

Bridging Michigan



Michele Anderson, John Glenn High School teacher, was awarded the 2014 National History Teacher of the Year. Historian Earl Lewis, former provost at Emory University and current president of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation presented the award to Michele in New York City on December 9, 2014.

VETERANS, STUDENTS AND TEACHER OF THE YEAR

By Michele Anderson

About a dozen years ago I came up with an idea to have a historical dance that would bring together students with the community. I wanted it to be like the USO dances I had learned about from WWII. After writing out a formal description of the project, I presented it to my administration. Unfortunately, my idea never left the paper due to financial constraints.

Ten years later I read an article about grant money provided by the Michigan Humanities Council. I had been tossing around a different idea for a project and realized if I combined it with the USO dance project I would meet the criteria needed to receive a grant. I approached my new administrator with the idea confident I could get the financial backing needed for such a large project. To my surprise he encouraged me to apply for the grant.

The Michigan Humanities Council major grant provided the funding

for my students to interview and record WWII veterans and defense workers stories. Those interviewed were invited back as our guests of honor to the WWII USO dance held on the 68th Anniversary of the Victory in Europe. Approximately 600 students and community members attended. It was a night filled with the bonding of two very different generations filled with a tremendous amount of patriotism.

With the help of my colleagues and administration, I have continued the project moving on last year to include Korean veterans followed by a Korean War USO dance. This year's Vietnam USO dance was attended by approximately 900 students, veterans and community members. To date, 56 veterans and defense workers have been interviewed. These interviews include participants from WWII, the Korean War, the Berlin Airlift and Vietnam. The focus of the upcoming school year's interviews will be on conflicts

occurring after Vietnam, but we will continue to interview veterans from the past wars, as well. Another USO dance is scheduled for April of 2016. The "Persian Gulf to Present" is this year's theme.

The major grant was the catalyst for putting this project in motion. Without the financial support, I doubt this project would have moved forward. This project was recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Michigan who awarded me with the 2014 High School Teacher of the Year. It also caught the attention of other historical organizations which encouraged my administrator, David Ingham, to nominate me for the National History Teacher of the Year. To my surprise, I received the honor in December from the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History, History (Channel) and Preserve America. I cannot thank the Michigan Humanities Council enough for helping turn my ideas into realities.

WHY THE COUNCIL IS IMPORTANT TO ME

By Bill Alsover, Michigan Humanities Council Board Member



Our world is dominated by science and technology. For example, Netflix streams over 1 billion hours of TV shows and movies every month. The digital universe is doubling in size approximately every two years, and by 2020 will reach 44 zettabytes, or 44 trillion gigabytes. To put this in perspective, Mark Liberman, an American linguist at the University of Pennsylvania, estimates the storage requirements of all human speech ever spoken is less than this.

And that is precisely why we need the humanities now more than ever. To paraphrase Indiana Jones, "Science is the search for facts, humanities is the search for truth." In most cases, however, the study of humanities does not give us the

answer, but rather leads to questions. It provides us the tools and skills to make our own determination of what is right and what is wrong, guides us in how to better our life by enjoying it more, and to pursue the truth.

The Michigan Humanities Council (MHC) provides the leadership and programs to help people in this scientific world dominated by technology to explore the questions, values, and meanings of the true human experience. Moreover, it encourages students to step out and to take a chance with our Poetry Out Loud program. Many times this experience is life-changing. The Traveling Exhibitions and Speaker Series programs bring the humanities to communities throughout the entire State of Michigan. The Great Michigan Read program continues to grow, and this year's book, *Station Eleven*, tells an intriguing story that will stimulate many a discussion.

MHC is also providing Heritage Grants in conjunction with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. These grants help support

non-profit groups in Michigan explore and record the cultural identity of their community that may otherwise be lost. MHC is also co-sponsoring with the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street traveling exhibit program, Hometown Teams. There are five cities throughout the state who will not only host the exhibit, but will in addition gather items about their hometown sport teams to add to the event.

In her provocative book *Station Eleven*, author Emily St. John Mandel quotes Star Trek, "Survival is not sufficient." In her story, humanities is what makes that difference between surviving and living.

The hundreds of yearly events MHC provides around Michigan make that difference to 1.5 million people, including over 50,000 participating students. We need your financial help to expand such existing programs and to foster new ones. We need humanities more than ever.

Contact Bill Alsover at info@mihumanities.org.

2015-18 New Touring Directory

The 2015-18 Arts & Humanities Touring Directory is now available online. The directory includes seven major categories: Dance, Music, Puppet, Storyteller, Theatre, Tradition Bearer & Folk Artist and Visual Arts. Within those seven major categories are 12 subcategories (see the Table of Contents in our directory for more information). There are 118 presenters/performers in the directory, with 21 new presenters/performers added to this new edition.

We have redesigned the new directory so that it is user-friendly - easier to view and print. There are links to view the performers online prior to booking them for an event. The costs and contact information are included, along with a thorough description.

Before the next grant cycle begins, take a look through the directory, and see what fits into your school or community plans. The anticipated date for the opening of the Touring Grants application is November 10, 2015. The grant guidelines, application and other information are available on our website. Preview the directory before November. Once the grant application opens, submit your request early - Touring Grant funds are expended quickly.



2015 HUMANITIES GRANTS

The review of grant applications for potential Humanities Grant funding will soon be underway. MHC plans to announce the 2015 Humanities Grant recipients in November, following funding recommendations made to the MHC Board of Directors by the grant review panels.

Humanities grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations throughout Michigan and provide opportunities to engage the public with the humanities in a variety of creative and thoughtful ways. Projects include public events, community conversations, museum exhibitions, film and book discussions, documentaries, performances and other public activities. These grants play a vital role in defining our culture, our state, our community and ourselves, and are intended to connect us to Michigan's rich cultural heritage and history.

Successful grant applications share several characteristics--humanities content is central to the project, humanities professionals or scholars are involved in the project planning and implementation, the public is directly engaged in the humanities program, and projects advance the mission of the MHC. We will announce the 2015 Humanities Grant recipients soon. Watch for our announcement online.

GREAT MICHIGAN READ

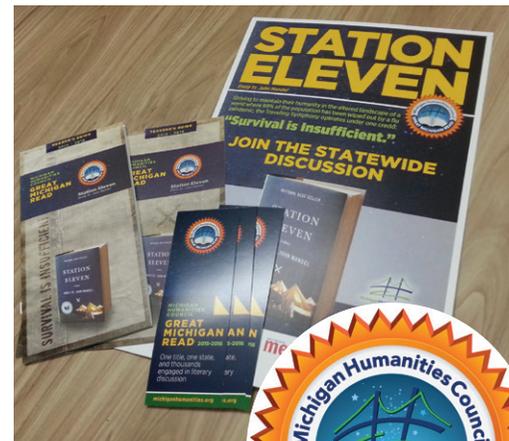
The 2015-16 Great Michigan Read (GMR) materials have left the MHC offices and arrived at our partner locations all over the state. As our partners prepare their events, please watch our website calendar for an event near you. Partner Registration is still open - register today to receive the materials and books while our supplies last.

We also have the **Author Tour Schedule** in place, so mark your calendar and see Emily St. John Mandel in person. Between October 2015 and May 2016, Emily will be visiting at least 13 locations in Michigan to discuss *Station Eleven*. Our Kick-off Event will be on October 8th at the Library of Michigan in Lansing. Emily will be interviewed by 2013-14 GMR author Steve Luxenberg, an event worth attending.

We are especially proud of the materials we have created to accompany the book *Station Eleven*. Michigan teachers are encouraged to contact us for a classroom set so their students can be a part of The Great Michigan Read.

Thank you to our generous sponsors for their support. Without all of you, The Great Michigan Read could not happen. Thank you to:

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Join us on Thursday, October 8 for our Great Michigan Read Kick-off Event! Meet Emily St. John Mandel and hear her discuss her work. Doors open at 6:00 pm, at the Library of Michigan in Lansing. This free event will begin at 7:00 pm. Books will be available for sale and signing.



Looking Back to Look Forward

What stories can best tell the history of race and the struggle for racial equity

in Michigan? Last June, the Michigan Humanities Council's first cohort of Heritage Grant Recipients – representing 26 cultural organizations from across the state – came together in Lansing to begin projects that will start to answer this question. Although the project types vary widely, from oral histories and exhibits to community conversations and youth programs, all are linked by their commitment to using the humanities to build a deeper understanding of race and cultural identity in Michigan. In the process, these projects are also bringing communities together to ensure they have a voice in how their histories are told. At Fire Historical Arts and Cultural Collaborative in Kalamazoo, for example, project leaders are creating a reading and writing program that focuses on using historical works by authors of color as a catalyst for helping students develop their own voices on topics important to their lives today. Across the state in Detroit, students at the Ebenezer Community Cultural Center will be participating in the National History Day competition with research they will conduct on the history of race relations in Detroit. You can read more about each of the projects on our website.

Interested in proposing your own Heritage Grant Project?

The draft proposal period will be open from December 1, 2015 - January 25, 2016. The Final Application Deadline will be March 21, 2016. Draft proposals are read in the order they are received, so get them in early. Contact program manager Joe Cialdella (jcialdella@michiganhumanities.org) with your questions or to discuss ideas.

Michigan High School Teachers: Sign up for Poetry Out Loud 2015-16 Today!

Visit our website for a School Participation Form. Submit to us by November 13, 2015.

Materials will be available very soon. Get your students involved in this life-changing program.

This is a free statewide program. All Michigan high schools are eligible to participate. All eligible applicants will be accepted.



POETRY OUT LOUD

Visit our website at
www.michiganhumanities.org



119 Pere Marquette, Suite 3B
Lansing, MI 48912-1270



DONATE.

Imagine living in a community without creativity, shared values, thoughtful conversation and a reason to celebrate. Make a donation today to support the Michigan Humanities Council.

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To reach our staff, please call
517-372-7770, write
info@mihumanities.org or
visit our website at
www.michiganhumanities.org



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Board Meetings are open to the public.
Please visit our website for location.

Upcoming dates:
October 15, 2015; January 14, 2016;
April 21, 2016; June 9, 2016