



A Center Celebrating the Written Word Makes Change in Leadership and Venue

Hartford, Connecticut (July 25, 2012) — A center celebrating the written word is about to make a change of both leadership and venue. The Connecticut Center for the Book, which has been part of the Hartford Public Library for the last decade, is moving from the downtown library on Main Street in Hartford to the Connecticut Humanities Council, based in Middletown.

Matthew K. Poland, Chief Executive Officer of the Hartford Public Library, explained that the transition from the library to the humanities council was a natural one.

“When our Library became an affiliate of the national Center for the Book we created a vibrant platform for reading here in the state capital,” said Poland. “At a time when public libraries, including ours, were rapidly facing both funding reductions and a tidal wave of social and technological change, Hartford Public Library singlehandedly invested in growing the Center with great success. But as our mission in an urban library in one of the nation’s poorest cities has changed to meet the pressing educational and social needs of our citizens, it became clear that for the Center to survive robustly for another decade, we needed to find a successor with the financial resources and the mission to build upon our many successes. We found that successor, an organization with a broad reach throughout the State, a worthy vision for the Center’s future, and a trusted partner, the Connecticut Humanities Council.”

In addition to readings and literary gatherings designed to showcase the achievements of state writers and designers of books, in 2002, the Connecticut Center for the Book began presenting the Connecticut Book Awards to writers of poetry, history, fiction, biography, and book design. During the Connecticut Center for the Book’s tenure at the library, programming also included World of Words, which used many different activities to promote public libraries to the state’s ethnic communities; and Letters about Literature, an essay contest for students in grades 4 through 12, with a chance to win gift cards, cash or a trip to the national essay finals. In 2002, the Connecticut Center for the Book received the Boorstin Center for the Book Award, a national prize that recognizes and supports the achievements of individual state Centers for the Book for contributions to the overall national program and objectives. The prize is named for Daniel J. Boorstin, who created the Center for the Book in 1977 and was the Librarian of Congress.

"We wish the Connecticut Humanities Council much success as it continues the long history of the Connecticut Center for the Book’s programs that enrich the state’s literary history for all its citizens," said John Y. Cole, Director of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. "The addition of the Connecticut Humanities Council brings to 11 the number of state humanities councils that host our affiliate centers and strengthen our overall state center network."

“The Connecticut Center for the Book is a perfect fit for us,” said Executive Director Stuart Parnes of Connecticut Humanities Council. “We were established as our state’s affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1973, and 4 years later the Congress created the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress. Our missions have always been aligned – to help individuals and communities deal with the issues that confront us today by engaging in discussions of works of literature. Across the country, nearly a dozen Centers for the Book are housed in humanities councils. They each reflect the unique character of their home state. We look forward to building on the successes of the HPL and partnering with a wide variety of organizations to promote the joy and the importance of reading all across Connecticut.”

The collections of books, documents, audiotapes, videos and other materials from the Connecticut Center for the Book’s ten-year residency will move into the special collections of the Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library as a component of the library’s institutional history.

Of the transition Poland said, “It’s bittersweet, like tearfully saying goodbye to your child who is off to college, but knowing in your heart that you have given her the wings to fly.”

The national Center for the Book was established as a private-public partnership to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. Further Information, please visit <http://www.read.gov/cfb/>.

About [Hartford Public Library](#)

The Hartford Public Library traces its roots to 1774. It operates 10 locations in the City of Hartford. The Library receives more than 860,000 visits per year. Services include access to a large collection of materials for reading and research, as well as music and video. Programs provide education, information and enrichment to the people of Hartford in such areas as citizenship training, literacy, business skills and cultural awareness. The mission of Hartford Public Library is to provide free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. Visit hplct.org and the library’s new blog at blogs.hplct.org

About the [Hartford History Center](#)

Hartford History Center at Hartford Public Library, collects, preserves, and makes available materials and information relating to the history, literature, and culture of Hartford. The holdings include, but are not limited to books; scrapbooks; pamphlets; the City of Hartford archives; the Hartford City Parks collection; image collections; maps; fine and graphic arts, including paintings, posters, prints and drawings; and memorabilia – those materials that preserve and share the story of Hartford, Connecticut - its place, its people, and its past. Located on the third floor of the Downtown Library, 500 Main Street, the Hartford History Center is open 1:00 – 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. For more information, please call the Center at 860-695-6297 or visit online at <http://hhc.hplct.org/>.

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