WELCOME TO THE 11TH YEAR OF READING ACROSS RHODE ISLAND!

Reading Across Rhode Island, the statewide community read, kicks off its 11th year with the 2013 title, The Beauty of Humanity Movement by Camilla Gibb. Reading Across Rhode Island is a project of the Rhode Island Center for the Book, made possible through a vibrant collaboration of librarians, teachers, book group leaders and readers from across the State.

The 2013 program runs from January to May with readers in Rhode Island classrooms, libraries, and bookstores joining discussions and participating in events such as lectures, art exhibits, poetry readings and dramatic interpretations focused on this year’s selection.

Robin Kall, host of the popular radio show Reading With Robin on WHJJ 920 AM and Chanravy Proeung, Executive Director of prYSM (Providence Youth Student Movement) serve as the program’s Honorary Chairs.

This booklet presents resources the Reading Across Rhode Island committee has gathered to enrich and expand this reading.

www.ribook.org

THANK YOU!

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Rhode Island Center for the Book is a statewide organization devoted to promoting personal and community enrichment by celebrating the art and heritage of reading, writing, making, and sharing books. Founded in 2003, Center for the Book is an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Join a discussion group at your community public library, school or bookshop!

Kick-Off Event
January 26, 2-4pm
Newman Congregational Church
Rumford, RI
Professor Theodore Gatchel
“Language, Culture and History: Understanding Mr. Hung’s Vietnam”

March 18, 7pm
Providence Public Library
Providence, RI
Ken MacLean, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of International Development and Social Change: “Vietnamese Resistance Movements in the 1950’s and Current Day Vietnam.”

April 8, 7pm
Weaver Library
East Providence, RI
Martha Collins will discuss Vietnamese literature and read some of her translations of Vietnamese poems. She will offer brief comments on the literary history of Vietnam, but her main focus will be on contemporary poetry, and the challenges and rewards of translation. Collins has individually published six volumes of poetry, for which she has won numerous awards, and two volumes of co-translated Vietnamese poetry; a third volume of her co-translations will be published this year. Formerly Pauline Delaney Professor of Creative Writing at Oberlin College, she is now an editor for FIELD magazine and the Oberlin College Press, and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her website is http://www.marthacollinspoet.com

May 3, 10am
Statewide student videoconference with Camilla Gibb

May 4, 9am
11th Annual May Breakfast with Camilla Gibb
Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, Cranston, RI
Tickets available after February 25th

ABOUT THE BOOK

By Maxine Williams, Reading Across RI Committee Member

The Beauty of Humanity Movement gives a glimpse of the history and culture of the Vietnamese people by telling the story of several individuals. We meet Tu, a young man working as a tour guide in Hanoi in present-day Vietnam; Maggie, who was born in Vietnam but came to the U.S. as a young child with her mother and has returned to her native country to uncover the fate of her father, an artist and political dissident; and Hung, a highly skilled culinary expert who produces tasty fare for his many customers in times of great scarcity as well as increasing comfort.

The book moves skillfully between the 1950s, when the Communist regime was becoming increasingly more oppressive and Hung provided space in his building for political liberals, to the turbulent 1970s Vietnam War era, to the current day, when food is more plentiful but questions of how to preserve Vietnamese culture and art remain complicated with people struggling to make peace with their past.

The children, men and women of different ages are believably drawn and appealing. Issues of loyalty to family and tradition emerge along with a message of hopefulness that understanding and forgiveness can arise even in the face of great difficulty.

The book also helps the reader look at some historical events from the Vietnamese perspective. For example, what we refer to as the Vietnam war is conversely called the American war.

In reviewing The Beauty of Humanity Movement, another member of the RARI committee wrote, “This is a novel filled with longing: Hung’s longing for the woman who lives in the shack almost adjoining his own, the longing of Maggie for information about her father…the longing of Hung’s soup fans who look forward to inhaling the aroma of his broth every morning and warming their bellies.” I agree with this person completely, and believe that this longing is one of the most moving aspects of the book.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Camilla Gibb is the author of four novels: Mouthing the Words, The Petty Details of So-and-So's Life, Sweetness in the Belly and The Beauty of Humanity Movement.

She was the winner of the Trillium Book Award in 2006, a Scotiabank Giller Prize short list nominee in 2005, winner of the City of Toronto Book Award in 2000 and the recipient of the CBC Canadian Literary Award for short fiction in 2001. Her books have been published in 18 countries and translated into 14 languages and she was named by the jury of the prestigious Orange Prize as one of 21 writers to watch in the new century.

Camilla was born in London, England, and grew up in Toronto. She has a B.A. in anthropology and Middle Eastern studies from the University of Toronto, completed her Ph.D. in social anthropology at Oxford University in 1997, and spent two years at the University of Toronto as a post-doctoral research fellow before becoming a full-time writer.

Camilla has been writer-in-residence at the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta. She is currently an adjunct faculty member of the graduate creative writing programs at the University of Guelph-Humber and the University of Toronto, and is the Barker Fairley Distinguished Visitor at the University of Toronto this fall. She is at work on a memoir and a new novel.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

TOPICS FOR FURTHER STUDY OR RESEARCH

1. Vietnam has long been the object of colonization and intrusion by China, Japan, France and Russia from 221 B.C. to the present. What influences did each of these nations have upon the Viet people and how do we see evidence of their respective efforts even today? Include such examples as language, arts, cuisine religion, etc.

2. Identify the following:
   a) The 17th Parallel
   b) Ho Chi Minh
   c) Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
   d) The Tet Festival

3. A map of Vietnam and its proximity to other countries help to shed light on invaders’ interest in the country. What might some of them be?

4. The poet Phan Khoi appears as a minor character in the book. Is his role in the novel similar to his in the movement? Be sure to include a biographical sketch of the man to give some insight into his actual persona.

5. Write a commentary about what can be learned about Vietnam by viewing the films Three Seasons or The Quiet American. You may also listen to the CD’s of Gabriel Yared’s soundtrack of The Lover and/or Blue Zone. Pham Duo Thanh is an earlier musician with CD’s Fishing and The Moving Cloud, which show an older Vietnam.

We encourage teachers to read The Beauty of Humanity Movement before assigning it for their students to determine the appropriateness of the content for their specific students. There are lists of similarly themed books for children and youth in our Resource Guide, which may be substituted if The Beauty of Humanity Movement is not appropriate for the classroom level.
WRITING AND/OR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you consider the main plot of the book? What then is the sub-plot?
2. How does the Vietnamese family differ from the American family? Cite examples from the book and your study of the culture.
3. The arts, particularly music and painting, play a major role in the novel. How is this depicted through both Phuong and Dao?
4. What was the relationship between Dao and Hu’ng before Dao was taken away?
5. Do a character analysis of Hu’ng using specific examples from the text to illustrate your points.
6. What are the mainstays of Vietnamese cuisine? How are the influences of Indian, French and Japanese cooking apparent in the country’s foodstuffs?
7. What is pho? What are its varieties?
8. What are the cultural interests of the Vietnamese? What is the chief religion?
9. What languages are spoken in the country today?
10. What is the country’s political status at present?

BOOKS ON RELATED THEMES

FOR ADULTS

NONFICTION

*The History of Vietnam* by Justin J. Corfield
*Tours of Vietnam: War, Travel Guides, and Memory* by Scott Laderman
*Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America’s Vietnam* by Fredrik Logevall
*Vietnam: An Illustrated History* by L. Shelton Woods
*Perfect Spy: The Incredible Double Life of Pham Xuan An, Time Magazine Reporter and Vietnamese Communist Agent* by Larry Berman
*Black Virgin Mountain: A Return to Vietnam* by Larry Heinemann
*Vietnam, Now: A Reporter Returns* by David Lamb
*Argument Without End: In Search of Answers to the Vietnam Tragedy* by Robert S. McNamara
*Strange Ground: Americans in Vietnam, 1945-1975, an Oral History* by Harry Maurer
*River of Time* by Jon Swain

FICTION

*The Time In Between: A Novel* by David Bergen
*Up Country* by Nelson DeMille
*A Dangerous Friend* by Ward S. Just
*The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien
*Don’t Mean Nothing: Short Stories of Vietnam* by Susan O’Neill
*Girl by the Road at Night: A novel of Vietnam* by David Rabe
*The Lotus Eaters* by Tatjana Soli
*What We All Long For* by Dionne Brand
*Monkey Bridge* by Lan Cao
*Quiet as They Come* by Angie Chau
*Fake House: Stories and Love Like Hate: A Novel* by Linh Dinh
*Night, Again: Contemporary Fiction From Vietnam* edited by Linh Dinh
*Daughters of the River Huong: Stories of a Vietnamese Royal Concubine and Her Descendants* by Nicole Nguyễn Duong
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
(continued)

POETRY
An Anthology of Vietnamese Poems: From the eleventh through the twentieth centuries
Spring Essence: The Poetry of Hồ Xuân Hương
Song of the Cicadas by Mông-Lan
A Thousand Years of Vietnamese Poetry by Nguyên Bích Nguyên
Poems From Captured Documents selected and translated from the Vietnamese by Thanh T. Nguyên & Bruce Weigl

FOOD
Vietnamese Cooking by Ghillie Basan
Wild, Wild East: Recipes & stories from Vietnam by Bobby Chinn
Communion: A culinary journey through Vietnam by Kim Fay
Koto: A culinary journey through Vietnam by Tracey Lister

MEMOIRS & BIOGRAPHIES
In the Jaws of History by Diem Bui
The Sacred Willow: Four generations in the life of a Vietnamese family by Duong Van Mai Elliott
Where the Ashes Are: The odyssey of a Vietnamese family by Qui Thúc Nguyên
The Eaves of Heaven: A life in three wars by Andrew X. Pham
Last Airlift: A Vietnamese orphan’s rescue from war by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch
The Lost Years: My 1,632 days in Vietnamese reeducation camps by Tri Vu Tran
Ao Dai: My war, my country, my Vietnam by Phuong Xuan

FICTION
All the Broken Pieces: A novel in verse by Ann E. Burg
Song of the Buffalo Boy by Sherry Garland
Shadow of the Dragon by Sherry Garland
Cracker: The best dog in Vietnam by Cynthia Kadohata
A Million Shades of Gray by Cynthia Kadohata
Inside Out & Back Again by Thanhha Lai
Zazoo by Richard Mosher
Sing for Your Father, Su Phan by Stella Pevsner & Fay Tang
Goodbye, Vietnam by Gloria Whelan

NONFICTION
Vietnamese Americans by Susan Auerbach
Vietnam: Land of many dragons by Hal Buell
American Women of the Vietnam War by Amanda Ferguson
Vietnam & Countries of the Mekong by Larry Henderson
The Land I Lost: The adventures of a boy in Vietnam by Quang Nhuong Huynh
Vietnamerica: A family’s journey (graphic novel) by GB Tran
Escape from Saigon: How a Vietnam War orphan became an American boy by Andrea Warren
Three Faces of Vietnam by Richard L. Wormser

BIOGRAPHY
Ho Chi Minh: legend of Hanoi by Jules Archer
Nominate the Next
Reading Across Rhode Island Book!

Deadline: May 15, 2013

The general criteria for book selection includes:

- A good story with a universal theme
- Appealing to a wide range of readers, from age 14 and up
- Accessible in language and content
- Available in different formats (i.e., paperback, audio, Braille)
- Written by an author who is available to visit and speak with Rhode Islanders about the book
- Over time, the titles selected should reflect diversity in content, culture and genre

Title & Author:

Or email your book nomination to kate@ribook.org.

The Beauty of Humanity Movement
By Camilla Gibb

2013
Resource Guide

Rhode Island Center for the Book
At Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

www.ribook.org