If you visit Charlottesville on any given Saturday and wander into those low brick buildings that once were the Frank Ix and Sons textile factory, you may catch a glimpse of something easily confused with a mirage.

At the end of a dim corridor that still harkens to the site’s industrial past, you will see swaying bamboo leaves bathed in sunlight. Next to them, a glassed-in studio suffused by the same generous glow, now perhaps beginning to hum with the morning sounds of the printers and artists who arrive with book chat, news from their various provinces, and, as always, long rolls of paper.

They are warming up machines and testing inks that were the print technology of half a century ago—and not that far from Gutenberg—achieving results impossible to replicate with contemporary commercial methods and today’s desktop computers. This is the Virginia Arts of the Book Center, a working studio and print shop where community members share knowledge of printmaking and book arts. As a program of the VFH Center for the Book, the VABC promotes the values of the humanities through appreciation of visual and verbal literacy, creativity, and the fostering of traditional and contemporary book arts skills.

The organization traces back to the early 1990s, when Virginia Festival of the Book co-founder Cal Otto, Charlottesville artist and designer Josef Beery, and Rare Book School founder Terry Belanger rescued a Vandercook press, type cabinets, and related equipment being discarded as surplus by the University of Virginia. As printing technology, cold type was outmoded and slow. At the same time, Beery, Otto, and Belanger knew that this machinery was still quite valuable to printers.

Continued on page 2
Virginia Arts of the Book Center: Vision of a Printing Community

Continued from cover

These rescue stories are familiar to printers and not always successful. The scene is repeated across the country as old equipment is being forced even from the unused corners of a print shop or art studio to the scrapyards. While access to the equipment grew scarcer, typecases were most visible as display mechanisms for thimble collections at yard sales, and those few with the knowledge of what was yet possible sought the help of institutions to preserve and protect this vital link to printing tradition.

“Some studio space became open at the McGuffey Art Center so the two of us [Otto and he] decided to apply as joint artists with the intention of creating a public access letterpress studio,” recalls Beery of this time. “The idea was to create a center where artists and craftspeople could have access to letterpress equipment for little cost.” In 1995, the VFH became involved in helping the fledgling organization stay alive, eventually incorporating the VABC under the Foundation’s auspices.

The VABC survived for years underground, quite literally. In a room about the size of half a school bus, the bulky equipment gave a small room for classes. Members of the UVA faculty including renowned book and print artists Johann Drucker and Dean Dass began to consult and coordinate programs and resources. During this time the VABC’s first printer in residence, Debra Fabrizzi, came aboard.

The Community Grows

What began to distinguish the VABC in the next phase of development was the diverse core of artist/volunteers. This core, including illustrator Frank Riccio, poets Karen Kevorkian, Barbara Heritage and Angie Hogan, artist John Bylander, designer/book artist Kristin Adolfson, joined with the board to create a working model for more public access to the equipment. As organized classes, a membership structure, and group projects began to emerge, a VFH-liaison appeared to facilitate programming. When the VABC would require a new home, that home was found in the IX Project’s diverse mixed-use community with more generous support from the IX founders.

The new studio—a glassy and open housing for its many weighty, antique machines—opened in 2004 and is now an oasis for aspiring artists and craftspeople keeping alive this spirit. The VABC has attracted about two dozen members who support the space with donation and volunteer time: authors, photographers, rare book enthusiasts, retired printers, and an increasing number with MFAs in book arts and writing. Students come from all corners of the Commonwealth to attend classes in what has become the most accessible public printing studio in the state. And they are welcomed.

“The VABC has created a community of support and creativity that I feel are invaluable to the artist who is not part of an institutional program,” says Adolfson, who oversees the website and class schedule that appears online three times a year. She helped plan and instruct the first weekend advanced seminars in the book arts with Johanna Drucker and Lindsey Mears (“Hands-On and Critical Concepts in Letterpress Artists’ Books”). A week later, VFH-liaison Kevin McFadden, Karen Kevorkian, and Bonnie Bernstein held “Printing for Poets: Creating a Broadside.”

Poet Sarah Knorr says finding VFH programs is “like finding ‘my tribe.’” She has participated in many VFH book programs—Sacred Bearings, Tough Times Companion, and the Virginia Festival of the Book—but the VABC holds a special place: “Just to have a seat in the room where so many deeply informed, visionary and generous minds are dancing levitates me. When the more experienced members reach out to teach beginners like me, it connects us all to the long legacy of those who have invented ways to literally ‘get the word out’ to others.”
More than Words

Words, like printing organizations, can be well hidden, but they are nearly impossible to erase. The language of lead type—leading, kerning, ligature—is still very much alive as the terminology of digital typography. And many expressions in the visual arts—lithography, etching, woodblock printing—are more understandable through experience than memory. Part of the VABC philosophy is that when students work with the physical equipment and processes which created these terms, the language becomes palpable, opening the learner to an experience and the history of printing that a traditional classroom simply cannot replicate.

The foresight of the VABC founders seems justified in light of the resurgence of excitement and expanded cultural awareness surrounding print culture. Witness the documentary films Helvetica (2007), Typeface (2008), and Proceed and Be Bold! (2008) that highlight the impact of fonts on our culture and the powerful stories of the designers and printers who still engage this process.

The unspoken links between word and image became news as the 2008 presidential campaigns chose their own fonts, fonts seen on every bumper sticker and poster for the visual impression they convey. John McCain’s Optima (a sans-serif face with bold strokes, as seen on the Vietnam War Memorial) went up against Barack Obama’s Gotham (a simple, open, and uncluttered face). You may also have noticed also the “retro” wood-style font that has become the chosen emblem for CNN presidential election coverage.

Strolling through the VABC, words and letters cease to be forms of abstraction, calling out to us in tall letters on the many posters and broadsides. LEAD IS NOT DEAD, reads one of the vigilant among them. This is a Printing Office, another intones, Crossroads of Civilization. Refuge of All the Arts. Words are, as we like to say at the VFH, the building blocks of the humanities—and at the VABC they are blocks you can put in your hands.

Instructor Garrett Queen conducts a lesson on the VABC’s century-old Chandler & Price, a mechanical pedal-driven press still in superb working order.

“Just to have a seat in the room where so many deeply informed, visionary and generous minds are dancing levitates me. When the more experienced members reach out to teach beginners like me, it connects us all to the long legacy of those who have invented ways to literally ‘get the word out’ to others.” — SARAH KNORR

November 14
The Annual Raucous Auction
5:30 PM – 8 PM
(auctions at 6 PM & 7 PM)
Virginia Arts of the Book Center
977 Second Street SE
(The IX Project)

Refreshments served
Admission Free, $5 donation recommended

During this evening of fun and entertainment, meet the students, artists, and friends of the VABC and the work they create during the year. Up for auction: A week in an apartment in Paris, books and prints, framed artwork, a class at the Rare Book School, portfolio collections of VABC group projects (including this year’s work on Frankenstein). We also salute in memoriam our fellow printer and first professional member, John McCarthy.

Go online for more details and a list of items:
VirginiaBookArts.org

Sarah Knorr uses a manual proofing press during a weeklong summer seminar.

Instructor Garrett Queen conducts a lesson on the VABC’s century-old Chandler & Price, a mechanical pedal-driven press still in superb working order.

Book artist Johanna Drucker entertains as the Raucous Auctioneer.
It’s a Tuesday morning in VFH’s media suite, and producers of BackStory with the American History Guys are huddled around a phone for a conference call with the show’s hosts. Under discussion is an upcoming episode of the new radio show about the history of America’s war veterans, set for broadcast the week of Veterans’ Day.

The History Guys are constellated thousands of miles apart—Peter Onuf in Oxford, Ed Ayers in Richmond, and Brian Balogh here in Charlottesville—but they come together, as usual, in harmony as they toss out their ideas for the show. Ayers (BackStory’s 19th Century Guy) suggests an interview with a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Balogh (20th Century Guy) mentions the G.I. Bill, and its discriminatory application to African-American vets after WWII. Onuf (18th Century Guy) wonders about the special status veterans get when they run for office, and the Guys mull the names of Revolutionary War scholars who might join them to discuss how George Washington ushered in a new way of thinking about vets.

Key questions emerge: Do we honor veterans of popular wars more than we honor soldiers returning from unpopular ones? Do vets have special credibility as critics of wars or as political office-holders? How have the challenges of coming home changed over time? Producers take it all in, feverishly scribbling notes on their yellow pads.

The brainstorming session has an air of inception about it, but the life of this particular episode began much earlier, with a comment on BackStory’s website—How about something on veterans? From the beginning, an interactive and collaborative web strategy has been central to BackStory’s mission. Not only are visitors to the website encouraged to suggest future show topics and share their thoughts on shows already aired; they are actively encouraged to weigh in on shows still in production. Comments are often integrated into the show production, and “commenters” are frequently invited to join the History Guys on the air.

Unlike history programs presided over by experts who give an official account of the past from “on high,” BackStory approaches history as a moving target, a work-in-progress that is constantly being re-written by successive generations of scholars. Accordingly, BackStory sets out not simply to deliver historical findings, but to embody historical method. “Knowledge may be the car we’re driving,” says BackStory producer.
Tony Field, “but questions are its real engine.”

BackStory’s own backstory goes back to August 2005, when VHF’s Director of Media Programs and BackStory’s Executive Producer Andrew Wyndham hatched the idea of bringing specialists and non-academics together in a conversation about America’s past. Wyndham approached Onuf and Ayers, then the Dean of UVA’s College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. They enthusiastically signed onto the project, with one condition: they needed a 20th-century expert to fill in the holes of their collective expertise. And they knew just the guy.

Over the course of the next three years, Wyndham oversaw an extensive development and pilot phase that included a series of focus groups with listeners and public radio program directors throughout the country. In early 2008, he hired Field, a public radio producer from New York City with years of experience on successful national programs including NPR’s On the Media and Radio Lab, to lead the project. He also brought on board Associate Producer Rachel Quimby, who had gotten her start in radio as an undergraduate several years earlier at WKCR in New York, where she created Grey Matters, a program on psychology-related themes. Assistant Producer Catherine Moore, a veteran of historical archives, libraries, and humanities organizations, joined the team a few months later after completing an MFA in creative writing. Based on feedback from the development phase, the team decided that the best approach for the show would be to try and make the study of history relevant by connecting it to current events. Each week, the History Guys would tear a topic from the headlines, and spend an hour reflecting on that topic’s historical roots. BackStory premiered on Virginia stations in June of this year. Eleven episodes were produced for the show’s first season, and included shows on timely topics such as “Controversial Wars,” “Environmental Crisis,” “Family Values,” and “Punishment in America.” Shows have featured interviews with prominent scholars from around the nation, as well as what the production team refers to as “practitioners” — non-academics whose personal or professional lives qualify them to share their own stories about a given week’s topic. (In the “punishment” show, for example, Balogh discussed racial disparities in incarceration rates with Washington D.C. Corrections Director Devon Brown, and conducted a roadside interview with members of the Charlottesville-Albermarle Jail work crew.) But the true grounding elements of each show are its call-in segments, in which curious listeners around the country join the Guys with their questions and stories.

In addition to having complementary areas of expertise, the Guys also represent different approaches to the study of history. Balogh kicks off each week’s discussion in the here-and-now, framing questions and acting as the show’s main pivot between the present and the past. Onuf comes at current events with an intellectual historian’s eye, highlighting the extent to which many of today’s issues are echoes of struggles that took place at the nation’s founding. Ayers always seems ready with a compelling story to illustrate the big ideas. “I think of myself as a social history guy,” he says, “focusing on people and parts of life often left out of the big stories. As a result, my perspective tends to be kaleidoscopic, complementing the laser-like vision of Peter and the X-ray-like vision of Brian, both of whom see structures and ideas with great clarity.”

Of the History Guys’ unique collaboration, Onuf notes that “History tends to be a solitary enterprise for historians. Talking with the Guys enables us to make good use of all those lonely hours—years!—and have fun at the same time. At its best, historical study illuminates connections; the connections we make with each other, and with each other’s work is the big pay-off for me. I hope our audience picks up on some of that excitement.”

After a short production break, BackStory returned to the airwaves in November for an eight-week series of new programs. Listeners to the current series can expect to hear episodes on the history of voting, veterans, energy, and alcohol, among others. Central Virginia stations Radio IQ, WMRA, and WHRV will continue to broadcast the show weekly (see sidebar for broadcast times); those outside the listening area can stream archived shows from BackStory’s website (backstoryradio.org) or sign up for the weekly podcast in the iTunes store.

Stay tuned – with luck BackStory will be on the air coast-to-coast sometime very soon.

Major production support for BackStory has been provided by the David A. Harrison Fund for the President’s Initiatives at the University of Virginia; the Perry Foundation, Incorporated; Cary Brown-Epstein and the W. L. Lyons Brown, Jr. Charitable Foundation; Caroleen Feeney; Marcus and Carole Weinstein; Jay M. Weinberg; Trish and David Crowe; Claire Gargalli and David Carley; and an anonymous donor.
For 35 years, the VFH has been deeply involved in exploring Virginia’s history, especially its hidden or untold stories. On occasion, this work has proved to be history-making in its own right or has brought us into the center of historic events, such as the dedication of the Civil Rights Memorial on Capitol Square in Richmond this past summer.

On July 20–21, 2008, Virginia took a bold step toward acknowledging the legacy of racial segregation in the state that would have been unthinkable a generation ago.

Through a public symposium and the unveiling of a bronze statue honoring those who led the fight to overturn the doctrine of “separate but equal,” the Old Dominion showed how far it has come since a group of students led by 16-year-old Barbara Johns walked out of their high school in Prince Edward County to demand equal (but still separate) school facilities for black and white students.

It also explicitly acknowledged that the struggle for racial equality is not over. These events were organized by the Capitol Square Civil Rights Memorial Foundation which also raised the funds to establish this Memorial. The statue itself portrays the student leaders—Barbara Johns and others—and the attorneys, Oliver Hill and Spotswood Robinson, who took up their cause in a case that later became part of the Supreme Court’s Brown v. Board decision.

It also movingly represents an interracial group of students who seem to be walking, almost literally, out of the statue into a hopeful future.

For more than a decade, the VFH has worked with organizations such as the Robert R. Moton Museum in Farmville to explore this part of our collective history and to help ensure that the story being commemorated in the Civil Rights Memorial is known to all Virginians.

So we were honored and delighted to be asked by the Civil Rights Memorial Foundation to be present at the dedication ceremony and to record both formal and informal interviews with those who attended.

These included well known figures such as former Virginia governors Linwood Holton and Mark Warner. They also included members of the Johns family and former Prince Edward students who had been part of the 1951 strike, or had experienced the closing of the public schools in “massive resistance” to federally mandated school desegregation.

And they also included younger people, who have no memory of these events but who were there as witnesses to a ceremony of deep historic meaning, aware that the course of their own lives had been changed by what happened in Prince Edward County more than 50 years before.
The essential question we asked of each of these interviewees was: “What does this event mean to you?” Their responses are a powerful testament to the changes that were set in motion by the student strike; to the cost of these changes, paid especially by those whose education was deferred or in many cases denied altogether; and to the hope as well as the need for reconciliation—in part through education.

It is significant, as Governor Timothy Kaine pointed out in his remarks, that this Monument is the first one on Capitol Square to depict African Americans; the first to depict children; and the first to depict women as central figures.

VFH worked in close partnership with members of the Board and staff of the Robert R. Moton Museum in Farmville to collect these interviews. The Museum, which is located in the building where the student strike took place, will be the permanent archival home for the recordings, and over the next several months, VFH and Moton will work together, exploring how this important archival record and resource can be used to advance new educational programs we and others might develop.

We’re grateful to the Museum’s leadership and especially to the Capitol Square Civil Rights Memorial Foundation for this opportunity.

Audience and speakers (including Gov. Tim Kaine, seated far right, and Judith C. Anderson, at the podium) at the dedication ceremony on July 21, 2008.

All photos for this article courtesy of the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial Foundation.
Sheila Bowles teaches in the Offender Aid and Restoration program of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Regional Jail, where she prepares young people to pass the G.E.D. Leslie Taliaferro, teaching in the affluent Philadelphia suburb of Narberth, PA, brings her extensive experience of traveling and teaching abroad into her elementary school classroom. Felisha Bell works with at-risk young women in New York City, focusing on program development in English to supplement public school program content.

What purpose has brought them all together? They and 11 other elementary and high-school teachers participated in the Roots 2008 NEH Summer Seminar for Teachers, ninth in a series of institutes for K-12, college and university instructors sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and conducted by Professor Joseph C. Miller, the T. Cary Johnson, Jr. Professor of History at the University of Virginia.

The Roots seminar began in 1998, arising from Miller’s collaboration with current VFH Senior Scholar Jerome Handler. Its focus is the African past of those enslaved and brought to the New World: their religious beliefs, conceptions of the afterlife, family relationships, and knowledge of the environment and what it could yield. In Handler’s words, “When shorn of all their material goods, enslaved peoples weren’t shorn of their memories…they needed to reconstruct their lives under difficult conditions.” Miller named the seminar Roots to emphasize how African heritages informed lives in the New World under the oppressive and restrictive conditions of slavery, from Brazil to the area that would become the United States.

For the first Roots seminar, Handler prepared a slide lecture based on his collection of 250 images illustrating the lives of enslaved Africans, which he had used in teaching an undergraduate class on New World slavery at Southern Illinois University (Carbondale). Miller suggested he have these images scanned and digitized, and they became the basis of the website, The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record (www.slaveryimages.org), which has since grown to over 1,200 images and receives thousands of hits from all over the world.

NEH funding for Roots includes administrative support—provided this year by Amanda Mushal, a graduate student in Southern history at UVa—and a participant stipend for the five-week session, out of which participants pay for their lodgings and meals. The 2008 session for K-12 teachers alternates in the series with those intended for college and university instructors, held in odd years.

Miller’s role is that of a facilitator. This year he quickly established an informal and comfortable rapport with the seminar group, welcoming participants and VFH friends with a delicious meal of African and Africa-inspired foods at his home. In the seminar room at the VFH, Miller’s energy and inclusiveness provided a supportive environment for the lively exchange of ideas that occurred there daily.

Miller has published widely on Africa and the history of slavery, and teaches the history of early Africa, slavery, and the slave trade at UVa. With his leadership, and with presentations from visiting scholars, the Roots seminar squarely confronts the challenging issues of enslaved Africans in U.S. history and culture. Discussions include the
selling of men and women into New World slavery by competing African peoples, the European slave trade and its economics, the agony and dislocation of the Middle Passage, and the social and economic legacies of slavery today. Sessions for K-12 teachers inevitably revolve around issues of, in Miller’s words, “family narratives, contemporary American culture, state SOLS, and the state of the public education system,” while the seminars for college and university educators have a more academic focus.

Seeking to dispel preconceptions, and proceeding on the assumption that race is deeply embedded in American culture, Miller’s intention is to deal openly with the “prevalence of race in this subject,” and to let participants know that, in his words, “whatever your position is, you’ll be respected.”

Roots offers an alternative to what Miller considers the tragedy of the marginalization of this history within the scholarship and instruction of American history, providing rich resources and a pedagogic model that teachers can take back to their own classrooms and communities. Participants have full access to the digital resources and collections of the University of Virginia, and Miller provides an extensive syllabus, with books made available at the UVa Bookstore. These readings serve as the background for Miller’s and his guests’ presentations and the lively discussions they provoke.

Guest speakers and topics during the summer 2008 session included Professor Michelle Kisliuk of the UVa Department of Music, who illustrated African polyrhythmic sensibilities by forming the group into a band of Ewe (Ghana) polyrhythmic percussionists and then into a group of pygmies singing in Central African forests. Professor Babatunde Lawal of Virginia Commonwealth University showed slides of African art and its many branches, speaking compellingly of its spiritual and expressive content, and Yale Professor Robert Harms presented his socio-economic study of the Diligent, a 1730s French slaving vessel. At the end of the first week, the Roots group toured the African Voices exhibit at the Smithsonian and visited the National Museum of African Art.

The culmination of the seminar was the presentation of individual projects, intended to be used as tools in the classroom, which participants developed using the resources made available during the five-week seminar. “Participants arrive with more clearly formulated projects every year,” commented Miller, and with increased technical sophistication. This year, Texas high school teacher Steven Toliver produced a 70-minute video called “Fractures: The Demise of the Communal Ethos,” focusing on contemporary urban culture, and Sheila Bowles created a video called “Teaching the Unteachable: Through Students’ Eyes.” Other projects focused on slave narrative as folk religion, the school as community, and the African Diaspora in Latin America.

Miller commented that seminar participants are doing the hard work of “trying to build community,” and are coming from schools where they represent tiny minorities in what they seek to teach. He too gains from the Roots seminars; conversations in and out of the seminar room sensitize him to the concerns of the diverse audiences he addresses, making him a better teacher and expanding his intellectual horizons. Teachers come to Roots in search of a shared vision and a sense of community. What they experience during the five weeks is an atmosphere of mutual respect, intellectual stimulation, collegiality, and shared purpose. They leave Charlottesville with new friends, new ideas, new teaching resources, and renewed courage.
Fifteen Years for VABook!

Interest in the March 18-22, 2009 Virginia Festival of the Book is high, if the volume on our much-anticipated registration day was any indication. The Festival luncheon for 500 with Virginia native Adriana Trigiani sold out in about a day. Tickets are still available for the Crime Wave Luncheon, Business Breakfast, and Authors Reception if you act quickly.

Keep watching the website (vabook.org) this fall as we announce our featured speakers. The best way not to miss a beat is to sign up for the VABook-Newsletter through the website.

Buy a beautiful book/shopping bag and support the Virginia Festival of the Book.

These bags are being sponsored by Barracks Road Shopping Center in Charlottesville, Virginia and the parent company, Federal Realty Investment Trust. The beautiful tan bags are made from recycled materials and are perfect for carrying your favorite books, groceries or anything else!

Bags cost $10 and include more than $200 in free coupons for stores at Barracks Road Shopping Center at select shops; visit vabook.org for details. The bag pays for itself!

Go to vabook.org to order tickets to the following:

Festival Luncheon
Sold Out, Waitlist available online
Thursday, March 19 • 11:45 AM – 1:30 PM, Omni Hotel • $50
Adriana Trigiani, author of the forthcoming Very Valentine, has written four novels about her home Big Stone Gap, and three other novels featuring Italian-American families coming of age in America.

Crime Wave Mystery Luncheon
Saturday, March 21 • Noon –1:30 PM, Omni Hotel • $50
Brad Meltzer, best-selling author of The Book of Lies, has written five other thrillers, and four comic books. Publisher’s Weekly #1.

Business Breakfast
Wednesday, March 18 • 7:30 – 9 AM, Omni Hotel • $30
Dan Ariely, author of Predictably Irrational, a New York Times best-seller, is a student of behavioral economics, who currently teaches at Duke University.

Authors Reception
Saturday, March 21 • 6 – 7:30 PM • $35
New Location: Sage Moon Gallery, Downtown Charlottesville
Hosts TBA

Big Read in Virginia
Free Resources Available

The VFH Center for the Book and Virginia First Lady Anne Holton invite Virginians across the Commonwealth to participate in the “Big Read in Virginia” by reading together Zora Neale Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God and find out why this 1937 book has become a modern classic.

The VFH is one of 208 organizations—and the only statewide program—to receive a Big Read grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute for Museum and Library Services in partnership with Arts Midwest.

Alice Walker says of Their Eyes Were Watching God, “There is no book more important to me than this one.” Rediscovered in the early 1970s, the novel provides timeless insights on the forcefulness of relationships, the power of language, and the resilience of the human spirit.

Information on how to obtain free reading and educational resources for your community and school can be found at virginiafoundation.org/bookcenter.

Of special interest this year is the “Big Read for Little Readers” featuring Roy Makes a Car based on a folktale uncovered by Hurston and written by Virginia author Mary E. Lyons. Roy Makes a Car also was selected to represent Virginia at the National Book Festival in September in Washington, DC. Lyons is also the author of a young adult biography of Hurston called Sorrow’s Kitchen.

Read. Be Inspired. Write Back.

The annual Letters About Literature reading and writing competition has begun. Students in grades 4-12 are encouraged to think of a favorite book or story and then write a personal letter to the author explaining how that author’s work changed the reader’s way of thinking about the world or themselves.

Three state winners will be invited to read their winning letters aloud at the March 18, 2009 Opening Ceremony of the Virginia Festival of the Book in Charlottesville. Each will also be given a cash prize and a Target gift card and automatically are entered into the national competition. National winners also earn for their school or community library reading promotion grants. Last year, 11th grade student Courtney Harnett won a $1,000 reading promotion grant for her local library, the L.E. Smoot Memorial Library in King George County.

Nationally, Letters About Literature is sponsored by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target.

The submission deadline is December 6, 2008. Entry forms and guidelines can be found at virginiafoundation.org/bookcenter. A 36-page Teacher’s Guide and examples of previous winners can be found at that same website.
New Season, New Places and Faces for VFH Staff

As fall leaves began to rustle and stir in the cool breezes, VFH folk did the same. This favored season has taken some familiar faces to new places and swept in some new faces to get to know.

After more than eight years at the VFH, Andrew Chancey has moved to the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, where he is serving as the Assistant Director for Finance and Program Analysis. Andrew joined the VFH in January 2000 as the Project Coordinator for the ultimately successful effort to establish the South Atlantic Humanities Center, located at the VFH. He became Associate Director in 2002 and Director of Planning and Management in 2004. In this latter role, Andrew had responsibility for the budget, personnel, facilities, and related operations and had oversight of *Encyclopedia Virginia*. At the Miller Center, Andrew is in charge of finance and personnel.

Newcomers to VFH are already settling into the community and their diverse responsibilities. Peter Hedlund is the *Encyclopedia Virginia*’s new database and web applications programmer. Peter came to us from the Darden School of Business, where since 1999 he was a developer for the Instructional Technology Group. Before he joined Darden, he worked with Michael Tupe (who helped create Jerry Handler’s Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade site) in the Digital Media Lab in Clemons Library. He created digital resources and tools for classroom use. In 1998, Peter received his MA in Russian Literature from UVa and, like some of our other *Encyclopedia Virginia* folks, was called to be a computing humanist.

In the Center for Research and Education, Hilary Holladay has been named Senior Program Fellow for 2008-2009. Hilary was a VFH Fellow last spring as well as in the spring of 1998. In her new position, she is directing the Fellowship Program while continuing her research and writing on the literature of the Beat Movement. Before coming to the VFH, she was a professor of English and the director of the Jack and Stella Kerouac Center for American Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. Her most recent book is *Wild Blessings: The Poetry of Lucille Clifton*. She is currently writing a biography of the Beat Movement icon and raconteur Herbert Huncke.

Christina Draper, Director of the Virginia African American Heritage Program, came to the VFH in September 2004, and left this fall to begin her studies in the MA/PhD program in American Studies at the College of William and Mary. Four of Christina’s favorite projects over the years were the second printing and new exhibition for *Don’t Grieve After Me*, which is traversing the state of Virginia; the Fayette Area Historical Initiative that formed a partnership to use the humanities — literature, art, history, music, culture, but in this case, especially local history — to foster community development and re-development in the Martinsville area; her work with the VA Network of African American Museums; and, the redesign of the African American Heritage Database (AAHeritageVA.org).

Fall 2008 VFH Fellows

Fall 2008 Fellows (left to right) are Quentin Beresford, associate professor of politics and government at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia, whose work considers the ramifications of the Australian government’s official apology to indigenous people and its parallels with American race relations. He is particularly interested in the intergenerational impacts of colonization on Aboriginal youth, crime and alienation. Hilary Holladay is professor of English and the director of the Jack and Stella Kerouac Center for American Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. Her most recent book is *Wild Blessings: The Poetry of Lucille Clifton*. She is currently writing a biography of the Beat Movement icon and raconteur Herbert Huncke. Senior Fellow William Frehling is completing a documentary book, *Secession Redeemed: Virginia’s Showdown in 1961*, composing a collection of essays, *Disunion Revisited: Shorter Descriptions, Longer Perspectives*, and completing research on his next book, *Lincoln’s Room for Growth: A Great President’s Early Presidential Stumbles*. Philip Levy’s project, *Weems to Walmart: The Story of George Washington’s Boyhood Home*, has involved extensive archaeological research on Ferry Farm, a 300-year-old property. Levy is an associate professor of history at the University of South Florida. He is the recipient of the 2008-2009 Edna and Norman Frehling Fellowship in South Atlantic Studies. Nathan Currier’s project, *War Music*, describes his personal journey while composing a full-length musical work based on a contemporary translation of The Iliad by the British poet Christopher Logue. Currier is a classical composer and musician and recipient of a lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is on the faculty at the University of Virginia. He is interested in the expression of war through art, and in the impact of war on artists.
2008 National Book Festival

Members of the VFH Center for the Book staff attended the 2008 National Book Festival, sponsored by the Library of Congress and First Lady Laura Bush, on September 27. At a “Pavilion of the States” Virginia table, they were joined by Roy Makes a Car author Mary Lyons and by author and sports celebrity Tiki Barber.

Back: Tiki Barber, Susan Coleman, Mary Chote (IMLS Deputy Director for Libraries), and Kevin McFadden.

Front: Nancy Damon
Photo by Tony Hildenbrick, Institute for Museum and Library Services