

**For Immediate Release**

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Contact

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**READING TOGETHER PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED**

Reading Together invites all Kalamazoo County residents to read and then discuss important issues raised by a single book. Thousands of people participated in the three previous Reading Together programs. *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien's brilliant collection of short stories about the men of Alpha Company during the Vietnam War, is the 2006 selection.

Reading Together events already number almost 50, including both public and private book discussions. Listed below are headline events and the Reading Together Live series of panel discussions, lectures and performances. A film series and exhibits are being planned. Program details will be posted at [www.readingtogether.us](http://www.readingtogether.us).

**HEADLINE EVENTS**

**Event: The Voice of the Audio Book**

**Description:** Tom Stechschulte, the narrator who read *The Things They Carried* for the Recorded Books version, will read selections from the book and talk about the craft of being a professional reader. Free tickets for Tim O'Brien's March 21 Kalamazoo appearance will begin distribution at this event.

**Place:** Kalamazoo Public Library, Van Deusen Room, 315 S Rose St

**Date, Time:** Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 553-7914

**Event: Tim O'Brien Kalamazoo Visit**

**Description:** Tim O'Brien, author of *The Things They Carried*, will visit Kalamazoo, speaking to the public on the evening of March 21. Free tickets for this event will be distributed at participating libraries beginning February 16. List on the Reading Together website, [www.readingtogether.us](http://www.readingtogether.us), before event.

**Event: Tim O'Brien Book Signing**

**Place:** Kalamazoo Public Library, Van Deusen Room, 315 S Rose St

**Date, Time:** Tuesday, March 21, 4:30-6:00 pm

**Event: Tim O'Brien Public Talk**

**Place:** Miller Auditorium, Western Michigan University

**Date, Time:** Tuesday, March 21, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free, BUT TICKET REQUIRED FOR ENTRANCE. Tickets will be available beginning February 15 at Kalamazoo Public Library and February 16 at the following locations.

Air Zoo

Augusta-Ross Township District Library

Climax/Lawrence Memorial Library

Comstock Township Library

Davenport University

Galesburg Memorial Library

Kalamazoo Community Foundation

Parchment Community Library

Portage District Library

Richland Community Library

Schoolcraft Community Library

Vicksburg District Library

Waldo Library, Western Michigan University

Davenport, Kalamazoo College, and KVCC Libraries

Limit of four tickets per person. Community and school groups may call 553-7914 for special ticket arrangements.

**Phone:** 269 553-7914

**Event: Vietnam: Journey of the Heart**

**Description:** This Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit presents 52 breathtaking images of post-war Vietnam taken by Vietnam veteran Geoffrey Clifford over a decade and a half. Descriptive text by respected author and translator John Balaban accompanies each photograph.

**Website:** [www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibits/vietnam/main.htm](http://www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibits/vietnam/main.htm)

**Place:** The Air Zoo, 6151 Portage Rd, Portage

**Date:** February 14-April 8

**Hours:** January-March, Monday-Saturday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm; Sunday, 12:00-6:00 pm; April, Monday-Friday, 10:00 am-5:00 pm; Saturday, 10:00 am-6:00 pm, Sunday, 12:00-6:00 pm

**Cost:** Free or discounted admission sometimes available. For information, check [www.readingtogether.us/exhibit](http://www.readingtogether.us/exhibit). Otherwise, exhibit included in admission to Air Zoo--adults (16-59), \$19.50; seniors (60+), \$17.50; children (6-15), \$15.50; children five and under are free.

**Phone:** 269 382-6555 or toll free, 1 866 524-7966

**Event: Formal Opening of Smithsonian Exhibit (above), Discussion and Performance by John Balaban and Ngo Thanh Nhan**

**Description:** Poet and translator John Balaban, a conscientious objector during the Vietnamese war, discovered the work of Ho Xuan Huong, an eighteenth-century woman poet, while in Vietnam making recordings of folk poetry. President Clinton cited Balaban's brilliant translation of her verse, *Spring Essence*, during his historical visit to

North Vietnam. Musician Ngo Thanh Nhan will accompany Balaban's reading on a 16-string dan tranh, the classical zither of Vietnam.

**Websites:** John Balaban - [www.johnbalaban.com](http://www.johnbalaban.com)

Ngo Thanh Nhan - [www.cs.nyu.edu/~nhan/](http://www.cs.nyu.edu/~nhan/)

**Place:** The Air Zoo, 6151 Portage Rd, Portage

**Date, Time:** February 20, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 382-6555 or toll free, 1 866 524-7966

### ***THE THINGS THEY CARRIED LIVE***

**A series of panel discussions, lectures and presentations**

#### **Event: From Saigon to Sanctuary**

**Description:** A documentary featuring the stories of Vietnamese refugees who made their way to West Michigan after the Communist takeover of South Vietnam in 1975. President Gerald R. Ford discusses the historic setting, which brought the several waves of refugees to America. Compelling interviews of escape, historic film footage of the Vietnam War and an assessment of the contributions that Vietnamese Americans now make to the larger society are all featured. Winner of the 2002 Communicator Award for Ethnic Understanding. Discussion follows led by film producers Frank Jamison and Huan Le.

**Place:** First Baptist Church, 315 W Michigan Ave

**Date, Time:** Thursday, February 16, 12:00 noon

**Date, Time:** Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 553-7914

#### **Event: The Experiences of Black Vietnam Veterans**

**Description:** A panel of African American veterans will share their wartime experiences with emphasis on the particular issues and challenges faced by people of color during and after the war. Presented concurrently with the Black Heritage Book Fair, Douglass Community Association.

**Place:** Barnabee Gallery, Powell Branch Library, 1000 W Paterson St

**Date, Time:** Saturday, February 18, 12:00 noon-1:30 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 344-0781

#### **Event: Vietnam in Kalamazoo**

**Description:** A panel of local residents will describe their involvement in military service, anti-war protests, and recognition of veterans, and reflect on how Vietnam has continued to affect them over the past thirty years.

**Place:** Kalamazoo Public Library, Van Deusen Room, 315 S Rose St

**Date, Time:** Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 553-7914

**Event: The Book as Critically Acclaimed Literature**

**Description:** A panel of local literary experts will discuss narrative structure, characters, style, and storytelling in the award-winning short stories of *The Things They Carried*.

**Place:** Kalamazoo College, Mandelle Hall, Olmstead Room, 1200 Academy St

**Date, Time:** Monday, February 27, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 553-7914

**Event: Music of the Vietnam War Era: Concert and Sing-along**

**Description:** Singer/songwriter Pat Madden, whose rich alto voice and spirited presence has enlivened the Michigan folk music scene for twenty-five years, will perform music from and inspired by the Vietnam era.

**Place:** First Baptist Church, 315 W Michigan Ave

**Date, Time:** Sunday, March 5, 3:00 pm

**Cost:** Free/ \$5 donation suggested. A portion of proceeds will be donated to Ministry with Community.

**Phone:** 249 345-2195 x 105

**Event: Songs of Rebellion and Hope: Vietnam and Civil Rights in the 1960s**

**Description:** Through a combination of audio, video, and live performance, Dan Jacobson, Western Michigan University School of Music, will discuss the impact of popular songs on the turbulent socio-political climate of the 1960s.

**Place:** Portage District Library, 300 Library Lane

**Date, Time:** Tuesday, March 7, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 329-4542 x 710

**Event: Conversations with Latino Veterans**

**Description:** The language and culture that bind them together also present challenges for Latino soldiers, who often serve in disproportionate numbers in the U.S. armed forces. Sponsored by the Hispanic American Council.

**Place:** Washington Square Branch Library, 1244 Portage St

**Date, Time:** Wednesday, March 8, 6:30-8:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 345-4279

**Event: The Costs of War**

**Description:** A panel of local experts will discuss how the Vietnam War's costs can be measured in dollars, as well as the toll that war takes in terms of politics, the environment, mental health, and the health of the soul.

**Place:** Transformations Spirituality Center, 3427 Gull Road

**Date, Time:** Tuesday, March 14, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 553-7914

**Event: Writing in Dark Times: War and Plague**

**Description:** Drs. Gloria Larrieu, Kalamazoo Valley Community College English instructor, and Thomas Seiler, emeritus professor of English, Western Michigan University, will examine the formal, stylistic, and thematic connections between Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* and Mark Doty's *Heavens Coast*, books in which the authors wrestle with, respectively, the experience of war (Vietnam) and that of plague (the loss of a partner to AIDS). Cosponsored by KVCC and the Kalamazoo Gay Lesbian Resource Center.

**Place:** Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Texas Township, Student Commons

**Date, Time:** Wednesday, March 15, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 345-4025

**Event: A Veteran Returns to Vietnam: Reflections on a Recent Trip**

**Description:** Edo Weits, Western Michigan University Holistic Health Department, spent a tour of in Vietnam as a member of the officers' class that sustained the highest number of casualties. In February 2006 he, along with classmates and widows, returns to Vietnam as part of the humanitarian efforts of the East Meets West Foundation.

**Place:** Oshtemo Branch Library, 7265 W Main St

**Date, Time:** Tuesday, March 28, 7:00 pm

**Cost:** Free

**Phone:** 269 553-7914