

The NCB News

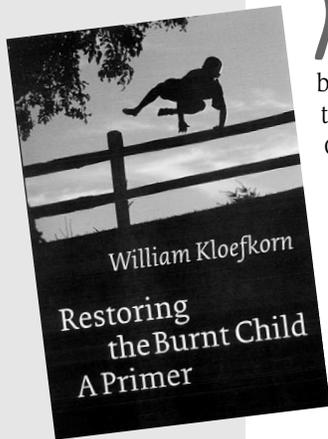
Volume 18

Winter 2007-2008

No. 1

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Restoring the Burnt Child is 2008 One Book



Nebraskans are invited to read the contemporary memoir, **Restoring the Burnt Child**, by Nebraska State Poet Bill Kloefkorn, as a part of the 2008 One Book One Nebraska statewide read. Gov. Dave Heineman launched the statewide initiative with a proclamation encouraging all residents of Nebraska to participate by reading the book, joining community book discussion groups, and participating in local community events.

One Book One Nebraska 2008 is sponsored by a coalition of organizations including the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska

Humanities Council, Nebraska Library Association, Nebraska Library Commission, and University of Nebraska Press. Local libraries and other cultural organizations are participating in One Book One Nebraska events throughout 2008. A lively discussion is under way on the Nebraska Library Commission Blog (www.nlc.state.ne.us/blogs/NLC/books_reading), titled "What tools would help libraries take advantage of the One Book One State opportunity?"

The author will participate in a statewide tour. Contact him at 402-486-0256. For more information see www.onebookonenebraska.org.

Literacy Festival Honored at Annual Meeting

Plum Creek Literacy Festival, hosted annually by Concordia College, was awarded the Jane Pope Geske Award for exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, bookselling, and writing in Nebraska. "We are so honored to be among the winners of the Jane Geske award," said Vikki Gremel, festival coordinator. "From the beginning, our mission was to bring children and authors together to encourage the love of reading, writing, and books. It is wonderful to have that accomplishment recognized by the Center."

The award was presented to Dr. Leah Serck, one of the festival founders, and Gremel at the 2007 Nebraska

Center for the Book annual membership meeting held in October in Lincoln. The award itself is a print titled "Four Dancers" by Randy Waln, art professor at Peru State College. Each year a different piece of art from a Nebraska artist is selected as the award.

The award, established by the Nebraska Center for the Book and presented annually, commemorates Geske's passion for books. It was established in recognition of her contribution to the well-being of the libraries in Nebraska. Jane Geske was a founding

member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, a former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, and a long-time leader in Nebraska library and literary activities.

Nominations are now open for the 2008 award to honor a Nebraska association, organization, business, library, school, academic institution, or other group that has made an exceptional long-term contribution to the Nebraska community



Norman Geske, husband of the late Jane Geske, helps Vikki Gremel (center), and Dr. Leah Serck, display the 2007 Jane Geske Award.

of the book in regard to literacy, books, reading, libraries, bookselling, and/or writing. To nominate an organization, contact Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director, 402-471-4001, 800-307-2665, e-mail: rwagner@nlc.state.ne.us.

Incoming President Encourages Membership Involvement

**Guest Editorial
by Sharon
Bishop,**
Nebraska Center
for the Book
President

*"I owe
everything I am
and everything
that I ever will be
to books."*

Gary Paulsen

I am one of the lucky ones who learned early in life the pleasure of reading. My mom was an avid reader and she passed on that love to all of her children by telling us stories and reading to us. As a long-time English teacher, I can quickly identify my students lucky enough to have been given that heritage too. Even in this digital age, educators know that reading is central to academic success.

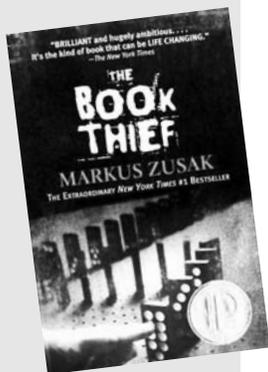
The work of the Center for the Book in Nebraska is a vital part of spreading that "gospel" of books and reading across our state. I first heard of the Center for the Book several years ago when I attended the literary festivals held at various locations across Nebraska. I was always so invigorated by these festivals but I did not fully appreciate the work that goes into planning each one! In my work with the Nebraska Writing Project, I have co-facilitated several summer rural writing institutes in small schools in rural areas. The importance of libraries to these rural areas is vital. My small town does not have a library and I am fortunate to have to drive only fifteen miles to access a wonderful library. I think that the work of small libraries should be celebrated, and through the

Nebraska Center for the Book, I have met several of these hardworking librarians who are devoted to their work.

I come to this position on the board at an exciting time. I am impressed with the quality and interests of other board members. I have been reminded through these diverse interests of the importance of bookstores and small presses, and the support of the Nebraska Library Commission and Nebraska Humanities Council. The addition of Michael Cartwright as director of the annual book festival was made before I joined the board, but Mike has brought new ideas and enthusiasm for this important showcase for Nebraska's literary heritage.

I know that I will continue to learn from this vibrant and knowledgeable group of people, led by the guidance of Rod Wagner, Nebraska Library Commission Director. My goals for this next year are to continue to work with the board to bring attention to books and reading in Nebraska. I encourage all members of the Nebraska Center for the Book to get involved in this exciting work!

One Book for Nebraska Teens 2008 Under Way



Librarians, teachers, parents, and students across the state are encouraged to read and discuss *The Book Thief*, by Markus Zusak. The Nebraska Library Commission is distributing book bags containing fifteen paperback copies and one DVD of the book, along with discussion questions and background information. To borrow the book bags,

contact Nebraska Library Commission Information and Reference Services, 402-471-4016, 800-307-2665, e-mail: ready@nlc.state.ne.us or the Regional Library Systems. For more information contact Sally Snyder, 402-471-4003, 800-307-2665, e-mail: ssnyder@nlc.state.ne.us.

The **NCB News**

Vol. 18 • Winter 2007-2008 • No. 1

Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

Executive Committee

Sharon Bishop, President; Linda Trout, Past President; Garry Alkire, Vice President; Lupe Mier, Treasurer; Ellen Scott, Secretary; Rod Wagner (*ex-officio*)

Funding/Membership

Lupe Mier, Treasurer; Sherry Houston, Chair; Sharon Bishop, President

Nebraska Book Festival

Mel Krutz, Past President; Garry Alkire, Chair; J.V. Brummels; Michael Cartwright; Richard Graham; Erika Hamilton; Nancy Johnson; Marge Saiser

Programs/Projects

Sharon Bishop; Becky Faber; Ellen Scott, Secretary; Carolyn Clark; Rod Wagner (*ex-officio*)

Publications/Publicity

Linda Trout, Chair; Molly Fisher; Judith E. Thornton-Jarunge; Mary Jo Ryan; staff

Awards Art Coordinator

Denise Brady

Letters About Literature Coordinator

Laureen Reidesel

2007 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

February 16 Bellevue, 9:30 a.m.
May 31 Hastings, 9:30 a.m.
August 9 Scottsbluff, 9:00 a.m.
November 8 York, 9:30 a.m.

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 May 1, August 15, and November 1. 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; phone 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665, e-mail: mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us.
www.unl.edu/NCB.

The NCB News is published three times each year by the Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023. Subscription is free with membership. Editor: Linda Trout
Design and Production: Reynold Peterson
Staff: Mary Jo Ryan, Nancy Evans, Janet Greser

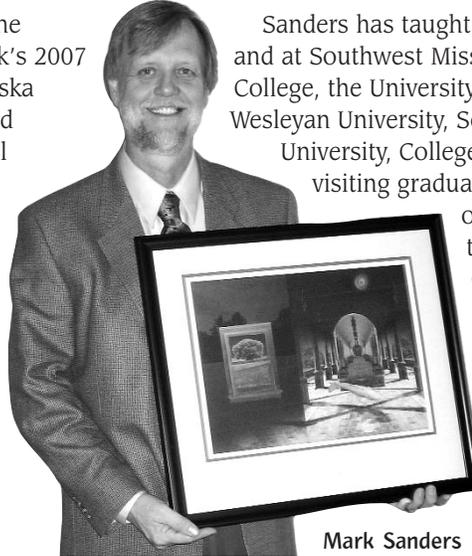
All book cover art and photos reprinted by permission of the publisher.

*This publication is
made possible by
Library Services and
Technology Act
funding through the
U.S. Institute of
Museum and Library
Services, administered
by the Nebraska
Library Commission.*



Mark Sanders Wins 2007 Mildred Bennett Award

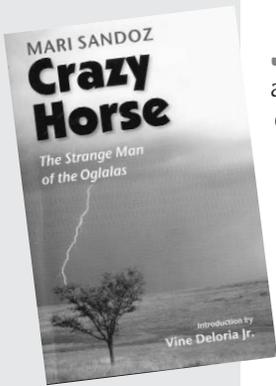
Mark Sanders was presented the Nebraska Center for the Book's 2007 Mildred Bennett Award at the Nebraska Book Festival in Lincoln. The Mildred Bennett Award is given at the annual festival, by the Nebraska Center for the Book, to an individual who provides leadership and service in the promotion of Nebraska literature. Poet, essayist, story writer, and editor Sanders is a Nebraska native, born in Creighton in 1955 and raised in Ord. He holds bachelors and masters degrees in English from Kearney State College, and a PhD in Modern Poetry from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Mark Sanders

Sanders has taught in Nebraska high schools and at Southwest Missouri State University, Tarkio College, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Southwestern Oklahoma State University, College of the Mainland, and as a visiting graduate professor at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. He now teaches at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho, where he is Professor of English and director of the Publishing Arts Program. His poems, stories, and essays have been published in journals in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and Australia.

Evaluations Guide One Book One Nebraska Future



As we end our yearlong reading of *Crazy Horse: Strange Man of the Oglalas* by Mari Sandoz and prepare for a year of reading *Restoring the Burnt Child* by Nebraska State Poet Bill Kloefkorn, we turn to evaluations from last year's readers. Notes from schoolchildren who used the book kits convinced us that it is important to have multiple copies of the book to share all over the state. Blog entries from librarians led us to work with Bill Kloefkorn and the University of Nebraska Press to make an audio book available for Nebraska library customers. Recording and distributing the audio book is under way. The blog entries also convinced us that the sooner the Website and print materials are available

in 2008, the better. The University Press has arranged for a designer to develop these tools.

Written evaluations told us that most people hear about One Book One Nebraska from libraries and newspapers. This helps us focus our promotions on those sources of information. Since evaluations also informed us that discussion questions are extremely important to the readers, the Press printed the questions in the paperback version of the book and graciously speeded up production to have the paperback available at the first of the year. A majority of the participants in discussion groups indicated that they plan to participate again this year. With the reflection on One Book One Nebraska 2007 on page 9, we move on to 2008.

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

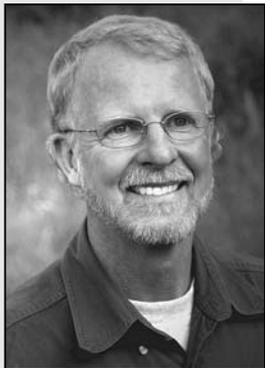
Name _____ Address _____
Phone _____ E-Mail: _____

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

___ \$15 Individual Membership ___ \$25 Organizational Membership ___ \$50 Octavo Membership
___ \$100 Quarto Membership ___ \$250 Folio Membership

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

Ben Mikaelson to Visit Nebraska in April



Ben Mikaelson

The Nebraska Library Commission will bring children's author **Ben Mikaelson** to Nebraska for an **April statewide author tour**. Mikaelson will present programs for schoolchildren and the general public in ten Nebraska communities, in cooperation with the Regional Library Systems.

Ben Mikaelson has won the International Reading Association Award and the Western Writer's Golden Spur Award. In addition, his novels have won many state Reader's Choice Awards, including the 1995 Nebraska Golden Sower Award. Mikaelson is the author of *Rescue Josh McGuire*, Nebraska's 2007 One Book for Nebraska Kids selection. He lives in a log cabin near Bozeman, Montana, with a 750-pound black bear that he adopted and has raised for the last twenty-five years. For more information see his Website, www.benmikaelson.com.

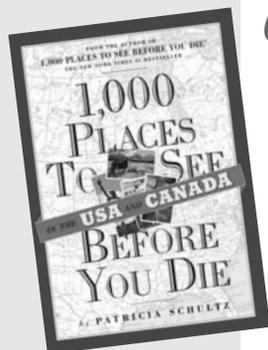
School visits (not open to the public) are set for Broken Bow, DeWitt: Tri-County Schools, Elgin, Fremont, Gretna, Hastings, Ogallala, and Plainview.

Public Library programs for the general public include:

- Ogallala, Goodall City Library: *Becoming the Author of Your Own Life* – April 14, 4:00 p.m.
- Hildreth Public Library: *Becoming the Author of Your Own Life* – April 15, 4:00-5:00 p.m.
- Holdrege Area Public Library: *Becoming the Author of Your Own Life* – April 15, 7:00 p.m.
- Mahoney State Park: *Research—Finding the Heart of the Story* – April 16, 7:00 p.m.

For more information about the tour, contact Sally Snyder (see contact information on page 2) or Sherry Houston, 402-462-1975.

Catherland featured in *1,000 Places to See in the U.S.A. and Canada before You Die*



Some of Nebraska's most distinctive tourist attractions made it into the second book by author Patricia Schultz, who wrote the *New York Times* best-seller *1,000 Places to See before You Die*, one of the most successful travel books in recent history. Along with highlighting Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Omaha Steaks, the book also

features sections on Red Cloud's Cather Foundation and the legacy of author Willa Cather.

Schultz's first book spent a staggering one hundred and sixty-two weeks on the best-seller list. It is the basis of a new reality television show of the same name on the Travel Channel, and attracts visitors to Nebraska literary sites at www.1000beforeyoudie.com.

American Life in Poetry: Column 141

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



Life becomes more complicated every day, and each of us can control only so much of what happens. As for the rest? Poet Thomas R. Smith of Wisconsin offers some practical advice.

Trust

*It's like so many other things in life
to which you must say no or yes.
So you take your car to the new mechanic.
Sometimes the best thing to do is trust.*

*The package left with the disreputable-looking
clerk, the check gulped by the night deposit,
the envelope passed by dozens of strangers--
all show up at their intended destinations.*

*The theft that could have happened doesn't.
Wind finally gets where it was going*

*through the snowy trees, and the river, even
when frozen, arrives at the right place.*

*And sometimes you sense how faithfully your life
is delivered, even though you can't read the address.*

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 (c) 2003 by Thomas R. Smith. Reprinted from "Waking before Dawn," Thomas R. Smith, Red Dragonfly Press, 2007, by permission of the author. Introduction copyright (c) 2007 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. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts.

Poetry Contest Open to Nebraskans

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery announces the **Nebraska Poets on Sheldon Paintings** Contest, in conjunction with the **Poets on Painters** exhibition on view April 26 through June 29.

A cash prize will be awarded in each of four categories for the best poem written about a painting or paintings in the Sheldon collection. Submissions from Nebraska poets (published and unpublished), writers, and students will be accepted. To view paintings visit the museum or www.sheldon.unl.edu, click on Collection.

The contest categories are:

- Students, grade K-5
- Students, grade 6-8
- Students, grade 9-12
- Adults, 18 and older

Participants may submit up to three poems. Each poem must respond to a specific Sheldon painting. Note the painting's title in a note at the bottom of the poem. Submissions should be original, unpublished work. (They may have appeared in student periodicals.) Simultaneous submissions are accepted, but the contest is to be notified immediately if a poem is accepted for publication elsewhere.

A \$3 entry fee, payable to the Nebraska Art Association, must accompany each submission. Each entrant should send only one manuscript envelope. Manuscripts should be typewritten (one side only) on 8 1/2" x 11" paper and accompanied by a cover sheet with the following information: title of the poem(s), contest category, and poet's name, address, phone number, e-mail address (if available), grade level, and academic institution (if applicable). Only the title should appear on the manuscript itself. Manuscripts will not be returned, but will be recycled. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for announcement of the winners.

Entries must be sent via USPS and postmarked by March 1, 2008. Winners will be announced via the Website on or before April 15. Winners will receive notification in April. For questions about the contest, e-mail: sheldonpoetrycontest@unl.edu. Funding from the Nebraska Arts Council made this contest possible. Send submissions by March 1 to:

Nebraska Poets on Sheldon Paintings
 Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery
 P.O. Box 880300
 Lincoln, NE 68588-0300

Nebraska Federal Writers' Project Featured

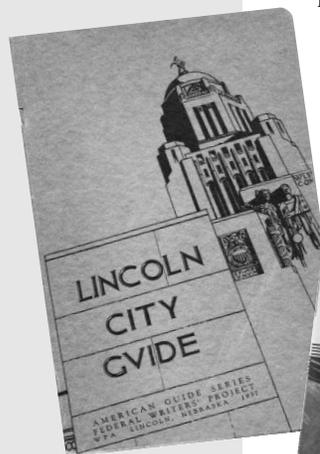
A new Web exhibit, "The Nebraska Federal Writers' Project: Remembering Writers of the 1930s," is now live on Lincoln City Libraries' Jane Pope Geske Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors Website. The Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was part of the Roosevelt administration's evolving New Deal program. The Writers' Project was a work relief project established in each state. It produced the *American Guide Series* by employing writers, editors, researchers, map-

makers, clerks, and other white collar workers to research and write detailed guides to the people, geography, history, resources, traditions, and achievements of that state.

The productivity and quality of work achieved by the Nebraska Writers' Project reflected the influence of Lowry

Wimberly, his *Prairie Schooner*, Mari Sandoz, Addison Sheldon of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and Louise Pound. They nurtured a sophisticated interest in folklore, local history, and the natural world. The Nebraska Writers' Project was built on the foundation of this developing regionalism. To see more about the Nebraska Writers' Project, view the exhibit at www.lincolnllibraries.org/depts/hr/wpa.

This project was funded through a Nebraska Library Commission Library Improvement Grant. The digitized images from this project were contributed to the Nebraska Library Commission's *Nebraska Memories* (www.nebraskamemories.org), a cooperative Web-based collection of digitized Nebraska-related historical and cultural heritage materials. This project was supported in part by the United States Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered through the Nebraska Library Commission. For more information about the *Nebraska Memories* project, contact Shannon White, Nebraska Library Commission Network Services Director, 402-471-4031, 800-307-2665, or e-mail: swhite@nlc.state.ne.us.



Doris Lessing – In and Out of Africa

by **Oliver B. Pollak**,
University of
Nebraska at
Omaha

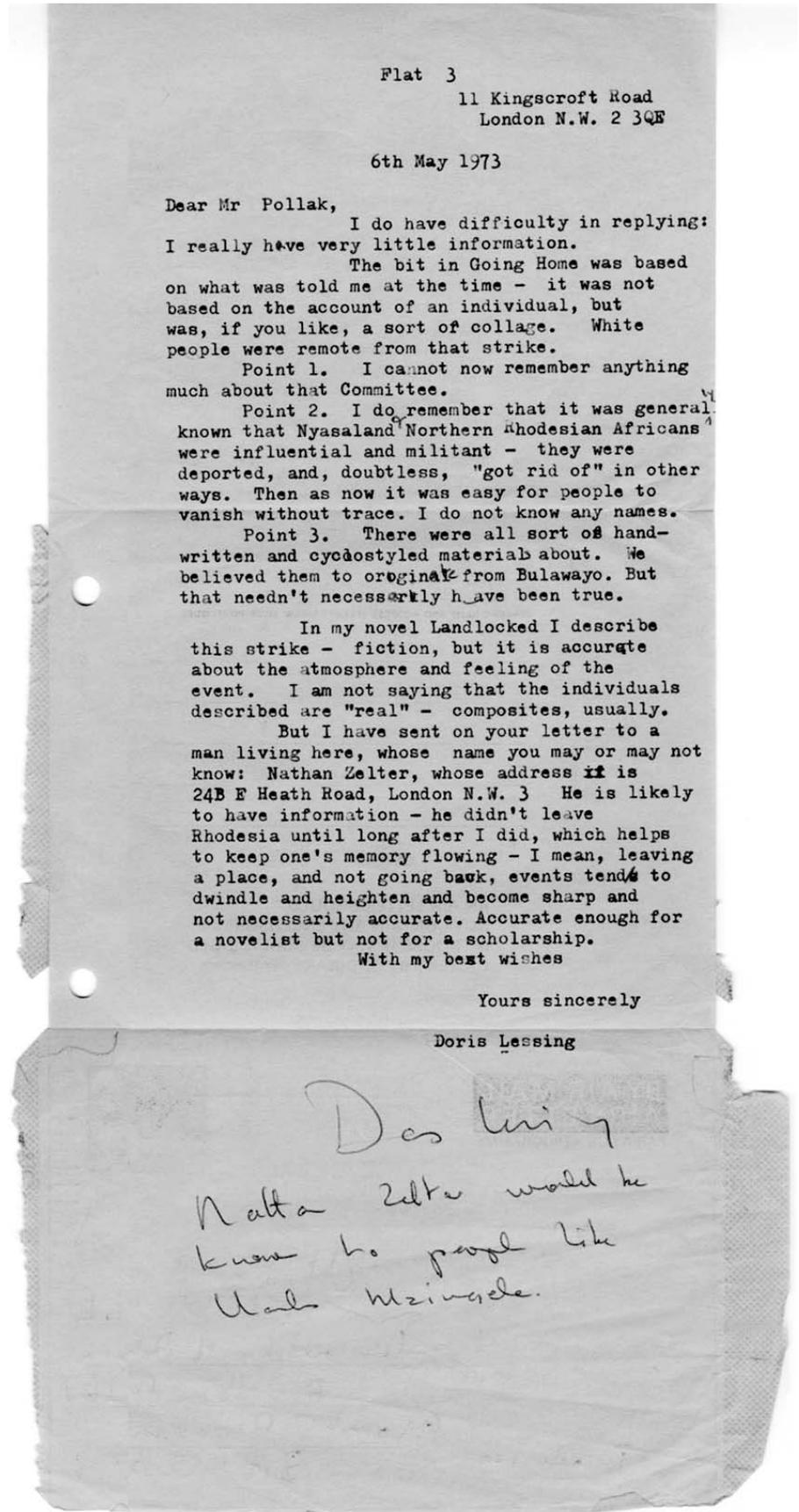
I arrived in Salisbury in 1971 to teach history at the University of Rhodesia. I found a copy of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* (1951) at a garage sale for 15 cents and became an immediate fan. I have been advocating her Nobel qualities for more than twenty-five years.

Lessing's description of Zimbabwe's 1948 African General Strike baffled me. I wrote her for clarification. She graciously responded in the letter shown at right.

She deftly revealed the writer's craft, mixing experience and imagination, and crowding multiple people into an enormous character. The 2007 Nobel Prize gave precedence to her 1961 novel, *The Golden Notebook*. I read it on two recent round-trips to Southern California. Phenomenal!

Salisbury became Harare, Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. Lessing's acute account of human sentiment is as vibrant today as it was fifty years ago. She needs no updating or decolonizing.

"The Nobility of Doris Lessing," an exhibit curated by Gayle Roberts, will be on display at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Criss Library through March 2008. For more information see library.unomaha.edu/aboutthelibrary/calendar/exhibits.php. ♦♦



Browsing at the Library

by Robert
Trautwein,
Columbus Public
Library

If I were a library patron rather than a librarian, every two weeks or so I'd plan to spend part of an afternoon or an evening at the public library. The majority of my time there would be occupied reading magazines and newspapers. Just before leaving, I would browse the New Book racks and select two or three fiction titles, and maybe two non-fiction books to take home. I'm not saying that I would read every one of those books. With some, I would probably only scan the book jacket and maybe check the table of contents for interesting-sounding chapters. I'm not a believer in reading every last word in a book. I've always considered books—both fiction and non-fiction—as a smorgasbord with many tasty treats. Just as with any buffet, you may select an appetizing, but bland, morsel that can be left on the plate as you move on to the next selection.

Whenever I reminisce about my college days at the University of Idaho, I have fond memories of the two hours a week I allowed myself to relax and read in the magazine and newspaper room at the campus library. I developed a routine of spending a portion of every Wednesday evening perusing the periodicals. There never seemed to be a test on Thursday. It was a way for me to catch up on the news and read editorials and other articles to expand my college universe. When I look back at that time with the magazines, I often wonder if I gained more knowledge there, in the magazine room at the library, than in the classrooms.

There are quite a few people here in Columbus that do just what I desire to do. Their visits are so regular that you know what day of the week it is by their presence. Maybe it's always on a Wednesday afternoon or a Thursday evening that I see him or her. After a few sightings, I know that this patron has developed a library-visiting pattern to expand his awareness beyond the mediocre insight provided by television newscasters.

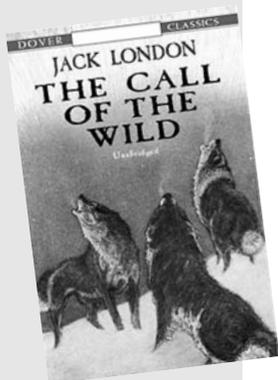
The first floor reading room is practically filled on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Sometimes there is a waiting line for those who wish to read the *Wall Street Journal* or last Sunday's *New York Times*. In the past few years, the *National Enquirer* has developed a devoted readership. And that's not all bad, as the *Enquirer* always provides good conversation starters back at home or at a social gathering.

Regarding books I would take home, I want to renew the kind of devotion I once had to contemporary authors. Years ago, I read everything published by Leon Uris, James Michener, Phillip Roth, and Kurt Vonnegut. It would be great to latch on to some newer authors and read their previous work as well as the most recently published books. Currently, I read everything written by mystery writer Walter Mosely, and I am really taken by Khaled Hosseini, the author of *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. While I'm not heavy into theology, I've read practically everything written by Marcus Borg. There are many other authors worthy of my attention. I'm reminded of the adage, "...too many books, not enough time."

The non-fiction books in my "Friends" book bag would include at least one travel guide and maybe some how-to-make-it volumes. For sure, I would include a cookbook as it's a gastronomic delight for me to scan through recipes to find one that sounds incredibly tasty. Those discoveries are always photocopied and given to my wife, who is willing to experiment with foods and spices.

As a librarian, books have, unfortunately, become a commodity to be purchased and promoted to others. Someday, it will be my turn to slide into a routine of weekly or bi-weekly visits to the library to learn about the world and current events from the written word and to select morsels to take home and savor. You're invited to join me at the banquet. ♦

Omaha Public Library Partners with Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo



Omaha is one of 127 communities nationwide participating in **The Big Read 2008**. Through March 15, Omaha will celebrate Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* with a full calendar of events including a kickoff at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo along with signature events, including book lectures and discussions.

The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts, in partnership with the United States Institute of Museum and Library Services, designed to revitalize the role of literature

in American culture and bring the transformative power of literature into the lives of its citizens. The Big Read brings together community partners to encourage citizens to read for pleasure and enlightenment. More information can be found at www.neabigread.org.

See www.omahapubliclibrary.org/events/programs/bigread2.html for a complete listing of Omaha activities. For more information about applying for The Big Read grants, see www.neabigread.org/application_process.php. ♦

Review:

River

by **Lowen Clausen**,
Silo Press, 2008

ISBN: 978-0972581127

Review by **Jane Smith**,
The Lyceum

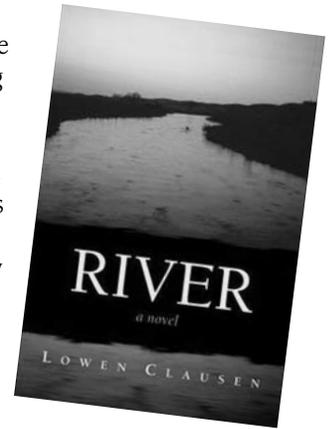
Nebraska native Lowen Clausen's new novel, *River*, has a deceptively simple title and a complex storyline that weaves a tale of self-discovery with an epic journey. The journey begins when the narrator, a Sandhills rancher, launches his kayak in the Loup River that courses through the ranch where he was born and it ends as he finds his way down the Platte, the Missouri, the Mississippi and, finally, to the ocean. Along the way he comes to a truce with himself and the ghost of his estranged son, who died trying to win his respect. Any parent who has experienced the death of a child will feel a deep empathy for him in his search for meaning.

Clausen got the inspiration for his fourth novel from a kayak trip he and his daughter, Sonya, made in 2002 down the inland rivers to the Gulf of Mexico. In a subsequent solo kayak trip, he stopped several days in Brownville and won the affection of the

town's people. He wrote the opening and ending lines of the book in a tent on the Missouri River. His almost poetic description of the rivers and the land along them enhance the story of the novel's narrator as he journeys through grief to understanding.

Ed. Note:

Lowen Clausen has been invited to a February reading and discussion of his book at The Lyceum in Brownville, see www.brownvillelyceum.com for details.



Review:

Beyond Madness:

The Art of Ralph Blakelock, 1847-1919

by **Norman A. Geske**,
University of
Nebraska Press,
2007

ISBN: 978-0-8032-2207-6

Review by
Roger Holmes,
Lincoln

The most important person in the fine arts in Nebraska during the past fifty years (perhaps the entire 20th century) is not a painter or sculptor, printmaker or performance artist. Norman Geske, best known as the longtime director of the Sheldon Art Gallery and a driving force behind its creation, trails in his wake a list of accomplishments that could fill this entire newsletter. Those activities have touched, in one way or another, every artist and every art lover in the state for a very long time. It's also safe to say that Geske has tickled or punched the art button of tens of thousands who wouldn't otherwise have known they had such a button.

Geske's remarkable influence draws from fifty years of enriching a wonderful collection at the Sheldon, shepherding numerous exhibitions through its galleries and those of outposts around the state, and all sorts of public proselytizing for the arts. But that influence has deeper roots. Recently, with a large group of admirers, I followed Geske around an exhibition of drawings he had selected for Modern Arts Midwest, a gallery in Lincoln's Haymarket. He spoke

for an hour, without notes, commenting on many individual works and the artists who made them. He spoke with enthusiasm, precision, passion, and humor; not once resorting to formulaic "artspeak."

Many reading this newsletter will know Norman Geske personally or through his tireless activities in the state. (The man is 92 and shows no signs of slowing down!) If, like me, you are less familiar with Geske's academic works, a look at *Beyond Madness* will be rewarding. Geske has been studying the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century American painter Ralph Blakelock for decades and this volume is the culmination, in print at least, of his efforts. I admit that I began reading the book because I knew the author, not the subject. But I was rewarded on both accounts. I'm now itching to see more of Blakelock, a remarkable painter and precursor to all sorts of 20th-century painting that I admire. (There are lots of photos in the book, but they are just photos...) Geske's clear-eyed, work-centered approach seems to me particularly well suited to this artist, whose troubled life has diverted some critics from the paintings themselves. Geske is mindful of the artist's life and times, but he doesn't ask Blakelock's life to explain his art or his art to explain his life. Geske speaks of the work itself and with his guidance it speaks to us—a service he's rendered countless times for all of us lucky Nebraskans.



Imagine the National Book Festival 2007

by **Linda Trout**,
Omaha Public
Library

Imagine fifteen, or more, very large tent pavilions filled with people listening to award-winning authors discuss their books, purchasing copies of their favorite festival authors' current works, or learning about the fifty state Centers for the Book. This was the setting for the National Book Festival held on the National Mall in Washington D.C., on September 29. More than 150,000 people attended the festival, which featured seventy award-winning authors. In its seventh year, the National Book Festival is an annual event celebrating the joy of reading. This year's Festival was hosted

Nebraska authors and storytelling festivals, state maps, and crayons made from Nebraska soybeans. A map was available for young people to take to each booth to obtain a stamp or sticker to highlight each state. Both children and their parents enjoyed completing their goal of getting all fifty states represented. The Pavilion of the States was sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The National Book Festival was an incredible day where people from all over the United States came together to celebrate the joy of reading and the power of the written word.

Ed. Note:

This year's festival is set for September 20. Watch the Festival Website, www.loc.gov/bookfest, for updates on plans for the 2008 Festival.



Devra Dragos (left), introduces youth and adults to Nebraska writers.

by First Lady Laura Bush and was sponsored by the Library of Congress and the National Center for the Book.

Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB) was represented with a booth in the Pavilion of the States along with the forty-nine other state Centers for the Book. Each state distributed materials that demonstrated how their state promotes reading, books, literacy and libraries. NCB handouts included information about



The Story Behind the Story

by **Ann Greenia**,
Mari Sandoz
High Plains
Heritage Center,
Chadron State
College

In 1940, Mari Sandoz dedicated her book, *Crazy Horse*, to Eleanor Hinman. Who was Eleanor Hinman? Where was she from and why did she relinquish all of her biographical work on Crazy Horse to Mari Sandoz?

Eleanor Hinman was the daughter of the chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and graduated from there in 1920. She also worked on the staff of various newspapers in Omaha and Lincoln and was able to secure a rare interview with the author Willa Cather, in November of 1921, for the *Lincoln Sunday Star*. The two authors met through a women's writing group called "The Quill" that met semimonthly at the old Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln. Mari joined "The Quill" in 1929 and Eleanor and Mari soon became very close friends.

When Mari and Eleanor met, they realized they both shared a very strong interest in Native American history and culture. Eleanor soon shared with Mari that she had been researching and working on a biography about Crazy Horse. In the foreword of Mari

Sandoz's book, *Crazy Horse*, Mari writes about a three-thousand-mile fact-finding journey that the two friends decided to make together in 1930. The focus of the journey was to research Crazy Horse by interviewing Native Americans that had known the great leader. The journey was considered a success, with the authors securing several interviews with individuals that had known Crazy Horse.

On two separate occasions, Eleanor offered her work on *Crazy Horse* to Mari, once in 1938 and again in 1940. In Helen Winter Stauffer's book, *Story Catcher of the Plains*, Stauffer notes that it was possibly a lack of time and money to travel to Washington, D.C., to research the national archives that caused Eleanor Hinman to fail to finish her biography on Crazy Horse. Eleanor was a published author in her own right, but believed that Mari was the superior author to complete the *Crazy Horse* work. We will never know what Eleanor Hinman's biography on Crazy Horse might have encompassed. What we do know is that due to her dedication and loyalty to her friend Mari Sandoz, our literary world is a richer place because of her sacrifice.



The Take Off - unidentified woman and Mari Sandoz (r.)

From the Caroline Sandoz Pifer Collection - Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center, Chadron State College, Chadron, NE



The NCB News



THE NEBRASKA CENTER FOR THE BOOK

an affiliate of the Library of
Congress

c/o Nebraska Library Commission
The Atrium
1200 N Street, Suite 120
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-2023
34-00-00

NONPROFIT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 988
Lincoln, NE

Tell us how our Website works for you,
www.unl.edu/NCB



Calendar of Events:

- Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meeting** February 16 Bellevue
Contact: Nebraska Library Commission, 800-307-2665, mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us
- Paul A. Olson Seminar: *Permanence and Transmission: Willa Cather's Entropology*,**
with Guy Reynolds February 20 Lincoln
Contact: Center for Great Plains Studies, Kim Weide, 402-472-3964,
kweide@unlnotes.edu, www.unl.edu/plains/seminars/Olson/olsonseminars.shtml
- John H. Ames Reading Series: Rajean Luebs Shepherd** February 21 Lincoln
Contact: Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8516, m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org,
www.lincolnlibraries.org/depts/hr/ames.htm
- Nebraska State Reading Conference** February 21-23 Kearney
Contact: Julie Kozisek, julie.kozisek@doane.edu, www.nereads.org/conference/index.html
- Sunday Afternoon at the Museum: Traveling with Lewis and Clark in the 21st Century**
with Jeff Troupe February 24 Bancroft
Contact: John G. Neihardt State Historical Site, 402-648-3388,
neihardt@gpcom.net, www.neihardtcenter.org
- Affordable Remodel, Fernando Page Ruiz Signing** March 2 Lincoln
Contact: Linda Hillegas, Lee Booksellers, 402-420-1919, info@leebooksellers.com,
www.leebooksellers.com
- Teen Tech Week: Get Connected @ Your Library®** March 2-8 Nationwide
Contact: American Library Association, wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Tech_Week
- Lunch at the Library: Brent Spencer** March 5 Lincoln
Contact: Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8516,
m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org, www.lincolnlibraries.org/depts/hr/lunch.htm
- Omaha Public Library Friends Book Sale** March 6-8 Omaha
Contact: omahalibraryfriends@gmail.com
- Stay Home and Read a Book Ball:** March 9 Lincoln
Contact: Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries, info@lclf.org, www.foundationforlcl.org
- Irish Stories** March 16 Omaha
Contact: Omaha StoryArts, gteten@tconl.com, www.nebraskastoryarts.org/events.html
- John H. Ames Reading Series: Ted Kooser** March 20 Lincoln
Contact: Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8516, m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org,
www.lincolnlibraries.org/depts/hr/ames.htm
- Liar's Contest at The Bookworm** March 30 Omaha
Contact: Omaha StoryArts, gteten@tconl.com, www.nebraskastoryarts.org/events.html
- Lunch at the Library: Chaparral Poets.** April 2 Lincoln
Contact: Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, Lincoln City Libraries, 402-441-8516,
m.mcgowan@lincolnlibraries.org, www.lincolnlibraries.org/depts/hr/lunch.htm