It’s hard to avoid Abraham Lincoln these days…

His face is everywhere, with that trademark gaze of his, radiating its seriousness from bus shelters, televisions, newsstands and bookstore shelves.

Of course, 2009 marks Lincoln’s bicentennial—and that accounts for much of it. But at the same time, it’s hard not to notice his increasingly prominent role as a symbol of inspired leadership during a time of crisis. With the United States currently in two wars, a complicated and severe recession, as well as an historic moment of national transition, Abraham Lincoln just seems to make sense in 2009.

What can the humanities offer us during unsettled times? I always like to start any list of their benefits with a simple acknowledgement of the pleasure of a good book and a discussion. And while it could legitimately end right there, my list is much longer, and sooner or later it moves on to the way in which humanities disciplines can help people achieve a better understanding of the past, a clearer view of the present, and a more informed glimpse of the future.

That concept, of the humanities as a lens for analysis, lies at the heart of the legislation that established the National Endowment for the Humanities back in 1965. This legislation was part of the Great Society initiative, enacted during an earlier time of national stress caused by the Viet Nam War. The Endowment was founded on the belief that the arts and humanities can confer important civic benefits on a nation and its people.

With that in mind, we hope that you will find our contribution to this year’s busy Lincoln calendar valuable: on March 21, the Council, in collaboration with the Maine Historical Society, as well as the American and New England Studies Program at USM, presents a public symposium on the leadership skills of the 16th President (see article on page 4). We’ll have the iconic Lincoln, to be sure, but on that day we’ll go behind the eyes and under the hat to see how this 19th century leader can shed light on our situation today. I hope you can join us.

Erik Jorgensen
Executive Director
We invite you to consider our HUMANITIES TOMORROW SOCIETY, the Maine Humanities Council’s new planned giving program. Thinking ahead about estate planning can give you tax benefits while also ensuring the future of the Council’s programs. For more information on how you can be a part of this, contact Diane Magras, Director of Development, at (207) 773-5051 or diane@mainehumanities.org.

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.
This article is the text of a speech delivered by Esther Nettles Rauch at the Deborah Morton Award Convocation on September 23, 2008. The Deborah Morton Awards are presented each year by the trustees of the University of New England to outstanding women who have achieved high distinction in their careers and public service or whose leadership in civic, cultural, or social causes has been exceptional. Since 1961, more than 150 distinguished women have been honored with the award.

2008 Morton honoree Esther Rauch is a former vice president of the Bangor Theological Seminary and professor of English at the University of Maine. She inaugurated the Constance H. Carlson Distinguished Chair in the Humanities at Husson College in Bangor, where she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters. Prior to her academic career, she was the manager of professional staffing at the Center for Naval Analyses, a private research center in Arlington, Virginia.

Rauch has served on numerous boards—the University of Maine System, Eastern Maine Medical Center, and the Farnsworth Museum, to name just a few—but in this speech, she focused on her service to the Maine Humanities Council. A board member in the early nineties, Rauch has also been a scholar/discussion leader for Let’s Talk About It and Literature & Medicine programs across the state for many years. The text of her speech follows.

THANK YOU to the Deborah Morton Society Members and the University of New England for bestowing upon me this distinguished honor. I accept it with humility and gratitude.

I want to talk about reading, and talking about what you’ve read with a variety of people, and why I believe such a discussion to be the most human of activities. It is, I believe, the single thing that each of us can do to change the world.

A book is not completely read until it is discussed. Discussion is a dying art that needs to be revived. The Maine Humanities Council is one of the few institutions that encourages and nurtures discussion. I am eternally grateful to the Council for allowing me to participate in this peculiarly human art of discussion.

To begin reading a book is like entering a strange city for which you have no road map. A reader has expectations, of course. The reader wishes to find entertainment, amusement, information, or inspiration. S/he chooses a book for reasons of personal taste. Still, the writer’s choices for the way the work unfolds are at the beginning unknown. And, for a good while into the book, the techniques of exposition, the figuration of language, the presentation of characters and their development or lack of it, the genre, all remain areas for exploration. The road markers are unsettled, open for discovery. They seem to move about and result in consequent dislocation. At this time, the writer and the reader are in conversation with each other. Are they in the same discourse group? Do they speak the same language? Can the writer give and withhold information regarding the content sufficient to keep the reader engaged until the book’s end? Can the reader negotiate the terrain?
Finally, there is the question of whether the rewards of reading the book justify the effort required to complete it. The reader’s destination in the city must, at some point, come into view, and the plan of the city needs to become clear. Then the completing process begins.

Each reader brings to a text the sum total of his or her experience up to the point of entering the strange city of the book. Age, gender, regional location, religion or lack of it, income group, education, and other demographics determine the world-view that each reader brings to the reading of a text. Still, each reader’s completion of the book is idiosyncratic. For no one, not even identical twins, is the same as anyone else. Our solitudes are just that. Each of us is separate and each of our reading experiences is also separate. So, although the words are the same, the type exact, the books reproduced so that each is exactly like every other one, the same book is different when I read it than it is when you read it. We will see elements on which we can agree. We will experience the text on many levels in common. But there will be differences from person to person and within the same person at different times in that person’s life.

The solitudes that meet in discussing a text are the most human experiences we can know. Those solitudes, meeting each other with respect, are uniquely human. No other species can know them. In fact, everything about this process is limited to human beings. No other species writes about ideas. No other species manufactures books, distributes them, or reads them; nor can they know about them. So this supremely human activity is worth reverence, worth cultivation, worth doing whatever we have to do to experience it. Yet, while we celebrate being humans, call ourselves humanist, many of us will do everything we can to avoid participating in the reading of a book. We are too busy. Researchers report that only 20 percent of Americans read a book not connected with their work last year. A few more read about four books. No one has reported on how many people participated in discussions about those books. How can I bridge the gaps that separate me from my neighbor if I do not talk with my neighbor about things that matter? In discussion, our solitudes open and admit the other and we meet: not to agree or disagree, not to tie up and pin down the answers to questions raised by the reading, but to explore the possibilities offered by the book. When we fail to read and to discuss, we become less human.

The Maine Humanities Council and the Bangor Public Library have afforded me opportunities to facilitate reading and discussion groups throughout Maine. Those experiences to me are beyond price. I recall being in a discussion group in South Addison, Maine, that lasted so far into the night that a woman in the group had to take me home with her to the Pleasant Bay Bed and Breakfast: the roads had frozen over, it was snowing hard, and I could not have made it to Ellsworth, not to mention Orono, where I lived at the time. We had begun our discussion at the regularly scheduled time. But the time simply flew by because a new person—unknown to anyone usually present—had joined the group for that evening, and a whole new array of speculations and challenges arose that consumed us. I knew better than to allow the talk to go on so long, but I also knew better than to interrupt a real meeting. When solitudes greet each other, they meet on holy ground.

In a world beset by the problems created as a result of diversity and pluralism, in a world made smaller by new technologies, in a world suffering from nature-deficit and a host of other disorders, in a world looking for simple answers to complex questions, it is tempting to retreat into a book and hide out—away from the chaotic and unsettling world. Let me offer instead, as a remedy for the troubling problems of coexistence: let’s read a book and talk about it together. I want to get to know you and your world. And I want you to get to know me and mine. Let’s read. Let’s meet. Let’s talk about it.

Thank you for your attention. Good reading and talking with you.

“How can I bridge the gaps that separate me from my neighbor if I do not talk with my neighbor about things that matter?”
Abraham Lincoln never visited Maine—he got as close as Exeter, New Hampshire, where his son Robert went to school—but Maine played a crucial role in the early years of both the Republican Party and the Lincoln presidency. Hannibal Hamlin, an anti-slavery former Democrat from Paris Hill, became Lincoln’s first vice president in a successful gesture of bipartisanship, and Portland’s William Pitt Fessenden was a close ally of the president, first in the Senate, and then as wartime Secretary of the Treasury.

On the other hand, Jefferson Davis had a great time Down East! Ostensibly traveling for reasons of health, the Mississippi senator “worked” the Maine coast in the summer of 1858, shaking every Democratic hand in sight and affirming the bonds of North-South amity.

We know how that ended up. But this year, as the nation looks back upon the 200th anniversary of Lincoln’s birth and the 144th of his assassination, we once again try to understand why. The Maine Humanities Council’s contribution to this effort is a March 21 symposium. A group of distinguished scholars will discuss various aspects of Lincoln’s life, times, and enduring afterlife; the audience will have ample opportunity to ask questions and continue the discussions in small break-out groups. A new generation of scholarship on antebellum America—especially the interlocked histories of race, gender, labor, and human bondage—has enriched our understanding of that era in ways that make the Lincoln story even more compelling.

Yet I’m not sure how far this scholarship has traveled. I recently heard a well-known Civil War historian talk about the Emancipation Proclamation. He gave an exhaustively researched account of every legal and political aspect of the process. He analyzed the 19th-century concept of “contraband”; he surveyed the constitutional law of presidential wartime powers. It was a talk that could have been given in 1953. Lincoln’s most defining act as president was treated as if it had no context—least of all, the context of Lincoln’s own contradictory, ever-changing, ever-deepening views on the relationship of white and black. Frederick Douglass was never mentioned.
It was a reminder that we all have our own Lincolns. Mine was shaped by a childhood in the pre-Civil Rights Era South. While Grant was reviled and the word “Sherman” treated as almost indecent, I never heard an unkind word about the Union’s president. It was just assumed that had he lived—had that fool Booth not shot him—Reconstruction would never have happened, and all would have been forgiven. That there was no historical evidence for such a view didn’t matter a hoot.

From college on, I’ve tried to read and think a bit more critically, a bit more historically—most recently, with the help of Doris Kearns Goodwin’s very readable Team of Rivals, a group biography of Lincoln’s cabinet (and a book we have used with great success in our Teaching American History institutes for Maine educators). Goodwin adores Lincoln, but she understands the contingencies that shaped his career, beginning with his election. We might easily have had a President Seward instead.

The other day, I came face to face with the man who was actually elected. He was between Napoleon and Keats, in the basement of the Boston Athenæum. In Chicago in 1860, a sculptor had made a plaster cast of the candidate’s head. There it was—the sunken cheeks, the bold nose and forehead, but without the deep creases of the 1865 photographs. He stared back at me with chalky eyes, inscrutable, infinitely fascinating.
HEN CHARLES CALHOUN started planning a teacher symposium on India and Pakistan, “The History Behind the Headlines” seemed an appropriate tag line. Although the symposium was almost a year away, it was safe to assume that this volatile region would be in the news when it took place. In fact, violent attacks on Mumbai exploded into the headlines less than one week before the symposium, prompting Maine students to pepper their teachers with questions, adding urgency to the teachers’ desire to understand the region.

The fifty participants who crowded into Bowdoin’s Cram Alumni House on December 5, 2008, arrived with solid knowledge of India’s colonial past, independence movement, and postcolonial condition. They had all read Pankaj Mishra’s *Temptations of the West*, the book they received from the Council. Still, many admitted to staying just ahead of their students in the textbook’s South Asia unit, and almost all identified the 1982 film “Gandhi” as the major “text” in that unit. They were in familiar territory when Professor Rachel Sturman projected a slide of Gandhi wearing his famous loincloth, but she reminded them that before he ever assumed the garb of a Hindu holy man, he’d spent...
many years as a lawyer, dressing in Western-style suits. And then she questioned the film's treatment of Pakistani leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah as a villain. His original vision of partition was peaceful and inclusive, but he died before that vision could be realized.

Professor Sturman teaches a survey course on modern South Asia at Bowdoin, but until the Council approached her about leading its teacher symposium, she had never tried to cover this immense topic in a single day. She displayed impressive stamina during her six-hour presentation. In written evaluations, teachers praised her expertise, even-handedness, and "willingness to take so many questions," which "added a more dynamic element and showed how very knowledgeable she is."

Midway through the day, as they waited in line for lunch, two middle-school teachers expressed their appreciation for Professor Sturman's knowledge. "There's only so much a seventh grade social studies textbook covers," said Holly Groom, who teaches in Cumberland. Kathy Letsch, who reads the novel Homeless Bird by Gloria Whelan with sixth graders in Whitefield, agreed. Her students can't believe that the 13-year-old protagonist is already locked into an arranged marriage when the story begins. Letsch hoped that the insight she gained from the symposium would help her explain this character's plight in the context of Indian culture.

="This was well worth the trip," wrote one teacher in his evaluation—and a significant trip it was for attendees who traveled to Bowdoin from South Paris and South Berwick, Bethel and Bangor, even Presque Isle. Judson Raven and Mike Felton took the boat from Vinalhaven on the day before the program. (They would have left before dawn on the day of, but the marine forecast looked foreboding.)
For an organization that has mined the complexities of regions like East Asia and ancient Rome, the Maine Humanities Council has offered surprisingly little programming on South Asia. A reading and discussion series focusing primarily on post-colonialism and the diaspora was recently developed for the Let’s Talk About It program (see page 6). Prior to that, the Council’s primary connection to the region has come courtesy of artist Barbara Goodbody. Goodbody first traveled to India in 1988, with Stephen Huyler of Camden, whom she met in the Maine Photo Workshops. Huyler is an ethnologist and photographer whose books (most recently Daughters of India: Art and Identity), have helped bring Indian folk traditions to the attention of the Hindu elite and the international community. With Huyler as her capable guide, Goodbody was immersed in communities of artists that she would not otherwise have encountered. “I went innocently into a culture vastly different from my own,” she has explained, “and felt a body, mind, and spirit awakening I had not felt before.” The result was India: The Sacred and the Secular, an exhibition of her color photography that traveled, with support from the Council, to the Hudson Museum in Orono and the University of Maine at Presque Isle.

Goodbody’s ongoing interest in India led her to the New York-based nonprofit, Folk Arts Rajasthan (FAR). FAR is dedicated to preserving and promoting the traditional music and art of the Merasi people, who have been oppressed by India’s caste system. As a volunteer with FAR, Goodbody has spent enough time with the Merasi that they now honor her with the title amaji—grandmother. She has created a bilingual book as a gift to the Merasi children who are pursuing educational opportunities they were previously denied (see facing page). And in 2005, when FAR first brought a troupe of Merasi musicians to the United States, Goodbody secured a Council grant that enabled them to travel to Maine. When the troupe returned last year, another Council grant brought them back to Maine, where they performed at schools and at the Portland Museum of Art. A highlight of their second tour occurred when their leader, Sarwar Khan, received an honorary doctoral degree from the Maine College of Art. “What an amazing moment,” Goodbody recalls, “for this illiterate musician from halfway around the world to be recognized by a college of art in Maine.”

From Barbara Goodbody’s specific and sustained relationship with the Merasi people, to Rachel Sturman’s virtuosic presentation for teachers on all the complexities of contemporary India and Pakistan, the Maine Humanities Council is proud to strengthen connections between Maine and South Asia, and hopes to cultivate more in the future.
Merasi School

Caitie Whalin, a Maine native and graduate of Waynflete School, Brown University, and the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, traveled to India as an intern for Folk Arts Rajasthan in 2006. A year later, Whalin returned as a Truman Scholar and co-founded the Merasi School. The school educates Merasi children in language and mathematics, but also furthers the musical traditions that have distinguished their community for 37 generations. The curriculum “uses the Merasi’s unique musical heritage as the launching pad for an experiential classroom focused on creating walkable avenues to opportunity.”

To learn more about the Merasi School, visit www.merasischool.org.

The Merasi Counting Book

Barbara Goodbody created The Merasi Counting Book to support both of the Merasi School’s strains of instruction, academic and artistic. The book gives the numbers from one through twenty in English and Hindi, alongside the paintings of Merasi artist Indra Banu. It provides Merasi children with a rare opportunity to see their traditional art printed in book form. Goodbody hopes to send as many copies as possible to the school using funds raised from U.S. sales.

To support the Merasi School by purchasing a copy of The Merasi Counting Book, please email bargoodb@gmail.com.

“I went innocently into a culture vastly different from my own,” she has explained, “and felt a body, mind, and spirit awakening I had not felt before.”
The state of Maine is home to hundreds of museums, archives, and small cultural organizations. Many are run entirely by volunteers. Even in the best of times, their budgets are so lean that they are forced to concentrate fundraising efforts on immediate needs. If a museum wants to host an important traveling exhibit, it might need to postpone improvements to its permanent collection. If an historic building is damaged by an ice storm, the historical society that manages it may not be able to afford new signage at the site. And if an archive can still reproduce its ancient finding aid on the office copier, it is unlikely to explore new technology that might increase access to the resource.

The Maine Humanities Council’s humanities infrastructure grant program is intended to address the crucial long-term needs that are so frequently compromised when an organization has to stretch its dollars to keep the lights on. Funded through the New Century Community Program’s bond funds, the humanities infrastructure grants are restricted to projects with a life span of at least ten years. Some are long-awaited upgrades to obsolete equipment; others are entirely new. Applicants are required to provide a one-to-one cash match and encouraged to use Maine labor (contractors, suppliers, consultants) wherever possible.

The L.C. Bates Museum in Hinckley received funding to install new LED lighting, solid case roofs, safe glass, and tight molding. These improvements allowed the museum to install its new exhibition, “Living the Good Will Idea,” with confidence. The museum’s director, Deborah Staber, notes that “we are able to include light-sensitive objects that we have not exhibited in the past because of the new LED lighting. We could not have completed this necessary collections care and case glass safety project without a humanities infrastructure grant.”

Please see the next three pages for a sampling of humanities infrastructure projects. The next deadline for this grant program is April 10. Application forms are available on the Maine Humanities Council website.
Heritage Tourism Photography Project

$5,000. Maine Archives and Museums (MAM) has identified access to high quality professional digital photography as a major need for infrastructure development among the state’s cultural and historical institutions. Through MAM’s Heritage Tourism Photo Project, Maine-based photographer Dennis Welsh held photo sessions with nine member institutions: the Seashore Trolley Museum, the Sabbathday Lake Shaker Museum, the Ogunquit Museum of American Art, the Penobscot Marine Museum, the Abbe Museum, the Children’s Discovery Museum, the Patten Lumberman’s Museum, the Tides Institute, and the Willowbrook Museum. Welsh’s images will help the participating museums with marketing, audience development, and education; and extend to other museums—and Maine tourism in general—by increasing awareness of the state’s cultural and educational resources.

SELECTED INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS FROM 2007 & 2008

Safe Exhibit Cases for “Living the Good Will Idea”

$2,160: The L.C. Bates Museum plans to open a new long-term exhibition, “Living the Good Will Idea: Childhood at Good Will Farm,” in conjunction with Good Will-Hinckley’s 120th anniversary in May 2009. The historic objects and documents that tell the story of Good Will and its place in the history of child care must be displayed in safe cases under proper conditions. However, the original display cases at L.C. Bates reflected museum practices from the early 20th century. While these cases were prime examples of early rural museum presentation, they were no longer suitable for exhibit materials. L.C.Bates staff and consultants have replaced the cases’ interior, roof, lighting, and safety glass while retaining their historic exterior, enabling the museum to display its new major exhibition—and those to follow—in the best possible environment.

Left: Waterville woodworker John Willey upgrading the L.C. Bates display cases. Right: Travelers waiting at the Good Will Farm train stop.

PHOTOS COURTESY L.C.BATES MUSEUM
Textile Display Cases

$1,900: The first test of the new textile display cases at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, purchased with support from a Humanities Infrastructure grant, comes with the exhibit Twisted Path: Contemporary Native American Artists Walking in Two Worlds (December 4, 2008 through June 14, 2009), for which the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and American Art in Indianapolis has loaned a coat made by Mi’kmaq artist Teresa Marshall. This exhibit, along with future exhibits that take advantage of the new textile display cases, will particularly enhance the Abbe’s contribution to Native American studies in Maine schools. To learn more, please call (207) 388-3519 or visit www.abbemuseum.org.

Northeast Historic Film’s Moving Image Review Online

$5,000: Every issue of Northeast Historic Film’s Moving Image Review, published twice yearly since 1988, is now available online. A planning grant from the Council helped NHF and its partners (including the Maine Memory Network project of the Maine Historical Society, the Windows on Maine project of the University of Maine’s Fogler Library, and the Open Video Digital Library Toolkit project of the University of Texas in Austin) design this innovative web-based humanities resource that will enhance public access to NHF’s collection of historic moving images. In the implementation phase, the contents of Moving Image Review—a journal that chronicles the origins, significance, and ongoing relevance of old films—were digitized, professionally indexed, and cross-referenced with existing online resources. Organizations such as the Maine Memory Network and MaineLearns.org collaborated on the project, along with individual historians and other content providers. View the archive at www.oldfilm.org/imagereview.

The Villages of Piscataquis County Audio Driving Tour

$5,000: The Villages of Piscataquis County is a 134-mile driving tour that winds through 15 communities from Milo to Greenville, and takes about four hours to cover all at once. The creators of the tour have already placed interpretive signs at 15 cultural heritage and historical sites along the route; they hope to place at least ten more. Drivers can use maps and print materials to find their way, but they can also purchase an audio recording of stories, music, and narrative that ties the individual sites together. Updates on the progress of the signage and recording are available online at www.villagestour.org.

Lighting Our Past for the Future

$3,227: This project will bring museum-quality lighting to the 18 exhibit cases and two murals in the Franco-American Heritage Center in downtown Lewiston (www.francoamericanheritage.org). The cases house photographs, musical instruments, household items, crafts, maps, military memorabilia, and other examples of Franco-American culture. Over 12,000 people each year pass through the Center’s 450-seat Performance Hall, but because the performances usually take place at night, special lighting is needed to make the displays more visible, attractive, and accessible to these visitors. The project will also illuminate exhibits in the Heritage Hall on the Center’s lower level, which is currently being refurbished.

Above: The donated communion items in this case will soon be illuminated with museum-quality lighting for viewing by hundreds of people every year. PHOTO: RITA DUBE

Right: The interpretive sign at the Sebec Reading Room in Sebec Village, designed and erected as part of the Villages of Piscataquis County driving tour. PHOTO: SETH BARDEN

(B) This mid-19th century Penobscot collar, made of wool, cotton, silk ribbon, and glass beads; and (right) this late-19th century Northern Plains Indian shirt (possibly Assiniboin/Sioux or Hidatsa/Mandan/Arikara), made from buckskin, porcupine quills, horsehair, pigment, and cloth, are each part of the Frank T. Siebert Collection at the Abbe Museum. They are just two examples of light-sensitive textile pieces from the collection that will be displayed safely for the first time in the museum’s new specialized cases for textiles and clothing.

Collar photo: Stephen Bicknell; Shirt photo: Julia Clark

BAR HARBOR

BUCKSPORT

DOVER-FOXCROFT

LEWISTON
Musée on the Web
$10,000: The Musée culturel du Mont-Carmel is a decommissioned Catholic Church in the St. John Valley, fully renovated and now serving as a museum dedicated to the preservation and development of Acadian and Québecois culture. This infrastructure project will support the development of a website for the museum that will explain the renovation process, showcase items from the collection, serve as a resource for students and educators, open lines of communication with a broader public, and support development efforts. The website will break down barriers serve as a model for other cultural institutions in the St. John Valley. It will be bilingual, and very receptive to former parishioners who wish to share their stories. It will also allow researchers to access the more rare and delicate items in the collection, which must be stored away from visitors. The website will be launched in conjunction with the building’s centennial celebration in 2010.

Making Mount Desert Island History Accessible by Touch Screen Exhibit
$4,300: Historical resources on Mount Desert Island are segmented by geographic area, such that residents are frequently well-versed in the history of their own community, but lack knowledge in other areas. Similarly, while visitors have access to the fine collections of institutions like the Seal Harbor Library and the Tremont Historical Society, there is currently nowhere to go for an overview of island history. That's why the Mount Desert Island Historical Society is creating a touch screen exhibit covering social history, labor and economic factors, trends in architecture, and other broad topics for the island as a whole. Touch screen buttons leading to photographic images will draw viewers in to the stories being narrated by local experts. Since the exhibit will be fully portable, it can travel from its home base at the Old School House to schools, town meetings, tourist areas—even banks and grocery stores. To find out where the exhibit will turn up next, please call (207) 276-9323.

Increasing Visitor Access to Cultural Opportunities
$5,000: In 2008, the 19th Century Willowbrook Village in Newfield, Maine, deployed a number of strategies to increase visitor access to cultural opportunities. They developed a 13-minute orientation video, revised the museum’s visitor guide and website, and recovered historic film footage of rural trades. The museum now features 48 hands-on stations (including four with historic film footage of ice harvesting, sleighing, horse shoeing, and logging) as part of its Passport Through Time booklet program for families. The new materials help modern visitors understand how industrialization impacted 19th-century rural life. Willowbrook is open from Memorial Day through the end of October; meanwhile, explore the new website at www.willowbrookmuseum.org.

Public History in Public Places for Saco Bay Cities
$10,000: The Saco Museum plans to create three new local history exhibits covering the Saco Bay communities of Biddeford, Saco, and Old Orchard Beach. One of the exhibits will be installed permanently in the Saco Museum, where local history is a focus of the collection but isn’t currently presented to the visiting public in a comprehensive manner. A smaller exhibit will be installed at the Amtrak Downeaster Station in Saco’s historic mill district. Twenty linear feet of colored panels will hook tourists just entering the area as well as commuters who use the station but aren’t familiar with the museum. Finally, a lightweight Exhibit that travels to local schools will include a trunk filled with objects from the museum’s collection, to ensure a tactile experience of history. All three are slated for completion in 2010; to learn more, please contact the museum at (207) 283-3861 or www.sacomuseum.org.

Fisheries Exhibit
$8,500: A new exhibit on fisheries will soon occupy its own building at the Penobscot Marine Museum. This comprehensive exhibit will combine gear, photographs, models of boats, and educational films to inform visitors about the four major types of fisheries on the coast of Maine (designed to catch shell, ground, sea run, and schooling fish). Visitors will be able to view the fisheries from the perspectives of fishermen, researchers, corporations, legislators—even the fish themselves! They will leave with an understanding of both the history and the questions about the future that face fisheries today. Examples of the photographs that will appear in the new exhibit are available on the museum’s website, www.penobscotmarinemuseum.org.

2008-2009 Educational Initiative
$10,000: The Portland Harbor Museum is in the process of developing three web-based curricula for use in Maine schools, each elucidating the impact of world events on ordinary life in and around Casco Bay. The first curriculum focuses on commerce in the age of clipper ships. The second looks at Ferry Village in South Portland during World War II, and the third looks back further still, to the colonial era. Students will use online tools to learn about daily life during these periods, then make the connection to national and world history. All curricula will be aligned with the Maine Learning Results.
Do you have fond memories of Taxing Maine, the award-winning history of state taxes that toured our fair State back in 2006?*

Well, we hope so, because the Theater at Monmouth’s David Greenham and Dennis Price are coming back, this time tackling the weighty issues facing Maine as we grow into our future.

A reprise of their audience-engaging performance/discussion format will surely bring thrills (and perhaps raise hackles!) across the state. If you would like to ensure that As Maine Grows... makes a stop in your neck of the woods in 2009, please call the Maine Humanities Council at 773-5051, or visit www.mainehumanities.org to secure a spot on David and Dennis’s calendar.

* You can refresh your memory of Taxing Maine, or hear it for the very first time, via podcast at www.mainehumanities.org.