

Celebrate Nebraska Stories on October 21

Q. What's free and fun and focused on Nebraska stories?

A. The Nebraska Center for the Book's **Celebration of Nebraska Books.**

Save the date to Celebrate: **October 21** at the Nebraska History Museum in downtown Lincoln. This event, free and open to the public, will feature the 2017 One Book One

Nebraska book selection, announce the reading selection for the 2018 One Book One Nebraska, and honor the winners of Nebraska's prestigious awards for literacy, literature, writing, and publishing.

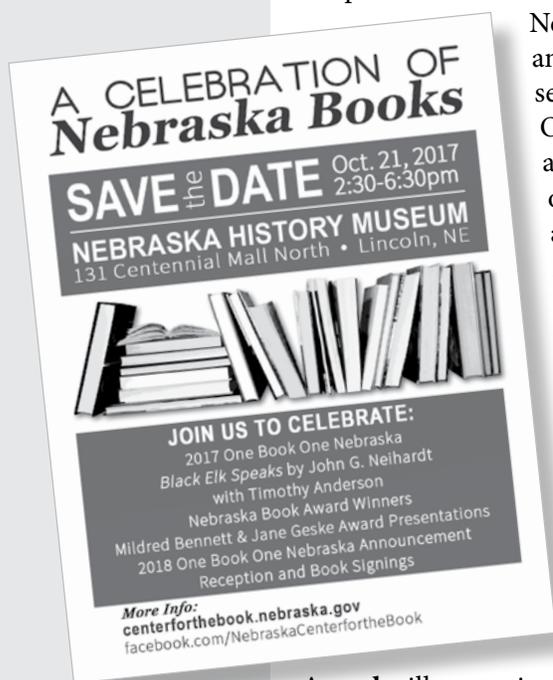
The 2017 **Nebraska Book Awards** will honor authors and publishers of books with a Nebraska connection published in 2016. Featured winning authors will read from their work and sign copies of their books.

The **Mildred Bennett**

Award will recognize an **individual** who has made a significant contribution to fostering the literary tradition in Nebraska, reminding us of the literary and intellectual foundations that enrich our lives and mold our world. The **Jane Geske Award** will be presented to a Nebraska **organization** for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or literature in Nebraska. It commemorates Geske's passion for books, and was established in recognition of her contributions to the well-being of Nebraska libraries. Nomination forms are available at <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/nominationforms.html>.

This year the Celebration marks the thirteenth year of One Book One Nebraska—selecting and promoting a book for Nebraska citizens to read to celebrate the literary richness of our state. *Black Elk Speaks* (University of Nebraska Press, 2014) by John G. Neihardt is the 2017 One Book One Nebraska selection. This story of the Oglala Lakota visionary and healer Nicholas Black Elk (1863-1950) and his people offers readers much more than a glimpse of a vanished time. Black Elk's searing visions of the unity of Humanity and Earth, conveyed by John G. Neihardt, have made this book a classic that crosses multiple genres and generations. This year's Celebration will feature a presentation by Timothy Anderson, author of *Lonesome Dreamer: The Life of John G. Neihardt*. Anderson will read from his book, and will share insights on the life of John G. Neihardt and the story behind *Black Elk Speaks*. Nebraska libraries and other literary and cultural organizations across the state are hosting activities and events to encourage all Nebraskans to read and discuss the same book (see <http://onebook.nebraska.gov/2017/index.aspx>).

The **Nebraska Center for the Book Annual Meeting** will be held at 1:30 p.m.—just prior to the Celebration of Nebraska Books. An Awards Reception honoring the winning authors, book signings, and announcement of the 2018 One Book One Nebraska book choice will conclude the festivities. The 2017 Celebration of Nebraska Books is sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB) and Nebraska Library Commission—with Humanities Nebraska supporting the One Book One Nebraska presentation. For more information see <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/celebration.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook>. 



Library of Congress Resources Featured at Idea Exchange

Guest Editorial by
Christine Walsh,
NCB Vice-President

In early May I had the privilege of attending the Idea Exchange as a representative for the Nebraska Center for the Book. This annual meeting held at the Library of Congress Madison Building gathers representatives and coordinators from all of the state Centers for the Book in Washington D.C. for two days of brainstorming, education, networking, and collaboration. As a first time attendee I was amazed, excited, and a bit intimidated to hear about projects and activities across the country as well as the wealth of ideas and projects in development. This is an energetic, dynamic, innovative, and inspiring group of people and I was in awe to be sitting in the same room soaking up as much information as possible.

“Think of the Center for the Book as the Library of Congress in your community!” was among the opening remarks from Pam Jackson, Director of the Library of Congress Center for the Book, and her staff. This message was woven through all of the presentations, conversations, brainstorming, and work sessions during these amazing two days. Pam also shared a message of support from Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress, for continued efforts to promote the Library of Congress, libraries, reading, and literacy across the country.

Highlights were:

- Being challenged to increase visibility for Centers for the Book on the local, state, regional, and national level by being out in our communities physically and virtually. This includes increased branding by the Library of Congress and the Center for the Book, especially at events like the National Book Festival, scheduled for September 2.
- Plans are underway to highlight the 40th Anniversary of the Center for the Book at the National Book Festival.
- Letters about Literature is celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2017-18. Catherine Gourley, longtime national director of this reading and writing promotion program, spoke about revisions in the process of submitting letters and the effort to build participation. *Journeys: Young Readers’ Letters to Authors Who Changed Their Lives* will be published in August by Candlewick Press. It was edited by Catherine Gourley in cooperation with Center for the Book at the Library of Congress.
- Presentations from a variety of departments at the Library of Congress added insights about the wealth of information and resources available for all of us to use. I would encourage everyone to explore the largest library in the

(continued on page 3)



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One Book One Nebraska

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Laureen Riedesel

Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner is an ex-officio member of all committees.

Nebraska Center for the Book

Board Meeting

October 1 1:00 p.m.
Neihardt Center,
Bancroft, NE

2017 Annual Meeting

October 21 1:30 p.m.
Nebraska History
Museum,
Lincoln, NE

Advertising

The NCB News can accept up to four 1/8- page ads for each issue. The advertising rate is \$125 for 1/8-page. NCB News is issued March 15, June 15 and October 15. The advertising and copy deadline is six weeks prior to issue date. For details, contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023; 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665, e-mail: maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov, centerforthebook.nebraska.gov

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Nonfiction Young Adult Book to Represent Nebraska at Book Festival

The Nebraska Center for the Book selected *This Strange Wilderness: The Life and Art of John James Audubon* by Nancy Plain (University of Nebraska Press, 2015) to represent Nebraska at the 2017 National Book Festival. The book is the state's selection for the National Book Festival's "Discover Great Places through Reading" brochure and map. Each state selects one book about the state, or by an author from the state, that is a good read for children or young adults. The brochure and map will be distributed at the Festival in Washington, DC on September 2.

This book brings together the story of the career of John James Audubon (1785–1851), founder of modern ornithology and one of the

world's greatest bird painters, and the beautiful images that are his legacy. It details his art and writing, transporting the reader back to the frontiers of early nineteenth-century America. Nebraska's "Great Reads about Great Places" book is chosen from the previous year's Nebraska Book Award winners and this book was awarded the 2016 Nebraska Book Award in the Children/Young Adult category. The National Book Festival will feature presentations by award-winning authors, poets, and illustrators. Find out more about the National Book Festival (including a list of featured authors) at <http://www.loc.gov/bookfest>. 



Library of Congress Resources Featured at Idea Exchange (continued from page 2)

world online or in person—including the American Folklife Center, Sanborn maps, music, photographs, and so much more. This is truly a treasure trove worth exploring!

- Reading and literacy promotion partners (such as the founder of Little Free Library) joined us to discuss possible collaborations and tools to promote reading, writing, and literacy throughout the country.

I came away from the experience with a greater understanding of the National Center for the Book, the Library of Congress, and a sense of wonder at the amazing people that

passionately promote reading, writing, and literacy across the country. I hope to bring at least some of this home to the NCB. Thank you to the Nebraska Center for the Book for the opportunity and support to attend the Idea Exchange on behalf of Nebraska.

One last note: What trip is complete without a great souvenir? Mine is in the shape of a library card from the Library of Congress! Library reader card in hand, I toured the Library of Congress Jefferson Building to see the famed Reading Room and the exhibit of Thomas Jefferson's Library. Icing on the cake! 

What is the Nebraska Center for the Book?

The Nebraska Center for the Book brings together the state's readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars to build the community of the book. We are the people who know and love books, and who value the richness they bring to our lives. Our Nebraska Center supports programs to celebrate and stimulate public interest in books, reading, and the written word. We have been an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress since 1990.

Join the Nebraska Center for the Book

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Name/address of a friend who might be interested in NCB membership:

\$15 Individual Membership \$25 Organizational Membership Additional Contribution

Contributions above \$15 are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**Please send this form and a check to: Nebraska Center for the Book
The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120 • Lincoln, NE 68508-2023**

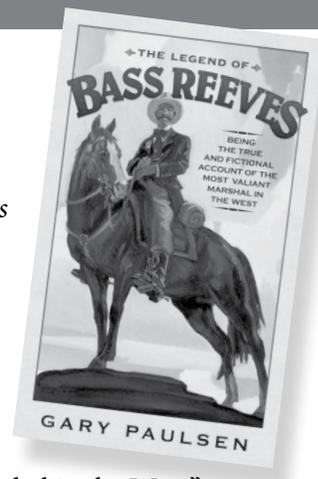


One Book for Nebraska Kids/Teens



Wouldn't it be great if kids all over the state were reading and discussing the same book? The Nebraska Library Commission and Nebraska Regional Library Systems continue to work to make that happen through One Book for Nebraska Kids and One Book for Nebraska Teens. The 2017 **One Book for Nebraska Kids** selection is *Alcatraz Versus the Evil Librarians* (Starscape, 2016) by Nebraska writer Brandon Sanderson. *Alcatraz Versus the Evil Librarians* is the fantasy tale of a small group of freedom fighters operating against the cult of Evil Librarians. With offbeat humor, high adventure, and endearing characterization, this book should appeal to all lovers of the

fantastical. *The Legend of Bass Reeves* (Laurel Leaf, 2008) by Gary Paulsen is the 2017 **One Book for Nebraska Teens** selection. Subtitled, "Being the true and fictional account of the most valiant Marshal in the West," this tale fills in the unrecorded youth of an unjustly obscure historical figure who was born a slave, became a successful rancher, then later in life played an integral role in taming the West. See <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/Youth/OBOK> for information and activities. 



Happy #bookfacefriday!
We post one of these #bookface photos every Friday.

REMINDER: The Nebraska Library Commission Book Club collection includes audio books too, like *Alcatraz Versus the Evil Librarians* by Brandon Sanderson (Scholastic Audio Books, 2007). Ask your librarian to check out a book club kit at <http://nlc.nebraska.gov> for your book group. Follow the Nebraska Center for the Book on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook>) to see all our #bookface posts.

Review:

Review by
 Rebecca Faber

Lonesome Dreamer: The Life of John G. Neihardt

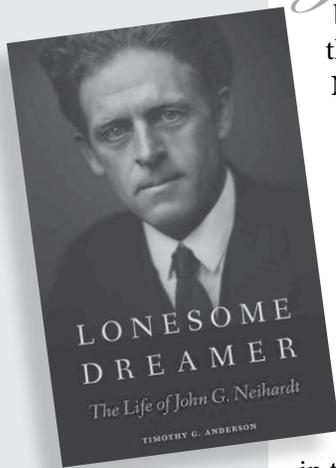
by Timothy G. Anderson
 University of Nebraska Press, 2016
 ISBN: 978-0803290259

John Greenleaf Neihardt was a talented and complex man. Timothy Anderson's biography of Neihardt provides insight into the life and career of Nebraska's Poet Laureate. Neihardt's talent and vision drove his writing from an early age. His initial career included epic poems and prose. Neihardt's focus on what was important as a writer made him a formidable journalist, critic, and colleague. His disagreement with Harriet Monroe, founder and editor of *Poetry* magazine, about modernist forms overrode his consideration about public acclaim and peer acceptance. He tolerated the ups and downs of his career, steadfastly believing in the value and quality of his writing. In 1921

after achieving success as a poet in Nebraska, the Nebraska Legislature named John Neihardt Nebraska's Poet Laureate.

Anderson gives the reader a clear chronology of Neihardt's unstable early life, his marriage to his beloved Mona, his passion for writing, and his methodology for doing so. Anderson explores Neihardt's full body of work: three novels, two short story collections, five volumes of lyrics, five book-length narrative poems, four volumes of nonfiction, one volume of poetic drama, and an extensive number of newspaper articles and reviews.

Anderson's biography will be the definitive text for those who seek to know the real John G. Neihardt and his influence on American literature. Neihardt was a major figure across decades of Twentieth Century America in both literature and cultural studies, and Timothy Anderson has done him justice. 



What Are You Reading?

Nebraska Center for the Book board members share their thoughts about the books they are reading.

I have just finished reading *A Warrior of the People: How Susan La Flesche Overcame Racial and Gender Inequality to Become America's First Indian Doctor* (St. Martin's Press, 2016) by Joe Starita. This is an incredible story about how Dr. Susan La Flesche and her family lived in two cultures and the challenges they faced. This book is a "Must Read" for the sesquicentennial.

Kate Borchman Hassebrook

I am reading *Writings on the Wall: Searching for a New Equality Beyond Black and White* (Time, 2016) by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Like many history majors, he wanted to gain a better understanding of the world—he has! His perspectives, grounded in historical detail and constitutional knowledge, resonate with realism, wisdom, and solutions. I hope that reading *Writings on the Wall* will inspire people to become more engaged citizens.

Francine Canfield

I'm reading *The Devil's Triangle* (Gallery Books, 2017) by Catherine Coulter and J.T. Ellison. It's their latest thriller in the series, "A Brit in the FBI." It's fast paced, but the plot is not quite believable, perhaps more fantasy than a mystery. However, the romance is still there.

Diane Downer

Tangled (CreateSpace, 2014) by Traci Robison is the second book of three "Tales of Malstria" volumes. I've enjoyed the mystery and development of characters in these tales—for both what is written about them and what is left to imagine—making it an engaging read.

Mary Ellen Ducey

I've been reading *The Cat's Table* (Vintage, 2012) by Michael Ondaatje, the narrative of a young boy in the 1950s who travels alone by ship from Ceylon to England to be reunited with his mother. The initial story of colorful characters and youthful antics gives way to a bittersweet vision of what life holds for their futures.

Rebecca Faber

My book club is reading Joe Starita's new book, *A Warrior of the People: How Susan La Flesche Overcame Racial and Gender Inequality to Become America's First Indian Doctor*. The story

of Susan La Flesche is inspirational. Starita tells her story from her point of view, and her many accomplishments and commitment to her people shine through.

Molly Fisher

I just finished listening to *The Trespasser* by Tana French. It is set in Ireland, read with the Irish brogue—an eighteen-CD police novel which I didn't want to end. Loved it!

Sherry Houston

A Sister's Memories: The Life and Work of Grace Abbott from the Writings of Her Sister, Edith Abbott (University of Chicago Press, 2015) by John Sorenson, includes a lot of notes by Edith Abbott compiled to make a fantastic read.

Donna Kennedy Marvin

I recently completed *Homegoing: A Novel* (Vintage, 2017) by Yaa Gyasi, which is on the American Library Association Notable Books list. It follows the descendants of two half-sisters, born in Ghana in the mid-1700s, to contemporary times. One woman stays in Africa, the other is sold into slavery in America. Often a difficult book to read, but one that provides layers of depth.

Pat Leach

I'm reading the first book in the "Poldark" series, *Ross Poldark: A Novel of Cornwall, 1783-1787* (Sourcebooks, 2015) by Winston Graham—light, summer reading. I've enjoyed the "Masterpiece Theatre" productions and didn't realize he wrote so many "Poldark" books.

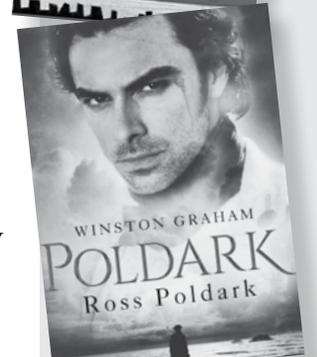
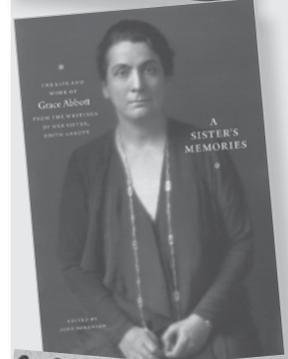
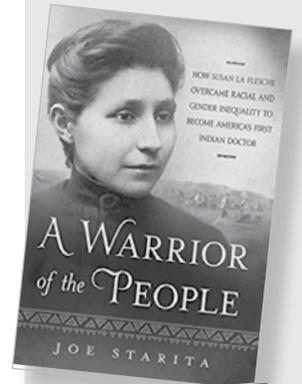
Lois Todd-Meyer

I'm reading Ann Patchett's *Run* (Harper, 2008)—actually just finished it. It is a family-based story with richly developed characters, relationships, and interesting themes involving race, gender, politics, religion, and health.

Rod Wagner

Whenever I go on long car trips, a couple of good audio books from my public library make great travel companions. I'm reading *Black Elk Speaks* (South San Francisco, CA: Audio Literature, 2007) by John G. Neihardt (read by Scott Peterson)—the One Book One Nebraska selection for 2017. This past weekend, the rhythmic diction and lyrical melody of *Black Elk Speaks* spooled across the miles as I drove across Nebraska, allowing me to glimpse by car some of the sites the book describes.

Laura Madeline Wiseman 



American Life in Poetry: Column 630



by Ted Kooser,
U.S. Poet Laureate,
2004-2006

I'm celebrating my 78th birthday by publishing one of my own poems. When an old guy like me is still writing poetry, he tends to write a lot of old-guy poems.

Look for Me

Look for me under the hood
of that old Chevrolet settled in weeds
at the end of the pasture.

I'm the radiator that spent its years
bolted in front of an engine
shoving me forward into the wind.

Whatever was in me in those days
has mostly leaked away,

but my cap's still screwed on tight
and I know the names of all these
tattered moths and broken grasshoppers
the rest of you've forgotten.

We do not accept unsolicited submissions.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation (www.poetryfoundation.org), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2017 by Ted Kooser, "Look for Me." Poem reprinted by permission of Ted Kooser. Introduction copyright ©2017 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. 

Review:

Review by
Rod Wagner,
Nebraska Library
Commission



Books: A Memoir

by Larry McMurtry
Simon & Schuster, 2009
ISBN: 978-1416583356

I've been a Larry McMurtry fan since reading *Lonesome Dove* (Simon & Schuster, 2010)—1986 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Fiction—the only book I recall reading twice. Most likely, I'll read it again someday. Since then I've read many of McMurtry's books: *The Last Picture Show* (Simon & Schuster, 1999), *Comanche Moon* (Pocket Books, 1998), *Dead Man's Walk* (Pocket Books, 1996), *Streets of Laredo* (Simon & Schuster, 2000), and more. Well known as a prolific novelist, McMurtry also has credits as an Academy Award-winning screenwriter (*Terms of Endearment*, *Brokeback Mountain*, and *The Last Picture Show* to name some), and nonfiction writings including *Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections on Sixty and Beyond* (Simon & Schuster, 2001)—a wonderful autobiographical reflection on many things and particularly those things from his home state Texas.

McMurtry self describes as a reader, writer, and bookseller. Add teacher, book scout, dealer, business owner to those descriptors. It

is his passion for books and book dealing that is the subject of *Books: A Memoir*. In *Books* McMurtry reflects on his life-long affinity for all things books. It's curious that McMurtry tells of growing up in a house without books and musing that it is perhaps his discovery of books that led to his lifelong passion for them. The absence of books in his home ended when a relative gave him a box of nineteen books, a small batch that the young McMurtry read and re-read many times. When his family moved from their Texas ranch home to Archer City, he had opportunities to explore many other books, including those in the local public library.

McMurtry's book scouting, buying, and selling happened in many places. I took special notice when he mentions searching in San Francisco for a Weldon Kees' book, and for Wright Morris's *The Home Place* (University of Nebraska Press, 1968). For those who love books and fine writing, McMurtry's *Books* will be an enjoyable read. And for those who enjoy book stores, there is a great adventure ahead in traveling to Archer City, TX, to visit McMurtry's store.

Ed. Note: This review originally appeared in the Nebraska Library Commission *NCompass* Blog, <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/>. 

Plum Creek Literacy Festival Set

The 22nd annual Plum Creek Adult Conference will be held on September 30 on Concordia University's campus in Seward. Teachers, administrators, media specialists, and book lovers are invited to hear visiting authors and illustrators, as well as other literacy experts.

Featured authors and illustrators include Kwame Alexander, Lauren Castillo, Henry Cole, Rebecca Kai Dotlich, Sharon Draper, Tad Hills, Jennifer Holm, Matthew Holm, Patricia MacLachlan, Brandon Mull, Kadir Nelson, Christian Robinson, Laura Vaccaro Seeger, Philip and Erin Stead, and Melissa Sweet. Patricia MacLachlan will be the author luncheon speaker. Her topic is, "Revising My Life in My Books."

Literacy experts will speak on many topics, including bibliotherapy, Nebraska folk songs and

literature, school-wide reading communities, reading and agriculture, literacy and technology, using graphic novels, and multisensory techniques for engaging learners. Registration, book sales, and author autographing begins at 7:30 a.m. Sessions run from 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m. Authors will autograph after the last session. A special exhibit, "Wizards of Pop: Original Pop-up Book Art of Matthew Reinhardt and Robert Sabuda," will be displayed in the Concordia University Marxhausen Gallery.

Registration for the Adult Conference is \$99, which includes the author luncheon and a choice of five sessions. See <http://www.cune.edu/plumcreek> for Registration, or contact Dylan Teut, Dylan.Teut@cune.edu, 402-643-7483. 



Print Culture and Remembering the Rise and Fall of the Third Reich

William Shirer's *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* was published in October 1960, and an Eighth Printing copy arrived at my house in November, at a much reduced price courtesy of the Book of the Month Club. I was a seventeen-year old high school senior. This book combined with family history—my parents were German and Austrian refugees (my paternal grandmother died and my maternal grandfather survived Theresienstadt)—kindled my interest in history. I have had this book for fifty-six years. It has the telltale Book Club blind stamp on the exterior of the back board, knowledge acquired in the late 1990s as I became interested in print culture and joined the Nebraska Center for the Book.

Simon & Schuster produced a 30th anniversary edition in 1990 and a 50th in 2011. Abebooks has 3,748 volumes written by Shirer, 1,418 are *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. Signed copies of the 1960 edition run from \$199 to \$1200 (the latter has a dust jacket). There were twenty-five signed copies, six of them from booksellers in Sarasota and West Palm Beach, FL and Sun City, AZ. Hmmm, retired readers?

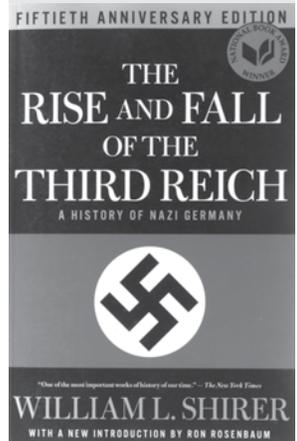
I have given talks on the Holocaust for Nebraska Humanities since 1989. I take Shirer's

volume as testimony to the power of reading. The dust jacket is long gone. The 1,245 pages and 31 chapters are intact, underlined with marginalia in red ballpoint. Felt tips and post-it notes were in the future.

Moving to the Bay Area, we reduced our print footprint including fifteen or so linear feet of newspaper and magazine clippings started in 1969 with the flimsy *Manchester Guardian* airmail edition. The pile of potential stories with a future life had no alphabetic, chronological, topical, or thematic organization—other than obituaries. I disinterred a 1994 *Journal of Contemporary History* notice announcing that the next issue would contain UCLA graduate student Gavriel Rosenfeld's article on Shirer's *Rise and Fall*, thirty-four years after Shirer's book appeared. JSTOR provided the article which I quickly read, twenty-two years after the announcement appeared. It's gratifying to see that the clipping file worked, belatedly.

William Lawrence Shirer, born February 23, 1904, probably did not respond to Rosenfeld's narrative. He died on December 28, 1993, at the age of 89. Rosenfeld told me he communicated with Shirer but not about his 1960 book. 

by Oliver B. Pollak,
UNO Professor
Emeritus



Review:

Review by Laura Madeline Wiseman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

New City

by Scott Abels
BlazeVOX Books, 2015
ISBN: 978-1609642228

Collaging sentence fragments, curiously juxtaposed images, and pop culture comebacks, Scott Abels' new book is a good fit for all that's fantastic in Nebraska, reminding us how much we get to celebrate in this 150th year of statehood. Alongside Manwiches®, Ronald Regan, and lonely dinosaurs, there are teachers, family trees, and public transit riders. To read *New City* means entering as an outsider who seeks to "get/ this local language right" (52) and not be lonely, even if "We are all making this/ up as we go along" (56).

Having taught elsewhere, Abels currently teaches in Nebraska. *New City* joins larger conversations on pedagogy, literacy, and education. "Nebraska Fantastic"

focuses on a teacher who has "come to teach college" (17) and is "ready for anything/ in the Professor job interview," (15) even if it's a fistfight. If winning the job is competitive, the students need help winning basic skills. If the teacher helps with word order, he's aware of their academic fears:

I write that you have 30 minutes on the board and after 10 minutes

I write that you have 20 minutes.

They think I am punishing them. (17)

New City also explores the playfulness of language to convey meaning in form. One sequence opens with a key that codes our vices then closes with one that codes our lives, while troubling, the simplicity of unlocking secrets in "Nebraska Family Tree." Complicating place and circumstance, Abels writes "Very little is known about the family," (38) suggesting that our lives are so much larger than our vices. It's the new work we do in our classrooms and communities that make our Nebraska cities home. 📖



Nominations Accepted Until August 15 for Literary/Literacy Awards

The Nebraska Center for the Book is accepting nominations to honor Nebraska's champions of literature and literacy. Awards will be presented at the Celebration of Nebraska Books on October 21. The **Jane Geske Award** is presented annually to a Nebraska **organization** for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or literature in Nebraska. It commemorates Geske's passion for books, and was established in recognition of her contributions to the well-being of Nebraska libraries. Jane Pope Geske was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, and a long-time leader in Nebraska library and literary activities.

The **Mildred Bennett Award** recognizes an **individual** who has made a significant

contribution to fostering the literary tradition in Nebraska. Its purpose is to remind us of the literary and intellectual foundations that enrich our lives and mold our world. The award recognizes inspired leadership and service on behalf of Nebraska literature, highlighting how the recipient follows the example of Mildred Bennett, the charismatic founder and long-time president of the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial and Educational Foundation.

For more information see <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards.html>. Nomination forms are available at <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/nominationforms.html> or contact Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, rod.wagner@nebraska.gov, 402-471-4001, 800-307-2665. 📖

Treasures of the Heritage Room

The photography collections of Wright Morris are represented in museums and archives in Nebraska and throughout the world. The Sheldon Museum of Art's extensive collection of Wright Morris photography is on display for the "Wright Morris: Nebraska Pictures" exhibit this summer in conjunction with the Nebraska 150 Celebration. This display exemplifies his dramatic style and "sensitivity in capturing details of rural Nebraska."

The Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room collection of Wright Morris photographs was curated by Morris himself, who recommended photographs for the collection that would uniquely enhance the space. The Heritage Room is set apart from the traditional museum experience because of its equal concentration on Morris' words and photography. The combination of text and images are a trademark aspect of Morris' literary artistry. Morris is credited with the invention of the "Photo-Texts" genre, exemplified in his innovative books *The Inhabitants* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946) and *The Home Place* (University of Nebraska Press,

1948). The Heritage Room holds rare, signed First Editions of both of these books, as well as examples of his prepublication writing including page proofs, galley proofs, and corrected manuscript pages. The connection of Morris's photography with his writing in its raw form is a rare opportunity to encounter Wright Morris and his work. His creative process is revealed through his published words and images as well as through his correspondence, personal interviews, and the body of critical assessments of his work. All of which are held in the Heritage Room vertical files.

The Heritage Room, with its combination of Nebraska literature, visual art and ambiance, is a place reminiscent of Morris' art. The atmosphere is heavy with the memory of authors who have visited the space, including Wright Morris himself, who was an honored guest in the Heritage Room in 1975. Patrons and visitors of the collection are invited to sit in the chair at the table where Morris once sat, gaze at the images that he captured, read the words that he wrote, and become inhabitants of a place inspired by Wright Morris. 📖

by Erin Willis,
Lincoln City
Libraries

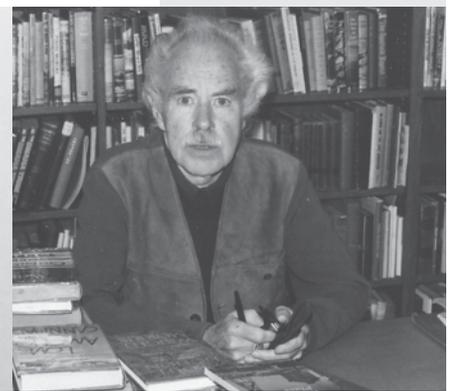


Wright Morris (below) signs books in the Heritage Room in 1975.



THE INHABITANTS

Wright Morris
May 16, 1980



UNK Seeks Children's Books

The University of Nebraska Kearney (UNK) is accepting donations of children's books for the Calvin T. Ryan Library Nebraska Archive of Children's Books. A book may have outlived its usefulness because it no longer appeals to the interests or tastes of the contemporary child, or because its information has been superseded. But books written for children reflect the attitudes, customs, and concerns of the societies and the times for

which the books were written. This archived collection provides continuing access to out-of-print volumes and books for which there is diminished demand by children and families, but which may be of continuing interest to the student, researcher, or scholar. If you have books to donate, contact Rochelle Hunt Krueger, Curriculum Librarian, Calvin T. Ryan Library, krueger@unk.edu, 308-865-8276. 📖



Letter Writing Clinics Underway

What could motivate Nebraska young people to write letters? A great story and the opportunity to tell an author about how a book made a difference in their own life can provide just the right encouragement. Teachers and librarians across Nebraska were recently awarded grants to host pilot Letter Writing Clinics for students in their area. The clinics introduce students to the Letters About Literature (LAL) contest and letter writing techniques. Students get ideas for selecting books and learn how to craft letters that can be submitted to the Letters About Literature contest, a national reading and writing promotion program that engages nearly 50,000 adolescent and young readers nationwide in grades four through twelve.

The Letter Writing Clinic grants were sponsored by Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Nebraska Library Commission. Grantees are:



Students work on letters to authors at Norfolk Catholic Elementary School Letter Writing Clinic.

Lisa Guenther, **Norfolk Catholic Elementary School** Director of Reading

Jennifer Van Winkle, **Lincoln Lux Middle School** Teacher

Lori Springer, **Valparaiso Public Library** Director

Noelle Thompson, **Lied Scottsbluff Public Library** Director, Scottsbluff Library Foundation

Denise Ketchens, **Oshkosh Public Library** Director

This annual writing competition is sponsored nationally by the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, with funding from Dollar General Literacy Foundation. The Center for the Book was established in 1977 as a public-private partnership to use the resources of the Library of Congress to stimulate public interest in books and reading. The Nebraska competition is coordinated and sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, Houchen Bindery Ltd., and Chapters Bookstore in Seward. 📖

Young Nebraska Writers Honored



Letters About Literature award winners: (l-r) NCB board members Lois Todd Meyer and Donna Kennedy Marvin; Ethan Morrow, Omaha; Gov. Pete Ricketts; Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner; Matthew Heaney, Omaha; Jack Slagle, Omaha; Caleb Hamilton, Falls City; Francine Canfield, Nebraska Center for the Book board member; Lexi Miller, Falls City.

Young Nebraska writers received Letters about Literature award certificates from Gov. Pete Ricketts at a proclamation-signing ceremony celebrating National Library Week, April 9-15, 2017. The competition encourages young people to read, be inspired, and write back to the author (living or dead) who had an impact on their lives. The Nebraska winners were honored at a luncheon and received cash prizes and gift certificates. Their winning letters were placed in the Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors at Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln.

The students wrote personal letters to authors explaining how his or her work changed their

view of themselves or the world. They selected authors from any genre, fiction or nonfiction, contemporary or classic. Winners were chosen from three competition levels: upper elementary, middle, and secondary school.

WINNERS

Caleb Hamilton, Falls City, for a letter to **John David Anderson**, *Minion* (Walden Pond Press, 2015)

Ethan Morrow, Omaha, for a letter to **Andy Weir**, *The Martian* (Broadway Books, 2014)

Matthew Heaney, Omaha, for a letter to **Theodore Gray**, *The Elements: A Visual Exploration of Every Known Atom in the Universe* (Black Dog & Leventhal, 2012)

ALTERNATE WINNERS

Lexi Miller, Falls City, for a letter to **R. J. Palacio**, *Wonder* (Knopf, 2012)

Madelyn Stoffel, Omaha, for a letter to **R. J. Palacio**, *Wonder* (Knopf, 2012)

Jack Slagle, Omaha, for a letter to **John L. Parker Jr.**, *Once a Runner: A Novel* (Scribner, 2010) 📖



What Is a Successful Letter for Letters About Literature?

Three Nebraska teachers, Nancy Svoboda, Linda Rix, and Karen Boatright have been very successful in guiding students to write winning letters in the Letters About Literature competition. What is the secret to their success? When asked about their interest in the contest and how they encouraged students, their answers show their love of teaching and their commitment to reading and writing.

Karen Boatright, a Falls City high school teacher with four student winners, said:

“My school librarian shared the contest with me. In pursuing a K-12 Reading master’s degree, I was reminded of the importance of reading and writing because they correlate with one another. The writing prompt was an excellent way to incorporate reading, writing, and thinking. I walked them through the steps, modeling the thinking, brainstorming, writing, re-writing. I also told them that last year we had a state runner-up! They pick a book/author that impacted them because they aren’t writing a summary, they are explaining how the book impacted them. I gave them some examples of books that impacted me and how those books impacted me, then assisted them as they crafted their own responses to books/authors that impacted them.”

Linda Rix, a seventh grade teacher at Omaha’s St. Pius X/St. Leo School with three student winners, commented:

“I first became interested in Letters About Literature several years ago. I was searching for writing contests for my students and ran across the information online. I loved how it connected writing and reading. Because I teach literature and writing at St. Pius X/St. Leo School, our seventh graders have a sustained silent reading time each day. Each quarter, they write about a book they have read during that time. These pieces include a character analysis, a persuasive business letter, and a creative essay. The LAL contest provides them an opportunity to write a different kind of piece. I use the resources provided by LAL to teach reflective writing. I was excited when I learned that Ethan Morrow had won because his older brother, Owen, had also won! I love teaching at St. Pius X/St. Leo School. From the early grades on up, our teachers do an amazing job building strong writers, so by the

time they enter seventh grade, they already have a strong foundation.”

Nancy Svoboda, a teacher at Lincoln’s Irving Middle School with eleven student winners, said:

“I discovered the Letters About Literature contest in 2006. When I read the theme of the contest: *How did an author’s work change your view of the world or yourself?*, I knew immediately that participating in this competition would be an annual requirement for my students. The contest embodies everything I want to impart to and extract from my students: analysis, introspection, and writing skills that communicate their individual voice. I am a full-time mentor at Irving, which means any given year I have the privilege of working with a mix of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders throughout the day. Usually we work one-on-one, but occasionally I work with two students during the same hour. I teach History, Spanish, and English—depending on student/parents preference. No matter what subject a student studies with me, they benefit by participating in LAL. And students from each of the three disciplines have been LAL winners. The benefits derived from analysis, introspection, and writing skills apply to all disciplines. Students get to read each other’s entries *after* submission. I believe this exchange promotes respect for each other as well as for the art of writing and the LAL contest. They literally (pun intended) look forward to the next year’s competition.

Oftentimes, the most difficult part of the process is choosing the book. Students may go through three or four books before finding the one that speaks most deeply to them.

Writing is difficult. Staying honest is often difficult. Keeping to the ‘main thing’ can be difficult. I constantly urge my students to keep their unique voices, but to always communicate with the reader. Students have often told me that the editing phase has been the most eye-opening and useful part of the process. Several of my students were disappointed when LAL’s rules were changed and they took away word limits. Students said they had learned a great deal by seeing the benefits of deleting unnecessary words, sentences, and repetitive thoughts as they edited. Of course, the hoped-for end result of all this is a clean, reflective letter.” 

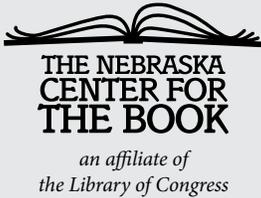
by Molly Fisher,
Nebraska Library
Commission

For more
information about
Letters About
Literature,
see [http://
centerforthebook.
nebraska.gov/
programs/LAL.html](http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/LAL.html).
To learn more about
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The NCB News

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Celebrate Nebraska Books October 21, 2017
<http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/programs/celebration.html>

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DRIVE

It's time to renew your NCB membership.
President Sherry Houston recently sent out membership renewal reminders. Please show your support and send your check now to the Nebraska Center for the Book.
Membership form on page 3.

CURRENT RESIDENT OR:

Calendar of Events:



View the complete Nebraska Literary Calendar at centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/get_involved/calendar.html. Send items for the calendar to tessa.terry@nebraska.gov.

- Library Card Sign-up Month** September nationwide
Contact: <http://www.ala.org/conferencesevents/celebrationweeks/card>
- 2017 National Book Festival**..... September 2 Washington, D.C.
Contact: <http://www.loc.gov/bookfest/>
- “Oh/Pioneers” Play by A.P. Andrews** September 8-10 Red Cloud
Contact: <https://www.willacather.org/events/oh/pioneers-play-ap-andrews>,
866-731-7304
- Write on the River, with Karen Gettert Shoemaker and Amy Hassinger** September 28-October 1.. Brownville
Contact: 402-489-0859, larksongwritersplace@gmail.com,
<http://karenshoemaker.com/workshops/writeontheriver.html>
- Plum Creek Children’s Literacy Festival Adult Conference** September 30 Seward
Contact: 402-643-7483, Dylan.Teut@cune.edu,
<http://www.cune.edu/about/conferences-and-camps/plumcreek/>
- Banned Books Week**..... September 24-30 nationwide
Contact: <http://www.ala.org/bbooks>
- Mari Sandoz Conference: Nebraska 150 and the Future**..... September 28-30 Chadron
Contact: http://www.marisandoz.org/events_activities/2017_conference/,
402-499-3703, echase@windstream.net
- 22nd Annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities: T.J. Stiles “It Happened Here: Why National Conflicts Have Centered on the Great Plains”** October 3 Omaha
Contact: 402-474-2131, Erika@humanitiesnebraska.org,
<http://humanitiesnebraska.org/program/governors-lecture/>
- One Author Kearney, featuring William Kent Krueger** October 10 Kearney
Contact: <https://visitkearney.org/event/one-author-william-kent-krueger>,
cwalsh@kearneygov.org,
- Nebraska Library Association/Nebraska School Librarians Association Conference** ... October 11-13 Kearney
Contact: <http://www.nebraskalibraries.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=966227>,
NLAexecutivedirector@gmail.com
- NE Center for the Book’s Celebration of Nebraska Books** October 21 Lincoln
Annual Meeting at 1:30 p.m.
Contact: maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov, 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665,
<http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov>, www.facebook.com/NebraskaCenterfortheBook

