

The **NCB** News

Volume 9

Spring 1999

No. 1

A Publication of the Nebraska Center for the Book

Nebraska Literature Festival 1999

by **Katherine
Walter**, Chair,
Serials
Department,
University of NE-
Lincoln Libraries

Mark your calendar now! *The Eighth Nebraska Literature Festival will be held September 17-18 in Chadron at the recently completed Chadron State College Student Center. This multistate celebration, hosted by Chadron State College and Oglala Lakota College (of South Dakota) will focus on the theme, "Crossing Borders: Geographical, Ethnic, and Literary Frontiers in Plains Literature."*

Andrew Elkins (Chadron State College Dept. of Language and Literature) and Deb Carpenter (Oglala Lakota College) will coordinate a program planning committee including representatives from the two colleges, Pine Ridge SD High School, and Chadron High School.

Friday, September 17 will be High School Day, with programming open to high school students from

across the state. The general public is invited to attend events Friday evening and all day Saturday, September 18. A book fair will be held in conjunction with the Festival. More information about the program will be announced in the next issue of *NCB News*.

The region is rich in scenic and historical attractions, including the Pine Ridge area, the Nebraska National Forest, Chadron State Park, Fort Robinson State Park, the Museum of the Fur Trade, Toadstool Park, Agate Fossil Beds National Monument, and other sites. Chadron is also a short drive from the Black Hills and Mt. Rushmore National Monument. Half-day tours of Mari Sandoz country (in the nearby Sandhills) and Fort Robinson (site of Crazy Horse's death) will be offered at a modest additional registration fee. Funding for the Festival is provided by the Nebraska Center for the Book, the Nebraska Humanities Council, Chadron State College, Oglala Lakota College, and the Mari Sandoz Society. ▲

Governor's Mansion Library Rejuvenated

by **Gerry Cox**,
Chair, Publications
Committee,
Nebraska Center
for the Book

After the Nebraska Governor's Mansion was completed in 1957, the Nebraska Public Library Commission asked Nebraska libraries to contribute books to fill the shelves of the new Governor's Mansion library. The library was dedicated by First Lady Darlene Brooks during National Library Week in 1959.

Forty years later, the Mansion has undergone a much-needed renovation, resulting in a place of beauty and pride for Nebraska's first family, visitors, and guests. As part of the 1998 Governor's Residence Restoration Project, First Lady Diane Nelson initiated a rejuvenation of the Mansion library. The Nebraska Library Commission, Lincoln City Libraries' Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors, and the Nebraska Center for the Book coordinated the project. Libraries, library foundations, and library friends groups contributed books to update the Mansion library.

They donated books for display and reading that showcase the best of books by Nebraskans, books about Nebraska, or the book arts made in Nebraska. The library was presented to the public at a reception on



Author Jean Sanders presents First Lady Diane Nelson with a copy of her book for the Mansion Library.

November 19, 1998. Fifty-four donors (including libraries, presses and publishing companies, authors, and private citizens) contributed 215 titles by local, as well as nationally known, best-selling authors. ▲

NCB Quarterly Becomes NCB News

by Gerry Cox,
Editor, NCB News

Spring greetings from the first edition of the *NCB News* and a hearty thank you to the perceptive readers who entered the highly suspenseful competition which began a year ago to rename the *NCB Quarterly*, now published three times a year. At that time Editor Linda Hillegass sought a change in name, "something snappier, more friendly, and more expressive of our focus on books." Her plea brought imaginative names such as *All Booked Up*, *Booked Solid*, *Booking*, *Delicious Discourse*, *Print Charming*, *Print of Tales*, and *Storybearded*.

Readers who entered the contest to rename the *NCB Quarterly* were vying for a \$25 gift certificate from Lincoln's Lee Booksellers. Winner Oliver Pollak proposed only a slight change, *NCB News*, for name recognition and continuity, "otherwise the three issues we worked on this year (1998) become orphans...but

really are the fine start of quality book/library commentary." Names of those whose entries weren't picked will be entered in a drawing for a \$10 gift certificate at Lee Booksellers. The winner of the drawing will be announced in the summer edition of the *NCB News*.

Since the beginning of the decade, the Nebraska Center for the Book has communicated efforts to promote literacy, Nebraska writers, and Nebraska authors through this newsletter. Please tell us how this publication is doing. What topics should the *NCB News* address? What are your concerns about literary issues? Will you write about them? Send responses to Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023, e-mail: <mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. ▲

Welcome to Nebraska's Community of the Book

by Dee Yost,
President,
Nebraska Center
for the Book and
Republican
Valley Library
System
Administrator

Welcome to the ninth year of the Nebraska Center for the Book. We have been an affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book since 1990 when a group of literary types were inspired to bring together the state's readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars. They were united in the vision of a community of the book.

Where is the Nebraska Center for the Book? Well, in the words of one of our own (with a little license used here), it lives in the hearts of Nebraskans who believe in the value of reading and the printed word. We receive mail at the Nebraska Library Commission, but the people who are the center and community of the book are

spread all across the state working together to promote literature. It is the people in Chadron who are diligently preparing for the 1999 Nebraska Literature Festival. It is the teachers who promote our Letters about Literature writing contest and the students who enter. It is the book lovers of our state. And, it could be you.

Andrew Carnegie wrote in the Gospel of Wealth that the man who dies rich dies disgraced. Lest this should happen to you, we invite you to share some of your riches to promote the written word in Nebraska. Join the Nebraska Center for the Book. You'll be in good company. ▲

The NCB News

Spring 1999 Vol. 9 No. 1

Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

NE Literature Festival

Katherine Walter, Committee Chair, NCB
Vice President/President Elect
Jerry Kromberg, NCB Treasurer
Vicki Clarke
John Butler, NCB Secretary
Dee Yost, NCB President

By-Laws

Laureen Riedesel, NCB Past President
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Mel Krutz, Committee Chair
Laureen Riedesel, NCB Past President
Lora Black

Publications/Publicity

Gerry Cox, Committee Chair
Oliver Pollak
Dick Allen
Mary Jo Ryan (ex officio), Nebraska
Library Commission staff

Awards Art Coordinator

Denise Brady

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

1999 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meetings

May 10 - Chadron State College,
Student Center, 4 p.m.

August 7 - time and location to be
announced, tentatively Elmwood

November-Annual meeting - date,
time and location to be announced.

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 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665,
e-mail: <mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.

The *NCB News* is published three times a
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: Gerry Cox. Design and
production: Valerie Dayton.
Staff: Mary Jo Ryan

Library Commission Supports Center for the Book

Rod Wagner,
Director,
Nebraska Library
Commission

Among the wall hangings in my office is a framed letter handwritten by Mari Sandoz to Louise Nixon, former Executive Secretary of the Nebraska Library Commission. It is a treasure that has been passed along and I am fortunate to now have it.

This link between Sandoz and her friend Louise Nixon symbolizes, in a way, the link between one of America's greatest authors and the work of the Nebraska Library Commission. Since its creation in 1901, the Nebraska Library Commission has been linked to the world of writing and books.

In its historical role, the Commission served as a library for rural Nebraskans with no library in their community. Boxes of books, traveling libraries, and books-by-mail programs were among the many Library Commission efforts to get books into the hands of Nebraska readers. Interest in good writing and quality books has always been part of the Library Commission's purpose. The opportunity to support the creation of a Nebraska Center for the Book was a natural step in our work promoting the value of

writing, books, and reading. A decade ago, the Nebraska Library Commission convened a meeting to explore creating a state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book. A steering group prepared a proposal and the Library of Congress gave its blessing to the new Nebraska affiliate. The Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Library Commission are two statewide organizations that have contributed ongoing support for the Nebraska Center for the Book.

Last year, the Library Commission agreed to provide additional support, including development of a membership and contact database, publication of the newsletter, public relations assistance, limited staff support for the Center for the Book board, development of an archive, and funding for publications and program support expenses. The Library Commission's role as the "host" agency for the Nebraska Center for the Book will be evaluated this year to determine future roles and relationships. We hope this new arrangement has furthered the purpose and work of the Nebraska Center for the Book. ▲

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, 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 Library of Congress's National Center for the Book 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.

Storytelling Festival Planned for June 4-5

by **Richard Allen**

McCook's award-winning Buffalo Commons Storytelling Festival will include programs by professional storyteller John Stansfield, folk artist John Walker, comedy club entertainer Juli Burney, cowboy poet "Cactus" Chris Buethe, the McCook Brass Quintet, and the Maverick Band, as well as storytelling in the park and in the museum, storytelling

workshops, and a liar's contest. Some events have an admissions fee. A Grand Reception at the High Plains Museum with a cash bar, awards, auction, announcement, and music by John Walker will be held Saturday at 5:30 p.m. (admission \$5.00 at the door). Contact: Cloyd Clark, P.O. Box 63, McCook, NE, 69001, 308-345-6223. ▲

Mel Krutz Honored

The American Civil Liberties Union-Nebraska Defender of the Bill of Rights Award went to Nebraska Center for the Book Board Member Mel Krutz, in November 1998. President of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska (AFCON) and president-elect of

the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, she has worked for intellectual freedom locally and nationally for many years. Mel founded the Nebraska Writing and Storytelling Festival and edited its seven volumes. ▲

Center for Writers

The Nebraska Center for Writers is a rich repository of information about Nebraska's writers, both the living and the late great. Started three years ago as a personal project by Brent Spencer, director of creative writing at Creighton University, the Web site earned its designer a technology fellowship from US West to expand the project.

Students use the Web site for research. Universities use it to publicize faculty achievements. Fans use it to contact their favorite Nebraska writers. Visited by thousands from around the world, the site

includes a directory of libraries, readings, and bookstores throughout the state, a calendar of literary events, and a literary tour of Nebraska. The Center also contains a collection of information, links, and advice for writers wherever they live, including jobs for writers, publication opportunities, literary agents, and more. The Lost Coast, an online guide to writing poetry and fiction, has been used by students at Creighton University, the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For a look at literary life across the state and beyond, visit The Nebraska Center for Writers at <http://mockingbird.creighton.edu/NCW/>. ▲

Nebraska Authors Featured in Doctoral Dissertations

by **Oliver B. Pollak,**

Department of History, University of Nebraska at Omaha

The doctoral dissertation is the scholar's union card to college teaching. Research, writing, and defense can take from two to eight (or more) years. Distractions from scholarship, such as earning a living and raising a growing family, often slow down the process. Most dissertations languish on university

library shelves. Some are published with reviewers caustically noting that the book has the style of a doctoral dissertation.

Nebraska's authors have been studied in more than 300 dissertations. Willa Cather has been studied by a least 229 doctoral students, 132 of them completing their dissertations during this decade. The following compilation is based on bibliographic records maintained by Dissertation Abstracts.

By comparison, the number of American doctoral dissertations for Henry James is 1,115; William Shakespeare, 443; James Joyce, 481; Ernest Hemingway, 191; Marcel Proust, 154, and E. Scott Fitzgerald, 142. ▲

	1940-1959	1960-69	1970-79	1980-89	1990-99
Willa Cather	9	12	19	58	132
Tillie Olsen				17	23
Wright Morris		2	9	8	6
Mari Sandoz	1		2	7	6
Loren Eiseley			2	7	7
John Neihardt	2		3	2	5
Bess Streeter Adrich				4	2

Writers Conferences Scheduled

Two writers conferences are scheduled this summer in Nebraska. The Elkhorn Valley Writers conference will hold a workshop, "Pen Pointers," on June 26, at the Wisner-Pilger High School in Wisner. Four published writers will lead workshops and give readings and critiques. J.V. Brummels of Wayne, Lyn DeNaeyer of Seneca, Judy Johnson of West Point, and Judy Nelson of Lincoln will lead workshops and participate in discussions. The Elkhorn Valley Arts Unlimited will sponsor the conference. This organization includes people who are also interested in music and the visual and written arts. To request a brochure or to register, contact LaRayne Meyer at P.O. Box 385, Pilger, NE 68768, 402-396-3369.

The eighth annual Fort Kearny Summer Writers Conference will include a creative non-fiction

workshop on how to research, organize, and write memoirs and family histories, as well as fiction workshops focusing on character development, plot enhancement, and enrichment of detail. Poetry workshops will stress prewriting strategies, uses of imagery, sound and rhythm, and poetry performance. The week of workshops from July 12 to July 16 are offered for either undergraduate or graduate credit. Contact: University of Nebraska—Kearney Division of Continuing Education, Communications Center Building, Room 217, Kearney, NE 68849-4220, 308-865-8211, 800-865-6388, Fax: 308-865-8090. On-campus housing is available through Anita Kucera at 308-865-4824, 308-865-8519, or e-mail: <kucera@unk.edu>. ▲

Popular Reading in 1899

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

What did our grandparents and great-grandparents read in 1899? The Bookman, a literary journal started in 1895, tracked best sellers (books selling the most copies) in a section entitled "The Book Mart." In April 1899 Dr. W. H. Martin of Madison, New Jersey, calculated the best selling books for the four year period 1895-1899:

- ◆ *Quo Vadis* by H. Sienkiewicz
- ◆ *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* by Ian Maclaren
- ◆ *The Choir Invisible* by James Lane Allen
- ◆ *Hugh Wynne* by Weir Mitchell
- ◆ *Soldiers of Fortune* by R. H. Davis
- ◆ *The Seats of the Mighty* by Gilbert Parker

The top five sellers of 1899 based on reports from twenty-six American cities and three reports from Canada were:

- ◆ *David Harum* by Edward Noyce Westcott
- ◆ *The Knighthood was in Flower* by Charles Major
- ◆ *Richard Carvel* by Winston Churchill (American, not British Winston Spencer Churchill)
- ◆ *The Day's Work* by Rudyard Kipling
- ◆ *Red Block* by Thomas Nelson Page

Omaha sales were listed in January 1902, when Omaha's three top selling books were:

- ◆ *The Man from Glengarry* by Ralph Connor
- ◆ *The Crisis* by Winston Churchill

◆ *The Right of Way* by Gilbert Parker

These titles remind me that best sellers, classics, and enduring literature are not identical. Books published in 1899 that did not make the best seller list include *The Awkward Age* by Henry James, *McTeague: A Story of San Francisco* by Frank Norris, and *A Message to Garcia* by Elbert Hubbard. Theodore Dreiser published *Sister Carrie* in 1900 but it took some time before it achieved popular success and was regarded as serious literature.

In the twentieth century, the publishing industry assiduously promoted and recorded national reading habits. *The Book Review Digest*, *Publishers Weekly*, *The New York Times Book Review*, and other publications reported the hierarchy of popularity. The transference of best sellers into movies is another twentieth century phenomena of popularity, frequently occurring long after the author is dead, as in the case of E. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. ▲

THIS SPACE AVAILABLE

By way of dipping our toes in the water, the **Nebraska Center for the Book News** has begun taking ads in a small way. We can publish only three or four ads per issue. The cost is \$125 per 1/8 page. To place an ad in the August 15, 1999 issue, contact Mary Jo Ryan: Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023; 402-471-2045, 800-307-2665; e-mail: <mjryan@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>. The deadline for the next issue is July 1.



Nominations Solicited for Jane Geske Award

The Nebraska Center for the Book invites nominations for the 1999 Jane Geske Award. The award honors Jane Geske, a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book and a long time active participant in Nebraska library and literary activities.

The purpose of the award is to recognize a Nebraska association, organization, business, library, school, academic institution, or other group that has made an exceptional, long-term contribution to The Nebraska Community of the Book. Contributions should fall in one or more of the following categories:

literacy, books, reading, libraries, book selling, and/or writing in Nebraska.

Nominations should be in the

form of a letter containing the name of the organization, a brief description of the organization (governance, mission, area served, etc.), field or fields in which an exceptional, long-term contribution has been made, and a description of the contribution or contributions. This may be accompanied by supporting documentation. Additional letters supporting the nomination are welcome.

Nominations and supporting letters must be received by July 15. They should be mailed to Nebraska Center for the Book Jane Geske Award, c/o Dee Yost, Republican Valley Library System, 2727 West 2nd St., Suite 233, Hastings, NE 68901, 402-462-1975, 800-569-4961, fax: 402-462-1974, e-mail: <dyost@tcgs.com>. For questions, contact Rod Wagner, Library Commission Director, 402-471-4001 or 800-307-2665, e-mail: <rwagner@neon.nlc.state.ne.us>.



Former Presidents of the Friends of the University of Nebraska Libraries (from left) Dr. James Rawley, Virginia Knoll, Current President Rod Confer, John Angle and Nebraska Center for the Book Past Presidents Lauren Riedesel and Denise Brady at the award ceremony.

Regional Humanities Center Takes Root on the Plains

by Deborah Eisloeffel, Administrative Coordinator, Nebraska Consortium for a Regional Humanities Center

The University of Nebraska is establishing a regional humanities center to support and encourage regional humanities programming and scholarship for the Great Plains.

This initiative, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is part of the creation of ten centers across the country to collaborate with museums, state humanities councils, and other humanities organizations. John R. Wunder, Professor of History, former Director of the Center for Great Plains Studies and Western History scholar, and Susan J. Rosowski, Adele Hall Distinguished Professor of English and Cather scholar, lead Nebraska's effort.

"This opportunity to form a regional humanities center allows us to think generously about humanities and about the valuable contributions they can make to the quality of life in the region," said Wunder. "We are excited about how such a center could encourage humanities activities, particularly in the areas of research, teaching support, publications, and

programming," said Rosowski. "It would also serve to bring diverse groups together to engage in dialogue and exchange ideas."

To facilitate this exchange, the Consortium has established working relationships with Nebraska groups and sponsored a series of informational meetings with more than 100 Great Plains scholars and interested members of the general public. The Consortium is compiling a cultural inventory of humanities programming and activity in the region to help humanities organizations publicize their activities, events, and perspective on the humanities via the Internet at <<http://www.unl.edu/rcplains>>.

An inventory of Nebraska libraries is underway to add library information to the statewide cultural inventory. To contribute to the inventory or for more information, contact Nebraska Consortium for a Regional Humanities Center, 605 Oldfather Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE 68588-0327, 402-472-3250, fax: 402-472-8839, e-mail: <plains1@unlinfo.unl.edu>.

Center for the Book Archives Developed

by **Maggie Harding**,
Executive Director,
Nebraska Library
Association

The Center for the Book materials have migrated to the Nebraska Library Commission Archives for safekeeping.

Early this winter, boxes of records were delivered to the Library Commission archives area. The first order of business was to sort and organize the material into some sort of meaningful arrangement. The result of all this thrashing around was a slimmed down and more compact collection. The Library Commission provided a file cabinet and shelf space for the materials. The materials in the file cabinet include membership lists, committees and their activ-

ities, agendas, historical information, and programs. Current stationery and publications are housed in the shelving area. The archives area computer contains a list of these materials and where they can be located.

Center for the Book President Dee Yost perused the files and put her stamp of approval on some items and removed others. We are now offering back issues of the *NCB Quarterly*. Contact Maggie Harding at 402-471-4870, 800-307-2665, e-mail: <gh12521@navix.net> to fill in issues for your collection. Members are invited to visit the archive anytime and make use of the materials. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays are best. ▲

Wright Morris and Bicycles

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

The Literary Cyclist by James Starr highlights bicycling in literature. Starr overlooked Wright Morris' autobiographical *Solo* (1983).

Morris spent 1934 in Europe, most of it in Austria. He cycled in Italy, an experience that lasted a lifetime. In *Solo*, Morris recalls purchasing an English Raleigh bike, with a four-speed Sturmey Archer gear. The bike was like new. The tires had inner tubes. There were tools, a pump, and a lamp with a generator that was turned by the front wheel. He outbid about 20 people at an auction and got it for 240 schillings, about \$65. The excitement of a new state of the art bike was evident. "Once I got on the bike I was seized with an impulse to pedal like mad. At the foot of the canyon, seeing the Danube as muddy as the Missouri at Omaha, I felt a weakness like that at losing a sweetheart." You can take the boy out of Nebraska but you cannot take Nebraska out of the boy.

Then it was off to Italy. His friend had a comical cheap Italian bike with warped wheels rubbing the fork and the seat welded to the frame. They did not

ride for pleasure or exercise, but to get somewhere and see things on the way. He asked, rhetorically, "What did riding a bike around in a freezing rain have to do with love, beauty and depth of feeling?"

I have shared his thrill of "flying down the mountains toward Florence." My experience in 1997 with my two sons included the unforgettable clambering on a ripening cherry tree at the bottom of the descent. Morris and his friend carried their *bicicletta* up three flights of stairs. Near Rome he got "caught in a downpour and soaked to the skin." The dye ran in his shoes staining his "feet the color of maraschino cherries." The ultimate indignity was theft, leaving Morris with a replacement chain that slipped, as its links did not match the sprocket.

Wright Morris has written more than thirty novels and essays. His observations cover almost a century's worth of experiences. He turns the commonplace into the universal, which it is, but he does it so well. Morris' books are available in libraries, and new and used bookstores. Good reading, good riding.

Reprinted with permission of Omaha Pedalers Bicycle Club Newsletter. ▲

Love Those Nebraska Authors

Supplies are limited on these Nebraska author materials available from the Nebraska Center for the Book. NCB publishes two resource guides on Nebraska authors. Coffee mugs with your favorite Nebraska authors and a book bag are also available.

- *Resource Guide to Nebraska Authors I* (the "big six"—Aldrich, Cather, Eiseley, Morris, Neihardt, and Sandoz) \$3.50
- *Resource Guide to Nebraska Authors II* (six more Nebraska authors, including Weldon Kees and Malcolm X) \$3.50

- Coffee mug: Aldrich \$6.50
- Coffee mug: Eiseley \$6.50
- Coffee mug: Neihardt \$6.50
- Coffee mug: Cather \$9.00
- Coffee mug: Sandoz \$9.00
- Red canvas book bag with slogan: "Go Big Read" \$7.50

All prices include postage and handling. Make your check payable to: The Nebraska Center for the Book. Send to: Jerry Kromberg, 2622 Nottingham Court, Lincoln, NE 68512. ▲

Nebraska Libraries Host Choices for the 21st Century Programs

As part of the Nebraska Humanities Council's twenty-fifth anniversary, *Choices for the 21st Century Public Policy Discussions* were presented in cooperation with twelve Nebraska libraries.

"Choices for the 21st Century: Defining Our Role in a Changing World" is an innovative, four-part reading and discussion program designed especially for public library audiences. Reading materials were provided free of charge. "Choices" covers U.S. foreign policy topics such as immigration, trade policy, global environment issues, and relationships

with China and the Middle East. "Choices for the 21st Century" is a public policy values-based discussion program, focusing on America's role in the world in the next century. The series is designed for citizens with no prior knowledge of foreign policy. For more information, see the Choices for the 21st Century Education Program Web page at <http://www.choices.edu/pphome.html>. The 1999 Schedule of Nebraska programs can be found on the Nebraska Humanities Council's Web page at <http://lincolne.com/nonprofit/nhc/current.htm>. For more information, contact the Nebraska Humanities Council at 402-474-2131. ▲

Chatauqua Planned for Plainview & Pawnee City

by Molly Fisher,
Director,
Nebraska
Humanities
Council Deputy

The "Behold Our New Century" Great Plains Chautauqua will return to Plainview, July 1-6 and Pawnee City, July 8-13. Both locations are planning special events that begin with the tent raising late Thursday afternoon.

In Plainview, the tent raising will be followed by a community barbecue and feature a presentation from Governor Mike Johanns. Sunday's 4th of July schedule

includes Teddy Roosevelt at 4:00 p.m. Other Chautauquans to appear are Jane Addams, Andrew Carnegie, Dr. Charles Eastman (Ohiysea), and Booker T. Washington. Each community will have complete schedules available that include children's and adult workshops and community events. Contact the Nebraska Humanities Council, Molly Fisher, 402-474-2131; Lee Warneke, Plainview, 402-582-4921; or Susan Zwickle, Pawnee City, 402-852-2548. ▲

Guide to Nebraska Newspapers Available

The Nebraska Newspaper Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, announces the availability of a new CD-ROM product, "A Guide to Nebraska Newspapers: 1854-Present."

The guide provides information about all known general newspapers published in the state since 1854. Searchable by title, city, county, and date of publication, the guide visually displays relationships

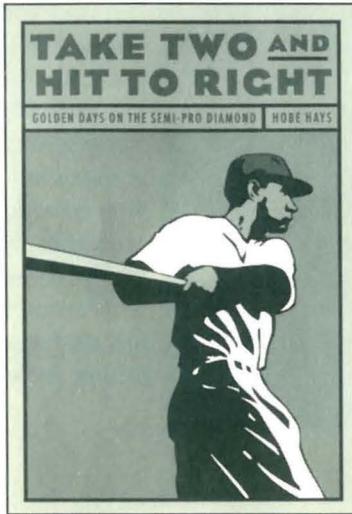
among papers using Adobe Acrobat Reader. This useful tool for genealogical researchers is designed for use on IBM-compatible computers. Copies for public and academic libraries in Nebraska are free. Contact: Katherine L. Walter, Project Director, Nebraska Newspaper Project, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, N209 Love Library, Lincoln, NE 68588-0410, phone: 402-472-3939, fax: 402-472-5131, e-mail: kayw@unllib.unl.edu. ▲



Review: **Take Two and Hit to Right:** Golden Days on the Semi-Pro Diamond

by **Hobe Hays**,
Bison Books,
University of
Nebraska Press,
1999, paperback,
ISBN: 0803273207

Reviewed by
Margie Rine,
Public
Information
Officer, Nebraska
Educational Tele-
communications



Before salary caps, free agents, and lockouts there was small town semi-pro baseball. *Take Two and Hit to Right*, a new book from the University of Nebraska Press, takes readers back to small town Nebraska baseball

with summer evenings, wooden bats and wool uniforms—where town team pride reigned. Author and second basemen Hobe Hays recalls the golden days of semi-pro baseball and recounts his career in the Nebraska Independent League during the late 1940s and early '50s.

Lulled by memories of baseball diamonds, the now retired Hays revisits his "field of dreams" and delivers an inspired story of his experiences. From Lincoln's Sherman field to the diamond of the McCook Cats, Hays nostalgically captures a lost chapter in Nebraska sports history. ▲

Letters about Literature Winners Announced

by **Laureen Riedesel**,
Director,
Beatrice Public
Library
Below: Governor
Mike Johanns
(seated) signs the
1999 National
Library Week
proclamation with
(left to right)
Laureen Riedesel,
Pam Scott, contest
winners **Katie Bolton**, **Ashley Johnson**, **Kristina Wright-Peterson** and
Library Commission
Director **Rod Wagner**.

The 1999 "Letters About Literature" essay contest winners for Nebraska have been selected. They are **Kristina Wright-Peterson** for her letter to **Willa Cather** and **Jamie Hamburg** for her letter to **Jon Krakauer**, author of *Into Thin Air*.

Kristina Wright-Peterson is in the seventh grade at Irving Middle School in Lincoln and the winner in the Level I category for students in Grades 4-7. Jamie Hamburg is a freshman at Burke High School in Omaha and is the winner in the Level II category for students in grades 8-12. Each state winner will receive \$100 from the Library of Congress Center for the Book and will be entered in the national "Letters About Literature" competition with the prize of a \$1,000 savings bond.

Two second place winners were also selected. Ashley Johnson, a seventh grader from Albion won for her letter to Jane Yolen, author of *The Devil's Arithmetic*. Katie Bolton, a sophomore from

Columbus was selected for her letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, the author of the essay, "Self-Reliance." They will receive \$50 awards from Houchen Bindery, Ltd. of Utica.

"Letters About Literature" is a national essay contest sponsored by the Library of Congress Center for the Book and the Weekly Reader Corporation. The Nebraska contest is sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, an affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book that is hosted by the Nebraska Library Commission. This is the first year the contest has been made available at the state level in Nebraska. Students from fourth through twelfth grades wrote letters to an author, living or dead, describing how that person's work changed the student's way of thinking. This year there were more than 15,500 entries in the contest. Students from Nebraska submitted 493 entries. Letters were received from 27 Nebraska communities, including Albion, Arnold, Bellevue, Brainard, Columbus, David City, Dunbar, Fairbury, Fairfield, Fairmont, Hastings, Lincoln, McCook, Mullen, Nebraska City, Norfolk, North Bend, North Platte, Omaha, Seward, Sidney, South Sioux City, Superior, Valentine, Valparaiso, Wakefield, and Westerville.

Judges for the Nebraska competition were Mel Krutz, Marly Swick, Fran Reinehr and Mary Ann Satterfield. Judges and winners will receive a complimentary membership to the Nebraska Center for the Book and a book bag filled with treats for book lovers. ▲



Review: The Magicians Assistant

by Ann Patchett, Harvest Books 1998, paperback, \$13 ISBN: 0156006219

Reviewed by Mary Jackson, Children's and Young Adult Services Coordinator, Nebraska Library Commission

Sabine has devoted over twenty years to loving Parsifal, the magician, despite the fact that he is gay and has a same-sex partner. The relationships, the setting, even the names may all sound improbable, but it's the kind of goings-on one expects in a place like Los Angeles. When Parsifal dies, Sabine is plunged into deep incapacitating depression. But there is more to come. Parsifal told Sabine that his Connecticut family had died, but Sabine is shocked when a living family is mentioned in the will. What's more, they are living in Alliance, Nebraska. And when Sabine



pays them a visit in Alliance, still more surprises pop up like magic rabbits. The contrast between untroubled, temperate Los Angeles and the bleakness of an Alliance winter are fun for Nebraskans to read about. (Will anyone catch the irony besides Nebraskans?) The differences in background between Sabine and Parsifal's family challenge everyone's assumptions and Parsifal is not the only magician in this charming novel. Sabine has a few healing tricks of her own. ▲

Review: Saviors

by Paul Eggers, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998, hardcover, \$23 ISBN 0151003513

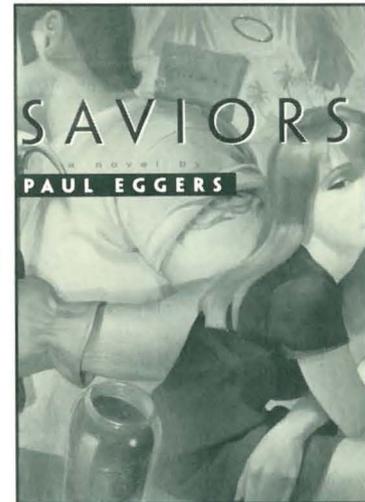
Reviewed by Linda Hillegass, Co-Owner, Lee Booksellers, Lincoln

A Nebraska author has written a rich, challenging, and rewarding novel that would make a good book club choice. In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, with thousands of refugees pouring into the Bidong refugee camp on a Malaysian island, a handful of Asians and westerners attempt to bring some kind of order to a boiling soup pot of trouble, need, despair, deprivation, and mud. This novel, identifiably a classic of American literature, centers on several characters. Porkpie, an idealistic but inept young American woman teaches English in Bidong to the tiny number who straggle into her classroom tent each day. Reuben, a gigantic American who barrels through life attempting to affect change with the manners of a battering ram, is both demon and hero to the Vietnamese refugees. Gurmit, an Indian Sikh, directs the camp for the United Nations (UN) in hapless bureaucratic style.

The camp itself (with its eternal rain and deep sucking mud) is a character as big, alive, moving, and unforgettable as any in literature. Author Paul Eggers, a teacher of creative writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, worked four years for the Peace Corps and the UN doing relief work in Vietnam and Malaysia.

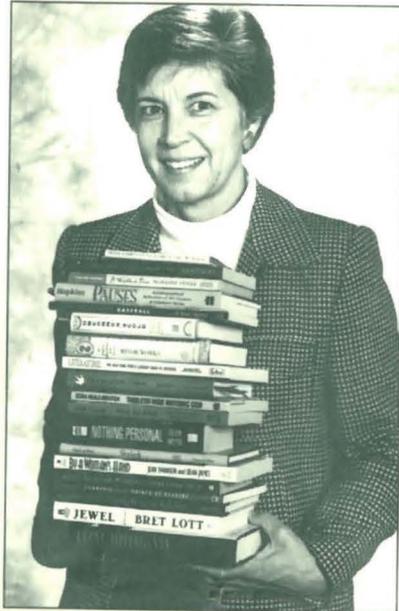
Other players are a set of bickering UN relief workers, the Malaysian Task Force police, and of course, the Vietnamese themselves. As the refugees near Year Five, the limit set by the Malaysians on the life of the camp, tension builds. Unless the politicians can reach a compromise, the Rangers will come and forcibly disband the camp, putting its residents to sea in boats with limited supplies and nowhere to go.

By the way, this is a book I would not have read if I hadn't been asked for a review and I wound up liking it and finding it very interesting. It's the kind of book you want to talk about with someone else who's read it. ▲



Bibliofile: Featuring NCB President and Republican Valley Library Director Dee Yost

by **Gerry Cox**,
Editor, *NCB News*



Q: What book are you reading now?

A: I'm just now starting *The Greatest Generation* by Tom Brokaw. I'm fascinated to learn why Brokaw feels my parents' generation is the greatest.

Q: Who is your favorite character?

A: Peter Rabbit. I'm an admitted Peter Rabbit addict. I think it has to do with both his charm and his naughtiness. I also admire his creator, Beatrix Potter, a great deal. She was reared in a very restrictive time but was wonderfully well-rounded. She wrote and illustrated books, made scientific discoveries about lichens, married, raised sheep, and from all accounts was a good friend and neighbor.

Q: When is your favorite time to read? Where is your favorite place to read?

A: I like to read in bed at night but I can read just about anywhere at anytime. Reading usually takes me to that other world which blocks out everything else going on around me. Lately I've gotten good at listening to audio books when I travel. I feel very accomplished by reading and driving at the same time.

Q: What book did you want never to end?

A: When I was a child there were lots of books I didn't want to end (*Wrinkle in Time*, for instance) but now that I am more or less an adult, I realize there are millions of good books out there that I haven't discovered yet so I must move onwards!

Q: What is the most difficult book you have read?

A: I think it was probably *Magic Mountain* by Thomas Mann. I felt I'd climbed a mountain!

Q: What is the worst screen adaptation of a book?

A: I thought the screen adaptation of *The Firm* was pretty disappointing. The ending of the movie was completely different from the book and not nearly as intriguing.

Q: What do you think is the most overrated book?

A: I personally did not like *Bridges of Madison County*. I wanted that woman to do something about her life and couldn't quite forgive her when she didn't.

Q: Who would be your ideal literary dining companion?

A: I would really have liked to have met Beatrix Potter, of course. But Mark Twain (on one of his good days) would surely be a witty dining companion.

Q: Do you have a comfort book that you reread?

A: I usually don't reread books due to the fact that there are so many I haven't read yet and I'm running out of time! However, I do love *Pride and Prejudice* and Austen's way with words and I have reread it several times.

Q: What book has marketed "spinoffs" that you think are appropriate to buy for gifts?

A: Any of Beatrix Potter's books—as long as the illustrations are by Potter. Real Potter purists hate that the books are reproduced in jumbo sizes, etc. (Ms. Potter wanted them child-sized.) But I think if a child is exposed to Potter's characters in any size, they can't go too wrong!

Q: Which contemporary author do you most admire?

A: I admire Maya Angelou very much and am the proud owner of a catalog card autographed by her. While I can't claim to identify completely with the culture, I certainly admire her as a person. She is also one that I love to hear read her own books as she has this beautiful rich and mellow voice.

Q: What poem or lines do you wish you had learned by heart?

A: I would like to be able to recite "The Mending Wall" by Robert Frost because it seems so true to midwest living. I'm just sure I know that man who loves repeating his father's sayings!

Q: What poem or lines can you recite by heart?

A: One I can recite in part is by Emily Dickinson: "This world is not conclusion, a sequel stands beyond; invisible as music, but positive as sound." ▲

Calendar of Events....

Buffalo Commons Storytelling Fesitcal Contact: Cloyd Clark: 308-345-6223	June 4-5	McCook
Mayor's Arts Awards. Contact: Margaret Berry, 402-434-2788	June 10	Lincoln
Mari Sandoz Society Annual Program: Young Writers Workshop. Contact: Andrew Elkins, 308-432-6307	June 11-13	Chadron
Nebraska Writers Live! at Omaha Public Library Contact: Linda Trout, 402-444-4838	June 24	Omaha
Elkborn Valley Writers Conference: Pen Pointers Contact: LaRayne Meyer, 402-396-3369	June 26	Wisner
"Behold Our New Century" Great Plains Chautauqua Contact: Lee Warneke, 402-582-4921	July 1-6	Plainview
"Behold Our New Century" Great Plains Chautauqua Contact: Susan Zwickle, 402-852-2548	July 8-13	Pawnee City
Ft. Kearny Writers Conference Contact: Steve Schneider, 308-865-8211, 800-865-6388	July 12-16	Kearney
Youth Literature Festival. Contact: Karen Drevo, 402-644-8710	July 31	Norfolk
34th Annual Neibardt Day: Plains Humor Contact: Nancy S. Crump, 888-777-4667	August 1	Bancroft
Bess Streeter Aldrich Rim of the Prairie Day Contact: Lorri Kentner, 402-994-3855	August 7	Elmwood
Library Night Golden Spikes Baseball at Rosenblatt Stadium. Contact: Linda Trout, 402-444-4838	August 27	Omaha
Jacqueline Tobin reading from Hidden in Plain View: The Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad. Contact: Linda Hillegass, Lee Bookseller, Edgewood, 888-665-0999	September 12	Lincoln
Nebraska Literature Festival 1999—Crossing Borders: Geographical, Ethnic, and Literary Frontiers in Plains Literature. Contact: Andrew Elkins, 308-432-6307	September 17-18	Chadron
Omaha Public Library Brown Bag; Dana Stabenow, Mystery Writer. Contact: Jennifer Kirchmann, 402-444-4842	September 28	Omaha



**THE NEBRASKA
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THE BOOK**

an affiliate of the Library of Congress

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Saviors, a new novel
Letters About Literature Winners