Dear Friends,

We are living in strange times. In so many parts of our country, books are being labeled as dangerous and removed from library shelves by the thousands.

On April 21st, I'm organizing a day of testimony on libraries and intellectual freedom for the Legislative Working Group on the Status of Libraries in Vermont. I'm proud to be a member of the commission, appointed by the legislature.

Lest you think that the censorship antics occurring in Florida and Texas cannot happen here, I want to assure you that challenges to the freedom to read are in fact happening in Vermont. National censorship organizations are influencing conversations happening in our local communities, they are supporting challenges at school boards, and in public libraries around the state. Efforts to remove books or censor programs are increasing in frequency – most often targeting humanities-based works by or about black and brown people or LGBTQ+ people.

And more than that, there is a soft censorship or chilling effect in communities where purchasing or promoting so-called “controversial” titles like our Vermont Reads 2020 title *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas or Vermont’s own Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* is simply seen as not worth the risk of discomfort or challenge. In these cases, important authors are quietly de-emphasized or de-accessioned. In one recent conversation, a well-meaning public librarian noted that while they might buy LGBTQ+ themed YA books for their collection, they would be unlikely to promote them in their public programming for fear of upsetting local community members.

No librarian should be put in the position of removing or restricting access to books and resources that members of their community need. This is a core tenant of librarianship and their work to provide full access to information is protected by the First Amendment, which states that the government may not restrict speech.

In our day of testimony, librarians and others from around Vermont will come together to share stories of their experience with the rising tide of censorship. If you have a story to share, please get in touch.

And of course, at Vermont Humanities we are leaning right in – in this issue you'll read more about our choice for Vermont Reads 2023: *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo. Though the setting is the early 1950s, during what we now call the McCarthy Era, we believe that our choice for 2023 will resonate strongly with those who support intellectual freedom today. Please read it with us.

Yours,

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup
Executive Director
Civic Engagement and The Humanities

As we begin to celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2024, we recall that our original name was the Vermont Council on the Humanities and Public Issues, and that many of our early projects addressed important policy issues of the time including environmental conservation, transportation, and even the livable wage.

Today, we’re delighted to engage with the health of our democracy through such projects as the Mellon Foundation’s “Democracy and the Informed Citizen” and “Why it Matters” initiatives to address the importance of deep engagement in our democratic system, and with the NEH’s “A More Perfect Union” project to interrogate the long arc of America’s quest for justice.

Vermont Humanities used these opportunities to bring leading humanists like Richard Blanco, Jason Reynolds, and Kekla Magoon to Vermont communities and, perhaps most importantly, to commission and distribute 20,000 copies of the Center for Cartoon Studies’ Freedom and Unity: A Graphic Guide to Civics and Democracy in Vermont.

This book, developed in partnership with the Vermont Secretary of State, has been distributed widely with thousands of copies handed out at Town Meetings across Vermont on March 7, 2023.

Our work to help support our democracy is critical to Vermont, and we are delighted that the arts and humanities are being recognized as key contributors to a healthy democratic process.

On February 15, we joined with the Vermont Arts Council and others for our first legislative advocacy day in many years at the Vermont State House. And we weren’t just advocating for our own needs – rather we testified in multiple committees from Health Care to Commerce to Corrections about the important roles that the creative and cultural sectors play in our state.

Leaders in Vermont’s cultural sector were recognized and celebrated from the floor of the Vermont House of Representatives, demonstrating that elected officials from around the state understand the key role we play in community development and democratic practice.

We are eager to continue this work in 2023 and beyond. The NEH has just announced a new initiative on civic engagement called “United We Stand” which will work “to recognize that the arts and humanities help us develop the skills needed to find connection, common purpose, and recognition of our shared humanity.”

To learn more or get involved, just send us a note to info@vermonthumanities.org, where you can also request a copy of Freedom and Unity.
Our 2023 Vermont Reads Pick: *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* by Malinda Lo

Teenager Lily Hu is fully immersed in the life and culture of San Francisco’s Chinatown, home to Chinese immigrant families like hers. But as she comes of age in the 1950s, her passion for rockets and space exploration is matched by her curiosity about the Telegraph Club, located in a neighboring part of the city her parents have asked her to avoid.

Lily and her new friend, Kathleen, begin to sneak out at night to the club, which hosts performances by Tommy Andrews, a woman who dresses and performs in a traditionally masculine style. Kath and Lily’s interest in each other continues to grow despite the very real danger faced by two girls falling in love in 1954.

At the same time, McCarthy-era fears about Communism, coupled with ongoing anti-Asian hate, shake the stability of the Chinese community and threaten to engulf Lily’s own father.

*Last Night at the Telegraph Club* has won many prestigious awards, including the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, The Michael L. Printz Award from the American Library Association, the Stonewall Medal for LGBTQIA+ books, and the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature.

Author Malinda Lo skillfully weaves actual events—such as Madame Chiang Kai-shek’s visit to San Francisco in 1943—into this narrative about a teenaged girl finding her true self. Throughout the novel, Lo also relates the stories of Lily’s extended family, including her father’s move from China to San Francisco as a college student and her aunt’s job in the budding aerospace industry.

“LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB IS BY TURNS GUT-WRENCHING, UTTERLY COMPPELLING, AND DEEPLY TENDER. I LOVED LILY FIERCELY, AND YOU WILL TOO.”
—REBECCA KIM WELLS, AUTHOR OF *SHATTER THE SKY.*

Background: Photo by Joseph Barrientos on Unsplash
Host a Vermont Reads Program

For the 21st year of the Vermont Reads program, we invite Vermont communities to plan projects centered around *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* and its themes of self-acceptance, familial and cultural ties, US/China relations, LGBTQ+ and Feminist history, McCarthyism and xenophobia, music of the 1940s and 1950s, and the Asian American experience, among others.

To support Vermont Reads 2023 we’ll host a series of public events, featuring in-person and online discussions and presentations around the book's themes, including a planned visit to Vermont by the author at some point during the program year.

Vermont Reads 2023 projects can begin as early as July 1 and must conclude by June 30, 2024. Visit vtreads.org to learn more about the book, view materials related to the book's themes, and apply to host a Vermont Reads program.

About the Author

Born in Guangzhou, China, Malinda Lo immigrated to the United States as a child with her family, and grew up near Boulder, Colorado. Although she always wanted to be a writer, she studied Economics and Chinese Studies at Wellesley College, where she earned her B.A.

She went on to earn a master’s degree in East Asian Studies from Harvard University and a master’s degree in cultural anthropology from Stanford University.

Lo is the New York Times bestselling author of seven novels, including most recently *A Scatter of Light*. Her novels have been selected for many best-of lists, including the American Library Association’s Best Fiction for Young Adults, the ALA’s Rainbow List, Bank Street College’s Best Children’s Books, the Locus Recommended Reading List, and the James Tiptree Jr. Longlist.

Malinda’s short fiction and nonfiction has been published by *The New York Times*, *Autostraddle*, *Foreshadow*, *NPR*, *The Toast*, *The Horn Book*, and multiple anthologies. She lives in Massachusetts with her wife and their dog.

Above: Malinda Lo photographed by Sharona Jacobs

SUPPORT OUR ONGOING WORK TODAY

Vermont Humanities is a non-profit organization that relies on individual contributions from the people in our community to provide accessible, high quality programming like Words in the Woods, Vermont Reads, our *Before Your Time* and *The Portable Humanist* podcasts, and much, much more.

As a conduit for federal Covid-related funding, we’ve been building collaborative partnerships with community organizers doing impactful work through the humanities all over the state.

As that COVID-related funding comes to an end, we don't want to abandon these partnerships. Your support is more important than ever so we can build on the momentum we’ve gained as a leader in Vermont's cultural sector.

Donate online today at vermonthumanities.org/support. You have options! You can give one time or set up monthly giving starting at $5/month.
Where We Land: Stories that Propel Us
Highlights from 2022’s Fall Festival

Our reimagined “Where We Land” Fall Festival, held in October, was a wonderful success. It began with two presentations by best-selling author and former Library of Congress National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature Jason Reynolds on his collaborative book with scholar Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You.*

Thousands of young people participated in-person at the Flynn in Burlington and virtually from their classrooms around the state. Thank you to the generous Vermont Humanities donors who provided free copies of the book to all in-person participants and book sets for participating schools.

The energy from the start of the festival carried throughout the month with a wide variety of events held across the state. Rural Vermont hosted an agrarian storytelling event at the Corinth Town Hall, journalist Eyal Press met with students at the Burr and Burton Academy and presented a livestream at the Manchester Community Library, and comic book artists from across the country presented their work as part of the day-long Nonfiction Comics event held at the Fletcher Free Library in partnership with the Vermont Folklife Center.

The power of music and storytelling was on display at this year’s festival with two impressive performances. Our partnership with the UVM Lane Series continued with the Villalobos Brothers at the UVM Recital Hall followed by an intimate performance and picnic at the Open Door Clinic in Middlebury. The festival closed with a community potluck, conversation, and concert by the Garifuna Collective at the Chandler Center for the Arts in Randolph.

In total, our community partners hosted eleven festival events with us across eight Vermont counties in October and early November. About 7,000 Vermonters participated overall, an exponential increase from the 960 attendees at last year’s virtual conference.

We are grateful for the generous support from audiences and our sponsors at UVM Office of Engagement, UVM Humanities Center and UVM School of Arts and Sciences as we shifted to this new format and look forward to this year’s festival!

*Top from left: Author James Spooner with Bobby Hackney, Jr. of the punk band Rough Francis at the Non-Fiction Comics Festival. The Villalobos Brothers perform for Open Door Clinic staff and volunteers. Bottom from left: Author Jason Reynolds poses with a student. Author Eyal Press speaks at Middlebury College about his book “Dirty Work.”*
With three months remaining in the program year, Vermont Reads 2022 The Most Costly Journey (El viaje más caro) has become the most popular Vermont Reads program ever.

Almost 100 Vermont communities have hosted programs centered around the book and its themes, and Vermont Humanities has distributed nearly 5,000 copies of the book. The comics collection was created from the oral histories of people who traveled from Mexico and Central America to work on Vermont farms, and was a joint project initiated by The Open Door Clinic in Middlebury.

Judi Byron, a Vermont Reads host from the Waterbury Public Library said, “Both [our] book discussion and movie night drew not just insightful, compassionate comments but the desire to make a difference, get involved, and help out in some way to this mostly invisible community in Vermont.”

The comics—originally published as Spanish-language pamphlets and distributed on Vermont farms—were eventually translated into English and compiled as The Most Costly Journey. A Spanish version of the book compilation is now available in limited quantities for Vermont Reads hosts. You can request copies of the Spanish version by emailing community@vermonthumanities.org.

Vermont Humanities worked with cartoonist Marek Bennett, one of the book’s editors, to create four portable exhibit displays. Each four-panel series expands upon different themes in The Most Costly Journey: crossing borders, the importance of family, physical and mental health issues, and building a life in Vermont. Most of the displays are still available for free loan in April, May, or June. Visit vermonthumanities.org/displays to request a Vermont Reads 2022 display.

Since an audiobook of The Most Costly Journey did not exist, Vermont Humanities is working with Inclusive Arts Vermont and a local audio producer to create audio versions of several of the comics to make the content accessible to those with visual impairments.

Aimee Ostensen, a Vermont Reads host from Shelburne Farms, said “We are deeply appreciative that Vermont Reads celebrates books that surface the unseen and gives voice to those who often go unheard.”

Vermont Reads 2022 programs can be scheduled as late as June 30, 2023. Visit vtreads.org to learn more about hosting a Vermont Reads program in your community.
Crafting Our Country in Winooski

Welcome Blanket is a nation-wide project created in 2017 by Jayna Zweiman. The project encourages local people to make hand-crafted welcome blankets to be given to immigrant families. It was initially created in response to the proposed wall between Mexico and the United States as a tangible way to engage in welcoming our newest refugee population to America.

The Heritage Winooski Mill Museum invited Jayna Zweiman to visit Winooski’s own Welcome Blanket exhibit with quilts crafted locally for New Americans coming to Vermont. The public event connected the local creators of the blankets with the national movement within a space dedicated to weaving our industrial and cultural past with what matters to our community today. Attendees even brought their current knitting projects to work on in the historic mill building.

“Backlash” Film and Panel Discussion

On February 7, a capacity crowd at the Vermont State House watched “Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age,” a documentary that tells in part the story of Kiah Morris—Vermont’s second African-American woman State Representative—who resigned after severe online and real world harassment. Vermont Humanities helped support the screening and the panel discussion afterward with a Rapid Response grant to the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.

The panel discussion included Morris; the film’s co-director Guylaine Maroist; Vermont State Representative Taylor Small, who is Vermont’s first transgender woman to serve in the legislature; and State of Vermont Director of Racial Equity and Inclusion Xusana Davis. It was moderated by Esther Charlestin, Dean of Students at the Addison County School District.

What is a Rapid Response Grant?

Established in 2020, Vermont Humanities’ Rapid Response Grants are quick turn-around small grants for humanities-focused community projects. We award Rapid Response Grants of up to $1,000. These projects include small initiatives that will be completed within three months of receiving the grant funding, and new “pop-up” opportunities that offer humanities experiences and require a quick response.

LEARN MORE about our Grants program at vermonthumanities.org/grants.
Author Andrew Aydin visits Vermont State House and Rutland’s Paramount

National Book Award winner Andrew Aydin visited Vermont in early February for a three-day residency that included a Farmers' Night presentation at the State House, a conversation with high school students in Rutland that was live streamed to schools across the state, and a visit to South Burlington High School.

Aydin is the co-author of The March Trilogy with civil rights icon John Lewis. March: Book One was our Vermont Reads choice for 2019. In October of that year Lewis and Aydin visited Vermont for three sold-out performances at the Flynn, the largest events in Vermont Humanities’ history.

During his talk at the State House, Aydin said that those Burlington performances were the last time he and Lewis shared a stage. Aydin described how he convinced the Congressman—considered one of the “Big Six” of the civil rights movement—to use graphic novels to tell his life story.

One of the teachers whose students watched via the live stream wrote afterwards, “We desperately need racial literacy in our overwhelmingly white classrooms. Thank you for giving representation to books and authors who have (and continue to be) marginalized in children’s literature.”

At the Paramount Theater in Rutland, Aydin joined two students from Rutland Union High School in an hour-long dialogue. School groups from Rutland, Mill River, Fair Haven, and Castleton University filled the main auditorium of the historic theater, and nearly 25 other schools watched via live stream. Each student who attended the in-person event received a free copy of March: Book One.

In a sign that the pandemic is not over for marginalized people, a planned visit by Aydin to the Marble Valley Correctional Facility in Rutland was cancelled due to a Covid-19 outbreak on site. Vermont Humanities distributed 10 sets of The March Trilogy to people incarcerated at Marble Valley to read ahead of Aydin’s visit, and we hope to schedule a conversation with Andrew and the men in the facility at a later date.

Aydin’s trip concluded with an informal discussion with members of the Social Justice Union at South Burlington High School. A number of students at the school had attended Aydin’s presentation with Congressman Lewis in 2019 when the students were in sixth grade. The group continued a conversation with Aydin on social media after that event.

We’re grateful to the Vermont Department of Libraries, Cabot Cooperative, Middlebury College and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their support of our author residency program.
Welcome to Five New Trustees

Ellen “LN” Bethea has volunteered locally for over 20 years. Whether reading for library Story Times or setting up tents for art events, each activity is intended to actualize accessibility and build community. LN volunteers in hopes of developing nurturing spaces where creativity and connections thrive. LN has performed as a Spoken Word Poet across Vermont from Morrisville to Brattleboro, and was thrilled to have been chosen by Vermont Arts Council for “I Am A Vermont Artist 2021.” Welcome, LN!

Susan Burch is a historian and member of the American Studies faculty at Middlebury College. She has authored and co-authored numerous books and journal articles, co-edited anthologies and special journal issues, and served as editor-in-chief of the Encyclopedia of American Disability History (2009). Susan has received an American Council of Learned Societies’ Fellowship, a National Archives regional residency fellowship, National Endowment for the Humanities and Mellon Foundation grants, and a Fulbright Scholars award. Welcome, Susan!

T. Elijah Hawkes is Director of School Leadership Programs at the Upper Valley Educator Institute, a small graduate school that prepares future teachers and school leaders in Vermont and New Hampshire. He was a public school principal for 16 years, including 10 years at Randolph Union in Vermont, and six years as founding principal of the James Baldwin School in New York City. He is the author of two books and a contributing editor at the journal, Schools: Studies in Education published by University of Chicago Press. Welcome, Elijah!

Lizzy Lyons of Colchester, is currently working both as the Child and Youth Advocate Coordinator for the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and as a Senior Family Services Worker with DCF- Family Services. She is a licensed clinical social worker (LICSW), with her Masters in Social Work from UVM. She spent 6 months working on the Navajo Reservation at Hubbell Trading Post National Park (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms- WWOOF). Lizzy stays busy going on real life adventures with her wife and two kids and imaginary adventures with her stack of books in every room. Welcome, Lizzy!

Patricia M. Sears is a co-founder of NEKTI Consulting and a certified community coach for Community Heart & Soul, a proven community engagement tool that strengthens social, cultural & economic vitality through community self-awareness & local decision-making. Trish serves as the president of the Community Capital of VT board of directors, vice president of the RuralEdge board, secretary for the VT Rural Education Collaborative board of directors, Governor-appointee to VT Environmental Commission District 7, and a member of NetZeroVermont’s board. Welcome, Trish!

If you are interested in serving as a governing trustee at Vermont Humanities, write to us at info@vermonthumanities.org for more information.
Welcome to Two New Staff Members

Accounting Assistant Cathleen Barkley holds a Masters in Art History from Goddard College. She has spent nearly two decades as an adjunct faculty, community educator, and organizer. She has held numerous administrative and finance positions within various nonprofit organizations throughout Vermont. In her spare time, Cathleen creates mixed media visual art pieces focusing on her deep love for all the wild things in our natural world. Welcome, Cathleen!

Community Programs Officer Toussaint St. Negritude comes to Vermont Humanities with a lifetime’s breadth of community enhancement, advocating the essential intersectionality of perspectives on the arts, spirituality, justice, sustainability, ethnicity, queer life, and the restorative benefit of our connection to Vermont’s landscape. A former Poet Laureate of Belfast, Maine, the works of Toussaint St. Negritude have been widely celebrated, published, and recorded for over 40 years. Originally from San Francisco, Toussaint has lived and broadly thrived across the African Diaspora, from the sacred mountains of Haiti to the Coltrane District of North Philadelphia. Welcome, Toussaint!

In Gratitude: Three Board Members Move On

In 2022, we said farewell to two stalwart trustees – Joy Facos and Meg Ostrum, both from Washington County. In early 2023, we also bid a fond adieu to Randall Szott, and we thank each of them for their distinguished service!

Joy served as our board treasurer and finance chair for several years, as well as on our development committee. She was appointed to the board by Governor Scott in 2017 and served with distinction, including working to make our financial management stronger and more transparent and building socially responsible investment practices into our work.

Meg Ostrum joined the board in 2020 and served as our Membership and Governance Chair and on the strategic planning committee, bringing nine new members to our board under her leadership, including the five members who joined in January 2023.

Randall Szott served on the Membership and Governance committee while he was also representing Weston in the Vermont House of Representatives. His thoughtful demeanor helped us navigate the Vermont Legislature and pushed us forward in our work around anti-racism and social justice.
First Wednesdays May 3rd Events

First Wednesdays wraps up the season with nine amazing events across the state. Each in-person event begins at 7:00 pm. Full schedule at vermonthumanities.org/attend.

**CIVIL WAR, EMANCIPATION, RECONSTRUCTION AND AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS**
Brownell Library - Essex Junction

Central Park and Yosemite Valley became public parks in the Civil War era. UVM historian and former National Park Service superintendent Rolf Diamant explains how anti-slavery activism, war, and the remaking of the federal government gave rise to the concept of national parks.

**WE ARE ALL FAST FOOD WORKERS NOW**
Brooks Memorial Library - Brattleboro

Labor historian Annelise Orleck provides a close look at globalization and its costs from the perspective of low-wage workers themselves who are fighting for respect, safety, and a living wage.

**HEALING THROUGH ART**
Rutland Free Library - Rutland

Author and artist Dana Walrath practices a border-crossing blend of creative writing, comics, art, and anthropology. She explores the work that went into Aliceheimer’s, a graphic memoir about her mother’s dementia journey, and the lasting impact of the graphic memoir form.

**BIRDING HER-STORY: THE LOST LEGACY OF WOMEN IN ORNITHOLOGY**
Isley Public Library - Middlebury

“Bird Diva” Bridget Butler examines new scientific studies on female birds, shares stories of the “Mothers of Ornithology,” and reflects on current research about gender and birding.

**BUILDING BERLIN: THE GENESIS OF A GRAPHIC NOVEL**
Goodrich Memorial Library - Newport

The graphic novel Berlin by Jason Lutes depicts life during the rise of fascism in post-WWI Germany. Lutes discusses his development as a cartoonist that culminated in “a modern classic.”

**WHEN THE BICYCLE CAME TO VERMONT**
Manchester Community Library - Manchester

UVM professor Luis Vivanco explores the fascinating early history of the bicycle in Vermont, which generated widespread curiosity when it arrived here in the 1880s.

**DARE NOT SPEAK: AUTOCRATS AND THE CAMPAIGN TO SILENCE LGBTQI+ COMMUNITIES**
Kellogg-Hubbard Library - Montpelier

In this talk, Michael Bosia, a leading scholar on global trans- and homophobia, focuses on laws and rhetoric that target LGBTQI+ youth, teachers, and allies as part of a global anti-democratic effort.

**ESSENTIAL WORK IN THE FOOD SYSTEM: IMAGINING A BETTER FUTURE**
Norwich Public Library - Norwich

Dr. Teresa Mares shares her ongoing research on food and farmworkers, focusing both on local labor concerns in the dairy industry and national conversations about essential work in the sustainable food movement.

**WAR REENACTORS: WHO GETS TO TELL HISTORY?**
St. Johnsbury Athenaeum - St. Johnsbury

Artist Ed Gendron shares a photo project about World War II reenactors in the United States. “The re-enactors assert that ‘history is a personal thing,’ says Gendron. “And for them, it may be quite true.”

Aliceheimer’s cover image (left) courtesy of the author
Words in the Woods: Six New Poets for 2023

The Words in the Woods program returns this summer with six new poets. We cannot wait to explore the Vermont State Parks again with you through this program featuring Monica Ferrell, Toby MacNutt, Michiko Oishi, Linda Quinlan, Bianca Stone, and Geza Tatrallyay.

Dates and locations will be announced soon, so be sure to follow us on social media or sign up for our email newsletter by visiting vermonthumanities.org. Here is a sneak preview of some of the poets we will feature this summer.

MONICA FERRELL is the author of a novel and two books of poetry, most recently the collection You Darling Thing, which was a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Award and the Believer Book Award. She has taught fiction and poetry for the MFA programs at Columbia University and Bennington College, and is Professor of Creative Writing at Purchase College (SUNY).

TOBY MACNUTT is an author, artist, and teacher based in Addison County. Their work engages themes of embodiment, space and relationship from a queer and disabled perspective. Toby's debut poetry and short story collection If Not Skin was published by Aqveduct Press in 2018, and their work has appeared in Liminality, Strange Horizons, and Vulture Bones, and as a self-published chapbook, “what cannot be held”.

BIANCA STONE is the author of the poetry collections What is Otherwise Infinite (Tin House, 2022) and The Möbius Strip Club of Grief (Tin House, 2018). Her work has appeared in many magazines, including The New Yorker, The Atlantic and The Nation. She teaches classes on poetry and poetic study at the Ruth Stone House where she is editor-at-large for ITERANT magazine and host of Ode & Psyche Podcast.

GEZA TATRALYAY - With now fifteen published books, Geza is a prolific author of five thrillers, three memoirs, five poetry collections, one short story collection and one children's picture story book. He has a sixteenth book, another thriller, coming out in August, and has just finished a murder mystery based in Vermont that will be published later this year.

Before Your Time Podcast Returns

The first new episode since a pandemic hiatus follows “The Curious Catamount”

Though said to be extinct, catamounts live on in the minds of many Vermonters.

In this episode, we retrace a Barnard panther hunt from 1881 and talk with John Hunt of the Nulhegan band of the Coosuk Abenaki nation, historian Jan Albers, and folklorist Joe Citro to consider the hold that catamounts continue to have on our imaginations.

Visit vermonthumanities.org/listen or find us wherever you get your podcasts.
Meet the Early Literacy Team

Wendy Martin and Leanne Porter work in the field and behind the scenes for Vermont Humanities as Early Literacy Associates, teaming with Literacy Programs Manager Jonny Flood to bring programs to schools and communities across the state.

“My favorite part of all of our literacy trainings is offering the opportunity for everyone to listen to and learn from each other. So many of these educators work alone and just knowing they’re not the only ones out there is so important. It’s especially true in the case of home-based early educators: they’re not used to this kind of support and their appreciation for the free Never Too Early books and programs is palpable.

I can say the same for the librarians we work with through the Vermont Early Literacy Initiative (VELI). Librarians have felt extremely isolated over the past couple of years and meeting with them regularly and giving them the space to talk and listen and learn from each other is so important.” ~ Wendy Martin, Early Literacy Associate

“In our trainings we always include something Literacy Programs Manager Jonny Flood talked about when we first started meeting as the Early Literacy Team: Childcare providers are critical supports to our state and society. Their labor ensures that parents can go to their jobs, meaning employers can effectively run their businesses and large employers like the state government can maintain essential operations. It is not an exaggeration to say that childcare keeps Vermont open and functional.

We now make sure we tell providers this in every class. Their trade, their craft, and their skills reach young people (and their families!) at the most critical developmental stage in their lives. The enriching, nurturing environments they provide for our youngest and most vulnerable citizens quite literally shape the future of our society.

The generosity and knowledge that we share goes a long way in making them feel valued for their work. This is all before the “learning” even starts. Home providers tend to be isolated, and our courses offer time together to share ideas and collaborate and try out new things in a supportive environment.

Some providers take all of the programs we offer! One teacher started to apologize because she didn’t think she’d contributed as much as she could, though it turned out she was very sick with an ongoing illness. Still, she made it to every class with determination and enthusiasm. I was touched when I heard that Wendy had visited her center and brought her extra books. It was so kind but not unexpected.

The relationships that we develop through these courses are important and create a network where the information learned is not forgotten but grows even after we say goodbye.” ~ Leanne Porter, Early Literacy Associate

Children like Tucker, who participated at the Enosburgh Public Library, benefit from the VELI program.

“CHILDCARE PROVIDERS ARE CRITICAL SUPPORTS TO OUR STATE AND SOCIETY. IT IS NOT AN EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT CHILDCARE KEEPS VERMONT OPEN AND FUNCTIONAL.”

— JONNY FLOOD
Richford Educator Annette Goyne receives Swenson Humanities Educator Award

This January we had the great pleasure to present the 2022 Victor R. Swenson Award to Annette Goyne, teacher and librarian at Richford Jr. Sr. High School. The award, named after Vermont Humanities’ first executive director, recognizes a Vermont educator who exemplifies excellence in the teaching of the humanities.

Annette Goyne served as the director of her town’s library for seven years before becoming a school librarian for the past twenty years. In each of those roles, Goyne says she found a comrade in Vermont Humanities, who “helped me bring the world’s history, art, cultures, peoples, philosophies, and religions to my rural community tucked along the border with Quebec.” Operating on a lean public library budget, she leveraged the Speakers Bureau and Vermont Reads programs to provide her community with new opportunities for learning, perspectives, and ideas.

A champion of Humanities Camps in her school, Goyne has been the lead in organizing and hosting a camp every summer for the last 14 years. “I was also eager to provide my middle schoolers with a safe place to forge and deepen friendships, and also to be able to provide breakfast and lunch for needy students during the week in between free school lunches and our local playground camp’s summer program,” says Goyne.

“Both my daughters attended the Vermont Humanities Camp that Annette spearheads each year,” says fellow educator and Richford High parent Lori McGraw, who nominated her for the Swenson award. “They enjoyed it so much that they became volunteer counselors every year in high school.”

Goyne also plans and co-leads the Rennaissance Awards for middle school students and serves as a National Honor Society Adviser for the high school students. In the fall of 2020 amid strict Covid-19 restrictions, Goyne collaborated with her colleagues to organize a safe, masked in-person ceremony for students inducted into the NHS that included all the features, speakers, and decorum of the annual induction ceremony. The event was broadcast to the students’ friends and families via Facebook Live.

As the school librarian, Goyne works to engage students in becoming readers and critical thinkers. She observed current trends in popular teen culture and tailors her book collections and displays to offer high-quality selections of literature to match. Goyne also recently undertook an audit of the library’s collection to better understand representation of characters across diverse cultures for the students. She is a leader in bringing the humanities to students in a way that augments their classroom experiences.

“I AM SO DEEPLY HONORED TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN AS THIS YEAR’S RECIPIENT. THIS AWARD IS ONE I WILL ALWAYS TREASURE, AS IT TRULY EMBODIES MY LIFE’S WORK WITH MY COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN VERMONT.

– ANNETTE GOYNE

Educator and Librarian Annette Goyne of Richford Jr. & Sr. High School received the award in an assembly in front of her students and peers on January 30, 2023.

To learn more about the Swenson Award and to nominate an educator, visit vermonthumanities.org/swenson. The deadline for nominations is August 1, 2023.
Join us for this Year's Vermont Book Awards! Get tickets at bit.ly/vtbookawards

vermont book

Join Vermont’s literary community as we celebrate outstanding literature from our state. Prizes awarded for the best poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and children's books published by Vermont authors in 2022. Cheers!

awards

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