



NEW HAMPSHIRE
humanities

CONNECTING PEOPLE & IDEAS • WINTER 2025

Engage!

Drawing Communities Together
Conversations to Spark Change Across New Hampshire



Marek Bennett draws a
community conversation
at the Arlington Street
Community Center, Nashua.
Photo by Kate Brindley
Photography. Artwork
by Marek Bennett:
www.MarekBennett.com
(story on p. 3)

Board of Directors

Marcia Schmidt Blaine,
Ph.D., Chair
Plymouth State University

Elizabeth Dubrulle, Vice-Chair
NH Historical Society

Samuel H. Witherspoon,
Treasurer, *Portsmouth*

Connie Roy-Czyzowski, SPHR
Secretary, *Manchester*

Marcia J. Kelly, Immediate
Past Chair, *Hanover*

Joshua Becker
Southern NH University

Rebecca Biron, Ph.D.
Dartmouth College

Dr. Gary Bouchard
Saint Anselm College

Zachary S. Camenker
Concord

Robert Dunn, Esq.
*Roman Catholic Diocese
of Manchester*

Professor Nicholas A. Germana
Keene State College

Dr. Christine Gustafson
Saint Anselm College

Molly Lunn Owen
University of New Hampshire

Andrew Pyszka
Goffstown High School

Amanda Quinlan
McLane Middleton

Teresa Rosenberger
Bernstein Shur

Katie Umans
University of New Hampshire

Jacqueline Wernimont, Ph.D.
Dartmouth College

Alfred A. Williams, IV
River Valley Community College

Andrea Williamson
Edward Jones

Ken Burns
Director Emeritus

Staff

Michael Haley Goldman
Executive Director

Sue Butman
Operations Manager

Sarah Chaffee
Director of Development

Rebecca Kinhan
Communications Director

Katie Malloy
Program Coordinator

Mary Nolin
Program Manager - Connections

Larissa Striga
Development Coordinator

New Hampshire Humanities: We Are Still Here!

Dear Friends,

As you have heard me say since April, keep ONE THING about New Hampshire Humanities in mind for 2026 – We Are Still Here!

We are still here DESPITE unprecedented changes in our relationship to the National Endowment for the Humanities which canceled our contract, effectively halving their financial support of the humanities in New Hampshire for 2025.

We are still here DESPITE the reality that UNCERTAINTY around federal planning for 2026 requires us to prepare for ZERO federal funding for the humanities in New Hampshire in the coming year.

We are still here BECAUSE of the brave choices our staff and Board made – building our budget for 2026 at half the budget of 2024, reducing staff by almost half, and reducing our programming costs by around one-third. These choices prepare the organization for another 50 years serving the people of New Hampshire, with or without the federal government.

We are still here BECAUSE the humanities – history, literature, and so much more – still strengthen our communities. We believe in the mission of the humanities and that we owe it to the state of New Hampshire to continue this work with or without federal support.

We are still here BECAUSE of you – our community of partners, supporters, and friends. We now rely more than ever on your financial support. Thank you for believing in the cause – donating, buying tickets, sponsoring our programs. But you also make the humanities possible in New Hampshire by doing the work of the humanities – attending programs, teaching, discussing ideas in your community, and participating in the dialogue that is the humanities.

New Hampshire Humanities (NHH) continues our work in 2026 as we recognize the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This year, we'll sponsor the BIG WATCH, a statewide initiative based on a shared documentary, Ken Burns' *The American Revolution*. Communities across New Hampshire will discuss what has been passed down to us from colonial history and what we want remembered about us in the future. Featured *Humanities to Go* programs also explore US@250 themes ranging from *African American Soldiers and Sailors of New Hampshire During the American Revolution* to *How the Constitution Helps Us to Disagree*.

I'm proud that NHH will still be here for these discussions, and hope you will join us to explore the impact of the Declaration of Independence, examine how the Constitution has shaped our communities, and debate who we want to be as a community, state, and nation for the NEXT 250 years.



Michael Haley Goldman, Executive Director
mhaleygoldman@nhhumanities.org



Michael Haley Goldman, Executive Director

Join our US@250: Big Watch!

The Big Watch is a statewide series of community-driven programs that will bring Granite Staters together to watch, discuss, and reflect on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and American Revolution, based on Ken Burns' new film, *The American Revolution*.

Watch our news for details about the programs and events that will take place during the spring and summer of 2026. Visit nhhumanities.org/Big-Watch for details. *This program is a collaboration with NH Public Broadcasting.*





Neighbors gathered at the Arlington Street Community Center in Nashua for one of six Community Conversations (Photos: Kate Brindley Photography)

“Drawing Communities Together”

Conversations to Spark Change Across New Hampshire

On a cool spring evening in Nashua, neighbors gathered in the Arlington Street Community Center. Some had lived in the city their whole lives; others were new arrivals. At first, people were hesitant. But as the conversation unfolded, laughter and stories filled the room. One participant summed it up simply: “This conversation really got people talking together. I was surprised with the connections I had with others that I hadn’t expected until we talked.”

That idea was at the heart of *Community Conversations*, a new partnership between New Hampshire Humanities (NHH) and the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA). The effort grew out of the \$20M Community Center Investment Program, which supported 27 community centers statewide. Wanting to understand the impact of these spaces,

CDFA turned to NHH to help spark local dialogue. This spring, six communities – Whitefield, North Conway, Harrisville, Holderness, Nashua, and Portsmouth – hosted conversations about belonging, and how community centers can strengthen connection.

To help shape and capture the dialogue, New Hampshire Humanities-trained facilitators Kiki Berk, Mohamed Defaa, Damien Costello, Courtney Marshall, Maria Sanders, and Josh Tepley led groups in each location.

A Shared Question: What Is Community?

Each gathering began with a simple yet profound question: What does community mean to you?

At each event, the answers tumbled out quickly: “United neighbors.” “A feeling of comfort.” “Friendship and relationships.” Someone else reflected, “Sometimes you expect the community to give to you, but you might have to give to the community first.”

Another voice reminded the group of a familiar proverb: “A child is raised by community.” Others spoke of the importance of presence: “Go to community events—get outside your comfort zone. Show up, be a familiar face, recognize others.”

And sometimes, it was the smallest gestures that mattered most: “Just saying hi to a neighbor could make their day.”

(continued)



Artwork by Marek Bennett
www.MarekBennett.com



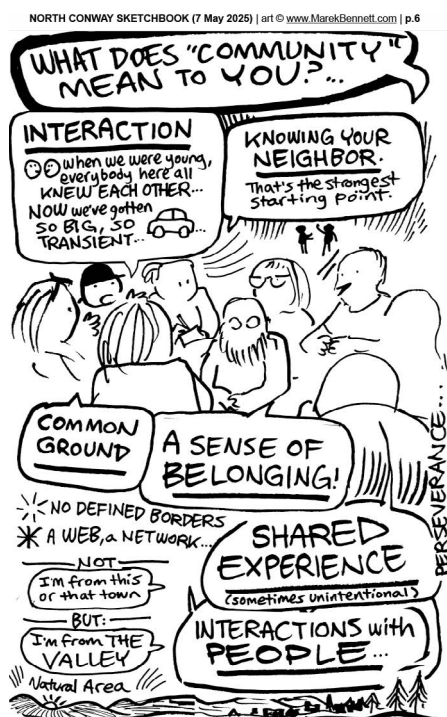


In Whitefield, residents described seeing familiar faces on the town common, the comfort of small-town traditions, and the hope that newcomers would feel welcome to take part.

Capturing Stories in Real Time

A special partnership with artist and educator Marek Bennett brought the events to life. Using his “Drawing Communities Together” method, Bennett sketched the conversations as they unfolded, visually recording the hopes, challenges, and questions voiced by participants. His drawings show neighbors leaning in, children playing, and big ideas distilled into simple images: “Celebrate what the community celebrates.” His illustrated booklets now serve as living community documents, preserving the spirit of each gathering.

(www.marekbennett.com/community-conversations-booklets)



Building Resilience & Looking Ahead

Participants across the six towns spoke openly about challenges too – housing costs, access to childcare, safe sidewalks, mental health, and the need for more welcoming spaces. Yet what resonated most was the recognition that resilience grows when people come together.

One participant put it bluntly: “We are in such a fast-paced life that we don’t even have time to say hi to our neighbors. We need to slow down and see if anyone needs help.”

Mohamed Defaa, who helped lead discussions in four of the locations, reflected on his experience. “Participating in the *Community Conversations* project was enriching and transformative. As a facilitator, I was reminded of the power of listening – not just to respond but to understand. This affirmed my belief that dialogue is a form of civic action, especially when it centers local voices and lived experiences,” he shared.

“It reinforced my commitment to creating spaces where differences are embraced as strengths and communities can reflect on who they are and who they want to become.”



In a time when communities are navigating rapid change, the *Community Conversations* project reminds us that community is not something we inherit – it’s something we create and renew each time neighbors gather, listen, and imagine a future together, helping build stronger and more resilient communities. Or, as one participant shared, “We can bring the community together. When you come together, you can learn a lot.” 🌈



Ripple effects...

Each host site received funding to develop a follow-up project to continue and deepen engagement. The projects included:

HARRISVILLE: Historic Harrisville, Inc. hosted a community dinner to spark meaningful conversations across social groups, with guests encouraged to engage with new neighbors.

WHITEFIELD: Working with local partners, the Public Library expanded its Community Day into a block party. Music, art, and a community fair strengthened ties across the town.

NASHUA: The Arlington Street Community Center collaborated with the Mayor’s office to host listening sessions with city officials, creating opportunities for residents to voice concerns and learn about resources.

NORTH CONWAY: The Gibson Center for Senior Services worked with partners to address the affordable housing crisis through a facilitated “housemate matching event” to help connect people to available housing opportunities.

HOLDERNESS: The Squam Lakes Association created a community arboretum, with volunteers planting, labeling, and caring for trees and shrubs that create both a gathering space and an educational resource.

PORTSMOUTH: The Portsmouth Community Complex piloted multi-generational programs, from video game nights to gingerbread-making workshops, to foster intergenerational bonds and combat social isolation.

www.nhcdfa.org



Calendar

NEW HAMPSHIRE HUMANITIES
WINTER 2025 EVENTS

12/22 | PEMBROKE | 7:00 PM

**Norman Rockwell: Inclusion, Exclusion
& Representing America**

Presented by Jane Oneail

Pembroke Town Library, 313 Pembroke Street

Contact: Ryan O'Hora, 603-485-7851

new

1/15 | PEMBROKE | 7:00 PM

**Unpacking the Declaration of
Independence: What It Meant Then and Now**

Presented by David Alcox

Pembroke Town Library, 313 Pembroke Street

Contact: Ryan O'Hora, 603-485-7851

new

1/24 | DUBLIN | 1:00 PM

Moved and Seconded: Town Meeting in NH

Presented by Rebecca Rule

Dublin Public Library, 1114 Main Street

Contact: Karen Madigan, 603-563-8658

1/3 | PLYMOUTH | 10:30 AM

**The Capital Crime of Witchcraft:
What the Primary Sources Tell Us**

Presented by Margo Burns

Pease Public Library, 1 Russell Street

Contact: cathleen.hargreaves@yahoo.com

1/19 | CONCORD | 2:00 PM

A Visit with Abraham Lincoln

Presented by Stephen Wood

Havenwood, 33 Christian Avenue

Contact: spollock@hhiinfo.org

1/19 | ETNA | 6:00 PM

Comics in World History and Cultures

Presented by Marek Bennett

Trumbull Hall, 195 Etna Road

Contact: etna.library@hanovernh.org

1/6 | EXETER | 7:00 PM

Redcoats & Rebels: NH & the American Revolution

Presented by Mary Adams

Exeter Town Hall, 9 Front Street

Contact: Barbara Rimkunas, 603-778-2335



1/8 | ATKINSON | 6:00 PM

Ethical Aspects of Converging Technologies

Presented by Herman Tavani

Kimball Library, 5 Academy Avenue

Contact: staff@kimballlibrary.com

1/11 | WESTMORELAND | 4:00 PM

Benedict Arnold, Patriot (and Traitor)

Presented by George Morrison

Westmoreland Town Hall, 780 Route 63

Contact: patti.seymour@gmail.com

1/14 | LINCOLN | 6:00 PM

History and Mystery: A Genealogy Starter Guide

Presented by Erin Moulton

Lincoln Public Library, 22 Church Street

Contact: Carol Riley, 603-745-8159

1/20 | MARLBOROUGH | 6:30 PM

Lafayette and the Farewell Tour:

Odyssey of an American Idol

Presented by Alan Hoffman

Frost Free Library, 28 Jaffrey Road

Contact: hbarker@frostfree.org

1/21 | GREENVILLE | 6:30 PM

Banjos, Bones, and Ballads

Presented by Jeff Warner

Chamberlin Free Public Library, 46 Main St.

Contact: cfpl_green@hotmail.com

1/22 | MEREDITH | 6:30 PM

**Brewing in New
Hampshire: An Informal
History of Beer
in the Granite State**

Presented by

Glenn Knoblock

Meredith Public Library

91 Main Street

Contact: erin@
meredithlibrary.org



Laura Loveday's photo, licensed as CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

1/24 | CHESTERFIELD | 12:00 PM

**Movie Mavericks: Filmmakers Who Challenge
the Hollywood System**

Presented by Patrick Anderson

Chesterfield Public Library, 524 Route 63

Contact: frontdesk@chesterfieldlibrary.org

1/29 | ATKINSON | 6:00 PM

12,000 Years Ago in the Granite State

Presented by Patrick Anderson

Kimball Library, 5 Academy Avenue

Contact: Robert Gustafson, 603-553-0531

2/18 | PORTSMOUTH | 1:00 PM

A Visit with Abraham Lincoln

Presented by Stephen Wood

Portsmouth Sr. Activity Center, 125 Cottage St.

Contact: Nicole Finitsis, 603-610-4433

As New Hampshire winter weather becomes unpredictable, please check our
online calendar at www.nhhumanities.org/programs/upcoming for updates
and cancellations before heading out!





COMING IN 2026:

Spark! Places of Innovation Traveling Exhibit

Discover the ingenuity and tenacity that define rural America when the Smithsonian's *Spark! Places of Innovation* traveling exhibit arrives in New England. This dynamic exhibit highlights more than 30 rural communities nationwide where everyday people turned local challenges into creative, lasting solutions—revitalizing neighborhoods, reimagining business districts, and cultivating vibrant cultural destinations. Like last year's *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, the exhibit comes through the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street program, in partnership with New Hampshire Humanities, Vermont Humanities, and local hosts, visiting six towns from June 2026 – March 2027.

Local hosts partners will expand the exhibit with community-driven programs in the humanities, sciences, and arts—inviting conversation, reflection, and inspiration. Visitors of all ages will be asked to consider how innovation has shaped their own towns and how *they* might help spark the next big idea.

Smithsonian

NEW HAMPSHIRE
humanities

VERMONT
HUMANITIES

TOUR SCHEDULE

Rockingham Memorial Library, Bellows Falls, VT – June 2026

Barnet Public Library, Barnet, VT – July 2026

Swanton Public Library, Swanton, VT – September 2026

Berlin Historical Society, Berlin, NH – November 2026

Mariposa Museum, Peterborough, NH – January 2027

Canaan Historical Society, Canaan, NH – February 2027

Stay tuned for details! Visit nhhumanities.org/moms-spark-cfp

At a Rural Crossroads: Smithsonian Exhibit Sparks Local Reflection

By Katie Umans, Assistant Director at the UNH Center for the Humanities and a member of the New Hampshire Humanities Board of Directors

When the Smithsonian's *Crossroads: Change in Rural America* exhibit arrived at the Museum of the White Mountains at Plymouth State University, it looked a little like a band was rolling in for a rock concert, says Meghan Doherty, outgoing director of the museum—sixteen black cases of various shapes and sizes on wheels, complete with a 40-pg. installation manual.

But instead of drums and amps, what emerged from the cases were intricate frames and panels from the Smithsonian Institution, which developed their Museum on Main Street program to provide small-town America access to their research through traveling, ready-to-install exhibitions. The Museum of the White Mountains was selected this past year by New Hampshire Humanities as one of three host sites in the state for the Smithsonian's 2025 *Crossroads* exhibit, exploring what happened when America's rural population began rapidly declining.



Indian Head Cottage Incense Burner, painted wood, c. 1930, on loan from the Robert S. Chase and Richard M. Candee Trust

Read more on our "What's the Big Idea?" blog: nhhumanities.org/bigidea

WHAT'S THE
BIG IDEA?



Thank you, Annual Partners

We are grateful for the support of our partners who help sustain the work of New Hampshire Humanities by providing year-round support:



SILVER PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Sarah Chaffee, Director of Development, at schaffee@nhhumanities.org or (603) 224-4071, ext. 113.



It's not too early to plan!



If you are over 70 ½ years old, you can turn your required IRA distribution into a charitable gift, tax free! By directing up to \$100,000 from your IRA straight to New Hampshire Humanities, your donation won't count as taxable income, potentially lowering your tax bill while supporting a cause you care about.

It's a smart move – and a generous one. A true win-win!

Contact development@nhhumanities.org to learn more.



Herb and Emily Archer at Acadia National Park in Maine

“Sustaining the Seedbank”

Emily Archer’s enduring commitment to the humanities

Emily Archer’s journey with New Hampshire Humanities began with a leap of faith and a desire to connect. Born in Atlanta, Georgia, she and her husband Herbert moved to New Hampshire in 1990. From the moment she arrived, Emily sought meaningful ways to engage with her new community – and she soon found her calling.

With a background in higher education, Emily began working with New Hampshire Humanities in 1993, contributing her talents as a facilitator and evaluator across a wide range of programs. “I have had the privilege of being a part of many initiatives since 1993,” she shared, “including *Book Bag Discussions*, *Fences & Neighbors*, *From Troy to Baghdad: A Reflection on Dialogues of War*, and most recently, *Connections* adult literacy, working with adult learners and immigrants.”

Her commitment to the mission runs deep. “I took

great heart in hearing Michael Haley Goldman’s refrain at the Annual Celebration this fall – ‘we are still here.’ New Hampshire Humanities is my bone marrow joy and gives me such professional satisfaction,” Emily continued. “We became sustaining monthly donors years ago because we understand how vital it is to provide a steady stream of support. New Hampshire Humanities is a seed bank for culture and community and we must keep resources flowing to this seed bank. My husband, Herbert, who shares my passion said it best: **‘New Hampshire Humanities has a proven track record of enabling conversations that are meaningful and consequential.’**”

You, too, can keep the “resources flowing to the seedbank” by becoming a monthly donor at nhhumanities.org/give or by calling (603) 224-4071. Your support ensures conversations, curiosity, and connections thrive in New Hampshire.

“We became sustaining monthly donors years ago because we understand how vital it is to provide a steady stream of support. New Hampshire Humanities is a seed bank for culture and community and we must keep resources flowing to this seed bank.”

~ Emily Archer, NHH Sustaining Donor



NEW HAMPSHIRE
humanities

117 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301-0375
Phone: 603-224-4071
www.nhhumanities.org



NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEW HAMPSHIRE
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL

"For last year's
words belong
to last year's
language. And
next year's
words await
another voice."

~ T.S. Eliot

NOW MORE
THAN EVER

Arts & Culture Matter



NH PBS
STREAM

For over 50 years, New Hampshire Humanities has been
connecting **people** and **ideas** by funding and supporting
statewide programs that inspire **curiosity**, foster civil
dialogue and explore **big questions!**



FEED YOUR MIND &
YOUR COMMUNITY

ONE GIFT, DOUBLE THE IMPACT!

nhpr

New Hampshire
**FOOD
BANK**
A Program of Catholic Charities NH

MAKE YOUR GIFT AT NHPR.ORG/FOODBANK