The Cornish Historical Mural Project

$1,000: Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at Cornish Elementary School spent February and March researching local history through field trips and interviews with older residents. Based on their research, students designed and created a permanent mural for the school’s multipurpose room. They were guided in this project by experienced educators, local historians at the Cornish Historical Society, and graphic artist Laurie Downey. The murals, painted on five wooden panels, were unveiled in a public presentation at the school on April 26, 2007.

> MSAD #55

Kristin Perry, McLaughlin Garden’s Director of Horticulture, leading a workshop on lilacs at its annual Lilac Festival. PHOTO: MOOSE POND ARTS + ECOLOGY
30 YEARS: TAXING MAIN IN 2006

“I wanted to let you know that my husband and I saw Taxing Maine this weekend and absolutely loved it. It was funny and informative and insightful. I wish I could package it and send it all throughout the country. Thank you for sponsoring it. It was just wonderful.” — an audience member from Winthrop

“Hey, Governah, my taxes are wicked high!” This memorable line came early in Taxing Maine and showed audience members in 31 towns that this Theater of Ideas performance would have a light touch. Commissioned from the Theater at Monmouth’s David Greenham and Dennis Price for the MHC’s 30th anniversary, this story of Maine taxation explored the topic from its earliest days and forms to more current issues, including the Taxpayer Bill of Rights on the Maine ballot in November 2006. Without taking a partisan position, but encouraging audience members to think about what taxes did not only to their pockets but also for their communities, Greenham and Price adopted a series of madcap characters throughout history—little-known politicians to popular grange leaders—to paint a rollickingly funny—and historically accurate—portrait of what people think about taxes. A discussion among audience members, facilitated by the actors, followed each performance.

In 2006: Taxing Maine traveled to 31 towns across the state of Maine, tickling and provoking hundreds of people along the way.
FOCUS: State of Maine

_Taxing Maine_ won three national awards for the MHC in 2007: both the Award of Merit and the WOW award from the American Association for State and Local History, and the Schwartz Prize from the Federation of State Humanities Councils. The Schwartz Prize is given annually to an outstanding public humanities initiative, and has been awarded to the MHC twice previously.

_Taxing Maine_ toured the state from May through October 2006; it was offered free of charge in partnership with libraries, schools, and other community groups. Venues and partners included:

Auburn: Auburn Public Library
Bangor: Husson College
Bar Harbor: Jesup Memorial Library
Bath: Winter Street Center
Bethel: Gould Academy
Biddeford: McArthur Public Library
Brunswick: Curtis Memorial Library, sponsored by the League of Women Voters
Camden: Camden Public Library
Dexter: Abbott Memorial Library
Dover-Foxcroft: Center Theatre for the Performing Arts
Eastport: Eastport Arts Center
Farmington: University of Maine at Farmington
Gorham: White Rock Grange
Lewiston: Bates College
Lincoln: Lincoln Memorial Library
Lubec: American Legion Post #65
Machias: University of Maine at Machias
Naples: Naples Public Library
North Haven: Waterman’s Community Center
Portland: Children’s Theater
of Maine, Maine Historical Society, & Portland Public Library

Rangeley: Rangeley Public Library
Rockland: Rockland Public Library
Scarborough: Scarborough Public Library
Springvale: Springvale Baptist Church
St. Agathe: Wisdom High School
Stonington: Opera House

Van Buren: Van Buren High School Auditorium
Wells: York County Community College
West Newfield: West Newfield Town Hall

Winthrop: Winthrop Performing Arts Center

_Taxing Maine_ was also performed at the 2006 Maine State Tax preparers convention and in Las Vegas, through the national program, Democracy and the Arts. Listen to an audio version via our podcast at www.mainehumanities.org.
A NATIONAL WINNER

For Maine’s Letters About Literature, a program offered by the Library of Congress nationally and in Maine by the MHC’s Harriet P. Henry Center for the Book, 2006 was a banner year. Since 2000, the MHC has offered Maine students grades 4 through 12 the opportunity to write a letter to an author (living or dead) about a book that has profoundly affected them. In 2006, for the first time, a Maine student won not just the state’s competition in Level II (grades 7 and 8) but the nation’s, over more than 48,000 participants nationwide.

Lacie Craven of Bucks Harbor wrote about Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ The Yearling. Its story of loss resonated with her own experience raising animals (cattle, hogs, chickens, and many sheep) on her family’s Wild Wind Farm. Lacie and her parents traveled to Washington, DC, on September 30, 2006, to receive the national award at the Library of Congress, and to read aloud her winning letter, printed here.

Dear Mrs. Rawlings,

I live near the ocean, under a mountain, on a farm. We raise a lot of different animals, but mostly sheep. We also hunt for our food. These things made me feel very close to the characters in this book. If you have sheep, you have orphaned lambs, if you have orphaned lambs, you have true friends. They get into a lot of trouble (A lot like Flag!) but it’s all worth it to have a little lamb that follows you and is dependent on you.

I remember Mattie, a lamb whose mother had refused to take her. I had heated up her bottle and fed her every two to three hours every day of her life. She would kick up her heels and run with me down the road, then push her little plush head into my hand. We would lay in the grass, and I talked to her about everything, and she listened as I felt her fragile little hoof and followed her tiny, warm curls. One day she got sick. I kept watch over her the whole day, praying hard and making her as comfortable as possible. I picked her up and held her tight, tracing a little swirl on the side of her face. I hoped to feel her lean her head against me. She didn’t. She was dead. I reluctantly put her down and looked at her for the last time, covered her with a towel, stepped back, and said goodbye through tears to my lifeless friend. Afterwards I ran to the barn in secret and cried into my sister’s lamb until it was time to feed him. After each death it feels like you lost a child. It is so devastating, I cry and feel like I did something wrong, like I could have prevented their death. I felt like I had trusted in God and he let me down, like He had forgotten about me. Why did He give me something only to take it away? Why didn’t He heal her when I asked?

The answer came in your book. When I read about Jody and his fawn at first I asked the same question. Why does this happen? Then I saw what Flag taught him. All my lambs had been working unintentionally to help make me who I am today, and who I will be. They taught me how to deal with challenges in my life, how to overcome, and when it seems like I’m all alone, I’m really not. If I could have changed the past and brought Mattie back to life, I wouldn’t.

I look back now and I only smile. I continue to raise sheep, and always happiness prevails over death. In every way when it seems like there is no good left in the world, you see it displayed in indirect ways. For every sad thing, there’s a happy reason behind it and it makes us stronger people. We can find rest in this. Thank you for writing this book.

Lacie
During FY06, the Maine Humanities Council had operating income of $2,554,973 and operating expenses of $2,457,532; in FY07, it had income of $2,338,584 and expenses of $2,292,398. The MHC's overall budget in 2007 was lower than it was in 2006 due to the conclusion of some grant-funded projects, an unfilled staff position, and the end of the MHC's special campaign for the Dorothy Schwartz Opportunity Fund.

While grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities comprise about one-third of the MHC's budget in both years, this support has been supplemented by a diverse range of other income streams, from the individual contributions highlighted elsewhere in this report, to program income, and support from private foundations. Both the income and the expense figures reported in these charts and in the MHC’s audited financial statements include in-kind contributions of time, mileage and materials, valued at $601,996 in 2006, and $475,321 in 2007.
The Maine Humanities Council engages the people of Maine in the power and pleasure of ideas, encouraging a deeper understanding of ourselves and others, fostering wisdom in an age of information, and providing context in a time of change. The Council uses the humanities to provide cultural enrichment for all Mainers and as a tool for social change, bringing people together in conversation that crosses social, economic and cultural barriers.