Michigan residents will soon meet Bich Minh Nguyen, author of the 2009-10 Great Michigan Read. On October 13-17, 2009, the Michigan Humanities Council will host Nguyen as she tours the state. In May, the Council announced its selection of her memoir, Stealing Buddha’s Dinner, as the 2009-10 Great Michigan Read. Nguyen will kick off the tour in her former hometown of Grand Rapids. Other stops include Traverse City, Midland, Lansing, and Plymouth.

“T’im excited about the tour,” said Nguyen. “October in Michigan is beautiful, and I’m looking forward to visiting places that are new to me as well as places that are familiar, and meeting as many people as possible along the way.”

Each appearance includes a presentation by Nguyen, followed by a book signing. Books will be sold on-site.

“This is a great opportunity for Michiganders to meet the author they’ve heard so much about,” said Jan Fedewa, executive director of the Council.

The tour features stops at two colleges, one library, and two historic theaters, including the City Opera House in Traverse City and the Penn Theatre in Plymouth. All appearances are open to the public.

“We’re delighted to host Bich in Midland because she will bring her story to life on our stage,” said Melissa Barnard, director of the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library in Midland. “It is truly wonderful to have an author whose visit generates so much excitement about reading.”

Great Michigan Read Author

Bich Minh Nguyen to Tour State

Stealing Buddha’s Dinner highlights the author’s immigration to Michigan as a Vietnamese refugee and her childhood in Grand Rapids. More than 150 organizations are partnering with the Council to offer supporting programs and events.

With a statewide focus on a single book, The Great Michigan Read encourages Michiganders to learn more about their state, their history, and their society. The Council’s free supporting programming focuses on three themes: immigration stories, cultural understanding, and contemporary history.

Meijer, Public Policy Associates, and the National Endowment for the Humanities are leading sponsors of The Great Michigan Read.
2009-10 Great Michigan Read Update

More than 150 organizations have joined The Great Michigan Read. Your organization can join them - and request free support materials, including reader’s guides, teacher’s guides, bookmarks, Detroit Free Press inserts, and posters - by registering at www.michiganhumanities.org.

Teacher’s Guide: The official teacher’s guide, featuring high school teaching strategies and other resources, is now available. Register online for a printed version or download an electronic copy.

Detroit Free Press Insert: On October 9, 2009, more than 300,000 daily readers will receive a special Great Michigan Read supplement featuring an excerpt from Stealing Buddha’s Dinner, a welcome message from the author, and essays from writers Lohita Hernandez, Anne-Marie Oomen, and Mohammed Naseehu Ali. Register your organization for The Great Michigan Read or sign up your school with the Detroit Newspapers in Education program to request additional free copies.

Vietnamese in Michigan Traveling Exhibit: In October 2009, the Council will launch a traveling exhibit featuring the story of Vietnamese refugees in Michigan. Great Michigan Read partners may apply to host the exhibit, available in four-week increments, during its 2009-10 tour. For application details, visit www.michiganhumanities.org.

Facebook: Discuss Stealing Buddha’s Dinner, keep up to date on the latest Great Michigan Read announcements, and meet other readers on www.facebook.com - just search for “Michigan Humanities Council.”

Events: Great Michigan Read partners in all areas of the state are planning scores of programs including book discussions, Vietnamese food tastings, humanities lectures, and more. See the Council’s online event calendar at www.michiganhumanities.org for events in your community.

Grants: Council quick grants of up to $500 are available to support Great Michigan Read programs related to themes in Stealing Buddha’s Dinner. See www.michiganhumanities.org/grants/quickgrants.php for details.

Seeking Nominations

The Michigan Humanities Council is actively seeking nominations of Michigan citizens who share our commitment to our state’s history and culture to serve on the Michigan Humanities Council Board of Directors. Board members are selected from business, government, academia, and other fields of interest. The Council seeks demographic and geographic diversity with the intent to represent the various regions and populations of Michigan.

Candidates to our 25-member board must reside in Michigan and believe in the importance of the humanities and their relevance to contemporary life. If you would like to nominate someone, or are interested yourself, please submit a resume and a letter of interest to Janice Fedewa, 119 Pere Marquette, Suite 3-B, Lansing, MI 48912 or email jfedewa@mihumanities.org.

Special consideration will be given to candidates who submit their letter of interest by December 31, 2009.

Dunlap Joins Michigan Humanities Council

The Michigan Humanities Council welcomes Richard Lowell Dunlap of Shelby Township to its Board of Directors. Earlier this year, Dunlap was named the Director of Research of The Kresge Foundation. He has served in several administrative positions since joining the Foundation in 1995. Previously, Dunlap worked for the state of Michigan for almost 20 with the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Prior to coming to Michigan, he was arts program director with the Oklahoma Arts and Humanities Council and held management positions with local arts organizations in Dallas, Texas. Dunlap has an active history as a volunteer in the nonprofit cultural community, including service for ArtServe Michigan, Cranbrook Academy of Art, and the Art Center in Mount Clemens. He earned a Bachelor of Music in Composition and Theory and a Master of Fine Arts in Arts Administration from Southern Methodist University and is a graduate of Leadership Detroit. He is also a composer, pianist, and organist. Dunlap will serve on the Board of Directors whose responsibilities include program and proposal review, planning, fundraising, advocacy, liaison to projects, and representation of the Council at activities around the state. Six members of the Council are gubernatorial appointees while the Council Board elects 18. Dunlap began his term on May 7, 2009, and will serve through the remainder of this year.
There were new ideas, talking points, and fundraising strategies discussed as Wendi Tilden, the Council’s newly hired development director, and I traveled throughout the state meeting with Board members. The purpose of our meetings was to introduce Wendi to the board and to seek their feedback and input as we finalize the Council’s five-year strategic and development plans.

While an ambitious effort with a few more to call upon, I think the board members’ responses to several of our questions will help guide our long-term plans: What do we mean when we talk about the humanities? If a stranger approaches you, how would you describe your role in the Council? What are the top three benefits of our work to Michigan citizens? What do you envision as the Council’s top priorities as we define our long-term fundraising goals?

The one question that always creates dialogue and a challenge to define is the humanities. Through our conversations, the humanities were described as helping people learn about others and oneself, about creating a sense of place and playing a critical role in civic discourse, or about affording us the opportunity to talk about ideas not ideologies. All these definitions capture the meaning of the humanities. Simply put: the humanities are about human ties. They help us understand the past so we can confront current issues and envision the future.

Many members see their role in the Council as an advocate for our programs and grants. Others believe it is their responsibility to harness interest in our work that will generate support, and a few see their role as the voice for the humanities in their community.

Making a difference in people’s lives, connecting others within the community, and sharing stories that help define who we are and what our lives mean are the benefits of our work.

Key to affecting change and meeting the needs of Michigan’s changing population is to raise the necessary funds to support our efforts. The Board listed their top fundraising priorities as expanding programs or strengthening the ones we have in place, building a substantial reserve fund, and establishing a permanent endowment.

These meetings were very inspiring and helpful. Not only did we discover the voice of each board member, but also we learned how significant our programs are to them and to Michiganders during these challenging times. More importantly, we observed that everyone we met with is willing to continue to dedicate time and energy to making our work meaningful and vital in communities throughout the state.

We are looking forward to working with them and Michigan citizens as we define our plans and our place within the context of our changing environment. It may be a challenge, but we are resilient and willing to do what it takes to transform the lives of our most important resource… people.

Jan Fedewa
“It All Began in Poland” Commemoration

The Polish Mission at Orchard Lake Schools’ commemoration weekend included photo history and oral history presentations and a discussion of the role of the arts in the lives of the deported Poles. It included the opening of two fine art collections by internationally-acclaimed artists who survived multiple concentration camps: Jan Komski (1915-2002) and Adam Grochowski (1924-1992). Following the war, Komski served as an artist for the Washington Post and also painted scenes of the brutality in the concentration camps. Grochowski earned fame as a leading paint-by-numbers artist for the Palmer Paint Company, but was also a fine artist. A signature mural allowed displaced people and veterans to sign tiles created by Pewabic Pottery. The Mission buried a time capsule which included the names of family members who suffered in Poland during World War II.

Above: Polish Veterans and Scouts gather to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Poland. They participated in a traditional Polish Wypominki which included the reading the names of families who suffered in Poland during World War II.

Above Right: The helmet on display bares the band of the Arma Krajowa (the Home Army, literally translated as the Country’s Army), abbreviated “AK,” the dominant Polish resistance movement in World War II German-occupied Poland.

One part of this grant project is a collection of oral histories from those of the Polish diaspora that reside in metropolitan Detroit. The collection will be published on the Internet, in a guidebook, and incorporated into school lesson plans. The lesson plans will align with K-12 education in the language arts, social studies, and fine arts. Documents used in the collection and lesson plans will include primary documents, such as government documents, photographs, and letters. It will also feature the importance of Scouting in the Polish community, with a comparison of Polish badges to American Scouting.

The Polish Mission’s oral history collection is Michigan’s contribution to an international effort to collect and publish the story of Polish diaspora by the Krezy-Siberia Foundation (www.kreysiberia.org). “Many of these are Michigan stories of neighbors and friends,” said Ceil Jensen, director of Michigan Humanities Council. “It All Began in Poland.”

“Remembering the Polish Experience”

Remembering the Polish Experience is a Michigan Humanities Council-supported project receiving national recognition is the documentary, Up From the Bottoms: The Search for the American Dream, by Grand Valley State University. The documentary was viewed in August at both the Rhode Island International Film Festival and the Michigan Film Festival. The film tells the story of the African Americans migration to Muskegon in the 1940s to 1960s, including how black businesses flourished out of the homes of residents and the popularity of the jazz clubs that drew people in from all areas. To view a trailer of the clip and learn more about the project, visit the Council’s online media archives or link to www.upfromthebottoms.com.

Above: Polish Army World War II veteran Jerzy Kozubski. Below: The Kozubski family (from left): Jerzy, Zofia, and Maria Kozubski, born in the Kresy region of Poland. Kozubski was a baby in 1939 when the Soviets invaded shortly after the German Blitzkrieg. Her mother’s memoirs described their ordeal as they were deported by the Soviets because of their economic well-being and high regard in the community. Kozubski describes her family’s struggles on a five-week trip to Siberia on cattle wagons, “packed in like sardines on top of bunks,” lacking sanitation, food, and medical care. The family was among two million Poles deported to Russia, which preceded their deportation to Uzbekistan, Iran, Mozambique, Rhodesia, and the United Kingdom.

Kozubski’s father joined the Polish army 1943—this resulted in a permanent dislocation from their homeland because postwar, Communist Poland would not accept the return of many Polish WWII veterans. The Kozubskas arrived in metropolitan Detroit in 1952 was the final stop on their journey. “These records need to be documented and the story needs to be shared with the people of Michigan,” said Jensen. “The Council’s support was of key importance for us to create this project; our community would not have been represented in this global project without it.”

For more information on the archives and the collections of the Polish Mission at Orchard Lake Schools, visit the website at www.polishmission.com.

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Pyle. Morrison sends playbills to his intended audience in advance of the presentation to educate them about the intended performance. “The dramatization allows people to see Ernie Pyle as he was the day before he was killed on the island of Ie Shima, Okinawa.” said Morrison. He mixes Pyle’s stories of the Nazi Blitzkrieg and World War II combat in Italy and North Africa through the media’s perspective at that time. “One of the stories I share was of Pyle’s highly-publicized story of Captain Henry T. Wascow of Texas, killed in combat in Italy in 1943. The story was emblematic of Pyle’s style, and helped to personalized the war by embedding the front line reactions to Wascow’s death in the every day realities of war,” said Morrison.

Morrison’s presentations are frequently to high schools or veterans groups, and the reactions are both educational and personal. “High school students can learn more about the war through Ernie’s stories about how soldiers lived, and actually what it was like to live on the front,” said Morrison. Veterans at his presentations have shared their stories, and sometimes their own artifacts, to present to other audiences. An important part of Morrison’s discussion is the difference in the media and the portrayal of combat in Iraq or Afghanistan by today’s media compared to the complications and delays in communication experienced by Pyle in World War II. “I ask students to pay attention to how Ernie wrote, his metaphors, his similes, and how he used words to convey his message.”

Another presenter in the Touring Directory is Tom Woodruff, who has presented his Great Lakes Illustration Workshops to K-12 schools and communities since 1987. Woodruff has researched and illustrated several Michigan and Great Lakes history books. He brings his work to audiences through a unique writing, illustrating, and storytelling presentation. “I have always used art as a learning tool, and now I use it as a teaching tool,” said Woodruff.

In schools, Woodruff works with teachers to create programs that meet classroom needs. “I’m inspired by kids and the natural world around me – I like to teach observation skills through nature journaling,” said Woodruff. An example is his workshop on Prehistoric Great Lakes, which meets the state’s earth science curriculum requirements and results in an eight-page book exploring paleontology. Students dig through piles of shale to discover and research real fossils. “I use the ancient rocks with writing and drawing skills to illuminate prehistory,” said Woodruff.

The Touring Program offers a unique opportunity for Morrison and Woodruff to be featured as quality resources for communities across Michigan. “Being selected to be a part of it adds validity to my presentation,” said Morrison. “Host sites know they are getting someone that has been approved by their peers, out in the market already.” Added Woodruff, “The Touring Program’s distribution shares a wide selection of artistic talent for event planners and teachers from which to choose. It shows how important art can be in our society through linking the arts to academics and community programs.”

“I’m inspired by kids and the natural world around me – I like to teach observation skills through nature journaling...”

In addition to the Touring Directory, the Michigan Humanities Council is awarding grants to Michigan nonprofit organizations (including schools, libraries, museums, cultural centers, and municipalities) to help cover costs of engaging performers or presenters listed in the Directory for arts and cultural programs. Nonprofit organizations may request up to 40 percent of a performer, presenter, or exhibitor’s fee and travel expense, with a limit of $4,000 per organization in the next year and no more than $3,000 per application.

Applications are currently being accepted to fund programs through September 30, 2010, until funding is exhausted. For more information on the touring directory and grant support, visit www.michiganhumanities.org/programs/touring. Presenters were formally adjudicated by peer review in January 2009. A listing in Michigan’s Arts & Humanities Touring Directory is not an endorsement by the Michigan Humanities Council or the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, nor are the Councils responsible for program content and/or incorrect information.
Picturing America in Michigan Merges Art and History

The story behind America’s great works of art – from Anasazi pottery (circa 1100) to Martin Puryear’s *Ladder for Booker T. Washington* (sculpture, 1996) – is the story of America itself.

This is the idea behind the Michigan Humanities Council’s programs for schools partnering in Picturing America, a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) initiative that helps students gain a deeper understanding of America’s history through the study and understanding of America’s art. Nearly 2,000 Michigan schools have received a set of large-format reproductions of American masterpieces, along with a companion teacher’s guide, from the NEH. The Council’s programs help these schools make the most of the prints.

For the 2008-09 school year, *Picturing America in Michigan* programs included:

- **Museum Partnership Program**: Nearly 4,500 students from 78 schools participated in programs at 12 of the state’s leading art museums that emphasized connections with American history.
- **Teacher Seminar Series**: 102 teachers participated in art history workshops in East Lansing, Jackson, and Ann Arbor.

**Fall 2009 Museum Partnership Grants**

The Museum Partnership Program offers museum and in-school programs that utilize American art as an exploring tool for exploring American history. Eligible programs including arts and libraries may apply for programs taking place before December 31, 2009 (submit application four weeks in advance). Download a program directory and application at www.michiganhumanities.org/programs/picturingamerica.

**Contributions During the Fiscal Year 2008**

November 1, 2007 to October 31, 2008

Funding success requires broad-based support. Annual gifts help support public humanities programs and events throughout the entire state. The Michigan Humanities Council depends on the generosity of many donors.

We are grateful to each of you!

**Fall 2009 Financial Statement**

**Revenue and Expenses**

- **Revenue**: $1,246,015
- **Expenses**:
  - Program services and grants: $967,741
  - Administration: $288,274
  - Total expenses: $1,255,915

**Total revenue**: $1,246,015

**Total expenses**: $1,255,915

**Net assets**: ($9,900)

**Fall 2009 | Michigan Humanities | 6**
The Michigan Melting Pot and the Great Michigan Read

By Patricia Anne Shaheen, Michigan Humanities Council Board of Directors

The state of Michigan mimics American society as a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities from around the world. Finding ways to learn more about who we are – to understand our similarities and differences – helps to define ourselves individually and collectively. The Michigan Humanities Council embraces this mission through its Great Michigan Read, in which everyone reads the same book of Michigan literature.

This year’s Great Michigan Read, Stealing Buddha’s Dinner, by Bich Minh Nguyen, is a perfect selection to discuss our melting pot. Nguyen’s memoir is an avenue to critical dialogue about our cultural identity, and who we are as citizens of Michigan. She helps us understand who she is through the unique perspective of cultural food experiences: her family’s Vietnamese traditions and her exposure to mass-marketed American cuisine.

It makes me pause and think: How do I define who I am? Coming from a family of immigrants myself, I can relate to some of Nguyen’s perspectives. Her memoir provided me with a tool to consider my own place in Michigan and in American society.

I look forward to expanding my own thoughts through my community’s participation in the Great Michigan Read. In the last program of the Tri-Cities area celebrated Ernest Hemingway’s Nick Adams Stories with programs to engage the public and students, and concluded with a visit by author Valerie Hemingway to Saginaw’s Temple Theatre. This fall, students at Delta College and Hemlock High School, along with patrons of the Bay County libraries and the Bay Arenac Reading Council, will use Stealing Buddha’s Dinner to discuss immigration stories, learn about cultural similarities and differences, and investigate contemporary history.

On October 15, we welcome Bich Minh Nguyen to Midland for one of her five public stops on her Michigan tour. The opportunity comes from the Michigan Humanities Council and the Grace A. Dow Memorial Library. The Tri-Cities region joins the rest of Michigan in The Great Michigan Read and reading Stealing Buddha’s Dinner to learn more about ourselves and others. I invite you to see Bich at one of the five sites, or to participate in a community program. Ask your local library, cultural organization, or book club to join. Together, we all make up what we call Michigan – so, let’s learn more about each other through literature.

I Want to Support the Council

You can help bring public humanities programs and more to Michigan and to your community by making a tax-deductible donation as a Friend of the Humanities in Michigan. Contributions will be recognized on the Council website and in a following newsletter.

Gift Amount

Card number

Expiration Date

Your Signature

*Please make your check payable to the Michigan Humanities Council.

I’d like my gift to support:

Please use my gift where needed (or designate a program below)

The Great Michigan Read

Arts & Humanities Touring Program

Endowment

PRIME TIME®

I would consider making a gift to MHC through my estate plan or will. Please contact me.

Giving Levels:

Sage ($1,000+)

Philosopher ($500-$999)

Master ($250-$499)

Mentor ($100-$249)

Scholar ($50-$99)

Other: ($1-$49)

Mail this form to:
Michigan Humanities Council
119 Pere Marquette Dr., Suite 3B
Lansing, MI 48912-1270

or, contribute on-line at

www.michiganhumanities.org

Fall 2009  |  Michigan Humanities  |  7

Help us by investing today!

The Upside Down Boy, or El niño de cabeza, by Juan Felipe Herrera, is used in the last week of the PRIME TIME® curriculum to set a context for a discussion about compassion.
Join the 4,000 student participants in Michigan’s Poetry Out Loud

In its four years, Michigan’s Poetry Out Loud has reached more than 4,000 high school students with some of the world’s greatest poetry. The program encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition. It helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

Now, the Michigan Humanities Council invites English and language arts teachers to add Poetry Out Loud to their 2009-2010 curriculum. Participating high schools will receive: a print and online poetry anthology; an instructional program guide; an audio CD featuring distinguished actors and writers; and, promotional and media materials. Each school champion will advance to the state competition. The state winner will receive $200 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC to compete for the national championship.

To participate, apply online at: www.michiganhumanities.org or email gparker@mihumanities.org or call 517-372-7770 with questions.

Each of Michigan’s champions advanced to the national finals, held annually in Washington, DC. Their testimony speaks volumes:

**Travis Walter.** Holt High School. 2006 Michigan champion. “After I read a poem, it motivates me to write poetry. If it stirs my emotions, it propels me to try to understand the meaning of the poem and what the poet was attempting to say.”

**Sarah Harris.** Holt High School. 2007 Michigan champion. “I love softball, but Poetry Out Loud provided a unique and creative opportunity. Poetry allows me to create through characterization, to play a part. In sports, you live for a short moment of glory. But in poetry, you can create, live, and relive every moment.”

**Charles White.** Forest Hills Central /Grand Rapids High School. 2008 Michigan champion. “I realized the power of poetry in reading it. It is different reading a poem in your mind, then taking the poem and learning it by heart. Recitation helped me to become the poem in and of itself.”

**David Bellomy.** Cass Technical (Detroit) High School. 2009 Michigan champion. “The journey from understanding a poem, from then to now, allows me to take the poem and relate it to my life.”

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the Michigan Humanities Council, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the State Library of Michigan, the National Endowment for the Arts, The Poetry Foundation, and the Michigan Youth Arts Association.