1 Family Night at the Museum
A Celebration of Picturing America
for Head Start Families.

2 Real Life | New Books, New Readers
as model for building a better world.

5 Lens on Cuba | People from all over
the state gather to talk about Cuba.

8 People, Place, and Purpose
Let’s Talk About It has the right mix.

10 Selected Grants
Reassuringly Unfamiliar: the Case for a State South Asianist

We have a state fish, a state song—even a state soil...so why shouldn't we have a state South Asianist? While I present this notion with tongue in cheek, it's an idea that seems relevant to the story of Bates College scholar Sagaree Sengupta, who is featured in this issue. She certainly sees herself in that role, and rightly so.

Though no missionary, Sagaree is nonetheless on a mission for the Council. She drives hundreds of miles across Maine to share with library patrons the surprises and delights of literature from South Asia. This is not a genre that most people in Maine have much occasion to encounter, yet through our Let's Talk About It program, they can visit—at a cost of only some time spent reading—cultures that may be at once new and reassuringly familiar. People everywhere share basic human triumphs and concerns, issues that cross boundaries of time, culture, and geography. Maybe “reassuringly unfamiliar” would be the right term for this type of cross-cultural reading experience.

I'm grateful for our State South Asianist...just as I am for our many state New Englandists, and the scores of other scholars and facilitators who work across our programs, with local libraries and other organizations, to help the MHC get people out of Maine (literarily, if not literally) each month. Getting away can provide both perspective and—especially now—a welcome relief from bug season.

Erik C. Jorgensen
Executive Director
FAMILY NIGHT
AT THE MUSEUM

BY DENISE PENDLETON

A Celebration of Picturing America for Head Start Families

On a Friday evening in early November, nearly 150 Head Start children and their parents attended a Maine Humanities Council-sponsored Picturing America event at the Portland Museum of Art. When they arrived, they went on a treasure hunt that took them through museum galleries, dabbled in art activities in the museum’s education studio, heard stories read aloud, ate pizza, and went home with a book and a coupon for free Museum attendance for each family.

Picturing America, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, provides a collection of high-quality reproductions of American artistic masterpieces. Along with teacher guides and web tools, these poster-sized reproductions allow schools, libraries and other organizations to give children, families and communities a deeper appreciation of our country’s history and character through exposure to its art.

With help from Maine’s Head Start Quality Initiative and the University of Maine at Augusta, the Maine Humanities Council and Portland Museum of Art developed a pilot project to provide trainings to the staff of two Head Start programs, based on the national partnership between Head Start and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The first training invited educators to the Museum to view artwork and learn how to effectively use the poster-sized reproductions provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities. A second training explored ways that teachers could integrate books, such as those provided by the MHC’s Born to Read program. Family Night at the Museum was the culminating event of this pilot project, inviting families with children in these Head Start programs to immerse themselves in an experience of the arts. Twenty-five early childhood educators from the York County and Cumberland County Head Start programs participated in this pilot project.

Patricia Clark, Director of Early Childhood Services/Instructor of Early Childhood and Special Education at the University of Maine at Augusta noted, “A Head Start participating in the Picturing America program offers preschoolers a chance to experience art and learn about artists in a way appropriate to their age and development. We incorporated children’s literature and many active literacy activities to enhance the existing curriculum. Bringing art to children is such a natural concept and it is gratifying to see the program in demand. All preschoolers can benefit from this collaboration because the resources are free and available online.”

The MHC has also worked with Head Start programs in midcoast and central Maine in partnership with the Farnsworth Museum of Art in Rockland and the Colby Museum of Art in Waterville to offer Picturing America. The Portland pilot has helped turn this venture into an exciting ongoing project for Maine.

Photos: Diane Hudson
New Books, New Readers is about much more than books and conversation. It’s a model for building a better world.

I have been consciously in love with children’s books since I bought *The Illustrated Treasury of Children’s Literature* in 1957. I had saved every nickel, every dime, every quarter that came my way for two years, and *The Treasury* was the first book I ever owned. Although I couldn’t articulate a book’s transformative powers at that time, I knew they had them. They took me to places and introduced me to people. They made me see things in new ways.

And when I grew up and had children, I read children’s books to them, too. We borrowed books from our local library. Housed in an old church building in the center of Patten, population 1,200, the library gave away books when it acquired new ones because there wasn’t enough room. Many of the books came to live with us.

But it wasn’t until I began facilitating discussion groups for the Maine Humanities Council’s *New Books, New Readers* program that I truly understood their power.

*New Books, New Readers* brings
together adults of varying reading levels, with disparate experiences with books and literature and with the English language, to discuss adult ideas through children’s books. Often they are picture books with limited text. Sometimes there is an early-reader chapter book or a young adult novel.

Always, there is magic.

Here in the library in Bangor, Literacy Volunteers is the glue that brings us together. This was my first *New Books, New Readers* group. At times we have been as many as thirty, rarely fewer than twenty, with LVA tutors and the adults with whom they work, and anyone else who wants to be with us.

That first Monday night, in early fall, the participants dribbled in through the large oak double doors to the Lecture Hall on the second floor of the library. They don’t know each other, only their tutor if he or she has come. One couple has been married for over forty years. They know each other. Everyone is uncertain and so am I. How will this really work? Will I ask the questions that will unlock the conversation? Will they talk? Will I know when to allow the room to fill with silence? I am, by nature, a silence filler. And sometimes people need time, silent space, in which to gather their thoughts, form their responses.

In retrospect, I am grateful that the inaugural series for our group was “Friendship,” a prescient beginning, for who could have known that a friendship is exactly what this would become—a friendship in which we slowly learn to trust each other, to talk truthfully about what matters, and all of it through books.

Now we are nearing the end of our tenth series, “Telling Our Stories.” Sheila and John—the married couple—have not missed, if I am correct, adventure. We know when our people are missing or late. Where is Carmie? Pierre? John and Sheila?

Each monthly session consists of books formed around a theme—books that will belong to these people who are willing to come together and take risks. This is how I explain it: It is like sitting around the kitchen table having a conversation with friends about something or someone you care deeply about. You will have opinions. You will not necessarily agree. And what is most important in the dynamic of these hours together is that we put as many voices, as many opinions, into the room—and that we learn to see the value in each voice, each opinion. I tell them at the beginning of each new series, “Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. There is only yours and Minh’s...”

“...we really listen to each other, we really respond to each other, and we really respect each other.”
Excerpt from “A Robbery Gone Bad” by Michael Brown

Tom McCool was standing by himself at a corral just outside of town. He saw the sheriff casually riding toward him. He watched the sheriff stop and get off his horse. Tom really didn’t like the sheriff. He thought the sheriff was useless, and he didn’t trust him.

Tom said, “What are you up to, John?”

John was on the heavy side with shifty eyes and a deep voice. “I’ve got news you will like.”

Tom said suspiciously, “What would that be?”

The sheriff quietly said, “There’s a stagecoach coming tomorrow between noon and one o’clock. It’s coming in on the Exeter road, and carrying lots of money. There’s no guard, only the driver.”

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and Bob’s... Sometimes they are the same and sometimes they are not.”

We are from Corinth and Hampden and Bangor and Orono. Some of us have arrived here via Sri Lanka, South Korea, Vietnam, Ghana, Brazil.

Some of us have only completed the third grade, and others are Ph.D. candidates with limited English skills; some live with mental illness; some of us have never traveled beyond a fifteen mile radius of Bangor, and others have lived in many countries, and have come from thousands and thousands of miles away.

In the beginning, John—of the long-term married couple—said very little, hesitant to put his voice into the room, to take that chance. Today, he speaks out, says exactly what he wants to. He brings us a picture of the bookcase he has built to hold all of his *New Books, New Readers* books—almost a hundred of them.

Someone may struggle to compose her answer; someone may speak of people—never us—treating him disrespectfully. We may all lean forward in our chairs to try to catch the words of a new English speaker. But this is the amazing truth of this group: beyond the reading of the books and the discussion of the ideas in the books and how those ideas affect us, we really listen to each other, we really respond to each other, and we really respect each other.

This is a world to live in.
PRIOR TO 1959, and Fidel Castro’s rise to power, Americans couldn’t get enough of Cuba—its pristine beaches, its seductive Skylines, its cuisine, the enticing rhythms of salsa, rumba, “son,” and jazz. But today, though the Caribbean island lies just ninety miles off the coast of Florida, the United States government has made it off-limits for most Americans.

In 1914, 33,000 U.S. citizens traveled to Cuba; 90,000 in 1928; 170,000 in 1937; and by 1957, 350,000 were vacationing and conducting business in the island country, according to Allen Wells, the Roger E. Howell, Jr. Professor of History at Bowdoin College. Now, five decades later, the political winds are not just indicating a shift but are actually shifting—and so the Maine Humanities Council decided to present an opportunity to understand more about this country and the dynamics of the past and present, and what that could mean for the future. In early December the MHC invited the public to the daylong program “Cuban Exceptionalism: Reflections on Latin American History.”

David Carey, Jr., associate professor of History and Women’s Studies at the University of Southern Maine, joined Wells in the Glickman Library at USM to take us on a rollicking ride through history—with wit and scholarly observations, poetry and song. All that was missing was the dancing—which the teens and their teacher join over a hundred people from all corners of the state. Sunlight streams through a bank of windows overlooking Portland. They are the only students in this eclectic mix of adults that includes an early childcare educator, an ethnomusicologist, three retired teachers who have chosen this as their monthly outing, a novelist, a cashier from Wal-Mart on her day off, and a U.S. Navy petty officer, among others. It is the teacher’s, and their, first experience of a Maine Humanities Council anything.

When Lee received a card in her box at school, she says, “It sounded like a good opportunity. These are my Spanish III students. And I was looking to do something additional that would address the cultural aspects. In terms of a conservative school, I do want them to be exposed to other ways of looking at a subject, and to view things from an artistic perspective.” Although Lee chose not to have her students read the literature component, Dreaming in Cuban by Cristina García, next time she will know to request an alternative should she deem the selection too mature for her class.

“A typical tourist perspective on Cuba.”

PHOTO: CYNTHIA THAYER
“...we can see and understand everything just as well alive as dead, only when we’re alive we don’t have the time, or the peace of mind, or the inclination to see and understand what we could. We’re too busy rushing to our graves.”

~ from *Dreaming In Cuban* by Cristina García

©1992 by Cristina García; used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc.

is no different from any other Maine Humanities Council program: its strengths have their origins in scholarship and in diversity—of material (maps and music and poetry), of presentation (Wells and Carey are both wise and funny, no mean feat), and of the people who have come to the event willing to take risks, speak out, ask questions. The result is a day in a chair that flies by—a miracle in itself—and rich, deep conversations.

Darshana Spach is a veteran of these kinds of conversations and of the Maine Humanities Council programming. The program coordinator at Portland’s Catherine Morrill Day Nursery, Spach is always looking for “ways to make our teachers better, more responsive to students. More ‘schooling’ doesn’t do it.”

She adds, “Our teachers here in Maine are mostly white and mostly unexposed” to other cultures. Early in her career, Spach thought she would teach social studies, but concluded it was “too late to make an impact.” And so she is in early child care, “taking care of vulnerable children,” where, she says, “we must see ourselves as advocates for social justice.”

Spach is currently developing her own workshop discussions for teachers that revolve around a humanities model, reading memoirs and novels that address issues of ethnicity, poverty, and more. “Everything in a classroom can’t be solved through the lens of development and nutrition. We need to be able to recognize and celebrate both the differences and the similarities in our children. The story of how class, country, and religion shape the culture of a child is so significant—which is what brings me here.”

Throughout the day we are led through a maze of similarities and differences between Cuba and the rest of Latin America: both are products of Spanish colonialism; the indigenous populations were all decimated, but in places like Peru, one-plus million survived—in Cuba, the native population essentially vanished.

Wells and Carey weave back and forth through politics and economics, class structure, racial diversity, the U.S. imperialist relationship with Cuba in the decades before the revolution. Wells says he is trying to distill his fifteen-week course into a day. “Hazardous business,” he says, laughing.

Who would have thought that baseball—an import from the U.S.—would have continued to be conducted in English once it took hold on the island? Or that Portland’s relationships with Cuba, dating back to the nineteenth century, made Maine’s largest city a “far more cosmopolitan place”? Carey says, “Portland was one of the largest trade ports prior to the Civil War, receiving more sugar than Boston or New York. Actually, in 1850 the mayor said, ‘The wharves of Portland

are creaking under rum,’ and Portlanders were arguing that everyone should learn Spanish as the universal language of the day.”

Handouts abound, and at one point everyone in the room is reading Cuban poet/activist José Martí’s last letter to his friend Manuel Mercado. We are instructed to “underline one sentence that jumps out at you. And as the spirit moves you, read it aloud, and if it is the same as what was already read, read it anyway.” It is a surprisingly powerful exercise.

The voices echo into the room: “I know how human hearts are inspired.” [twice] “In the benevolence of men’s souls I feel the root of my affection for their suffering, and my just desire to eliminate it.” [four times] “I realize that a nation cannot be led counter to or without the spirit that motivates it.” [three times]

And so it goes, with voices entering and exiting, beginning and ending. A slight breath. Silence. Then taking up once again. It assumes the cadence of a performance piece—of many voices exploring what it means to have been moved by the same phrases, the same ideas, no matter who they are or where they came from or where they will be driving when they leave the building on this cold winter day.

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**CUBA IN BRIEF**

| Geography: | 780-mile-by-40-mile island, 90 miles off the coast of Florida |
| Environment: | 4 mountain ranges, 200 rivers, 1,000 lakes, 25% forestland |
| Architecture: | best preserved colonial architecture in Latin America |
| Key political figures: | Fulgencio Batista, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro |
| Current president: | Raul Castro |
| Slavery: | abolished 1886 |
| Independence: | 1898; although some would argue not until 1959 |
| Cuban Revolution: | 1959 |
| Musical forms: | punto, criolla, guajira, rumba, jazz, and son, to name a few |
| Race/ethnicity: | primarily African and European; almost all indigenous peoples wiped out during colonialism |
| Products: | exports are historically sugar and tobacco, importing finished and manufactured products, including food, prior to the embargo, from the U.S. |
| Baseball: | brought by Cuban students in the U.S. in 1860s |
| Tourists: | about 2 million annually |
| Travel from U.S.: | “Although journalists, researchers, government officials, and conference attendees may be able to obtain legal approval, everyday [U.S.] citizens are not eligible for [trips to Cuba].” |

-- Peter Greenberg, travel writer

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**CUBA PHOTOS: CYNTHIA THAYER**

_Far left to right:_

Conversations about *Dreaming in Cuban* continue through lunch; Bowdoin professor Enrique Yepes puts poet Nicolás Guillén’s work in context; a participant takes in an informative presentation.

PHOTOS: DIANE HUDSON
ECENTLY Belfast Free Library and writer, translator, scholar, and textile artist Sagaree Sengupta came together to provide a lively series of discussions around the Maine Humanities Council’s *Let’s Talk About It* series “Across Cultures and Continents: Literature of the South Asian Experience.” Thirty-seven people showed up the first day—that’s packed—and even with holidays, snowbirds, and the relentless impact of a Maine winter on the coast, the numbers stayed high.

Brenda Harrington, program coordinator at the library, says it’s such a successful program “because the scholars are really good at what they do. They are knowledgeable, and they know how to lead without lecturing. The group not only feels like they have ownership, they do.”

Established in 1887, with a collection of 14,000 volumes, Belfast Free Library underwent a major renovation in 2000, resulting in a 149% increase in circulation and a 443% increase in adult program attendance.

Harrington says that the library has been fortunate to be granted a *Let’s Talk About It* series every year since 2004. “We can come together and explore differences and similarities—all around books. That’s what builds communities. It’s an important aspect of who we are and who we become.” Although Harrington selects many of the series, she encourages her readers to check out the listings on the Council’s website (www.mainehumanities.org) and ask for a specific one. When they do, she tries to get it.
But a critical aspect of the success of the conversations is the right scholar. During the South Asian series, Sagaree Sengupta drove up from Lewiston every month, a trek that required four new tires. Although she has lived and worked in Maine for almost eight years, long-distance winter driving has not been on her list of things to do.

Born in India, Sengupta moved with her family at the age of eight to Nova Scotia, and subsequently to Georgia. With a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and an M.A. from the University of Wisconsin, both in South Asian Studies, as well as a B.A. in English from Cornell University, she now teaches part-time at Bates College in Lewiston. As a translator, she works with Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali, and is dedicated to bringing the work of Indian writers to a wider readership. She writes and conducts conversations with readers in communities across the state through the Maine Humanities Council’s *Let’s Talk About It* program.

**A Conversation with SAGAREE SENGUPTA**

**Q:** How did you end up in Maine?

**A:** At about the same time that I had my daughter, I realized that being a full-time academic in my field closed off other possibilities. I had to choose and I chose translating, being of direct service to literature, and writing my own stuff. My husband specifically came to Bates for his work because he knew I would like it here.

**Q:** Could you tell me what makes for a good translator?

**A:** I think that a kind of living acquaintance with the culture that the book you’re translating comes from. It’s not just knowing the language. That’s one side, and it’s a hard order to fulfill because on the other side you also have to write English like a native. I have a third issue, which is that most translations of Indian literature are published in India for Indian readers so then I have to change my American English back into an English that is acceptable for Indian and British readers.

**Q:** How does your textile work [improvisational quilts and art jackets] connect with your word work? Or does it? I’ve wondered about that for some time. I don’t know—my textile style is so wild and my verbal style isn’t. What I do know is that it’s cross-cultural. Textiles and color are really important in Indian culture and life, but this is a very American medium. And I have grown up here.

**Q:** How did you get involved with the Maine Humanities Council?

**A:** I had read at the Lewiston library from a book I had translated, and a year later I was eating at a new Indian restaurant in town. The librarian was there, too, and he said, “We need a moderator for this series [MHC’s “Across Cultures and Continents”], but you’re not interested in that kind of stuff.” I said, “Are you kidding?” I literally had been waiting for a chance like that.

**Q:** You facilitated that series at Belfast Free Library recently. How was that?

**A:** It was a wonderful experience. For all of us. They were always willing to disagree with each other. Someone might have one interpretation and another person would say, “But that happens right here, too.”

**Q:** Did you see change in the group as a result of the conversations?

**A:** Yes, I did, and they told me they had changed. From me they got a lot of cultural, historical context. And they felt that they read things very differently by the end. Some stereotypes had been broken up, about women in particular.

**Q:** What are you reading now?

**A:** Last winter, my whole family went to India for the first time. I picked up ten novels by a writer so wonderful, so fine. Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay. He’s a literary writer who brings alive this urban Indian scene for me. Only one of his books, *Woodworm*, is available in English. There are so many great, great, great Indian writers who have never been translated for readers outside India. It is very difficult to get translations published outside of the country. I see it as part of my mission to spread the word about the incredible wealth of Indian literature.
BAR HARBOR

$989  “Union River Watershed Regional History Project”

The eight small towns along Hancock County’s Union River watershed have a rich history of lumbering, farming and community activities, but because of an aging and shrinking population, this history is at risk of being lost. A cooperative effort spearheaded by the Union River Watershed Coalition, with help from the Frenchman Bay Conservancy, the two small historical societies in the region, and local public libraries, ensured that some of this history would be captured through oral history on film, local history record books, and public potluck dinner presentations. Films are archived at the Maine Folklife Center in addition to the towns and libraries that partnered with this initiative.

> Union River Watershed Coalition

DENMARK

$1,000*  “New Suncook Local Stories Project”

Visiting artists Laurie Downey and Gretchen Berg will work with two 3rd grade classes at the New Suncook School to research local history, and to create a permanent mural and performance piece based on that research. Artists collaborate with classroom teachers and an art teacher to design a research unit combining field trips and interviews with local elders, culminating in an unveiling of the mural and performance to which the entire community is invited.

> Denmark Arts Center

BANGOR

$500  Humanities Programming with production of SPUNK

The Penobscot Theatre Company presented lectures and discussions that unpacked the themes, reflected on the history, and considered the current relevance of Zora Neale Hurston’s short stories which were adapted into the stage production “SPUNK.” The discussions were meant to increase understanding of the history and reality of African-American life locally and nationally in the context of this performance.

> Penobscot Theatre Company, Bangor

HINCKLEY

$500  Learning About the Past Through Play

L.C. Bates Museum developed and implemented a one-hour hour K–6 program for families, schools, and afterschool sites designed to stimulate the interest and knowledge of rural central Maine’s children about local history. The program used existing museum collections and materials, purchased hands-on materials, and inquiry-based guided activities and discussion.

> L.C. Bates Museum (Good Will Home Association)

A SELECTION FROM THE 120 GRANTS AWARDED BY THE MHC BETWEEN NOVEMBER 1, 2008 AND APRIL 31, 2010

*Awarded in partnership with the Maine Arts Commission.
PORTLAND

$3,350 Improving Exhibition and Programming Effectiveness

The Museum of African Culture will improve the effectiveness of its exhibition presentation with permanent, high-quality interpretive signs which will communicate the history, culture, and meaning of the artifacts being viewed. A large flat-screen TV will support the development of a visitor-service communications system for use in viewing exhibits.

> Museum of African Culture

$3,000 “Thin Blue Lines”

“Thin Blue Lines” was part of Portland’s Arts & Equity Initiative, a national pilot project. The project brought local poets and photographers together with Portland police officers and detectives to create poems and photographs that increased the department’s, municipal government’s and public’s knowledge and appreciation of the work the police do. The project included a series of three facilitated discussions about law enforcement and police/public relations based on readings of local contemporary poetry, held with Portland Police personnel, other city employees, and the general public (as part of the Portland Public Library’s Brown Bag Series).

> Terra Moto Inc., City Hall

ROCKPORT

$1,000* Reading of “Conversations at Midnight”

The Everyman Repertory Theatre, a Maine-based non-profit theatre company, presented a staged reading of Edna St. Vincent Millay’s rarely seen verse play “Conversations at Midnight” at a variety of venues throughout midcoast Maine during March 2010. In addition, archived materials and information about Millay were made available, and several Millay experts spoke to audiences.

> Everyman Repertory Theatre

SOUTHWEST HARBOR

$1,000 National Endowment for the Arts “Big Read”

Island Readers and Writers, in partnership with the Southwest Harbor Public Library, initiated a National Endowment for the Arts Big Read project using Jack London’s The Call of the Wild. Eight island communities, 12 libraries, and 17 other organizations, including schools, participated in this “literary sled ride.” Over 1,000 free copies of The Call of the Wild were distributed to more than 800 adults and 400 children. Activities included snowshoeing, family events, ice fishing, tracking and nature awareness, and book discussions.

> Island Readers and Writers: An Initiative for Maine Children

YORK

$500 “Southern Maine in the Seventeenth Century”

In the spring of 2009, Museums of Old York presented a series of events exploring the experiences and perspectives of Native, English, and French people in 17th-century Maine. Two re-enactors (one depicting a French Jesuit priest; the other a habitant, or settler) provided insight into the origins of conflict between Anglo and French populations in Maine; and a panel discussion of French-Canadian residents recounted their experiences in light of the history of Anglo/French tensions.

> Museums of Old York
Tolstoy’s powerful novel *War and Peace* inspired an invigorating presentation by Raffael Scheck during Winter Weekend, 2009. 

Photos: Diane Hudson

Through statewide reading and discussion series, seminars, conferences, and summer programs, the MHC reached:

- Early child care educators in child care programs
- Senior volunteers reading aloud in child care settings
- Library patrons
- Health care professionals
- New books, new readers
- Adults learning how to read
- Inmates in Maine’s prisons, jails, and re-entry centers
- English Language Learner students
- Schools served
- K–12 teachers
- Teenagers
- Community seminars
- Members of the general public

Can a reading and discussion experience change a life? Just ask Roger, a thoughtful and articulate *New Books, New Readers* participant who is learning to read so that he can share books with his grandson. Or the nurses, doctors, and physicians assistants at the Togus VA Medical Center who have a deeper understanding of what their patients have gone through thanks to the books they’ve discussed during *Literature & Medicine*.
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- K–12 teachers
- teenagers
- members of the general public

*Humanities at the Heart of Health Care.* Our rich array of programs in libraries, child care sites, and public venues across Maine introduces people to ideas, books, and conversations that help them reflect on their lives and the world around them.

In 2008 and 2009, the MHC offered literature-based conflict resolution trainings for child care providers; a seminar and discussion on fear, civil liberties, and the rule of law in the U.S.; a two-man play and community discussion on growth in Maine, and much more. In this report, you’ll see a sampling of what we did, and how we did it: thanks to the generous support of our friends, partners, and contributors.
153 MHC GRANTS were awarded to organizations statewide for humanities projects such as lectures, exhibits, discussion groups, and events, serving people of all ages.

NEW BOOKS, NEW READERS, a free reading and discussion program in which new adult readers experience the power and pleasure of ideas and discover how much their own ideas matter. | 08–09 Highlights:
• New series, “Conflict” and “Resolving Conflict”
• Series for English Language Learner Teens in Lewiston
• New sites (including the Women’s Reentry Center in Bangor and the York County Jail)

TEACHERS FOR A NEW CENTURY, an umbrella for teacher programs in which educators of children ages birth through eighteen engage with rich content and new resources.

08–09 Highlights:
• *Born to Read* literature-based training model for domestic violence agencies
• “Picturing America,” which pairs fine American art and high-quality picture books to teach very young students about art and history
• “India and Pakistan: The History Behind the Headlines” conference in Brunswick
• “Africa in Transition” one-day conference in Waterville
• “Teaching American History,” a three-year intensive institute with graduate credit for teachers

HISTORY CAMP, a week-long program in which junior high and high school students experience—through scholar presentations, behind-the-scenes museum visits, field trips, and more—how powerful history can be today.

08–09 Camps:
• “Find a Way or Make One: The Quest for the North Pole” in Brunswick
• “Immigration: Perspectives for ME” in Lewiston

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT, a free statewide library-based discussion series in which community members talk about books and exercise their minds. | New series:
• “Invisible New England: The Real New England?”
• “Liberating Imaginations: Readings in Modern Irish Fiction”
• “Paradise Revealed: Readings in Caribbean Literature”

The ability of this Portland Let’s Talk About It discussion to ignite passionate interest in sharing a fruitful exchange of perspectives is just one of the ways the MHC brings communities together, with extraordinary results. The spark here? *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Photos: Diane Hudson
LITERATURE & MEDICINE:
HUMANITIES AT THE HEART
OF HEALTH CARE, a reading and
discussion program that offers literature
as a springboard for conversations which
help health care professionals improve
their communication and interpersonal
skills while increasing their cultural
awareness, empathy for patients, and
job satisfaction. | 08–09 Highlights:
• Program expansion to 25 states,
  including Veterans Administration
  hospitals nationwide
• “Caring for the Caregiver:
  Perspectives on Literature and
  Medicine” national conference
• Literature & Medicine National
  Training Institutes in Chicago

PUBLIC EVENTS, including touring theater of ideas performances,
day-long symposia, and evening seminars. | 08–09 Highlights:
• “As Maine Grows...” touring play
  and discussion in 25 Maine towns
• “Looking for Zora: The Many Lives
  of Zora Neale Hurston” symposium
  in Lewiston
• “Power and Architecture in Rome:
  Augustus to Mussolini,” a scholar-led
  overseas trip
• “Leadership in a Time of Crisis:
  The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial
  Symposium” in Portland

CIVIC REFLECTION PROGRAMS,
in which people engaged in a common
purpose take part in literature-based
discussions to reflect on their work
together. | 08–09 Highlights:
• Americorps Vista volunteers’
  conversations on service
• “Bangor City Council’s annual
  “Cit Lit” program for city councilors
• Portland Parkside Neighborhood
  Association’s discussions on quality
  of life and neighborhood crime

MCLU Director Shenna Bellows, Carnegie Council
Senior Fellow Jeffrey McCausland, and participants
raised and attempted to answer many timely
questions during the “Fear, Civil Liberties and the
Rule of Law” symposium. Photos: Diane Hudson
Maine Humanities Council Annual Fund donors make a difference for people across Maine. They inspire the exchange of perspectives that lead MHC program participants to a better understanding of themselves, one another, and the world. They enrich the state by supporting the programs described in this report. We are grateful for their generosity.

If you would like to contribute, please fill out the enclosed envelope, or contact Diane Magras, Director of Development, at 207-773-5051, or diane@mainehumanities.org. To all of our donors: Thank you. You really do make a difference.

The two lists that follow represent gifts received in the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years, respectively (November 1, 2007, through October 31, 2009).
Children in child care across Maine are some of the greatest beneficiaries of Born to Read.

PHOTO: DIANE HUDSON
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In Memory of Marli Weiner
Richard E. Barnes & Sandra Armentrout
Patricia Bixel
Donna Cassidy & Michael Lawrenson
Margaret Crukshank
C. Stewart & Jean S. Doty
Lisa Feldman
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During FY 2008, the Maine Humanities Council had operating income of $2,131,095 and operating expenses of $2,249,834; in FY 2009, it had income of $1,195,419 and expenses of $1,932,634. The Council reported a non-operating deficit in 2008 due to adverse market conditions affecting its investments the previous year.

The Council's overall budget in 2009 was lower than it was in 2008 primarily due to the timing of various grant-funded projects, which do not necessarily correspond to its fiscal year. In 2009, the Council reported a $62,785 operating surplus, making up for many of the losses incurred during the previous year.

Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities made up an important component of the budget in both years. This support has been supplemented by a diverse range of other income streams, from the U.S. Department of Education, the State of Maine, the individual contributions highlighted in this report, program income, and generous support from private foundations.

Both the income and the expense figures reported in these charts and in the Council’s audited financial statements include in-kind contributions of time, mileage and materials, valued at $562,668 in 2008, and $351,414 in 2009.
Small actions taken now can have significant effects in the future.
Take a powerful experience of the mind, for instance. Inspire a child through a book like *Hey Little Ant* and a thoughtful conversation, and the child will discover the importance of respecting and feeling for others, an attitude that will be relevant in school, college, and beyond. Programs that inspire such experiences require an investment, and making these investments in the future of Maine people is fundamental to the Maine Humanities Council’s work.

Financial support makes our work possible. The Humanities Tomorrow Society was created in 2009 to ensure that MHC programs can continue to serve the people of Maine for decades to come. Members of the Humanities Tomorrow Society make gifts through wills, estate plans, charitable trusts, or gift annuities. For many people, a planned gift can be much larger than one they could make during their lifetimes. As is the case with all qualified donations, significant tax benefits can result, reducing income and estate taxation.

For more information about the Humanities Tomorrow Society, please contact Director of Development Diane Magras, 207-773-5051 ext. 208, or diane@mainehumanities.org.