Author Visit

Wednesday, October 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mayer Room
Andrew Forsthoefel: Walking to Listen

This year’s Everyone is Reading author, Andrew Forsthoefel, will speak about his book. Book signing to follow.

In 2011, at 23 years old, I walked out my mom’s back door near Philadelphia with a backpack, an audio recorder, and a sign that read “Walking to Listen.” I had just graduated from college, and I had so many questions: Who am I—as a young man, as Andrew? Who are we—as diverse human beings, as America? Why do we seem to hate each other so much? How can we learn to live with one another in peace, and even in love? I resolved to walk every step of the way, on the highways, seeing everyone as my teacher. Nearly one year after I began, 4,000 miles from my mother’s house, I made it to the Pacific Ocean.
A memoir of one young man's coming of age on a journey across America--told through the stories of the people of all ages, races, and inclinations he meets along the way.

Life is fast, and I've found it's easy to confuse the miraculous for the mundane, so I'm slowing down, way down, in order to give my full presence to the extraordinary that infuses each moment and resides in every one of us.

At 23, Andrew Forsthoefel headed out the back door of his home in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, with a backpack, an audio recorder, his copies of Whitman and Rilke, and a sign that read "Walking to Listen." He had just graduated from Middlebury College and was ready to begin his adult life, but he didn't know how. So he decided to take a cross-country quest for guidance, one where everyone he met would be his guide.

In the year that followed, he faced an Appalachian winter and a Mojave summer. He met beasts inside: fear, loneliness, doubt. But he also encountered incredible kindness from strangers. Thousands shared their stories with him, sometimes confiding their prejudices, too. Often he didn't know how to respond. How to find unity in diversity? How to stay connected, even as fear works to tear us apart? He listened for answers to these questions, and to the existential questions every human must face, and began to find that the answer might be in listening itself.

Ultimately, it's the stories of others living all along the roads of America that carry this journey and sing out in a hopeful, heartfelt book about how a life is made, and how our nation defines itself on the most human level.
One Book, One Community

In 1998, Seattle Public librarian Nancy Pearl developed the idea for a program that would bring people together by reading and discussing the same book at the same time. The idea soon spread around the country, reaching all the way to a small town in New Hampshire. Each year since 2009, Howe Library has invited the Upper Valley community to read the same book and join us for programming around themes found in the book.

Andrew Forsthoefel is a speaker, peace activist, and the author of the book *Walking to Listen*.

After graduating from Middlebury College, he spent a year walking across the highways of America, an apprentice to the discipline of listening. His narrative work has appeared on This American Life and The Moth, and he teaches trustworthy listening as a practice in reconciliation, personal transformation, and peace-making. Livingtolisten.com is the online home for his work, and he lives in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts.

About the Author
Thursday, September 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mayer Room

Unlaunch'd Voices:
An Evening with Walt Whitman

This event is made possible through a grant from New Hampshire Humanities.

This program opens with the elderly Whitman on the evening of his seventieth birthday. The audience is a visitor in his room as he prepares for his birthday celebration. Whitman begins to reminisce during the telling. He transforms into his young vibrant self and we begin to trace back with him the experiences that led to the creation of *Leaves Of Grass*, his lifetime work. The first part of the performance explores Whitman's preoccupation with the self and his resolve to write with "free and brave thought..." In the second part of the performance, Whitman's life is changed forever by the Civil War. It is here that he finds "the most important work of my life," nursing the wounded soldiers in the hospitals. Through Stephen Collins' recitation of poetry and readings of actual letters, we experience Whitman's movement from selfishness toward selflessness and his growth into a mature artist who is at peace about "himself, God and death."

Thursday, October 3 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mayer Room

Pilgrimages in World Religions

Andrew’s journey across the country is reminiscent of a pilgrimage. Elizabeth Krajewski, PhD from Colby Sawyer College, will talk about the idea of pilgrimage as the intersection of “sacred place” and “life as journey” using examples from a range of world religions including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam.

Tuesday, October 8 at Noon in the Rotary Room

BLT discusses this year’s Everyone is Reading title. Copies can be checked out by any Upper Valley resident; no Howe Library card is required.

Monday, October 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the Murray Room

Share your thoughts about this year’s title with other readers in a librarian-led book discussion.

Wednesday, October 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mayer Room

Author Visit

(See last page for details)

Sunday, October 20 drop in between 2:00 - 4:00 on the Main Floor

Make a Journal - A Howe 2.0 Event

All you need to get started on your own journaling odyssey is one of these beautiful journals. Come see where your creativity takes you.