

Maine Policy Review

Volume 24
Issue 1 *Humanities and Policy*

2015

Public Humanities: Section Introduction

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Recommended Citation

"Public Humanities: Section Introduction." *Maine Policy Review* 24.1 (2015) : 42 -42,
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mpr/vol24/iss1/15>.

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Public Humanities

For a relatively small, rural, and poor state, Maine has a rich array of public humanities resources. This section focuses on the public humanities and highlights many such programs in Maine in which people come together for shared experience. The Maine Humanities Council (MHC), a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress Center for the Book, is at the forefront of public humanities programming in the state, as Hayden Anderson describes in the first article, offering programs such as New Books, New Readers, Literature & Medicine, and the Veterans Book Group. Stephen Podgajny discusses the role public libraries play in the public humanities as centers for programs and as repositories of texts and other resources. Bernard Fishman fills the reader in on the strange persistence of the Maine State Museum, the only state museum in New England supported in large part by state appropriations. Kerrill O’Neill and Nate Rudy present for the reader Waterville’s innovative arts and humanities partnership—Waterville Creates!—which was created to highlight the artistic, creative, and cultural energies that enhance and strengthen the city. In the final article of the section, David Richards tells the story of his involvement with MHC’s New Books, New Readers and Let’s Talk About It programs and a writing program for inmates at the Somerset County Jail and the important role the programs have played in the lives of the participants. 🐟